Egypt

and Democracy

Critical Essays

With a new Postscript

Saad Eddin Ibrahim

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Introduction

Rereading the twelve essays that make up this volume, I was puzzled but pleasantly surprised. The essays were written separately and sporadically over a twenty-year period (1976–95), and I had not anticipated a publisher's request to gather them into a book, nor had I imagined I would find many common threads running through them.

As selected by the able editors of the American University in Cairo Press, the twelve essays come to read as a long, cohesive tale of Egypt's national drama in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This cohesion could all be in the eye of the beholder—I may be reading in my own essays what is not objectively there—but I leave it to other readers of this volume to judge.

The essays in this collection reflect several major themes that have concerned Egypt and the Arab world over the last twenty years. The strongest of these has been the rise of 'Islamic' militancy. Though an 'Islamic resurgence' followed the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967, it was not until six months after the war of October 1973 that this resurgence would forcefully express itself in a militant fashion. In April 1974 a group of young Islamic activists stormed a state military education institution, seized its arsenal, and prepared to march out and seize another state building where President Sadat and the rest of Egypt's ruling élite were meeting. As it turned out, the plan was foiled after an unprecedented shootout with state security forces. From this point forward, Egypt would witness similar periodic flare-ups and bloody confrontations between the state and Islamic militants; in one of them, on October 6, 1981, President Sadat was killed. Between April 1974 and October 1981 I conducted extensive fieldwork on Egypt's Islamic militancy and published some of it in an article in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) in December 1980, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Notes and Preliminary Findings," Chapter 1 of this volume. When Sadat was assassinated this was virtually the only article in English on the subject. As a result, it was instantly translated and published in several other languages, including Japanese.

But Islamic activism did not abate with the assassination of President Sadat. On the contrary, it mushroomed both inside and outside Egypt. Although the violent militant side of it claimed most of the headlines, the more moderate Islamic activists have made substantial inroads into the economy (for instance in the form of Islamic investment companies), professional syndicates, and political parties (the New Wafd in 1984 and the Labor Party since 1987). The face of the militants has changed over the past twenty years. As they have grown younger, less educated, and more daring, they have engaged

the Egyptian state in a more protracted and bloodier confrontation. This multifaceted phenomenon is revisited in Chapter 4, "The Changing Face of Egypt's Islamic Activism."

As Islamic activism has spread, the West has become as alarmed about the phenomenon as the ruling élites in the Muslim world. The bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in the spring of 1993, allegedly by Islamic militants, lent more existential urgency to this alarm. Coming shortly after the Gulf crisis of 1990–91, the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc, and the end of the Cold War, the World Trade Center episode—coupled with controversies in Western Europe over the growing size and the lifestyles of Muslim communities in their midst—prompted the eminent American political scientist Samuel Huntington to publish his polemical article "The Clash of Civilizations?" (*Foreign Affairs* 72:3, Summer 1993, pp. 21–49). Chapter 5 ("Islamic Activism: The Western Search for a New Enemy") is in part an answer to Huntington. But it is also a plea for understanding of the phenomenon of Islamic activism in its deepest sociological meaning, so that we can deal with it constructively and imaginatively.

The second group of essays in this volume focuses on the roots of many of Egypt's socioeconomic problems: overpopulation, overurbanization, and overexpectations. Egypt's population grew steadily from less than five million in 1800 to ten million in 1900, doubling in one century. However, the next doubling took only fifty years, and the the third doubling took only twenty-eight years: that is, the population reached forty million by 1978. At present (1996), Egypt's population exceeds sixty million, more than twelve times its level in 1800. Because Egypt's main material wealth comes from agriculture, a measure of whether the country is overpopulated or not is the per capita share of cultivable land. That share has steadily been declining—from one feddan per capita in 1800 to less than one-tenth in 1995. Of course, average crop productivity has improved tremendously, but it still falls short of meeting the mounting demands of a rapidly growing population. Egypt was self-sufficient in food production until 1950—now it imports more than 50 percent of its food, especially of grain.

Shrinking opportunities in the countryside have led to a steady rural–urban migration. Cities have grown at twice the rate of the general population in the last two centuries. This has led to overurbanization, that is, more people in the cities than can be properly housed, educated, or gainfully employed. Chapter 6 ("Cairo: A Sociological Profile") analyzes these trends. It is estimated that the population of Greater Cairo has grown from about three hundred thousand in 1800 to over twelve million in 1995. With this phenomenal demographic growth have come many serious problems. Much of the discontent that has been channeled into militant Islamic activism is a direct or indirect outcome of population pressures and overurbanization.

Nasser's 1952 Revolution grappled with Egypt's many socioeconomic and political problems, including overpopulation. His populist, quasi-socialist policies looked for a while as if they could deal with the problems. But despite some initial successes in its first decade, Nasser's populist social contract ran out of steam by the mid-1960s. With the military defeat of 1967, Egypt's economic growth came to a complete halt, while its population growth and military spending continued to rise. Sadat's ascendance to power after Nasser's death in 1970 did not improve matters. It was in 1974 (after the war of October 1973, which had been hailed as a victory) that President Sadat would confront Egypt's mounting economic problems through what was called the Open-Door Economic Policy (ODEP). Coupled with a pro-Western drive in foreign policy, Sadat's new orientation created new problems, including the alienation of many youngsters, some of whom joined the ranks of angry Islamic militants. Ultimately, some of them would assassinate Sadat on October 6, 1981.

However, Sadat's tenure in power (1970–81) unleashed many social forces, old and new. One of these was the old landed bourgeoisie. Small in size, but a powerful socioeconomic formation, Egypt's landed bourgeoisie had evolved steadily over a century (1840–1952). Nasser's Revolution delivered several hard blows to this class in 1952, 1960, and 1968. However, its ranks outlived Nasser and were rehabilitated by Sadat. The ODEP was welcomed by Egypt's landed bourgeoisie, and it thrived once again. Even after Sadat's death this old class, along with new recruits and international financial institutions, lobbied hard to move beyond the ODEP into a full-blown economic reform and structural adjustment program (ERSAP).

Chapter 8 ("Governance and Structural Adjustment: The Egyptian Case") explores the initial reluctance of President Mubarak in the 1980s to adopt ERSAP, then his plunge into it in the 1990s. Like Sadat's ODEP, which partly triggered the confrontations with Islamic militants in the 1970s and early 1980s, a similar pattern is repeated with Mubarak's ERSAP. It was explicitly and forcefully initiated in the spring of 1991, shortly after the Gulf War. It was not long before a wave of bloody confrontations was unleashed. In addition, Egypt witnessed a less talked-about wave of labor unrest. By the mid-1990s, the country was in the grip of a crisis of governance. The negative fall-out of rising Islamic militancy afflicted both the secular intelligentsia and Egypt's Christian Copts. In the summer of 1992, a well-known, outspoken secularist, Dr. Farag Fouda, was assassinated by Islamic militants. And an unprecedented number of Copts have been killed in Upper Egypt, especially in the village of Sanabou, Asyut. As usual, whenever the county as a whole is in a crisis, minorities and other disadvantaged groups suffer more.

The third group of essays places Egypt in regional cultural–geopolitical context. Egyptians pride themselves on having a bigger, more cohesive, and more tolerant society than others in the Arab world, and they often puzzle over the intolerance and civil strife in some

neighboring Arab countries. Though recognized by many, the plight of the Copts is generally denied or written off by Egyptians as a passing aberration. I think otherwise. The stress and strain accompanying modernization and state-building in multireligious or multiethnic societies could easily produce undesirable outcomes if not carefully managed by the ruling élite. That is why I have included here an essay on "Management and Mismanagement of Ethnic Diversity in the Arab World" (Chapter 9), in order to put the plight of Egyptian Copts into proper regional perspective.

By the same token, Egypt's central role in the region has had negative as well as positive multiplier effects. Sadat's leadership of Egypt and the Arab world in the war of October 1973 had far reaching regional and global implications. Among these were the 'oil shock' for the West and the 'oil boom' for the Arab world. But the same war was also a trigger for the beginning of a historical compromise to settle the nearly century-old Arab–Israeli conflict. Sadat's daring peace initiative in November 1977 was no less dramatic than his daring decision to go to war in October 1973. However, the Arab consensus on war was not matched by a similar consensus on peace. In fact, Sadat's peace initiative, though resulting in an Egyptian–Israeli treaty in 1979, led to a profound division in Egyptian and Arab ranks. Egypt's membership in the League of Arab States was suspended, and the League's headquarters was moved from Cairo to Tunis. It was not until more than ten years later that the rest of the Arab world would see more wisdom in what Sadat had done. But the full vindication of President Sadat (Chapter 10) would wait until more troubled water passed under many Arab, Middle Eastern, and global bridges. The second Gulf War of 1990–91 was a decisive factor. Within a year of that war, but nearly fifteen years after Sadat's peace initiative, and ten years after his assassination, the whole region embarked on an agonizing and protracted peace process. Despite many setbacks, it is now the only promising game in the region.

Equally challenging for the region are the processes of development and democracy. While development has been universally sought by successive regimes for more than a century in Egypt and the region, democracy has not been universally accepted or sought. The final two chapters in this volume explore the prospects fr both. Development is examined here not in terms of grand state schemes, which may be glamorous but often turn into white elephants. Rather, the focus is on development in terms of grassroots mobilization through NGOs and civil society in general. I argue that for Egypt and the Arab world to truly develop and democratize, as many people as possible must participate actively in societal affairs. People's ability to organize willfully to pursue collective desires is what many social scientists nowadays call 'civil society.'

The territorially based modern state has failed miserably in the Arab world. It has mismanaged its society, economy, and polity. Even when it claimed populist goals, the modern Arab state has for the

most part been authoritarian and despotic. If there is a hope for reclaiming the future, it is through a robust Arab civil society that carries forth both development and democracy. At present, there is an ongoing dialectic in the Arab world between the legacy of despotism, authoritarianism, intolerance, and a culture of violence on the one hand, and the sprouting forces of civil society, democratization, and a culture of peace on the other. Early in 1996 it looked as if the former set of forces would prevail. But because the region is so important for global stability, world leaders gathered in a swiftly convened 'Summit of Peace-Makers' at the Egyptian resort of Sharm al-Sheikh (March 13, 1996) to save the latter set of forces from completely faltering. Again, Egypt was at the regional center stage.

The twelve essays in this volume could have been reordered in more than one way. We could also have updated the information and analysis in each essay. With a few exceptions, we have decided to leave each essay intact, with date and original medium of publication identified, hoping to give the flavor and the context of the time when it was written.

Finally, this volume could not have been produced and published without the diligent effort of the staff of the AUC Press, especially Simon O'Rourke. My former student, wife, friend, and sharpest critic, Barbara Lethem Ibrahim, undertook the painful task of reading and editing the manuscript. My quiet but hardworking assistant, Yvette Ishaq, sacrificed many of her weekends with her family to get the manuscript in a publishable shape. To all of them, I want to express my deepest gratitude.

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Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

1980

Iran's Islamic Revolution took the world by surprise. The Western media have subsequently been alarming their readers with warnings of Islamic "revival," "resurgence," "rumble," and "anger."[1] Strategists and political practitioners have joined in—invariably using the same or more academic-sounding jargon, such as the "arc of trouble" or the "crescent of crisis."[2] The area referred to stretches from Morocco to Indonesia, where nearly 800 million Muslims live and in which some of the world's most strategic raw materials and real estate are located. The rising attention and the West's alarm are understandable and indeed quite justifiable. After all, most of that alleged anger is directed at the West and its local allies and surrogates—the Shah being a case in point. The seizure of the American embassy in Teheran along with some fifty hostages in November 1979 highlighted this deep-seated resentment. But in neighboring Afghanistan another chapter of the Islamic drama is unfolding—this time in the form of a resistance to the Soviets and their local surrogates. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late December of 1979 compounded an already complicated situation. It plunged the world closer to the brink.

The Islamic factor in all this should be studied with deserved care. It should not, however, be exaggerated, mystified, or metaphysicalized. The majority of American specialists on the Middle East who subscribed to 'modernization' theories in the 1950s and 1960s have tended to ignore Islam as a salient social force.[3] The Orientalists treated Islam 'ideationally' and insulated it from a changing social structure.[4] The 'modernization' school of social scientists believed Islam to be a polar opposite of secularism, science, and technology, and they thought that as these modes spread and struck roots, Islam would weaken. Some have argued that Islam without a Martin Luther-like reformation would be antithetical to any socioeconomic and political development. The choice was to be between Islam and 'progress.' Many of these contentions were propagated as social science theories until the mid-1970s. Their exponents, if they have not already disclaimed them, must now be hard pressed to come back with rejoinders or apologia.[5] For the present and future, however, there is danger of an intellectual backlash that exaggerates, mystifies, or metaphysicalizes the Islamic 'comeback.'

Nothing can guard against such overreactions more than careful in-depth observation of the indigenous scene. Specificities and local particularities have to be identified and correlated with the alleged Islamic revival. No matter how great the temptation to generalize, such scientific quests must be checked until sufficient numbers of case particulars have been documented and analyzed. Only then will inductively based generalizations make sense. Otherwise how can we lump together what is happening in Saudi Arabia (where the regime is allegedly based on Islamic fundamentals) with what happened in Iran (where the former regime was secular and anticlerical) or what is happening in Egypt (where the regime prides itself on being based on faith and science *[al-'ilm wa-l-'iman]*) with what is happening in Afghanistan (where the antagonists are patriotism and tribalism on the one hand and allegedly progressive but Soviet-supported forces on the other). This is not to mention the Islamic eruptions in Turkey and Tunisia that have occurred recently. The regimes of these countries, as well as the problems facing them, are quite diverse. Of course, there may be a common denominator underlying most of these cases. But such vectors are not to be cavalierly ascertained without careful country case studies.

Motivated by these methodological considerations, my colleagues and I undertook, in the fall of 1977, a study of Islamic movements in Egypt. That was at least one full year before the dramatic unfolding of events in Iran. Very few observers in September 1977 could have foretold the coming of an Islamic-led popular revolution in that country. Of course, there were signs of unrest in Iran, as there were in other Middle Eastern countries at the time. During 1977, however, Egypt witnessed three major events that had collective political implications. The first was the occurrence in January of massive food riots,[6] which were blamed on leftist elements and communist organizations[7] and which were followed by a multitude of repressive measures against all kinds of political opposition—right, center, and left.[8] The second event was a bloody confrontation in July between the regime and the members of a militant Islamic group[9] labeled in the mass media as "Repentance and Holy Flight" (RHF) *(al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra)*. The incident was set off when the group kidnapped a former cabinet minister for religious endowments, demanding the release of RHF members being detained by the government, and then carried out their threat to kill the former minister when the release did not materialize. Crackdowns and shootouts resulted in scores of dead and wounded around the country.[10] The third event was President Sadat's historic decision to travel to Israel in search of peace.

The three events are, in a curious way, intertwined. The January riots reflected the mounting frustrations of the lower and lower-middle classes in Egypt with the negative payoff of President Sadat's socioeconomic policies. The bloody confrontation in July between a religious group and the government reflected the growing despair of the most volatile element of the population—youth of the lower-middle

and working classes—who sought salvation in Islamic militancy. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was motivated as much by these mounting internal problems as by a genuine desire for peace. He thought and said that with peace would come instant prosperity.[11]

My concern here is with only one of that year's three curiously interlinked events—the confrontation between the regime and RHF. Although known for some time to exist, the size and organization of the group came as a surprise to the government and the public. The rounding-up operations, subsequent interrogations, and the trials revealed a sizable movement of between three thousand and five thousand active members who were highly organized and widely spread horizontally and vertically throughout Egyptian society.

Having been challenged by a popular uprising earlier in the year that was officially blamed on leftists, the regime was now in the embarrassing position of having to blame the religious right. Moreover, with an equally serious challenge from the liberal center, represented by the New Wafd party, the regime found itself in an even tighter position.[12] Absurd as it may sound, the regime accused Moscow of supporting and instigating militant Muslim groups to challenge its legitimate authority.[13] Thus the regime miraculously lumped the secular left, the atheist forces, and the religious militants into one sinister alliance directed by the Soviets. Later on the regime was to add the Wafdists to the list.

The violent confrontation mounted by RHF was not the first of its kind against the Sadat regime. Three years earlier (April 1974) another militant Islamic group, known interchangeably as the Islamic Liberation Organization, or "Technical Military Academy" (MA), *al-Fanniya al-'Askariya*, attempted to stage a coup d'état. The group succeeded in taking over the Technical Military Academy in preparation for a march on the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) where Egypt's top ruling élite were scheduled to listen to a speech by President Sadat. The plot was foiled while in process but only after dozens had been killed and wounded.[14] This attempt was spectacular in size, planning, and timing. Significantly it took place only a few months after the October War, which was hailed as a victory for President Sadat, and while he was presumably still riding high in popularity.

There were further scattered confrontations between the authorities and other militant Islamic elements, but they attracted much less publicity than the two mentioned above.

Most observers of the Egyptian scene agree on the following:[15]

1. The rise of these religious movements dates back to the aftermath of the Arab defeat of 1967.

2. The regime of President Sadat made a reconciliatory gesture toward these groups from 1970 to 1973 to counterbalance what the regime perceived as a Nasserist–leftist opposition.

3. These Islamic groups represent the small hard core of a broad but amorphous mass of religiosity in the society as a whole.

The Islamic resurgence was further evidenced by landslide victories of Muslim groups in university student union elections from 1975 to 1979—a fact that prompted the government to dissolve these unions by presidential decree in the summer of 1979. Religious publications have, in addition, increased in number and circulation. Two important periodicals, *al-Da'wa* ('the call' or 'the mission') and *al-'Itisam* ('perseverance') are run by former members of the Muslim Brotherhood (technically banned since its dissolution by the Nasser regime in 1954). Since these periodicals appeared in 1976, their readership has steadily increased. At first, they were encouraged by the Sadat regime to counterbalance the leftist and Nasserist opposition and to enhance Sadat's popular base. But while bitterly anti-Nasserist, these publications have gradually become more critical of Sadat's domestic and foreign policy. A near total break with the regime occurred over his 'peace initiative,' the signing of the Camp David Accord, and the peace treaty with Israel.[16] The regime is understandably annoyed and embarrassed by the escalating attacks in these publications but is in a predicament as to how to deal with them. Sadat had staked his quest for legitimacy on a 'democratization drive' and on declaring religious faith *(al-'iman)* as one of the two pillars of the state (the second being science, *al-'ilm*). If Sadat were to counterattack against these respectable Muslim critics, he would appear to be both antidemocratic and anti-Islamic. So far, Sadat has grudgingly tolerated *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam*. Meanwhile both publications have continued to solidify opposition to Sadat's policies. His only chances to crack down on them arise when militant groups use violence. This gives the regime a legitimate excuse to go on an all-out 'overkill' against all Islamic groups.[17] Government counterattacks, however, do not seem to have stemmed the rising tide of militant groups. For every group that is liquidated, two or three new organizations emerge spontaneously.

In our research we approached the phenomenon of these emerging religious groups as social movements. The government labeled members of these militant groups as "deviants," "abnormals," "heretics," and "*khawarij*."[18] When we applied for permission to interview the leaders of the two most prominent groups, we were first turned down because we had called them members of "revivalist movements." After prolonged negotiation we reached a compromise on the label: our work was to be called a study of 'religious violence.' The state nevertheless continues to treat members of these groups as common criminals, although prison wardens who are in daily touch with them cannot help treating them as de facto political prisoners.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Our interest in militant Islamic groups was stimulated by a multitude of academic as well as existential factors. First, to a social scientist these groups represent a significant variant of social movements that have been proliferating all over the Third World in recent decades:

some of the movements have developed into full-fledged revolutions, whose goal is to establish new social orders. Second, these Islamic social movements have not been sociologically studied before. Similar movements (for example, the Wahhabis, the Mahdiya, and the Muslim Brotherhood) have been studied by historians, often a long time after the event and with different emphases. The study of such movements, by employing a typically sociological perspective and sociological methods, would no doubt complement historical treatises. The sociological investigation, in this context at least, promises firsthand data (through interviews and questionnaires) and a quest for an explanation that would anchor them in their broader social structure.

The recent emergence of Islamic militant movements in Egypt takes on a special importance. Since Egypt is the center of the Arab–Muslim world, vibrations from Egypt often reach the much broader cultural hinterland beyond its borders. This has been the case with other political and ideological currents throughout the last two centuries. The cultural unifiers in the Arab–Muslim world make it possible for this vast area to respond to one center, especially in times of crisis.

The sociological study of militant Islamic groups presents the researcher with a host of obstacles. There are political, ethical, and practical problems in carrying out empirical research on groups that are extremely polemical and whose activities are still unfolding. Both the protagonists and the antagonists may be tempted to use the research project for their own purposes. There are vast and continuously fueled reservoirs of suspicion concerning the motives of the social scientist. Furthermore, there is overall inhospitality to empirical research even when initial goodwill is established. The theoretical problems are equally complex.

Our interest in studying militant Islamic groups was translated into a simple research design. We defined Islamic militancy as actual violent group behavior committed collectively against the state or other actors in the name of Islam. Two groups of substantial size met this definition. The first is the Islamic Liberation Organization *(Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami)*, known in the Arab mass media as *Gama'at al-Fanniya al-'Askariya* (Technical Military Academy group), henceforth abbreviated as MA. The second is *Gama'at al-Muslimin* (the Muslim group), known in the Arab media as Repentance and Holy Flight *(al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra)*, henceforth RHF.

After the arrest, trial, and sentencing of most of their members in 1974 and 1977, the two groups had no legal existence, technically speaking. The two top leaders of MA and the five leaders of RHF were executed. However, many of their second-echelon leaders were still in prison. Continued clandestine activities by both groups were rumored. The two groups seemed, from the preliminary information we gathered, to be typical of several others that have mushroomed under various names since the late 1960s. Many of the leaders of these groups, including the two in question, had some direct or indirect affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood,[19] as we shall see shortly.

The approval of the authorities, difficult and protracted as it was to obtain, proved to be the easiest of a host of research problems we were to encounter. The initial refusal by the militants to see us was predicated on several grounds. For some of them we were simply part of a 'corrupt society,' contact with which could only mean pollution *(najasa)*. The majority, however, strongly suspected that we were working for the government. The prison officials had told us of earlier unsuccessful attempts by others, ostensibly religious clergy, to talk with the militants. After several weeks of negotiation with their leaders, first through written messages, then in face-to-face contact, they agreed to cooperate with us.

Our objective, as we told them, was to hear their story in their own words and then to communicate it to the outside world as objectively as possible. We promised to draw a sharp line between the facts as stated by them on one hand and our analysis and opinions on the other. We stressed that they had been smeared so much by the government-controlled mass media that whatever we said could not really be any worse.

Our promise to be neutral and objective did not mean much to them at first. The militants requested to be allowed to read everything the members of the research team had ever published. They read the material carefully and discussed some of it with us. Some of these interviews were more like graduate seminar sessions, with lively and hot-tempered exchanges. In other words, they refused to play the conventional role of research subjects. They interviewed us as much as we interviewed them. At times they asked us to react to their views, something that goes against the grammar of social research. Some of them accepted our refusal to react; others made our reaction a condition for continuing the interview. They asked us some very personal questions and commented critically on the dress and appearance of female members of the team. Some would not meet with women researchers; others would if these women wore veils or covered all parts of their bodies. The leaders subjected us to some 'honesty tests'[20] and ran their own 'security checks'[21] on us through their out-of-prison followers. We acquiesced to some of these measures, negotiated some, refused others. One of the three women in the team rejected their veiling demand; and the militants finally tolerated her "sinful" behavior.[22]

We must ultimately have seemed honest and credible enough to the jailed militants, for they allowed us to spend approximately four hundred hours interviewing them over a two-year period. This amounts to more than ten hours per person for the thirty-three militants we managed to interview. Some of the interviews, especially with RHF militants, were collective. As in other protracted research encounters, a human bond developed between the research team and the Muslim militants. They became not only open but quite eager to talk. Some of them even dared to discuss their internal differences and to offer candid criticism of the movement. So deeply did

they become committed to our research objective that when the government withdrew our research permit, their leaders tried to reach us through secret channels, bypassing the prison authorities altogether.

In February 1979, the Egyptian authorities put an end to our prison interviewing. They did not give official reasons, but we attributed this action to the tense situation that prevailed in Egypt as a result of the steady march of the Iranian revolution toward seizure of power. President Sadat never hid his disapproval of Khomeini or his unequivocal support for his friend the Shah.[23] Egypt's mass media echoed that sentiment.

Throughout the remainder of 1979 we attempted to obtain a permit to resume our interviewing, but in vain. The research data, therefore, remain incomplete. What is reported here must be read with this caveat in mind.

The data reported in the following section were obtained primarily from interviews conducted inside prison, as well as some from outside prison with members who had been charged but acquitted. The information gained in interviews was supplemented by three additional sources of data. We tried to use questionnaires, but many of the militants refused to fill them out, preferring to be interviewed. Eleven people did respond to the questionnaire, however, and refused to be interviewed. Three people did both. Thus questionnaire data represent the second source of information. The third source was material written by leaders of the two militant groups on various issues—some of which was prepared for their rank-and-file members and some especially written in answer to questions we raised in the course of our research. Finally we used official documents to obtain strictly factual data (dates, numbers, arrests, trial proceedings, and so forth).

The amount of data gathered from these four sources is staggering. No attempt is made here even to summarize it. Instead we have selected a few aspects of the two militant groups to analyze in light of our preliminary findings.

Sociologists who study social movements are invariably interested in the general societal conditions that give rise to a movement, as well as its ideology, leadership, membership recruitment, and membership profile (that is, social base), its internal organization, strategy, and tactics. Some of these aspects are discussed below. One striking feature of the militants' responses to our questions is their uniformity. There was practically no variance among the responses of members of each group. A high degree of ideological discipline (or homogeneity) existed. On rare occasions where variance did exist, we report on it. But there were significant differences *between* the two groups, and these are pointed out in the text. Instead of quoting respondents at length, we have synthesized and paraphrased their answers to various questions, helped by the fact that almost the same words and phrases, the same Quranic verses, and the same *Hadith*

(Sayings of the Prophet) were used by most members of each group in making their points regarding various issues.

IDEOLOGY OF EGYPT'S ISLAMIC MILITANTS

Much has been written on what Islamic movements are seeking: the rebuilding of a new social order based on Islam. This has generally come to mean application of the *Shari'a* (that is, the Quran and *Hadith*) to everyday social life. Islam regards itself as the repository of the will of God, which has to be acted out on earth through a political order. Members of the two militant groups we interviewed are no exception in this respect. They subscribe to this objective wholeheartedly. There is no point in repeating here what has elsewhere been written about extensively in this regard.[24] Suffice it to say that for the militants we interviewed, adherence to Islam provides a complete and righteous vision for a healthy society on earth and provides for a heavenly paradise hereafter.

A vision of what ought to be, however, is only one part of any ideology. Analysis of the past, the present, and the unfolding process that links them is often an integral part of an ideology. In describing the present, an ideology offers an assessment of the role played by major segments of society (classes, tribes, ethnic groups, institutions, and so forth). It also points out actual and potential enemies of the new social order envisioned by the ideology.

On most of the principal elements of ideology, we found a near consensus among members of the two militant groups. Typically they start with axiomatic statements to the effect that man was created for a purpose—to embody the will of God by leading a righteous life and following the correct path *(al-sirat al-mustaqima)*. The operational content of such life is well-detailed in the Quran and the *Sunna* (the Prophet Muhammad's words and deeds). It goes without saying that strict adherence to the five pillars of Islam is an irreducible minimum for every Muslim. But to become a good Muslim a person must do more: aside from observing the commandments, taboos, and other rituals, a good Muslim is one who sees to it that the will of God in creating mankind is truly fulfilled on the collective level as well. Phrased differently, the righteous Muslim cannot exist individually; he must strive to build and maintain a righteous community of the faithful *(al-umma)*. Struggling to bring that about is a duty of every true Muslim.

It is this last component of their ideology that sets the militants apart from others in Muslim societies at present. Creating and sustaining a social order in the moral image outlined in the Quran is problematic, both intellectually and politically. Intellectually, most ruling regimes in Muslim countries, Egypt included, claim to be following the 'essence' or the 'spirit' of Islam. They justify what may otherwise seem to be variations in form necessitated by a changing and complex world.[25] Spokespeople for these regimes, including es-

tablishment *'ulama'*, would be quite prepared to marshal religious evidence in such debates.[26]

Against this moral 'relativism,' the militants believe that it is their religious duty to see to it that a truly Muslim social order comes about. Such a belief sooner or later takes on an organizational form leading to confrontation with the ruling élite. The objective is to force the élite either to conform to the precepts and edicts of Islam or to step down. In other words, a serious challenge to the status quo is a built-in component of militant Islamic ideology.

The way in which the two groups view the present is an integral part of their ideology. Both agree that the political system is corrupt and inept. The evidence is abundant. Externally it has been defeated by the enemies of Islam: the Christian West, Jewish Zionism, and atheist communism. The regime has made humiliating concessions to those enemies. The system, by deviating from the "straight path," has failed to prepare sufficiently to repel external assaults on *Dar al-Islam* ('the homeland of Islam'). Internally, the regime is oblivious to the Shari'a, and has adopted and enforced man-made, Western-imported legal codes. The leaders have not set an Islamic example in behavior and lifestyle, nor have they displayed any intention to reinstate Muslim institutions. The inevitable outcome is moral decay, poverty, disease, illiteracy, and the spread of vices *(radhila)*. In short, all the external setbacks and internal socioeconomic ills of Egypt (and other nations in the Muslim world) are attributable to a corrupt, inept system that has intentionally deviated from the correct path embodied in the Shari'a. The obverse of this proposition is clear: the sure solution for all such problems is a system that commits itself and indeed begins to implement the Shari'a.

There were some differences between the two groups on these aspects of ideology. The Military Academy group (MA) condemned the political system in the main. The society at large, though described as decaying and riddled with problems, was not blamed. It was viewed as a victim of unscrupulous and "God-fearless" leaders at the top of the political system. Thus a victimized society is seen as eager but unable to rid itself of its victimizers. The militants' reading of the nature of Egyptian society with regard to religion is quite interesting. One of the surviving leaders of the attack on the Technical Military Academy stated, "We believe that the Egyptians are basically the most religious of all Islamic peoples. They were so before Islam, from the time of the Pharaohs. They have continued to be very religious. Egypt would therefore be a good base to start the world Muslim revival. All that the religious Egyptians need is a sincere Muslim leadership." This conviction, we believe, had a decisive impact on shaping the strategy of MA, as will be shown later.

The Repentance and Holy Flight (RHF) group does not make that distinction between the political system and the society at large. They see both as equitable and as manifestations of one another. According to RHF, a corrupt society breeds a corrupt political system, and

vice versa. Thus the present political system and society in Egypt are beyond redemption. The most frequent term used to describe this state of affairs is a new *jahiliya*, that is, a combination of infidelity, decadence, and ignorance, similar to that prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia.

There are also several doctrinal differences between the two groups but they are not as significant as the one mentioned above. These differences are reflected in the organizational, strategic, and tactical aspects of each movement, as will be seen shortly.

In order to go beyond ideological generalities, we built several probes into our research design about specific issues. In both the questionnaire and the freewheeling interviews, members of the two groups were challenged to answer their critics as to how an Islamic social order would handle some contemporary problems on which the Shari'a is either vague or noncommittal. A sample of typical responses helps put their ideological perceptions in focus.

On the question of the status of women the consensus was that the Shari'a in essence gives women balanced rights and obligations. The militants concede that men have neglected women's rights and have been excessive in extracting obligations. But this is due to the overall corruption and irreligiosity of the present social order. The militants are not against women receiving equal education up to the highest level. They insist, however, that a woman's rightful place is the home and that her first obligation is to her husband and to the socialization of truly Muslim children. Women could work outside the home if they had fulfilled their primary obligations and if the interests of the community *(maslahat al-umma)* called for it. Significantly, members of MA were closer to the egalitarian model on this issue than members of RHF. But the latter accepted female members in their movement while the former did not. Both groups insisted on the imperative of modesty, the protection of women from temptation *(al-fitna, al-ghiwaya)*, and the separation of sexes in public places. They believe that the application of *hudud* (Islamic penal codes) with regard to sexual offenses is both necessary and sufficient to ensure these ends. They perceive the family as being the basic unit of Muslim society. Its soundness derives from strict observance of Shari'a values and regulation. Authority and protection flow from the male head of a household down to females and the young; respect and obedience flow in the opposite direction. In short, the Muslim family is built around obedience, complementarity, protection, and respect—not around equality, competition, and self-reliance.

On economic issues, both capitalism and communism were dismissed as inhuman and ungodly. But what exactly is an Islamic economic system? Neither group would or could give a complete and coherent answer. But one emerges from scattered incomplete answers and an overall impression. Excessive wealth and excessive poverty would have no place in a Muslim society—if the faithful respect religious edicts and taboos *(muharammat)*. The edicts include payment

of the *zakat* (alms tax), fair payment of wages to laborers, hard and honest work by every Muslim, and charitableness (aside from *zakat*). The taboos include cheating, extravagance *(tabdhir)*, hoarding *(iktinaz)*, and extracting or receiving usury interest. It is also clear that no single individual or group of individuals could monopolize or control public utilities (the analogy from early Islam is water, fire, and grazing land, or *al-ma' wa-l-nar wa-l-kala'*). Private property, profit, and inheritance are allowed. A Muslim government, however, could and should create something analagous to a public sector if the interest of the *umma* required it.

This last stipulation, interest of the community, seemed to perform two important ideological functions. First, it gives the Islamic state tremendous flexibility to engage in or refrain from engaging in major economic activities. Second, it accentuates the collective or communal nature of the envisioned Muslim society. We heard nothing about the interest of the individual; it was always that of the *umma*.

The militants perceive Egypt's present economic problems as the outcome of the mismanagement of resources, the application of imported policies, conspicuous consumerism, the corruption of top officials, and low productivity. Other factors—overpopulation, scarcity of cultivable land and other natural resources, the burdens of defense, and the war efforts—are not considered causes of Egypt's present economic difficulties.

The militants' blueprint for dealing with Egypt's problems is rather straightforward: it requires austerity, hard work, and self-reliance. Building basic industries and developing appropriate technology are integral parts of Islamic economics.

An important component of the militants' economic thinking is its pan-Islamic nature. This point raised interesting issues during the interviews. The excessive differential in the wealth of various Muslim countries is frowned upon by the militants. They believe that no true Muslim rulers would allow some Muslims to enjoy too much wealth (as in Saudi Arabia) while fellow Muslims elsewhere were starving (as is the case in Bangladesh).

On the question of classes and stratification, the two groups readily concede social differentiation as an accepted pillar of the Muslim social order, as the Quran states, "We [God] have put some of you in classes above others." But the only acceptable mechanism of differentiation is man's labor, not his race, color, tribal or family origin. As a matter of fact, this labor differentiating mechanism determines one's standing, both in this life and in the hereafter. The concepts of social justice *('adala)* and equity *(al-qistas)* are central in the envisioned Muslim society. It is the responsibility of the ruler, commander of the faithful (*amir al-mu'minin*, the caliph) to ensure that justice and equity are observed. This constitutes the essence of governance, *al-'adl asas al-hukm*. Countless episodes were related by members of the two groups to show how such principles were implemented and observed by the Prophet and the Guided Caliphs.

What the militants are calling for in the socioeconomic organization of Muslim society may come very close to a variety of moderate socialism (similar, say, to that of the British Labor party or even to Nasser's socialism), but any suggestion to that effect invariably produced an outraged response. Islam is not to be likened to any man-made doctrine or philosophy. It would be more acceptable to them if we were to say that British socialism resembled Islam. In fact some of them have attributed Mao Zedong's success in China to his emulation of Islam, rather than to his adherence to Marxism. The militants often use phrases such as "the poor" *(al-fuqara')*, "the wretched" *(al-masakin)*, and "the weak on earth" *(al-mustada'afin fi-l-ard)* to mean what secular leftists call "the working class," "the exploited," or "the proletariat." The militants, however, have an instant adverse reaction to the latter terms because of their association with imported secular ideologies. By the same token, the militants use terms such as "the corrupt on earth" *(al-mufsidun fi-l-ard)* and "the unjust" *(al-zalama)* to mean what secularists call "exploiters" or "oppressors."

As to the political system, the two groups expressed their conviction that the head of the community, the ruler, must be selected by the faithful, must be an adult, rational, pious male, and must abide by the Shari'a. He must consult his fellow Muslims in all important decisions on which there is no clear-cut ruling in the Shari'a.

But how would they organize matters related to selecting the ruler or ensuring his consultation with the community? The militants had not worked out the details of that, but when asked if they would go about it the same way as in Western-type democracies, they agreed in essence. Aside from not liking to use the word 'democracy' and preferring the term *shura* ('consultative'), both groups stipulated that elected *shura* assemblies would have no legislative powers in matters covered by the Shari'a. Rather, these elective bodies would be responsible primarily for the enforcement of the Shari'a; they would choose among alternative interpretations and would issue rules on matters not directly dealt with in the Shari'a. Elective bodies would have the authority to check on the rulers, to hold them accountable, and to remove them from office if they failed to carry out their duties. So long as the rulers are dutiful to God and the community, it is the obligation of every Muslim to obey their orders.

The tradition of tolerating an unjust ruler for the sake of preserving the unity of the *umma* is completely rejected by MA and RHF. In fact they believe it is the duty of every true Muslim to remove injustice *(al-zulm)* and misguidance *(dalala)*, including that committed by a ruler.

How do the militants see the *'ulama'*, the learned men of religion? Here there was no consensus among members of either group or between the two groups. Attitudes ranged from indifference to hostility. None had anything positive to say about the *'ulama'* as a group. Those who ignored or expressed indifference toward them tended to view the *'ulama'* as just a group of state employee bureaucrats who

take no initiative and who are more interested in observing rituals and formalities than in the essence and spirit of Islam. The *'ulama'* were invariably described as *babghawat al-manabir* ('pulpit parrots'). Most members of MA dismissed them as pathetic cases for whom pity rather than anger should be felt. Most RHF group members, however, were openly hostile toward the *'ulama,'* especially their top leaders. They viewed such men as hypocrites and opportunists and described them as people who would reverse religious edicts *(yuhallilun al-haram wa yuharrimun al-halal)* to suit the whims of the rulers. So much were the *'ulama'* considered a disgrace to Islam that members of RHF were strongly advised not to pray behind them or in mosques where official *'ulama'* presided. As a matter of fact, when RHF decided to confront the Egyptian state, they kidnapped no less a person than one of Sadat's former cabinet members, the minister of religious endowments. The man, Husayn al-Dhahabi, was one of Egypt's top *'ulama'*. His kidnapping and subsequent execution by RHF dramatized the group's hostility toward Egypt's religious establishment.

Underlying these negative attitudes is the Muslim militants' belief that the *'ulama'* and al-Azhar have abdicated their responsibility toward Islam, have emptied the religion of its sociopolitical component, and have therefore ceased to be qualified to lead the community of believers. Worse still, from the militants' point of view, the *'ulama'* stand in the way of rebuilding a true Islamic social order.

If these are their attitudes toward Egypt's religious establishment, what is their attitude toward similar militant Muslim groups, namely the Muslim Brotherhood? In terms of the religious component of their ideology, their reading of history, and their overall vision for the future, members of MA and RHF expressed no differences with the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, they consider themselves a natural continuation of the Brotherhood, which was banned and persecuted by both the royalist regime before 1952 and by Nasser's regime after 1952. MA and RHF revere the founder of the Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, and the pioneers who gave their lives as martyrs for Islam.

It is generally with the surviving members of the Brotherhood and their current practices that MA and RHF group members take some exception. They consider some of these surviving members either as weak, burned out, or as having sold out. Some of the early members of MA reported having gone to visit older members of the Brotherhood, seeking advice and offering support. They were advised to mind their own business, to stay out of trouble, and to worship God. This was quite disillusioning to the youngsters, who then decided to form their own organization.

In closing this sketchy presentation of the militants' ideology, it may be appropriate to say a word about the intellectual roots of their ideas. According to its members' own testimony, MA has been primarily influenced by the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially the writings of Hassan al-Banna and Sayid Qutb. Also important in shaping their ideas were the translated works of Abu al-'Ala

al-Mawdudi in Pakistan and 'Ali Shariati in Iran. The intellectual roots of RHF group were far more complex. Besides the above sources, its leader Shukri Mustafa synthesized the works of the Kharajites *(al-Khawarij)*, Ibn Taymiya (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (late eighteenth century), and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (nineteenth century). Curiously enough, the works of some modern Islamic reformers were not endorsed by the militants, notably those of Muhammad 'Abdu and 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq. The primary reason for that seems to be the association of the latter with secularist trends that opted for separation of religion and state.[27]

STRUCTURE OF THE MILITANT GROUPS

We have already indicated that following the Arab defeat of 1967, a tidal wave of religiosity swept the country. In an organizational sense, however, this religiosity remained by and large quite amorphous. Part of this religiosity took retreatist, mystical, or sufist forms—individual search for meaning and salvation by turning inward. What distinguished both MA and RHF in this ocean of generalized religiosity was precisely their organization and their outward turning, their desire to change not just their individual lives but also the world. To be sure, the climate of religiosity enabled the two groups to recruit members and challenge the Egyptian regime, but their organization, as far as we were able to determine from their testimonies, began with a single man in each case. The organizational evolution of both groups reflected to a significant degree the style and temperament of the two men responsible for their initiation. But the organizational structure and matters of strategy were just as much reflections of their respective ideologies. Below are some of the organizational features of both groups, their leadership, membership, internal control, and strategy.

LEADERSHIP

MA began on the initiative of Salih Siriya, a modern, educated man with a Ph.D. in science education. A Palestinian by birth and in his mid-thirties, he had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood branch in Jordan (known as the Islamic Liberation Party, *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*). After the Arab defeat of 1967 he intermittently joined various Palestinian organizations, tried to cooperate with various Arab regimes that claimed to be revolutionary (Libya and Iraq, for example), spent brief periods in jail, and finally settled in Egypt in 1971 and joined one of the specialized agencies of the Arab League in Cairo. It was from that vantage point that he began to attract the attention of some of the religious students. Underground cells, called *usar* (families) by the group, began to form in Cairo and Alexandria.

Interestingly enough, the initiator of RHF, Shukri Mustafa, was also in his early thirties and a veteran of the Muslim Brotherhood. He had been arrested in 1965, tried, and jailed for a few years on charges

of being a member of the Brotherhood. In prison he became disillusioned with older members of the Brotherhood, as he saw some of them either breaking down under torture during interrogation or engaging in petty fighting. The prison experience nevertheless did not disillusion him as far as the Brotherhood's ideology was concerned. If anything, it made him more of a true believer. The first RHF cell in fact was started while Mustafa was in prison. As soon as he was released, in 1971, he launched a steady and relentless effort to expand his movement. Mustafa was also educated in Cairo, with a B.Sc. in agricultural science.

Thus the founder-leaders of the two groups had several characteristics in common: age, modern scientific education, previous membership in the Muslim Brotherhood, prison experience, and a disposition toward secret organization. Both leaders had been hanged by the time we started our research. So personality characteristics of the two leaders could not be directly observed. We therefore relied heavily on what their closest lieutenants, the second-echelon leaders, told us. Both leaders were said to have possessed a great amount of charisma. They commanded tremendous respect from their followers, were considered exemplary Muslims, and were emulated. Besides the respect and admiration commanded by both leaders, Siriya reportedly elicited love and Mustafa elicited awe (some would say fear). None of the members of the two groups had anything negative to say about their fallen leaders. If there was criticism at all, it was self-criticism on the part of those interviewed for having failed or misled their leaders. This was especially true in the case of MA members, some of whom considered themselves primarily responsible for pressuring Siriya into a miscalculated action against the Egyptian regime. Both leaders were perceived as extremely eloquent, knowledgeable about religion, well-versed in the Quran and *Hadith*, and highly understanding of national, regional, and international affairs. Both were perceived as virtuous, courageous, fearless of death, and even eager for martyrdom *(istishhad)*.

Siriya and Mustafa initiated their respective groups about the same time, in the early 1970s, but independently from one another. It was somewhat later, in early 1974, that each became aware of the other's group. They made one attempt to join forces, but it ended because of differences in leadership style, ideology, organization, and strategy.

The leadership style differed significantly in the two militant groups. MA was fairly democratic in its deliberations and decision-making. An informal executive council of about twelve members was presided over by Siriya. All points of view were expressed and discussed. Formal voting, however, was quite rare. Consensus was always sought by the leader. His power of persuasion was often decisive in steering the views of the majority in one direction. As far as those interviewed could remember, there was only one occasion when Siriya was unable to persuade the council to adopt his point of view. The occasion involved the question of when to confront the regime violently in an attempt to take over power.

Siriya, as one of those who was present, felt very strongly that the time was not ripe for such an attempt. His argument was predicated on several facts: that the regime was still riding a popular upswing following the October War, that MA had not perfected its organizational machinery, and that it had not thoroughly prepared a program of action for running the country in case of success and seizure of power. Siriya estimated their chances of success at the time as no more than 30 percent. The majority (all but one other member) saw otherwise. Even if success was not assured, they argued, their action would be an "outrage for God" *(ghadba li-llah)*—propaganda by deed. The ideological justification for those who wanted to act immediately was the saying of the Prophet, "Any of you who sees something repugnant *(munkar)* ought to remove it with his hands; if unable, then by his tongue; and if unable, then by his heart." The political justification was Sadat's apparent moves toward the West and toward an accommodation with Israel, both of which are perceived (along with communism) as archenemies of Islam. An immediate action, therefore, was needed to circumvent such treasonous acts. At any rate, the majority view prevailed, and the leader was obliged to go along in accordance with the *shura* principle that the group had adopted from the beginning.

The leadership style of RHF, on the other hand, was quite autocratic. Mustafa, the founder, was established by his followers as the *amir gama'at al-mu'minin* (commander of the faithful group). Although he encouraged discussion and dialogue, the final word was always that of the amir. The multitude of issues on which he made such final judgments ranged from the very personal (marriage and divorce) to intergroup and international issues. He was considered by his followers as an authority on matters of doctrinal theology, Islamic jurisprudence, worship, and Islamic social transaction. His followers' perceptions of the general competence of their leader was steadily reinforced by both leader and followers. Over time, the RHF leader was elevated in their eyes until he became an almost omnipotent figure. Even after the death sentence had been issued, Mustafa's followers would not believe that the government could take his life. For several weeks after he was hanged, his closest followers refused to believe the news. We asked them if they thought that Mustafa was immortal; they answered in the negative. However, they all believed that, because God had ordained him and his group to restore Islam, he would not die before accomplishing this "divine mission."

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Both leaders recruited followers from among students or recent university graduates. Three recruitment mechanisms were employed: kinship, friendship, and worship. RHF relied heavily on kinship and friendship. Mustafa began with close friends from prison days, and relatives, like his brother and a nephew. These in turn enlisted their close friends and relatives as members of the group. MA relied on friendship and worship. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, with so many young

people increasingly observing religion and attending mosques for prayers, members of the first cell formed by Siriya would find their potential recruits among the worshipers. Typically, the older members would observe young worshipers in the college or neighborhood mosque. If the young persons appeared to be deeply religious (especially if they observed the dawn prayer), they would be approached to attend religious discussion after regular prayers. It was during these discussions that the potential member was discovered already to be or capable of becoming politically conscious. Since plain religiosity was evident, it was 'politicizability' that had to be ensured before a person was actually invited to be a member. More significant sociologically, of course, was the social selectivity of members, that is, their background and the segment of society they came from.

Since we studied only thirty-four members of both groups (twenty-one MA and thirteen RHF members) generalizations on the social selectivity of members must be taken with extreme caution. It must also be borne in mind that those studied were among the most active in both groups, as is evidenced by the fact that the government considered them responsible enough to sentence them to imprisonment.

Regional background. There were some regional background differences. Most MA members were from Cairo, Alexandria, and the Delta, while most RHF members were from Upper Egypt. This difference is readily explainable: Siriya operated from Cairo and had a link with Alexandria University; Mustafa, on the other hand, operated from Asyut, his hometown in Upper Egypt, before moving to Cairo at a later stage. Since recruitment mechanisms were kinship, friendship, and worship, it followed that potential members would tend to be marked by social and geographical proximity.

Age. Aside from these regional differences, the profile of membership in both groups was extremely similar. Age, a crucial variable in most militant organizations, ranged from seventeen to twenty-six at the time of joining as a fully fledged member. The median age for MA was twenty-two, and for RHF twenty-four.

The leader of MA, Siriya, was fourteen years above the median age of his followers, and the leader of RHF, Mustafa, was sixteen years older than the average member of his group. Thus, although youthful in both leadership and membership, all followers were significantly younger than their respective leaders. This may suggest that, even in a radical movement such as we are discussing here, the age-reverence tradition of Middle Eastern society still operates.

Rural and small-town origins. Another important component of the membership profile is the rural and small-town background of two-thirds of those interviewed (twenty-one out of thirty-four). They were born in villages or small towns and were recent arrivals in big cities when they joined MA or RHF. Most of them had come to Cairo, Alexandria, or Asyut after completing secondary school, to enroll in a university. Fully one-half of those interviewed were living in the city by themselves or with roommates, but not with their parents. Even

some of the one-third who were born in urban centers had lived in smaller communities during their early and middle teens. Five such members had moved with their government-employed fathers to smaller communities and had lived there for several years.

Although women are not represented in our sample, RHF did recruit from both sexes. At the time of the government crackdown on the group, some eighty women members were arrested along with several hundred male members. Secondary analysis of the backgrounds of these women indicates that they were mostly relatives or wives of male members of RHF.[28] Interestingly enough, RHF (as indicated earlier) was the more literal and dogmatic on women's inequality. The more flexible MA group did not recruit female members.

Class affiliation. Class affiliation of the members was hard to establish directly. Broadly speaking we inferred it from the occupation and education of fathers, as well as of the members themselves. There was no significant difference between MA and RHF in this respect. With regard to fathers' occupation, about two-thirds (twenty-one out of thirty-four) were government employees, mostly in middle grades of the civil service. Four members had fathers who were in high-level professional occupations (two university professors, one engineer, and one pharmacist). Four members had fathers who were small merchants; three had fathers who were small farmers (owning between six and eleven acres); and two had working-class fathers. With regard to education, only seven fathers (20 percent) had a university education. A majority of nineteen fathers (56 percent) had intermediate education (ranging from secondary school to less than four years of college). Five fathers had below intermediate certificates, and three were illiterate.

Although fathers spanned both the educational and occupational spectrums, the central tendency was decidedly in the middle—62 percent occupationally and 56 percent educationally. It is not unsafe therefore to conclude that the class affiliation of most members of these militant Islamic groups is middle and lower-middle class.

Achievement and mobility. The educational and occupational attainment of the members themselves was decidedly higher than that of their parents. All but five (twenty-nine out of thirty-four) were university graduates or university students who were enrolled in college at the time of their arrest. The rest were secondary school educated. Occupationally, only sixteen (47 percent) of the members were classifiable, the rest being students. Most of these were professionals (twelve out of sixteen) employed by the government: five teachers, three engineers, two doctors, and two agronomists. Three were self-employed (a pharmacist, a doctor, and an accountant), and one worked as a conductor for a bus company. Among those who were students at the time of their arrest (eighteen members, or 53 percent), six majored in engineering, four in medicine, three in agricultural science, two in pharmacy, two in technical military science, and one in literature.

It is worth noting here that four of the above majors require very high grades in Egypt's statewide examination of *thanawiya 'amma:*

medicine, engineering, technical military science, and pharmacy. These four majors accounted for fourteen out of the eighteen students (80 percent). In other words, student members of the two militant Islamic groups were decidedly high in both motivation and achievement.

Incidence of family cohesion. Most members of both groups came from 'normal' cohesive families, that is, families with no divorce, no separation, no death of either parent. None in either group was an only child, and none reported any significant tragic events in his family history. Seven members (20 percent) had experienced what may be considered family strain. Of these, three had lost their fathers, and the mother of one had remarried. The parents of two had divorced, and one father had remarried. One member had lost both parents and was living with an older brother. One member reported having been "shocked" by the behavior of his Westernized parents at a New Year's party and had subsequently moved out and was living with a friend. Aside from these seven cases, everyone else reported what may be generally considered a normal family background.

The typical member of the militant Islamic groups could therefore be described as young (early twenties), of rural or small-town background, from the middle or lower-middle class, with high achievement and motivation, upwardly mobile, with a scientific or engineering education, and from a normally cohesive family. This profile, as we shall discuss later, poses theoretical problems, since it is sometimes assumed in social science that members of 'radical movements' must be alienated, marginal, anomic, or must possess some other abnormal characteristic.[29] Most of those we investigated would normally be considered model young Egyptians. If they were not typical, it was because they were significantly above the average in their generation.

MEMBERSHIP CONTROL

Another aspect of organization worth looking into is membership control. Both MA and RHF demanded total commitment and ironclad discipline from their members. Decisions arrived at by the semidemocratic MA leadership and orders given by the autocratic RHF leadership were to be carried out scrupulously. Members in varying levels of the organizational structure did so with zeal and joy, in the unshakable belief that they were serving the cause of Islam. Thus the primary factors in controlling members' behavior were the members' own internal conviction and their exhilarating sense of mission.

RHF, however, employed additional secondary means of controlling its members. One such mechanism was the virtual absorption of all the members' time in activities related to the group—worshiping, studying, proselytizing, exercising, or working in one of the group's economic enterprises.[30] This tended gradually to insulate the members from outside society, something that was urged and welcomed openly in any case. Indirectly, this total absorption and insulation

made the typical member quite dependent on the group to satisfy spiritual, social, and economic needs. In fact at a certain point in the evolution of RHF, members were ordered to relinquish their jobs in the society at large, to desert their families, and to sever all relations with the outside world. In other words, RHF was to become the members' total and only world.

Both groups were quite keen on preparing their members for maximum personal sacrifice of worldly possession as well as life itself. Simply expressed, the member was rigorously conditioned to be a martyr *(shahid)*. The heavenly rewards awaiting martyrs are boundless. Fear or hesitation to die for Islam is the ultimate betrayal of fellow faithful Muslims, and among other things it means one's exclusion from their spiritual communion in both lives. Thinking of the joy and rewards of martyrdom is said to make any physical torture by the enemies of Islam quite bearable. Several members reported that the stories they had heard about the torture of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1966 had had a profound effect on them at the time and on their subsequent decision to join MA and RHF. The severe torture seems to have marked sharply the dividing line in their minds between a "merciless *jahiliya* society and a community of self-denying faithful."

Another mechanism for controlling members is the threat of being excommunicated from the group should one fail fellow members or the movement. In several instances, RHF not only carried out such a threat but also meted out physical punishment to expelled members.[31]

What most of these control mechanisms amount to in the end is no less than an attempt at total resocialization of their members. The individual member was asked not only to adhere to the ideas and principles of the group but also to engage in a serious transformation of behavior, attitudes, and relationships. In other words, both MA and RHF represented the kind of movements that aim at fundamental, simultaneous transformation of both the individual and society. It was quite evident to us that typical members felt (and readily expressed) a moral superiority vis-à-vis people outside the movement. Their ability to impose self-discipline in accordance with the commandments and prohibitions of Islam while others cannot or will not was the source of this feeling. It was equally evident that, aside from the moral superiority, members felt deep joy in defying society and its physical means of coercion. Several who claimed to have been severely tortured reported having images and dreams of prophets and saints welcoming them to the Garden of Eden or of the just Islamic society that would be established after their martyrdom.

STRATEGY ISSUES

The two groups, as should be clear by now, have one common objective: to topple Egypt's present social order and establish an Islamic

social order. It is on questions of strategy that MA and RHF differ most. Interestingly enough each group invoked a different Islamic principle or precedent to justify its strategy in achieving the ultimate goal of a truly Muslim society.

MA perceived the majority of Egyptians as basically religious people who were helpless victims of ungodly political regimes that had superimposed on them non-Islamic institutions. Such a situation was read as sinful and abhorrent, necessitating immediate removal of such regimes by those who are truly Muslims. One of the Prophet's famous sayings was invoked to justify direct and immediate action.[32] We have already reported on the debate on this subject within MA. An 'outrage for God' *(ghadba li-llah)* was the rallying cry for a violent confrontation designed to topple the regime. Of course they had to prepare well for the showdown. Arduous training in the use of various arms, infiltration of the army and the police, detailed study of the behavior and daily routines of the president and other leaders, map construction and map reading of all important strategic sites in the capital, and communiqués to be aired on radio and television were all prepared long in advance. Several rehearsals of parts of the plan were carried out before the actual final countdown on 18 April 1974.

The RHF strategy on the other hand was a patient and long-range one. Their reading of the situation was quite different from that of MA. It was not just the political regime that was corrupt, but all other social institutions as well. It was not only the rulers who were ungodly and sinful, but most members of the society were as well. Thus the moral revamping had to be done from the ground up. Their strategy was to build a nucleus community, a miniature society of believers who would act out the true life of Islam. This was to be a genuine alternative to the sinful ways of Egyptian society at large. Establishing this model community was the first step in RHF strategy. After its completion, this Islamic community of believers would grow in numbers and in spiritual and material strength. When it had reached a certain point the true believers would march onward to bring down the already crumbling sinful social order of Egypt at large.

Like MA, RHF invoked a precedent from early Islam to justify this strategy. The Prophet Muhammad, surrounded and harassed by the *jahiliya* people of Mecca, fled to Medina with a few followers and established there the first true Muslim community.[33] As the community gained in strength it engaged the infidels of Mecca in a series of battles *(ghazwat)* and finally conquered Mecca itself.[34] It is this model that was being emulated by RHF.

Thus while the MA showdown with the regime followed logically from its strategy, the RHF confrontation did not. In other words, MA timed its move and planned a coup d'état in April 1974. But RHF, when it clashed with the regime in July 1977, had no such intention in mind. RHF had a long way to go in implementing the first component of its strategy—building the model community of believers somewhere in the unpopulated hinterland on the edge of the Nile Valley.[35] They

had barely begun. It is safe to accept RHF's explanation that their move in July 1977 was basically a tactical one forced on them by the regime. As they tell the story, the security forces arrested several of their brothers and detained them without trial, thus going far beyond what the law allows. The rest of RHF demanded that their brothers be tried or set free. When their pleas were ignored, they kidnapped the former minister of endowments and kept him as a hostage, saying they would hold him until their brothers were freed. The deadline set by RHF passed without a positive response from the government. They felt they had to kill their hostage as they had warned they would.

In their confrontation with the Egyptian government both MA and RHF lost many of their cadres, either in actual shootouts or in subsequent executions.[36] The remaining leaders were put behind bars.

In retrospective evaluations of what had happened, we found some significant differences between the two groups. MA members were split down the middle: one half said that the strategy was correct, that their failure was due to tactical reasons,[37] and that they would do it again; the other half came to believe that the strategy was incorrect and the tactics impatient and adolescent. The latter members are the ones who now feel deep guilt for not having listened to Siriya and for having dragged him into an action that claimed his life and those of several innocent brothers.

Members of RHF who were interviewed expressed unanimous approval of their strategy. They regret that the government did not respond to their ultimatum, which triggered the subsequent tragic events. They would do the whole thing all over again.

Almost all members of both groups perceived their present prison sentences as an integral part of their struggle *(jihad)*, as God's test of their faith and perseverance. None of those interviewed had changed his ideology—the conviction that only Islam ensures a just and righteous society on earth. Some of the MA members, however, defected from the organization and joined RHF in prison. As far as we could infer from the interviews, both movements were still active, though underground. The initial success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, has given them a tremendous boost. At the time our interviews were stopped by the government, the morale of both groups was soaring high. When we drew their attention to the significant doctrinal differences between the Shias and the Sunnis, both dismissed them as inconsequential.

But there were signs of other influences of the Iranian example on the strategic thinking of both groups. The use of popular uprisings as a mechanism to topple the regime was more seriously looked into in late 1978 and early 1979. Until then such organizational weapons were perceived by the Islamic militants as essentially "communistic." Our interviewing was terminated before we could establish whether either or both groups had adopted popular uprisings as a strategic weapon in their fight against the regime. It is worth noting, however, that during 1979 and 1980 a host of Islamic groups began to stage sit-ins as well as

campus and street demonstrations[38]—protest activities similar to those that occurred during the early stages of the Iranian Revolution.

TOWARD AN EXPLANATION

In search of an explanation for the rising tide of Islamic militant movements, we would do well to place the phenomenon in its historical and comparative perspectives.

In modern Arab history, militant Islamic movements have sprung up in several countries—Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Sudan, and Egypt.[39] Most of them have used violence to change the status quo or to repel an external encroachment. Their members were mostly puritanical, fundamentalist, or neotraditionalist.[40] They are to be distinguished from the rising tide of Sufist movements. The latter, although they have revivalist overtones, are basically oriented toward the individual's spiritual rejuvenation and not toward changing the social structure. The militant movements are also to be distinguished from the religious reformism that was attempted by people like Muhammad 'Abduh[41] and from action-oriented but nonpolitical movements like *al-Shubban al-Muslimin*,[42] which was a character-building organization equivalent to the YMCA in the West. Here it may be useful to adopt a typology that looks simultaneously at the locus of change and the amount of change sought by the movement.[43] Some Islamic movements aim at changing the individual as a means of reforming society; others aim primarily at society as the locus of change. Some movements seek partial change; others seek total change in whatever locus they believe to be most significant. Both MA and RHF were of the type that aimed at total change of the individual and society, using violence if necessary to bring this about.

In premodern times the Muslim world witnessed several such movements. As early as the middle of the first century of Islam, one such protest movement appeared on the Islamic landscape under the name of the Kharajites[44] (*al-khawarij*, or the 'dissenters' as the most establishmentarian Muslims were to call them). This was to be followed by one Islamic militant movement after another.[45] In all these movements throughout the last ten centuries we find three common components: total change, change of the individual and society, and the use of violence.

Our investigation revealed that in modern times (that is, since 1800) ideological and organizational similarity has existed between MA and RHF on the one hand and the Wahhabi (Arabia),[46] the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt),[47] and the Mujahidin (Iran)[48] on the other.

Since both the Muslim Brotherhood (1928–54) and the Mujahidin (1963–80) are more recent, and since one appeared in the same society (Egypt) and the other in a structurally similar society (Iran), the sociological comparison between them and the two militant groups we studied is theoretically more promising. Our tentative investigation revealed that MA and RHF members tended to be somewhat

better educated and more homogeneous as a group than their counterparts among early members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The parents of MA and RHF members, however, have a social profile similar to parents of Brotherhood members. Neither MA nor RHF had the kind of leadership that could navigate its way through the mainstream of Egyptian politics without becoming polluted by it. The Brotherhood, as a result of its more effective leadership, was able to survive much longer (about thirty years), to broaden its social base, to increase its membership (some say to over one million), and to organize at the grassroots level.

The Brotherhood kept a low profile politically until the early 1940s and did not use violence until the late 1940s and early 1950s. In other words, it had more than ten years to develop organizationally before its first confrontation with the regime. Neither MA nor RHF had such a long organizational evolution. In internal control of membership there was more similarity between the Brotherhood and MA than between the Brotherhood and RHF. The Brotherhood never demanded of its members the kind of insulation and absorption that RHF insists upon.

In comparing MA and RHF with Iran's Mujahidin, we found similarities with regard to age, educational background, rural and small-town background, and class affiliation. Organizationally, there were also significant similarities, especially between MA and the Mujahidin. Both resorted to violence early on as a means of toppling the regime. Both believed that society was ripe, that the regime was vulnerable, and that an example had to be set (propaganda by deed).

Ideologically all four groups subscribe to Islam and believed that the implementation of the Shari'a would be the fundamental solution to all existing societal ills. None of them had detailed operational plans or action programs to implement once in power. All had a primary social commitment to the poor (*al-mustada'afin fi-l-ard*, 'the meek of the earth') and to social justice. All perceived their foreign enemies as Western capitalist imperialism, Marxist communism, and Zionism. They perceived local political regimes in their area as explicit or covert allies or by-products of one or more of the external enemies of Islam. In brief, all four militant groups were ideologically hostile to any external encroachment (economic, military, political, or cultural) on Dar al-Islam. Any outside influence is termed "imperialism" and considered inimical to Islam. The most apparent of the three archenemies of Islam at a particular point in time is usually the one that receives the harshest attack. Thus the enemy is Israel (and Zionism) at all times and for all four movements. It was Britain for the Brotherhood in the 1940s. It was the Soviet Union for MA and RHF in Egypt during the 1960s and early 1970s. It was the United States for the Mujahidin in the 1960s and 1970s and for MA and RHF in the 1970s.

If such similarities exist between past and present militant Islamic movements in Egypt or between contemporary movements in countries like Iran that are structurally similar to Egypt, then we must move a step forward toward an explanation. What common

structural features existed in all three situations—Egypt's past (1930s, 1940s), Egypt's present (1970s) and Iran's present (1970s)? If we can put a finger on common underlying structural forces, then we are that much closer to an explanation. Are these militant Islamic groups the only ones whose ideology and actions challenge the present social orders? If not, what other groups and ideologies do so and why have they not made similar headway? Again, answers to these questions would advance an explanation as to why Islamic movements and no others at this time carry the banner for change.

As to the first set of questions it seems that all four comparable Islamic movements (MA, RHF, Brotherhood, and Mujahidin) have grown primarily out of the middle and lower sectors of the new middle class;[49] they are of recent rural background, experiencing for the first time life in huge metropolitan areas where foreign influence is most apparent and where impersonal forces are at maximum strength. There seems also to be, in each case, an acute national crisis intertwined with social and psychological frustration. In Egypt in the 1930s there was the Great Depression and its aftermath, combined with the feeling that the earlier national struggle for independence had come to a halt before the signing of the 1936 treaty with Great Britain—a treaty that fell short of national expectations. The events of the 1940s—the war, increasing influx of foreign troops, soaring migration from rural areas to serve the war efforts of the Allies, rising inflation, immediate postwar unemployment—all contributed to widespread social discontent. That was the decade during which the Brotherhood enjoyed its greatest expansion and organizational strength. The middle and lower-middle classes were most adversely affected by the socioeconomic and political developments of the 1930s and 1940s. And sure enough, they were the most responsive to the call of the Muslim Brotherhood.[50]

Iran in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed developments of a similar nature to those of the 1930s and 1940s in Egypt: frustration of the national struggle (the crushing of the Musaddaq movement), increasing foreign (especially American) presence and influence, massive migration from rural to urban areas, and soaring inflation. In Egypt during the late 1960s and the 1970s there was a national defeat (1967), followed by an increasing foreign presence (Russian, then American), hardening of the social and political arteries of the country (as upward mobility and political participation significantly diminished), soaring inflation, and dim future prospects for the youngest and brightest members of the middle and lower-middle class.

What we argue here is that a sense of national crisis, accompanied by a class factor interacting adversely with personal aspirations have been common structural features surrounding the rise of the four movements. The national crisis in all four cases has something to do with foreign encroachment. The class factor in all cases has to do with collective status incongruity (that is, strong achievement motivation, with justified high aspiration, yet little economic and political opportu-

nity). In all four cases the middle and lower-middle classes felt this incongruity most sharply. The individual biography element sensitizes the confluence of both the national crisis and the class incongruity in a highly anomic, impersonal setting—the big urban centers.

It may be argued, however, that the combination of factors (national crisis, class incongruity, and individual anomie) could lead individuals to join non-Islamic movements. In fact this is quite possible. The social profile of those who join radical leftist movements seems quite similar to that of Islamic militants in all four cases.[51] The only significant difference in profiles, at least in the case of Egypt, is a preponderance of rural background among Islamic militants, compared with a preponderance of urban background among leftists. It is evident that both Islamic and leftist (including Marxist) ideologies provide a persuasive intellectual response to the issues of national crisis, class malaise, and individual alienation. The question remains why, in Egypt and the Arab world, people with roughly the same social profile have flocked into militant Islamic movements more readily than they have into leftist or Marxist groups?

Without more data and proper statistical controls than we have, this question cannot be satisfactorily answered. However, we submit that at least four factors in recent years have tilted the balance in favor of Islamic groups over their leftist or Marxist counterparts.

The first factor is the ability of the ruling élite to dismiss leftist and Marxist opposition as atheists or agents of a foreign power (usually the Soviet Union) bent on destroying Islamic and authentic national heritage. With the mass media nearly fully controlled by the government, such charges are repeated daily, enabling the élite to crush these leftist elements with impunity. It is much harder to use the same propaganda weapon against groups proclaiming Islam as their ideology, especially when those groups are avowedly opposed to foreign influence—Soviet, Western, and Zionist.

The second factor has to do with recent historical setbacks suffered by quasi-socialist experiments in Egypt and the Arab world. Even though Egyptian socialism was reasonably effective, Nasser's crushing defeat in the 1967 war was blamed on his entire system, including his socialist policies. The Soviet Union was equally blamed for letting the Arabs down in that war. Thus socialism, Marxism, and the Soviet Union have gradually acquired negative reputations. They were tried, so it is claimed, and they did not solve Egypt's problems.

The third factor has to do with the deep-rootedness of Islam in the entire Middle East. In Egypt particularly people are said to be quite religious. There is a positive sociocultural sanction to being religious. Even the most avowed liberal or leftist secularist regimes in the area find it necessary and expedient to invoke Islam when they try to institute any major new policy.[52] The point is that for any militant Islamic movement, half its task of recruiting members is already done by socialization and cultural sanctions in childhood. The other half of their task is merely to politicize consciousness and to discipline their re-

cruits organizationally. For a Marxist movement, the task must be three times harder: it involves eradicating negative cultural stereotypes of Marxism, teaching its precepts, politicizing, and organizing.

The fourth factor is the strong sense of communion that Muslim groups provide for their members. As we have seen, the typical recruit is usually of recent rural background, a newcomer to an impersonal city. Abu-Lughod found that in an earlier time relatives and fellow villagers who may have preceded him would offer the rural newcomer a soft landing in the city.[53] This mode of adjustment still exists for some. But for an increasing number of migrants such adjustment mechanisms may not be there. In such cases the militant Islamic groups with their emphasis on brotherhood, mutual sharing, and spiritual support become the functional equivalent of the extended family for young people who have left theirs behind. In other words, the Islamic group fulfills a de-alienating function for its members in ways that are not matched by other rival political movements.

CONCLUSION

In the absence of a credible, secular national vision, and effective means to repel external encroachment, Islamic movements exert a strong attraction. To enhance the present and future socioeconomic prospects of the middle and lower classes, and to galvanize the imagination of the educated youth and give them a sense of being essential parts of a grand design, Islamic militancy offers the alternative. To their credit, Egypt's middle classes have given the benefit of the doubt to some other secular alternatives: a liberal experiment (1922–52), a nationalist–socialist experiment (1952–70), and a quasi-liberal, quasi-autocratic regime (1970–80). These experiments all seem to have fallen short of fulfilling their promises. It may be argued that none of those experiments was allowed to run its full course or that one of them (Nasser's regime, 1952–70) was aborted by foreign powers. Such arguments may very well be valid on the formal level. But history seldom operates as a neutral laboratory for societal experiments. Thus, a fact of Egypt's modern history is that with the mounting troubles of each secular alternative, the appeal of Islamic militancy grows until it becomes a tidal wave. The last such cycle was stemmed by the 1952 Revolution, which addressed itself to most of the national and socioeconomic issues bedeviling the middle and lower classes. It was only when Nasserism seemed to have run out of steam in the late 1960s that Islamic militancy began its present resurgence.

Two sets of factors will decide the future of Egypt's Islamic militancy. The first has to do with the ability of the present regime or another secular alternative to address itself to the issues discussed above (independence, social equity, and a credible vision for the future that enlists the commitment of educated youth). The second set has to do with other regional models. An effective secular alternative may not readily appear in Egypt but in a neighboring country, and

yet may appeal to middle-class educated youth. However, the most salient regional effect on the future growth of Islamic militancy in Egypt and elsewhere is likely to come from the Iranian Revolution. Its success in dealing with the host of global, societal, and individual issues discussed in this paper would enhance Islamic militancy. Its failure, especially from within, and without foreign intervention, would set back Islamic militancy. The vision of establishing an Islamic social order has dazzled the imaginations of all Muslims for ages. But it usually becomes a passionate craving during national crisis or in the aftermath of a humiliation at the hands of the outside world. The Islamic vision will never be cut down to its proper size until it is tried at least once. This is why the Iranian Revolution is uniquely significant for the present and the near future.

NOTES

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1. See for example *Time* magazine, 15 Jan. 1979, "The Crescent of Crisis"; in other stories on Iran the same theme, the resurgence of Islam, was central (see *Time*, 17 Feb, 26 Feb., 26 Nov., and 3 Dec. 1979); *The New York Times*, 2 June, 23 Nov., 9 Dec., 13 Dec. 1978, 7 Jan. and 11 Dec. 1979. *The Guardian* (London) featured a special report on Islam (Dec. 1979) and several articles on 26 Jan. and 23 July 1977, and an article by Martin Woolacott, "New Politics of the Muslim World," 22 Nov. 1979.
2. Zbigniew Brzezinski is reputed to be fond of these terms. Recent scholarly treatment of resurgence of Islam includes Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam," *Commentary*, Jan. 1976, p. 3949; John A. Williams, "A Return to the Veil in Egypt," *Middle East Review*, vol. 11, no. 3, spring, 1978, pp. 40–55; R. S. Humphreys, "Islam and Political Violence in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria," *Middle East Journal*, 33, winter, 1979, pp. 1–19; Israel Altman, "Islamic Movements in Egypt," *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, winter, 1979, pp. 87–108; Hrair Dekmejian, "The Anatomy of Islamic Revival and the Search for Islamic Alternatives," *Middle East Journal*, 34, winter, 1980, pp. 1–12.
3. See, for example, Manfred Halpern, *Politics of Social Change in the Middle East* (Princeton. N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963). A native Arab, Western-educated scholar Hisham Sharabi echoes the same thesis about the decline of Islam. In 1966 he wrote, "In the contemporary Arab world, Islam has simply been by-passed .... The decline of Islam in the twentieth century as an organized institutional force capable of exerting direct influence on society and the state cannot be explained or accounted for by a simple or unitary diagnosis." Sharabi then lists the factors that contributed to the decline of Islam. See his article "Islam and Modernization in the Arab World," in J. H. Thompson and R. D. Reischauer, eds., *Modernization of The Arab World* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1966), pp. 26–27.
4. For a critical discussion of the limitation of the Orientalist approach see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
5. Writing some thirteen years later and taking note of what is happening in Iran and elsewhere, Hisham Sharabi, for example, wrote in 1977 that "Islamic conservatism is at present the dominant ideological force in Arab society." See his "Islam, Democracy and Socialism in the Arab World," in M. C. Hudson, ed., *The Arab Future: Critical Issues* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1979), pp. 95–104.

6. The reference here is to the countrywide urban uprising on 18 and 19 January 1977, following an announcement that the government in effect would end the state subsidies of a number of essential consumer items (such as rice, flour, cigarettes, and sugar), thus raising their prices by 30 to 50 percent. The rioting and clashes with the police left an estimated seventy-nine people dead and about eight hundred injured. The rioting subsided by 20 January after the government retracted its economic measure and restored the subsidies, declared martial law, and called in the army to enforce a curfew. See *al-Ahram*, 19, 20, 21 January 1977; also *Arab Reports and Records* (henceforth ARR), 16–31 Jan. 1977, p. 35.
7. Interior Minister Sayid Husayn Fahmi announced on 20 January 1977 that the authorities had "uncovered a plot to burn Cairo," as reported by Middle East News Agency (henceforth MENA) and quoted in ARR, 16–31 January 1977, p. 35. Public Prosecutor Ibrahim al-Qalyubi announced on 26 January that "two hundred suspects have been arrested and are being questioned by the security forces for being linked with subversive groups—namely the Egyptian Communist Labor party, the Revolutionary Current and Eighth of January organizations," ARR, 16–31 January 1977, p. 35. Then on 30 January Prime Minister Mamduh Salim repeated the same accusations in the People's Assembly, adding that the National Progressive Unionist party, one of Egypt's legitimate parties but one that is leftist and Nasserite, "had involved itself shamefully in this abominable national crime," *al-Ahram*, 31 January 1977.
8. The Egyptian cabinet on 26 January 1977 issued an order banning all demonstrations and strikes, *Le Monde*, 27 Jan. 1977.
9. The group calls itself Gama'at al-Muslimin (the Muslim Group), but the security forces and the mass media call it al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra group ('Repentance and Holy Flight' [RHF]). After initial resentment of this imposed name, members of the group began gradually to adopt it as their own.
10. The estimated number of those killed in shootouts was six, and those injured in shootouts and explosions numbered fifty-seven, ARR, 1–15 July 1977. Eventually all top leaders of RHF as well as some 620 members of the group were arrested, of which 465 were to stand trial before military courts, *al-Ahram*, 21 July 1977.
11. See especially Sadat's statements in interviews published in the Cairo weekly *Uktubir*, 18 and 25 December 1977.
12. The original Wafd party was established in 1919 as a result of a popular uprising in that year. The founder and leader of the party until 1928 was the Egyptian nationalist Saad Zaghloul. The party continued under the leadership of his successor, Mustafa al-Nahhas, as a grassroots majority party until it was banned along with all other parties in 1953 by the new revolutionary regime. During 1977 some of the survivors of the old Wafd began attempts to resurrect the party. The initial rallying of many young and prominent intellectuals took Sadat's regime by surprise. In 1978 the regime was to resort to legal, constitutional, and plebiscite maneuvers to ban several of the leaders of the New Wafd from political life. In mid-1978 the party decided to dissolve itself rather than function without its prominent figures, namely Fu'ad Sirag al-Din and Ibrahim Farag.
13. See Sadat's speech at Alexandria University, *al-Ahram*, 27 July 1977.
14. *al-Ahram*, 20 April 1974, reported that eleven people were killed and twenty-seven wounded when the group, henceforth MA, attacked the Technical Military Academy on 18 April 1974.
15. See for example Humphreys, "Islam and Political Values"; Dekmejian, "The Anatomy of Islamic Revival"; Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt," *mem.* (April, 1980); Ali Dessouki, "The Resurgence of Islamic Movements in Egypt," *mem.* (1979).
16. *al-Da'wa*, unlike most Egyptian opposition publications, never veiled its outright disapproval. The reader can easily see the escalation of its criticism of

the whole Sadat 'peace strategy,' starting with its issue of December 1977 and continuing through 1979.

17. An example of the use of one incident as a pretext for an all-out crackdown on Islamic groups was the government's arrest of members of two other religious groups in the aftermath of the confrontation with RHF. Thus according to *Uktubir* magazine, 28 August 1977, security authorities had arrested 104 members of an extremist religious group calling itself *Jund Allah* ('Soldiers of God'). Two days later *al-Ahram* reported, 30 August 1977, that "security police had arrested eighty of the leaders of a group called *Jihad* ('Holy Struggle') in Alexandria." No violent showdowns were reported, but the media alleged that the two groups were preparing and plotting an attack on the state and its citizens.
18. *al-Khawarij*, or Kharajites, were a group of early Muslim dissidents who sought strict adherence to Islamic egalitarian and pious principles as they saw them. They disapproved of the behavior and action of the fourth Guided Caliph 'Ali, as well as that of his challenger Mu'awiya. The Kharajites fought both at one time and never consented to the central authority of the Umayyads in Damascus or the Abbasids in Baghdad. The mainstream Sunni establishment consider the Kharajites heretics. The term has now come to be used in describing any group that the established political and religious authority perceives as threatening the 'unity' of society by rebelling. For a concise account of the evolution of Kharajites in history see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), pp. 167–80.
19. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. One of its avowed principles was the creation of an Islamic society through the application of the Shari'a. It gradually grew until it became one of the largest mass movements in Egypt during the 1940s. For a detailed account of the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood see Ishaq Musa Husayni, *The Moslem Brethren, the Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements*, trans. from Arabic, (Beirut: Kayat College Book Cooperative, 1956); Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Moslem Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).
20. These were later revealed to us by members of the two groups themselves. The honesty tests were designed to see if we were consistent and reliable. Different militants would ask us at various times the same questions about ourselves or other matters and then compare our answers.
21. The 'security checks,' as the militants later told us, put members of the research team under surveillance for several weeks. When they told us the kind of things they knew about us (including some very personal information), we were quite impressed but also somewhat frightened by their intelligence network.
22. The veiling that the militants demanded of the female members of the team varied widely. Some militants insisted on complete covering of the body, including the face. Others were satisfied with long, maxi-type dresses with full sleeves and with a covering for the hair.
23. President Sadat's most violent attack on the Iranian Revolution and the Ayatollah Khomeini came in a long television interview on 25 December 1979 (his birthday), which was reported fully in *al-Ahram* the following day. Among other things, he described Khomeini as a "lunatic madman . . . who has turned Islam into a mockery." In the same interview Sadat renewed his invitation to the exiled Shah to reside in Egypt, an invitation the Shah accepted in March 1980.
24. See articles already cited: Mitchell, Husayni, Humphreys, Altman, and Dekmejian.
25. See Sadat's speech before Egypt's People's Assembly, *al-Ahram*, 16 May 1980, in which he proposed a constitutional amendment to appease the Muslim groups but in which he insisted on separation of religion and state.
26. Husayn al-Dhahabi, who was kidnapped and assassinated by RHF, was a typical example of the establishmentarian *'ulama'* of al-Azhar. While a minis-

ter of religious endowments and religious affairs, he mounted blistering attacks on militant groups, calling them misguided. In that he echoed the line of the ruling élite toward these groups.

27. Sheikh 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq especially was condemned by the militants for his famous book, *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* ('Islam and the Foundations of Governance'), in which he advocated a secular theory of state.
28. See *al-Ahram*, 7 July 1977. For more details about those arrested and their backgrounds see *al-Ahram*, 7–20 July 1977.
29. This kind of proposition is to be found, for example, in Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper, 1951); *The Ordeal of Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); *Reflections on the Human Condition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). An exponent of similar arguments is Hadley Cantril, *The Psychology of Social Movements* (New York: Wiley, 1941); *The Politics of Despair* (New York: Basic Books, 1958).
30. Most of the RHF enterprises were small in scale and in an embryonic stage at the time of the group's showdown with the government. These enterprises included bakeries, bookshops, candy making, and vegetable gardening.
31. It was such attempts to penalize former members that first drew government attention to the potential strength and danger of RHF. See *al-Ahram*, 7 July 1977.
32. The saying of the Prophet is addressed to all Muslims: "Whom of you sees a repugnance *[munkarun]*, he must remove it with his hands: if unable, then by his tongue; and if unable, then by his heart, and that is the least the pious can do."
33. For details on this early period of Islam, consult any of the standard references on the history of Islam, the Arabs, or the Middle East. See for example, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966); S. C. Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1958); Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1950). The flight from Mecca to Medina marks the first day of the first year of the Islamic calendar.
34. This strategy by the Prophet Muhammad is explicitly discussed by Fazlur Rahman in *Islam*, pp. 18–29.
35. As those RHF members reported it to the research team, "The group debated several places to start its new community of believers." The sites included Yemen, Libya, the Sudan, and several spots in Egypt. Two sites were actually used by RHF. One was in Minya governorate in Upper Egypt. The second and more important was in the desert strip between Ma'adi, Ma'asara, and Helwan, south of Cairo. The group however, never moved entirely to either site.
36. Three MA leaders (Salih Siriya, Karim al-Anaduli, and Tallal al-Ansari) and five RHF leaders (Shukri Mustafa, Mahir A. Bakri Zanati, Ahmad Tariq 'Abd al-'Alim, Anwar Ma'mun Saqr, and Mustafa A. Ghazi) were sentenced to death. All but one (Tallal al-Ansari, whose sentence was reduced to life imprisonment) were actually executed on 9 November 1976 and 19 March 1978. Of the other ninety-two MA members tried by the state security court, twenty-nine were found guilty and sentenced to varying penalties (eight to life imprisonment; seven to fifteen years; eight to ten years; and six to four years). Of the 204 RHF members who were tried, thirty-six were found guilty (twelve received life sentences, six got ten years with hard labor, and the remainder received sentences varying from five to ten years). *al-Ahram*, 1 December 1977.
37. MA members who held this contention claimed that one member of the group who was part of the plan betrayed them by informing the state security forces of the intended plot to overthrow the regime. Curiously enough the informant was not taken seriously for several hours, and that enabled MA to implement the first part of its plan successfully—that is, the occupation of the Technical Military Academy. By the time they were to move on to the Arab Socialist Union building to carry out the second part of the plan, the authorities had

already acted on the information and had started a siege and a counterattack on the academy, *al-Gumhuriya*, 21 April 1974.

38. A typical example of this was reported in *al-Ahram*, 1 April 1980, quoting the minister of the interior's account to the People's Assembly of a student conference that began in a mosque in Asyut, then was converted into a march across the city protesting Sadat's invitation to the Shah to reside in Egypt and also protesting the peace treaty with Israel. Islamic groups in other universities staged similar demonstrations.
39. For an account of these movements see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, pp. 193–254: and Zeinab al-Bakry, "Mahdiyya Movement in the Sudan with a Comparison of Wahhabis and Sanusiyya," unpublished M.A. thesis in sociology, American University in Cairo, 1977.
40. For the meaning of 'puritanical,' 'fundamental,' and 'neotraditionalist,' see John A. Williams, "A Return to the Veil in Egypt," pp. 51–55; Stephen Humphreys, "Islam and Political Values in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, winter, 1979, pp. 1–19; Ali Dessouki, "The Resurgence of Islamic Movements in Egypt," *mem.*; Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam," *mem.* In oral remarks to the author, Professor Nikki Keddie suggested that the term 'neotraditionalists' describes most of the militant Islamic movements of recent times (such as the Wahhabis and the Iranian Revolution).
41. Muhammad 'Abduh (1854–1905), an Egyptian religious thinker, was a disciple of Jamal al-Din Afghani, but he was significantly less militant in the latter part of his life. He is credited with serious attempts to modernize Islamic thought by showing that Islam is consistent with reason, science, and adoption of modern technology. Among his famous writings is *Rasa'il al-ghufran* ('Messages of Atonement'). For more on Muhammad 'Abduh see Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).
42. *al-Shubban al-Muslimin*, literally Muslim Youth, was established in 1927 in emulation of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The founders, headed by a retired army general, Salih Harb, meant it to be a nonpolitical, social, and athletic organization.
43. This typology is an adaptation of that proposed by David F. Alberle in *The Peyote Religion among the Navaho* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966). Alberle's typology entails only four types (two by two) along the two axes of locus and amount of change.
44. The Kharajites *(al-Khawarij)* were the first dissident group in Islam: see note 18. One fundamental tenet of the Kharajites is insistence on the unity of faith and deeds. Thus a tyrant ruler is not to be obeyed, nor can there be obedience to a sinful command. This goes against the mainstream Sunni doctrine, which would tolerate a tyrant for the sake of preserving the unity of the *umma*. See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, pp. 168–70.
45. Other militant Islamic movements in premodern times include the Shia, on and off from the end of the first Islamic century to the present. One of the Shia sub-sects, the Isma'ilis, staged a revolt and a socioreligious campaign under the leadership of Hamdan Qarmat, after whom they came to be called Qarmatiyas *(al-Qaramita)*. He established a post near Kufa (A.D. 890) in Iraq and levied taxes on his followers. This process of taxation was soon replaced by a communist-type society (common ownership of all objects of general utility in the name of the imam). See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 176. Bernard Lewis surveys many modern militant Islamic movements and argues that some two hundred such cases were primarily resistance movements against foreign intrusion, *The Return of Islam*, pp. 17–20.
46. The Wahhabi movement began in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Its founder, Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, a puritanical fundamentalist, allied himself politically with the house of al-Sa'ud of Najd in central

Arabia. Together they began a drive to unite Arabia and to institute fundamentalist Islamic institutions. Despite the ups and downs of this alliance, vis-à-vis the outside world, it persisted and finally triumphed politically in the early decades of the twentieth century. Saudi Arabia today is a culmination of this effort. For more details on the Wahhabis, see John S. Habib, *The Ikhwan Movement in the Najd: Its Rise, Development and Decline* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970); Harry S. Philiby, *Saudi Arabia* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968).

47. The data on the Muslim Brotherhood are derived from R. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood*; I. M. Husayni, *The Moslem Brethren*; and Christina Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964).
48. Our data on the Mujahidin in Iran are derived from Ervand Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movements in Iran 1963–77," in *MERIP Reports*, 86, March/April, 1980, pp. 3–15. The social profile of the Mujahidin could be inferred from the characteristics of those who died during the struggle against the Shah's regime. Of some eighty known cases, thirty were college students, five teachers, fourteen engineers, ten professionals and office workers, ten women (including housewives), two shopkeepers, two workers, one clergyman, and six of unknown occupational background.
49. The concept of the new middle class has come to refer to modern-educated university graduates, professionals, or salaried employees. For a full discussion of this social formation see Halpern, *Politics of Social Change*, pp. 51–78.
50. For substantiation and elaboration of this point (that is, the appeal of the Brotherhood to the lower-middle class in Egypt) see Mitchell, *Brotherhood,* and Ayubi, "Political Revival."
51. The social profiles of those who joined militant leftist movements in both Iran and Egypt were similar to those of their Islamic counterparts in several respects. For a substantiation of this contention in Iran see Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movements," especially table I and table II, p. 5. For information about militant Egyptian leftists we relied on published lists in *al-Ahram* and ARR of over two hundred alleged members of communist organizations (for example, the Egyptian Communist party, Communist Labor party) who have been charged, tried, or sentenced during the period from January 1977 to April 1980. Of 198 whose occupations were identified, sixty-eight were students, sixty-one were professionals, twenty-eight were workers, twenty-five were middle- and lower-level civil servants, eight were peasants, and eight were small shopkeepers.
52. On this point see R. S. Humphreys, "Islam and Political Values."
53. See Janet Abu-Lughod, "Migrant Adjustment to City Life: The Egyptian Case," *American Journal of Sociology*, 67/1, July, 1961, pp. 22–32.

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2

An Islamic Alternative in Egypt

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND SADAT

1981

The rising interest in Islamic militant movements in the West may be fully justified on grounds of 'national interest.' However, there is a creeping danger of 'neo-Orientalism' in the garb of Western social science. One possible outcome is the mystification of Islamic militancy by Western writers. Concepts of the 'revival,' 'resurgence,' and 'return' of Islam may be quite misleading. The tendency to lump together all Islamic movements in all countries of the so-called 'crescent of crisis' glosses over the historical specificities and the socio-economic particulars of these countries. Premature generalization must also be guarded against.

Five years ago, in cooperation with an Egyptian research team, I began a study of the Islamic movement in Egypt. The major events in Iran had not yet unfolded.[1] What motivated our research was the spreading appeal of the movement among Egyptians in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Violent confrontations between Islamic groups and the regime of President Sadat had been increasing in number and scale after 1972.

This study reports on our analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood alternatives to the major policy orientations of the Sadat regime. The choice of the Muslim Brotherhood of all Islamic groups in Egypt was motivated by several considerations. First, as a movement, the MB is not new on the Egyptian political landscape.[2] It was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abdu, and Rashid Rida in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were its ideological antecedents. This historical continuity should dispel current Western views which see Islamic movements everywhere as if they spring out of nowhere. Second, the MB movement has been oriented toward a total change of society. Its underlying premise is that there is no separation between religion and state. Islam is state and politics. In this sense the MB is to be distinguished from Sufi and retreatist movements. The latter are individual-oriented, seeking human salvation by minimum involvement in societal affairs and maximum spiritual unity with God. Equally, the MB is to be distinguished from establishment religion symbolized by al-Azhar. The latter has, since the nineteenth century, been under state control, and hence has acted as a formal legitimizer for successive ruling élites. The MB seeks maximum involvement in worldly affairs and a total change of the

social order. Third, this group has proved to be tenacious. It was cracked down on three times—once in Royal Egypt and twice by the Nasser regime. Each time its organization was decimated, and observers wrote its obituary. But it has always reemerged. Fourth, the MB has been a grassroots movement, with an appeal mainly to the lower-middle class. This class has in turn been the fastest growing in Egypt. The Nasser-led July Revolution appealed to the same constituency. In the 1950s and the early 1960s, it pulled the rug out from under the MB and appropriated the support of most of this constituency. After the 1967 defeat of the Nasser regime at the hands of Israel, the Brothers (along with other Islamic groups) began to win back the support of an increasing segment of Egypt's middle classes. The semiformal comeback of the Brotherhood was symbolized by the reappearance of their hitherto banned monthly magazine, *al-Da'wa* (the Call).

This latest comeback had President Sadat's tolerance, if not outright blessing. Earlier in the 1970s Sadat had felt that Islamic groups, including the Brothers, would counterbalance the combined opposition to his regime (mounted by Nasserite and leftist elements). Evidence suggests that Islamic groups welcomed this tacit alliance and indeed delivered their part of the bargain during the first four years of Sadat's tenure in office in return for a greater margin of freedom of expression and organizational movement.[3] However, as early as 1972, some Islamic groups began to agitate against the regime. In 1977, one of them, the Islamic Liberation Organization, attempted a coup d'état; the attempt failed and resulted in the execution of its top leaders and the jailing of most of its members. In 1977, another group, *Gama'at al-Muslimin* (also known as *al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra* [Repentance and Holy Flight]), had a violent showdown with the Sadat regime.[4] While the leaders of the two groups had at one time been members of the MB, evidence suggests that they were splinter groups with no organizational links to the Brothers. They were acting on their own when the confrontations took place. Thus the MB was spared prosecution and allowed to continue under the watchful eye of the regime's security apparatus.

Some Egyptian observers maintain that the MB is tolerated by the regime so long as it confines itself to Islamic preaching, stays out of politics, refrains from reviving its underground militia, and avoids criticism of President Sadat and his policies.[5] In its first year of publication, *al-Da'wa* seems to have observed most of these conditions. However, as soon as President Sadat announced his celebrated visit to Israel in 1977, the MB, through *al-Da'wa*, launched the most vehement of attacks on Sadat's "peace initiatives." In the following four years, the MB expanded its attacks to all of the regime's major policies.

The pillars of the MB's Islamic ideology have been much written about. This paper will focus on that part of the ideology which represents an integrated critique of Sadat's regime.

Sadat, one of the original leaders of the 1952 Revolution, succeeded President Nasser upon his death, in September 1970. Despite

proclamations of loyalty to Nasser's ideological line, President Sadat began a gradual shift on several major issues right from the start. In the early years he was slow and quite cautious. Between 1971 and 1977, he managed to remove most loyal Nasserites and leftists from power, consolidated his own position, and waged a successful war against Israel.[6] The latter boosted his popularity, and he felt much freer to assert his own world view. In addition, there was less of a need to invoke Nasser's symbols and slogans as legitimizing mechanisms.

By the mid-1970s, Sadat's internal and external policies were adding up to a new ideological orientation. It was so substantially different from that of his predecessor that some observers have dubbed it as the 'de-Nasserization' of Egypt.[7] Sadat's new orientation consisted of four major policies: the Open Door, democratization, alliance with the West, and conciliation with Israel. The Open-Door Economic Policy *(Infitah)* is a set of measures intended to encourage the private sector of the economy.[8] Egyptian, Arab, and foreign investors have been given literally a free hand to operate. Law no. 43/1977 (and subsequent laws) granted individuals and corporations several privileges, including tax exemptions and reduced or no customs duty on imported capital equipment. In addition, they did away with currency restrictions, allowing investors to transfer their capital and profit out of the country, and floated the Egyptian pound vis-à-vis other hard currencies. Most of these privileges are denied to the public sector as well as to private sector enterprises initiated before 1974. In the following six years, investments under Law 43 totaled $3.1 billion, 65 percent of which was contributed by Egyptians, 19 percent by Arabs, and 16 percent by foreign capital.[9] The Open-Door Economic Policy is an integral part of the regime's economic orientation, which seeks to reincorporate Egypt in the world capitalist system, encourage free competition, and adopt modern technology. Several foreign banks were allowed to open branches in Egypt for the first time since 1961. The regime's new economic orientation coincided with the massive infusion of US economic aid.[10]

As part of the democratization policy, a permanent constitution was ratified in 1971.[11] As in most constitutions of Western democracies, it stipulates the standard basic civil and human rights for all citizens. A multiparty system replaced the previous one-party system (the Arab Socialist Union) in 1976. The government declared an end to arbitrary arrest and detention of citizens without due legal process. Censorship of the press was said to have been lifted, and the restriction on foreign travel was greatly relaxed. Three small opposition parties were permitted to operate, with at least two of them having their own newspapers.[12] These and other liberalization measures are hailed by the regime as ushering in a new era of rule by law, and fulfilling the sixth principle of the July Revolution—the establishment of "sound democracy." Sadat and the state-controlled mass media credit this "democracy" and "rule of law" with making

Egypt an oasis of stability and security in the midst of a chaotic despotic Arab world.[13]

In his third major policy change, Sadat has systematically moved closer to the West and away from the Soviets. The strain in Egyptian–Soviet relations began as early as 1971; taking a sharp turn for the worse when fifteen thousand Soviet advisors were expelled from Egypt in mid-1972. With the exception of a brief fence-mending during the October War of 1973, the deterioration continued. Sadat began to openly criticize the Soviets as early as 1974, a criticism which escalated to outright political and ideological attacks in subsequent years. A friendship treaty between the two countries (signed in 1971) was unilaterally canceled by Sadat in 1976.[14] He has persistently accused the Soviets of obstructing Egypt's war efforts before 1973 and its peace efforts after 1973. The Soviets have been blamed for destabilizing his regime and are accused of expansionist designs in the Middle East and Africa.[15] Simultaneously, Sadat has strengthened Egypt's economic, diplomatic, and military ties with the United States. The latter's economic aid to Egypt has totaled about $6 billion since 1974, and since 1977 arms sales have been on the increase.[16] Sadat now considers the United States a "full partner" in his quest for peace, economic development, and warding off Soviet threats to the region.[17] The American link is more than economic and strategic. Egypt's official mass media hails the United States as a model to be emulated in democracy, development, land reclamation, and technological progress. American films and TV shows appropriate about 30 percent of Egyptian TV's prime time, ranging from "I Dream of Jeannie" to "Dallas."

The fourth pillar of Sadat's new orientation is conciliation with Israel. As early as February 1971 he began to declare his willingness for peaceful coexistence.[18] But his gestures were not taken seriously by Israel or the United States until the 1973 October War. In the midst of that war (16 October) and while his forces were still performing well, Sadat renewed his bid for a peaceful settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict. The following six years witnessed a series of bold moves toward reconciling with Israel, culminating in Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979. The latter provided for "normalization" of all relations between the two countries in return for an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Egyptian territories (Sinai), and a pledge to grant the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza political autonomy, ending Israeli military rule and initiating a process which, during a five-year transition, would allow the Palestinians some sort of self-determination. Sadat's quest for peace is hailed by his mass media as the way to spare endless bloodshed, achieve reasonable Arab objectives through negotiation, and bring prosperity to the long-sacrificing Egyptian people.

These four major policies are quite interlinked. Together they constitute the genesis of Sadat's vision of Egypt's present and future.

Obviously he has thrown Egypt's lot with the West, not only in terms of global alignment, but also in terms of a cherished mode of socio-economic–political development. Rebuilding a strong, prosperous, peaceful, democratic Egypt would make it a model for the entire Arab world to emulate. Assessing the credibility and potential success of Sadat's dazzling vision, as well as its effects on the Arab world, is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that domestically, all organized opposition forces have expressed misgivings—ranging from reservation on one or more of the four major policies to a total rejection of the fundamental pillars of Sadat's entire vision. Most of the Arab states have likewise expressed varying degrees of opposition to Sadat's foreign policy. The conciliation with Israel was the one issue which resulted in nearly a total break between Sadat's regime and all Arab governments.

The Muslim Brotherhood has emerged as the most vocal critic of Sadat's vision. His alliance with the West and conciliation with Israel have received the brunt of the MB's frontal attacks since 1977. The Open-Door Economic Policy and the process of democratization have appropriated relatively less of the MB's attention. But apprehension vis-à-vis these two policies is equally unmistakable.

The MB critique has invariably contained alternatives to each of Sadat's major policies. Such alternatives are presumably grounded in the MB's understanding of Islam. We rely primarily on the two monthly periodicals *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam* ('Perseverance')[19] which speak for the MB in particular and the other Islamic groups in general. Each periodical has a circulation of about a hundred thousand inside Egypt.

The MB emphasizes two operational principles—one strategic and one tactical. The strategic principle is an assertion of its longstanding call for the establishment of an Islamic social order on the basis of the *Shari'a*. The present order in Egypt (and other Muslim countries) is deemed "non-Islamic" and, therefore, "corrupt." It is responsible for all societal ills and must be brought down. The tactical principle is the assertion that the MB is seeking its strategic objective in Egypt nonviolently through consciousness-raising of the Muslim masses and advice to "Muslim" rulers. The MB's leadership has detached itself from other Islamic groups which engage in violent confrontation against the Sadat regime. With this tactical caveat, which is reiterated in nearly all issues of *al-Da'wa*, the MB has not spared any occasion to highlight the corrupt practices of the regime, often without mentioning Sadat by name.

On the regime's socioeconomic policies, the MB has, since 1976, gradually pointed out their ineptness and injustice. As early as the fourth issue of *al Da'wa* (October 1976), the MB openly attacked the regime's failure to deal effectively with Egypt's problems of education, housing, transportation, and inflation. The dramatic food riots of January 1977[20] gave the MB an opportunity to launch its sharpest attack on Sadat's regime since the MB's latest reappearance on the

political landscape. In a long editorial, *al-Da'wa* (February 1977) mocked the government for blaming the widespread riots on the communists. It asserted that the riots were merely "normal symptoms of a more profound and prevalent disease afflicting various sectors of our people. . . . The ruling party and its deputies [in parliament] are isolated from the people who rejected the latest economic measures [which triggered the riots]. . . . Those who burned and looted public and private property would have not done so had they felt any sense of belonging to this country or sharing in its wealth. . . . They are poor, humiliated, and bitter."[21] In the same issue, Omar al-Tilmisani, the editor, wrote under the provocative heading, "Should Muslims Go Hungry, No One Is Entitled to Wealth":[22]

> These tremendous fortunes of the few, with its opulent display for everyone to see, and which the rich are spending conspicuously on luxurie . . . could it not have eased the hardship of the needy. . . . If we do not take from the rich to spend on the poor are we not violating the dicta of the Holy Quran? Are we not subjecting our nation and government to God's wrath? ... The Infitah would have helped in solving part of our serious crisis had it been devoted to productive enterprises rather than luxury items which aggravate the hardship. And these embezzlements which we read about every day could have been eradicated if the pure and the faithful were in charge.

A third, longer article on the riots entitled, "Don't Hide Your Heads in the Sand,"[23] gave the MB's blunt evaluation of the regime's socioeconomic performance. The author, A. H. Abu al-Fatah, contended that the government's announcement of terminating subsidies of some basic commodities (which sparked off mass rioting) was the straw which broke the camel's back. Like other MB spokesmen, he declared that what happened on 18 and 19 January "could not have been a plot engineered by the communists. The latter may have tried to ride the wave of public anger but they are not the ones who provided the underlying reasons."[24] He then outlined the longstanding factors responsible for the show of mass outrage: (1) The rampant social injustice: "The ruling class in Egypt has appropriated for itself unprecedented privileges. The average citizen perceives a glaring inequality. . . . Many of the rent laws serve the vested interests of the few at the top. . . . Injustice breeds all sorts of social ills—bribery, nepotism, graft, and sabotage of human morality."[25] (2) The excessive "dreamselling" and inept performance. The gap between expectations and achievement "sharpened the contradictions created by injustice. The suffering of the average citizen has intensified due to the multiplicity of problems in his daily life—transportation, food, clothing, and housing. Prices have skyrocketed with every sunrise, while incomes of the majority have remained the same or declined. . . . Meanwhile the state and the class which controls authority are building luxury housing and live conspicuously."[26] (3) The neglect of religious education and absence of pious models among the rulers:

> The declared slogan of the regime of "science and religious faith," *(al-'ilm wa-l-iman)*, has remained empty. People kept waiting for its implementation by rulers but to no avail. Instead poisonous corruption is enveloping new generations which do not know anything about Islam except the name. Then came the so-called Infitah only to compound the previous ills. It has initiated a new wave of compromising our honor, land, and wealth under the pretext of attracting foreign investors and tourists.[27]

The MB's attack on Sadat's socioeconomic policy is nearly identical with that of the secular left. Even its prescription of alternatives is not much different. The latter include self-reliance, nationalization of major utilities and production enterprises, and taxation of the wealthy through *zakat* for welfare subsidy of the poor's basic needs. The MB adds an eradication of usury or interest on savings and lending of all kind.[28]

On the question of democratization, Sadat's second major domestic policy, the MB is equally skeptical. Not that it does not welcome democracy, but rather because it perceives the regime as halfhearted in this regard. In an editorial following the 1980 US presidential election, *al-'Itisam* wrote, under the heading, "A Slap to Those Who Pride Themselves with False Election Results in the Arab–Islamic World,"[29] that for Jimmy Carter to lose while in power should be a lesson in real democracy. Egypt's rulers, the editorial continued,

> do not really recognize or respect our people. Nevertheless, they go through the empty exercise of plebiscites. The result is always 99.9 percent. The last American election is not only a lesson but it is also a slap in the faces of those who take pride in election results which falsify the will of our people. These rulers deceive no one but themselves. God the Great says "God strikes falsity with truth. Superficiality fades away but that which benefits the people remains on earth ... and so God demonstrates his wisdom."[30]

Sadat's regime has often counterattacked by contending that the very fact that opposition groups, including the MB, are allowed to exist and to have their press is evidence of the regime's commitment to democracy. Such groups should therefore be grateful.[31] Both *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam* have repeatedly rejected this on the grounds that freedom of organization or expression is not a grant bestowed by the ruler but a birthright stipulated by Islam and should be exercised and guarded by the community of believers (the *umma*).[32]

The MB has joined other secular opposition groups in resisting the regime's attempt to curb or retract what is already perceived as limited democratic freedoms. Cases in point include the government-sponsored law on shame *(al-'ayb)* and press regulation. Both *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam* opened their pages to secular critics of the regime on these and other issues.[33]

Probably the most vehement debunking of what the MB considers Sadat's facade democracy is in the area of civil rights. On the tenth anniversary of the 15 May 1971 'Corrective Revolution,' which the

regime celebrates annually, *al-Da'wa* published an article entitled "The Corrective Revolution is in Dire Need of Correction."[34] The author, Muhammad Abd al-Quddus, listed the major violations committed by the regime against its opposition, especially Islamic groups. In the first decade of Sadat's Corrective Revolution, which declared "rule by law" as one of its principles, Muslim citizens were harassed, arrested, and detained unlawfully by the regime's security forces. The author listed major collective arrests involving several thousand persons who after detention and interrogation were found innocent by civilian courts. The article provided extensive data on those suspected by Sadat's regime to be Islamic militants. For example, incidents of collective arrests spanned the entire country, from Alexandria to Aswan. The data also revealed the youthful composition of suspect Islamic groups, most of whose members were college and secondary school students.[35]

All in all, then, the MB considers the regime's claims of democracy and respect for law to be a thin veneer hiding a despotic authoritarianism. The alternative offered by the MB is the *shura* system as stipulated by Islam. In essence, that system is a democracy based on a truly free election of the *umma* representatives who are bound in their legislative functions by rules of God *(Shari'a)*. As to the head of the *umma* itself, he must be similarly chosen by the believers, must adhere strictly to the Shari'a, and consult with the representatives of the *umma*. The ruler is held accountable and is removable from office should he violate the Shari'a or jeopardize the interests of the *umma*.[36]

More immediate demands of the MB are the expansion of all civil and political freedoms to their maximum limits, including the right to form a political religious party.[37] Under the current law on national unity, such a right is impermissible on the grounds that it threatens national unity since it would exclude citizens of other religions.[38]

The antagonism of the MB toward Israel long predates Sadat's conciliation policy with the Jewish state. The MB was probably the first organized political group in Egypt to draw attention to the creeping dangers of Zionist designs in Palestine in the 1930s. It was also the first Egyptian organization to send volunteers and military assistance to the Palestinian resistance in the 1940s, several months before Arab armies were dispatched to fight the newly created state of Israel (May 1948).[39]

To the MB, Israel is one of the three archenemies of Islam—the other two being the never-ending crusade of the West *(al-salibiya al-gharbiya)* and communism. In most of its literature, the MB alleges that the Jews are behind both Western imperialism and international communism. There is a tacit alliance among all three to usurp or weaken the homeland of Islam *(Dar al-Islam)*.[40] A content analysis of *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam* in the last four years shows the persistence of this line. In no single issue of both periodicals would the reader fail

to encounter two or three articles about the Jewish danger or the atrocities of Israel.

Understandably, therefore, President Sadat's peace initiative has come under bitter attack from the MB right from the start. The MB was the only credible political force in Egypt which dared to take Sadat on, at least for the first year following his trip to Jerusalem. It was this open attack which emboldened other opposition groups to gradually come out against Sadat's policy of conciliation with Israel.[41]

The MB arguments revolve around the impossibility of peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state. It is an aggressor villain on the abode of Islam. It is directly or indirectly behind the major calamities befalling Muslims everywhere, especially in Palestine. It has desecrated Muslim shrines in the Holy Land. As an "evil" it must be eradicated. These assertions are echoed in nearly every issue of *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam*. A sample of article titles illustrates the point: "To Avoid Another Andalusia," "Israel Present and Future," "Begin: We Fight Therefore We Exist," "Jabotinsky: The Old Testament and the Sword are Our Gifts from God,"[42] "Peace à la American–Jewish Mode,"[43] "Israel Present and Future: In Order that the Arabs do not Forget,"[44] "Muslims of the World, Liberate the Captive [Aqsa] Mosque," "Jews and False Claim to Civilization," "Zionist Danger to our Economy," "Economic Cooperation with the Zionist Enemy by Force," "Israel Has Destroyed 388 Palestinian Villages Since 1948,"[45] "Loss of Palestine is a warning for Muslims to Go Back to Their Religion," "How to Turn Around the War Between Us and the Trinity of the Crusaders, Zionists, and Marxists," "Zionism in America Leads Writers and Publishers to Smear the Arabs and Islam," "International Zionism Controls Major TV and Radio Networks in the United States," "The Jews are Behind the Usury System in the World,"[46] "What Awaits Muslim Egypt after Normalization with the Jewish State?," "A Destructive Jewish Cultural Invasion of Muslim Egypt," "The Normalization Process Destroys Egypt's Links with Islam," "Know Your Enemy, Weizman Speaks: Land, Migrants, Settlements, and Jewish Culture Are Pillars of the Zionist Scheme,"[47] "Normalization or Penalization?," "Hidden Invasion and Not Normalization," "A New Slap in the Face for the Egyptian Negotiator," "When Do We Carry the Banner of *Jihad* to the Promised Land?"[48]

The MB condemned Sadat's visit, the Camp David Accords, and the Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty[49] and has sustained its vehement attack on Israel and the Sadat regime at a time when no other nationwide publication dared to even express polite reservation on Sadat's peace initiative. The MB often prefaces its attack with the assertion that it is speaking for Islam and that it fears no one but God. The following is a typical example. Under the heading, "Treaties Based on Usurpation are Illegitimate," *al-'Itisam* wrote:[50]

> Whatever Islam does not allow we must reject and struggle to eradicate. We fear no one but God. Prisons and hanging do not frighten us. Dying for the sake of God is our dearest aspiration. From this

vantage point we consider the shameful peace produced at Camp David and the treaty with the enemy of God, the Prophet, the believers, humanity, and justice to be an illusion. We believe from the depth of our hearts that it is a false peace. The Zionist existence on the land of Muslim Palestine at the expense of the Palestinian people is totally illegitimate. It is based on usurpation and pillage. Any treaty with a usurper, therefore, is itself false. Any outcome based on falsity is itself false and must be done away with sooner or later. As the treaty [with Israel] is false, so are all its consequences. Normalization, therefore, is not only religiously condemned but it also entails rampant dangers to Muslim Egypt. It is a disguised Jewish invasion of the Egyptian society which hitherto was the fortress of Islam. Egypt has been the last line of defense against the three enemies of Islam: Western crusaders, communists, and Jewish Zionists.

What alternative does the Muslim Brotherhood provide to Sadat's policy regarding Israel? In a four-article series, *al-Da'wa*[51] concludes that war is the way to liberate Palestine. After a detailed analysis of the Arab–Israeli conflict, and more than three years of Sadat's quest for a "just peace," *al-Da'wa* reminds its readers that the whole exercise is utterly futile as it had predicted all along. It says:[52]

War is the authentic means stipulated by God in his Holy Book for those whose rights, honor, or wealth have been encroached upon by an aggressor. God addressed the faithful, "fighting is your lot despite its hardship." Muslims do not seek fighting if they can protect or restore their rights through other means. If the aggressor ceased his aggression "and opted for peace then opt for peace and rely on God." Thus when we assert that war is the authentic means for liberating Palestine it is because for more than half a century Israel and its Western supporters have neither ceased their aggression nor showed any real inclination for peace. Israel has usurped the land of Palestine and expanded beyond. It has continued to build an awesome destructive arsenal including nuclear weapons. It has terrorized the Arabs, divided their ranks, plotted against their unity, and sapped their resources. . . . The Arabs have tried the West to see if it would help them restore their rights but to no avail. If anything, the West has persistently supported Israel with money and weapons to attack more and expand more. There is no hope for the Arabs out of this predicament except through fighting.

The MB outlined the necessary measures for war preparations. They include: (1) strengthening the internal front through the institution of justice and eradication of social and moral ills; (2) the formation of a broad Arab–Islamic front with plans for serious contribution to the actual battle with volunteers, arms, money, and diplomatic pressure; (3) severing ties with and terminating the interests of those who support Israel with money, arms, and diplomacy; and (4) sustained military, economic, and spiritual mobilization of Arab material and human resources for a protracted war until victory.[53]

Finally, the MB has been no less vehement in its criticism of Sadat's global alliance with the West. His break with the Soviets was heartily

endorsed initially. But as he began tilting toward the West, the brunt of the attack shifted from communism and the USSR to the West and the United States. As noted earlier, a close analysis of MB literature over the years reveals that its perceived foreign enemies are the West, Zionism, and communism. But the relative weight of its attack has been conditioned by whichever of the three enemies is gaining a stronghold in Egypt. Thus, while the Soviets were the major target in the 1960s and early 1970s, now it is the West and Israel.

The MB's antagonism toward the West is predicated on several grounds: the West's continuous encroachment on Dar al-Islam and the humiliation of Muslims, its support of Israel, its secular influence which dilutes Islamic culture, and its alleged role in the persecution of the MB in Egypt during the 1940s and 1950s.[54]

The West is perceived as still carrying its crusade against the Muslim world which started in the eleventh century. Until the Second World War, Great Britain was seen as the spearhead of this crusade. Since then the spearhead has been the United States. In a recent issue of *al-Da'wa*, its editorial says:[55]

> The United States is the leader of the international crusade and neo colonialism. The Muslim world in general and the Arab region in particular are considered a prime target for American designs because of their energy resources, strategic location, and tremendous markets. The United States would not permit competition from any rival in its quest to monopolize the pillage of Islamic wealth. It may allow other partners a small share so long as they enhance the strategic objectives of the American imperialist crusade against Islam and the Muslims. . . . The United States implements its scheme through both its own CIA and client Muslim rulers, who sold out their religion, country, nation, and honor. The price for selling out is for these client rulers to stay in the seats of power. . . . They have been instruments for the American Zionist to consolidate Israeli aggression in Palestine. The latest chapter of this American game is to concoct a false peace among the Arabs and the Jews. The American intention is to get the Arabs to shift their hostility away from Israel to a hostility toward the Soviets. True, they are all enemies. . . . But to frighten Arab rulers by an impending Soviet threat is only a trick to make them accept a false peace with the Jews, the archenemies of God, his Prophet, and the faithful. How naive our rulers would be if they swallow the bait.

The message of the MB is an unequivocal denunciation of President Sadat's current policy of drumming up support for an alliance with the United States to ward off the "Soviet threat."[56] To appreciate the daring assault of the MB on this particular pillar of Sadat's quest, suffice it to observe that none of Egypt's three daily newspapers have carried a single criticism of the United States since 1976. The United States is always portrayed most positively in Egypt's official media.

The MB's alternative to Sadat's allegiance with the West is nonalignment vis-à-vis the two superpowers. The only alignment which Egypt must engage in is with the rest of the Muslim world. As a

matter of fact, the MB perceives Egypt as having a divine mission in forming and leading such an alliance of all Muslims against the three archenemies of the faith. The MB firmly believes that such an alliance would have enough spiritual, ideological, and material resources to be both self-sufficient and victorious.[57]

The Muslim Brotherhood publicly attacks Sadat's regime with unusual vehemence. Why has the regime tolerated the MB so far, when it has not allowed other secular opposition groups to go that far? Is the MB capable in the foreseeable future of taking over power, say in the Iranian mode?

As to the first question, Sadat's regime is understandably annoyed with the MB. Sadat is embarrassed by the escalating attacks of *al-Da'wa* and *al-'Itisam*, but is in a predicament as to how to deal with them. He staked his quest for legitimacy on his "democratization" drive and on adopting religious faith *(al-iman)* as one of the regime's slogans. The MB has so far refrained from acts of violence of the kind committed by other fringe Islamic groups on its right and its left. Thus for Sadat to ban the MB or its publications would expose him as both antidemocratic and anti-Islamic. Nevertheless, he has not been totally helpless vis-à-vis the MB. On several occasions he counterattacked Muslim (and Christian) fanaticism and insisted that religion and politics should remain separate.[58] He does not allow the formation of religious political parties. When one of the fringe Islamic groups engages in violence, the regime uses the occasion as a pretext to go on an all-out 'overkill' against all Islamic groups.[59] Another regime tactic is occasional appeasement of the MB. Recently, for example, Sadat appointed two Muslim figures (one a former MB member and the other an MB sympathizer) to prominent state positions.[60] A special committee in the People's Assembly (Egypt's parliament) has been formed to look into the adoption of the Shari'a as a framework for Egypt's legal system.

Judging from recent MB political writings, Sadat's appeasement tactics seem to have little or no effect in toning down its attacks. In fact, following the above-mentioned appointments of the two MB sympathizers, *al-'Itisam* made a point of warning them against cooptation by the regime, and alerting its readers not to be duped by such tokenism.[61]

It has been much easier for Sadat's regime to discredit and outmaneuver its secular opposition. The latter have been subject to sustained attacks by his mass media. The leftist opposition has been labeled as "atheists," "communists," "importers of foreign ideologies," "agents of Moscow," "clients of rejectionist Arab States," and so forth. The secular liberal and conservative opposition (for example, the New Wafd party) is labeled "reactionary," "counterrevolutionary," and "former bootlicker of the king and British."[62] It has been difficult to engineer a credible smearing campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood.

The second question, the MB's viability as a political alternative to Sadat's regime, is far more complex. The MB's past history suggests its

tremendous potential to become a grassroots mass movement. Its Islamic ideology has cultural legitimacy, its political stands on most current issues are in tune with both Egyptian patriotism (independence and nonalignment) and the Arab national struggle (anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism). The public image of Muslim Brothers is one of brilliant fighters in Palestine (1948) and against the British in the Suez Canal (1950–51). It is also one of martyrdom and long suffering for their beliefs. But this positive image is tainted in the public mind by the MB's former acts of violence and assassination. Its persistent verbal vendetta against Nasser alienates part of Egypt's public opinion. But it is safe to say that at present the MB's public image is generally positive. This is evidenced by the landslide victories of MB supporters in student elections of nearly all Egyptian universities. Historically, the latter have been a sensitive barometer of Egyptian public opinion.

Organizationally, no one can speak with authority on the MB's actual membership. Also little is known about its internal chain of command, middle leadership, or cadres. The MB's top leaders who appear, speak, and write publicly are all leftovers from the pioneer generation which worked with the founder, Hassan al-Banna. Most of them are in their sixties. Thus it appears that the MB is a movement of thousands of youngsters in their twenties led and inspired by figures forty years their seniors. In this respect, there is at least one external similarity with the Khomeini-led Iranian Revolution. Other militant Islamic groups on the Egyptian scene do not display this generation gap between leaders and followers. It is hard to assess the future implication of this structural feature. Another structural weakness is the absence of a charismatic leader. Since Hassan al-Banna's death (February 1949), no single leader has emerged as a towering figure. In this respect Egypt's militant Islamic movement does not have a Khomeini as yet.

The MB at present has opted for nonviolence, and indeed has condemned violent fringes of the Islamic movement. We believe this to be tactical and provisional—until the movement rebuilds and consolidates itself. Its leaders seem to have learned well from past premature confrontations with the regime. They have also learned to engage in alliances and coalition-formation with other opposition groups—including secular liberals and leftists. This is evidenced by (1) allowing the latter to write in their periodicals on issues of common agreement (such as opposition to the peace treaty with Israel, alliance with the United States, and in defense of democracy and civil rights); (2) coordination with other opposition groups in local, trade union, and professional syndicate elections—usually against government-sponsored candidates.

In the short run, the MB will, along with other opposition groups, continue to discredit the Sadat regime by exposing the futility of its policies, the blind alley of its vision, and the domestic corruption of its practitioners. The objective is to isolate the regime and undermine its public support.

The regime is vulnerable on all four major policies discussed above. Despite the oversell propaganda approach, the yield of each policy has been modest, and most of the benefits have gone to the upper stratum of society. The middle and lower classes have been hard-pressed by rising inflation (averaging 20–30 percent annually). The reappearance of opulent wealth enjoyed by the few has intensified the feeling of "relative deprivation" among them. The growing Western, especially American, influence is touching the raw nerve of Egyptian patriotism and is perceived as a new threat to their cultural authenticity. The slow progress in restoring Palestinian rights and the relentless display of Israeli arrogance have dampened the enthusiasm of those Egyptians who initially supported Sadat's peace initiative.

These vulnerabilities give the MB the opportunity to discredit the regime and to expand the base of its own popular support. Should Sadat's major policies continue their meager yield, the MB would be in a position to drop its nonviolent tactics and stage a popular showdown with the regime. In so doing we believe the MB will act in a coalition with other secular opposition forces. Every time it was hit in the past it had acted alone, or was isolated by the regime beforehand.

President Sadat, however, is not going to be a sitting duck, waiting passively for all that to happen. He has shown an amazing tenacity and much political skill. Obviously he will do everything he can to make his major policies work. He will continue to sell his dazzling vision of Egypt—the strong, prosperous, stable democracy, reveling in peace. He will resort to coercion and repression if necessary before he ever considers stepping down.

In conclusion, the Islamic alternative spearheaded by the MB is there and it is quite viable. Its actualization, however, depends on (1) the ability of the MB to rebuild itself, produce a charismatic leader, and forge an alliance with other opposition groups; and (2) the conclusive failure of two or more of the regime's policies.

NOTES

1. For the research findings on two Islamic militant groups, see: Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 4, vol. 12, December 1980.
2. For a full historical and sociological account of the Muslim Brotherhood, see: Ishaq Musa Husayni, *The Muslim Brethren: The Greats of Modern Islamic Movements*, trans. from Arabic (Beirut: Khayat College Book Cooperative, 1956); Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Moslem Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Rifa'at al-Sa'id, *Hasan al-Banna* (Cairo: Madbuli, 1978).
3. For a penetrating analysis of the MB's comeback and its alliance with Sadat's regime, see: Salah Issa, "The Muslim Brotherhood: Tragedy of the Past and Problem of the Future," an introduction to the Arabic translation of Mitchell's *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) (Cairo: Madbuli, 1977).
4. For a fuller account of these confrontations, see: S.E. Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups," pp. 3–15; M. Abd al-Qudus, "The Corrective

Revolution Needs Correction, Beware Freedom Is Endangered," *al-Da'wa*, no. 61 (1-14 May 1978), pp. 44–45.

5. See *al-Taqaddum* ('progress'), a bulletin published in Arabic by the Progressive Unionist party (PUP) (a coalition of leftists, Nasserites, and Arab nationalists), 19 January 1981.
6. See Sadat's own account of these events in his *al-Bahth 'an al-zat* ['In search of identity'] (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Misri al-Hadith, 1978), pp. 218–81.
7. See F. Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1979; "The Struggle For Egypt's Soul," *Foreign Policy*, no. 35 (Summer 1979), pp. 3–30.
8. For a full discussion of the Open-Door policy, see Gouda Abdel Khalek, "The Open-Door Economic Policy in Egypt: A Search for Meaning, Interpretation, and Implication," Herbert Thompson, ed., *Studies in the Egyptian Political Economy*, Cairo Papers in Social Science, 2, no. 3 (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 1979), pp. 74–100.
9. *al-Ahram al-iqtisadi*, no. 635 (16 March 1981), p. 437.
10. For more of recent American aid to Egypt, see: S.E. Ibrahim, "Superpowers and the Arab World," *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1981.
11. For a full account and analysis of this point, see: 'Ali Dessouki, ed., *Democracy in Egypt: Quarter of a Century After the July Revolution*, Cairo Papers in Social Science, 1, no. 1 (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 1978).
12. The three legal opposition political parties are the Progressive Unionist party (PUP) (left), the Socialist Labor party (SLP) (left of center), and the Liberal party (LP) (right of center). Another opposition party, the New Wafd, operated for a brief period in 1977 and 1978. A special law was enacted by the government barring some of its top leaders from political activities on grounds of "corrupting public life" before the July Revolution. The New Wafd dissolved itself in protest. Both the Labor and Liberal parties issue weekly newspapers (*al-Sha'b* and *al-Ahrar*, respectively). The Progressive Unionist party (PUP) used to issue its own, *al-Ahali*, but due to frequent confiscation by the authorities the party stopped its publication and replaced it with a bulletin for members only called *al-Taqaddum*.
13. See President Sadat's speech in the People's Assembly, 14 May 1981. Cited in *al-Ahram*, 15 May 1981.
14. A full account of why his relations deteriorated with the Soviets is in Sadat's *al Bahth 'an al-zat*, pp. 238–81.
15. See Sadat's speech, 1 October 1981, cited in *al-Ahram*, 2 October, 1981.
16. S.E. Ibrahim, "Superpowers and the Arab World."
17. Sadat's speech, 1 October 1981, in which he publicly announced Egypt's plans to grant the United States military facilities to defend Arab and Muslim countries against Soviet threats.
18. Sadat himself asserts that this was the genesis of his peace initiative, but that no one took him seriously at the time. See his *al-Bahth 'an al-zat*, pp. 235, 282–328.
19. Officially, *al-'Itisam* is issued by the Shari'a Society not the Muslim Brotherhood. It has been in existence for the last forty-four years. Until the mid-1970s it was primarily devoted to theological matters. In the last five years, however, it has become quite vocal on current political issues. More importantly, it has followed the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological line. Its contributing writers are almost the same as those of *al-Da'wa*.
20. The reference here is to massive demonstrations on 18 and 19 January 1977, touched off by a government declaration of new economic measures ending subsidies on basic food items (bread, sugar, and cooking oil). The demonstrations spread to nearly all major Egyptian cities. In several urban centers demonstrations turned into violent rioting and looting. According to the official count, seventy people were killed as a result of clashes with police and security forces, and several hundred were injured. Things did not calm down until the government retracted all the new economic measures, declared martial

law, and called the army in to keep law and order. Critics of the regime call the events of those two days the "Popular Uprising." President Sadat calls them the "Uprising of the Thieves." In this paper we simply use the more neutral descriptive phrase of "food riots." For details on those events see, *al-Ahram*, 19, 20, 21, and 22 January 1977; and *Newsweek*, 23 January 1977.

21. *Al-Da'wa*, February 1977, pp. 2–3.
22. ibid., p. 7.
23. ibid., pp. 16–17.
24. ibid., p. 16.
25. ibid.
26. ibid., p. 17.
27. ibid.
28. On the MB's socioeconomic orientation, see, Sayid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (in Arabic) (Cairo, 1954); Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Islam and Socialist Doctrine* (in Arabic) (Cairo, 1991); *Islam and Economic Conditions* (in Arabic) (Cairo,1952). More recently on the same point see, Mustafa Kamal Wasfi, "Islamic Economic System," *al-Da'wa*, October and November 1976; Youssef Kamal, "Lights on Islamic Economics," *al-Da'wa*, May 1981, pp. 19–21.
29. *al-'Itisam*, December 1980, p. 4.
30. ibid.
31. See Sadat's speech in the People's Assembly, 14 May 1981, reported in *al-Ahram*, 15 May 1981.
32. These meanings are reflected in Ahmad Hussayn, "Words to a Generation of Rulers," (in Arabic) *al-'Itisam*, December 1980, pp. 16–17; "A Crisis of Generosity ... or a Crisis of Men: The Knights Who Resigned from the Labor Party," (in Arabic) *al-'Itisam*, February–March, 1981, p. 20; A.H. Abu al-Fatuh, "About the System of Governance in Islam," (in Arabic) *al-Da'wa*, January 1977, pp. 16–17. For an example of earlier MB writings on the topic, see: Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Islam and Political Despotism* (in Arabic) (Cairo, c.1950).
33. See, for example, Omar al-Tilmisani, "Religion, Politics, and Panics," *al-Da'wa*, January 1977, pp. 2–3.
34. *al-Da'wa*, May 1981, pp. 44–45.
35. ibid., p. 45.
36. A.H. Abu al-Fatuh, "About the System of Governance in Islam," pp. 16–17.
37. Salah Shadi, "Is it a Conspiracy Against Islamic Shari'a?" *al-Da'wa*, January 1977, pp. 6–7. The author takes Sadat to task for rejecting the founding of an Islamic political party. On other demands of the MB, see: M. Abd al-Qudus, "The Corrective Revolution Needs Correction," p. 45.
38. See Sadat's speech to the annual congress of the National Democratic party (NDP), 1 October 1980, reported in *al-Ahram*, 2 October 1980.
39. See the MB's own account of its role in, "The Jihad of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine," *al-Da'wa*, April and May issues, pp. 38–40, respectively.
40. These meanings are reflected in the following articles: M.R. Khalil, "To Avoid Turning the Islamic World into Another Andalus," and M. Shams al-Din al-Shinnawi, "The Real Reasons Behind Liquidating the Muslim Brotherhood," *al-Da'wa*, October 1976, pp. 14–15, and pp. 5 and 57, respectively. In the latter, the author contends that the 1948 and 1954 liquidations were upon orders of the West and Israel to lackey Egyptian governments. The third liquidation (1965) was upon orders from Moscow. The subheadings of al-Shinnawi's articles were: "Moshe Dayan Declares in America: Israel Does not Fear Arab States but the Muslim Brotherhood," "Ambassadors of Four Western Countries Made the Liquidation Decision and Nukrashi [Egypt's prime minister] Implemented It," "Abdel-Nasser Stood on the Kremlin Steps and Declared a War of Extermination Against the Brotherhood to Satisfy the Atheist State [USSR]."
41. The leftist Progressive Unionist party (PUP) has been equally vehement in attacking Sadat's peace initiative. But the regime easily dismissed the PUP as

being communist, following Moscow's orders. The Socialist Labor party initially supported the initiative with reservations, but in February 1981, it withdrew this support and declared its opposition to the peace treaty. See *al-Sha'b*, the SLP weekly newspaper throughout March, April, and May 1981; each issue carried one or two articles explaining the party's decision as well as a sharp criticism of the Sadat policy toward Israel.

42. *al-Da'wa*, October 1976, pp. 14–15, respectively.
43. *al-Da'wa*, February 1977, pp. 58–59.
45. *al-Da'wa*, May 1981, pp. 4–7, 22–23, 37, 50, and 52, respectively.
46. *al-'Itisam*, December 1980, pp. 10–13, 36–41, respectively.
47. *al-'Itisam*, February–March 1981, pp. 22–23, 24–25, 27, 32–33, respectively.
48. *al-'Itisam*, April–May 1981, pp. 14–15, 27–28, 29–30, respectively.
49. See *al-Da'wa* editorials in the issues of December 1977, January 1978, April, May, and June 1978, March and April 1979.
50. *al-'Itisam*, April–May 1981, pp. 28-29.
51. *al-Da'wa* issues of February through May 1981.
52. Fathi Radwan, "War Is the Solution, It is the Way to Liberate Palestine," *al-Da'wa*, May 1981, pp. 62–64.
53. ibid., pp. 63–64.
54. See, for example, M. Shams al-Din al-Shinnawi, "The Real Reasons Behind the Liquidation of the Muslim Brotherhood," *al-Da'wa*, October 1976, pp. 5–57.
55. *al-Da'wa*, May 1981, p. 61.
56. See Sadat's speech on 1 October 1980, reported in *al-Ahram*, 2 October 1980.
57. These contentions are reflected in the following articles of *al-Da'wa*, Salah Abu Isma'il, "Islam is an Imperative," M. Rashad Khalil, "To Avoid Turning the Muslim World into another Andalus," October 1976, pp. 8–9 and 14–15, respectively. Fathi Radwan, "War is the Solution ..."
58. See, for example, Sadat's speeches on 1 and 15 May 1980, reported in *al-Ahram* 2 and 16 May, respectively.
59. See a discussion on this point in S.E. Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups."
60. The reference is to the appointment in 1981 of Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali and Musa Lashin to the positions of deputy minister of religious endowments and deputy of al-Azhar, respectively. See the *New York Times*, 5 April 1981, p. 6E.
61. See *al-'Itisam*, April–May 1981, "Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali and the New Position," p. 25.
62. See Sadat's speeches on 1 and 14 May 1980, reported in *al-Ahram*, 2 and 15 May, respectively.

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Islamic Activism and Political Opposition in Egypt

1995

Islamic activism is currently an issue of great concern both within and outside the Muslim world. Unfortunately the term is overloaded with diverse, and often conflicting, meanings. The confusion is compounded by the inaccurate usage of interchangeable terms such as Islamic 'fundamentalism,' 'militancy,' 'fanaticism,' 'extremism,' and 'violence.' The Western mass media have used these terms as buzz words permeated by excessive fear-arousal. Certain dramatic events in Muslim countries—the Iranian Revolution (1979), the seizure of the Grand Mosque at Mecca (1979), the assassination of President Sadat (1981), the hostage-taking and suicide missions in Lebanon and Israel—have added to both media sensationalism and public fear of Islam and Muslims. There is a real need for clarity in distinguishing among the terms used—and abused—in referring to Islamic activism.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND ACTIVISM

Islamic fundamentalism[1] simply means the belief in the precepts and commandments of Islam as stated in its holy book, the Quran, and as enunciated and practiced by the Prophet Muhammad—known as the *Sunna*. In other words, Islamic fundamentalism is a return to the purest sources of the religion, cleansing it from all the impurities, heresies, and 'revisionisms' which accrued to the faith and practice throughout history.[2]

Believers, that is, fundamentalists, are convinced that adherence to the purest sources will deliver them, their society, and the entire world from all the ills of our time—decadence, corruption, weakness, poverty, and humiliation. In a word, it provides total salvation. Islam, it is claimed, will enable the faithful to establish a perfect social order on earth—one that is virtuous, just, humane, compassionate, free, strong, and prosperous. It is an order that is believed to be far superior to both communism and capitalism. The 'Islamic order' balances the interests of the individual with the welfare of the community; the material with the spiritual; and the imperative of the here-and-now on earth with the commandments of the hereafter in preparation for heaven. "Work for your world as if you would die tomorrow."[3]

Fundamentalists believe that Islam, unlike other religions, has provided not only guidelines for individual living, but also compre-

hensive principles and regulations for all aspects of life—from the interpersonal to the international. Indeed, in those areas which Islam considers important, it even provides detailed codes for human conduct. The penal codes *(hudud)* and codes covering business transactions *(mu'amalat)* are cases in point.

Reinforcing this conviction in the perfection of Islam is not just the deep religiosity of the fundamentalists, but also their reading of old and recent history of the *umma*, 'Islamic nation' or 'community of believers'. The glorious period for them was the seventh century A.D. (the first Islamic century)—when the prophet Muhammad and his four successors, the Guided Caliphs, presided over a society which strictly adhered to the spirit and letter of the Quran and *Sunna*. During that golden age, Muslims not only established a "perfect society" on earth but were also the masters of the entire world. *Dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) was the bearer of the torch of world civilization. The fundamentalist reading of more recent history is that Dar al-Islam has decayed and become vulnerable to Western encroachment, because Muslims have strayed away from their religion—no longer strictly adhering to its purest sources. The road to salvation, therefore, is self-evident.

In fact, the mainstream of fundamentalist thought *(al-salafiya or al-'usuliya)*, as expounded by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abdu in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, espouses a reading of Islam which is far from being extremist. This variant of undamentalism prides itself on being the epitome of moderation. The *umma* is a "moderate nation" *(ummatun wusta)* among all nations. The "straight path" of Islam is a geometric central axis between two extremes.

Fundamentalist Islam is consistent with human nature. It recognizes its instincts and impulses but attempts to refine, sublimate, or moderate them. Politically, it emphasizes a participatory society through a system of *shura*—the community's selection of a ruling council which must consult with others and be held accountable on the bases of *Shari'a*. As such, Islam is consistent with a Western-type democracy—the Holy Quran being the functional equivalent of a divine constitution. There is no priesthood, and hence no theocracy, under Islam. The *'ulama'* are learned men of religion, but they do not constitute a clergy in the Western sense.[4] While rulers may perform some religious functions (for example, leading prayers) and rule according to a divine constitution (the Quran), they are not themselves considered holy, nor do they possess any divine rights. Economically, fundamentalist Islam makes human labor the only legitimate basis of generating and accumulating wealth, and recognizes and protects the sanctity of private property in all spheres, except where it touches upon vital interests relating to the community as a whole (such as water, energy, and other public utilities). It prohibits usury (interests on loans), and production, trading, or consumption of commodities which are considered 'repugnant' by Islam (for example, pork,

liquor, and intoxicating drugs). Socially, fundamentalist Islam considers the family as the basic unit of society, and recognizes that women are equal to, but different from, men. It accepts religious pluralism with differential rights and obligations for Muslims and "Peoples of the Book" (Christians and Jews). While recognizing classes, fundamentalist Islam frowns upon vast class differences and provides several measures to check excessive wealth. It ensures satisfaction of basic needs for orphans, the poor, the disabled, and the aged. Finally, fundamentalist Islam glorifies the human mind, the pursuit of knowledge, and reason, so long as such activities cast no doubt on the existence and the omniscience of God. Thus, today's fundamentalists have no quarrel with modern science and technology, and many of them are in fact students and professional practitioners of science and technology.

Articulated in the above terms, contemporary Islamic fundamentalism can hardly be described as a fanatical ideology. In fact the bulk of today's fundamentalists are quite moderate in both word and deed. While vigorous in the advocacy of their vision, they do not, as a rule, resort to violence. The exception to this statement is the small group we may call, for the lack of a better term, 'Muslim militants.' Today's Islamic fundamentalism, whether at the hands of its pioneers (al-Afghani and 'Abdu) or its mid-century propagators (Hassan al-Banna and Sayid Qutb in Egypt, and Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi in Pakistan), has always emphasized conscience-raising, teaching, and peaceful pressure on rulers to heed the call of Islam. The occasional calls for the use of force have been mainly directed against foreign occupation or Zionism. But even in that respect, fundamentalists were in tune with other secular nationalist and patriotic forces in their respective countries.

While tens of millions of Muslims around the world adhere to fundamentalism, only a fraction of the faithful act upon their beliefs politically—that is, strive to bring about an Islamic order, to restore a 'paradise lost.' These are the Muslim activists, who propagate by words and deeds the fundamentalist vision.

The Islamic activists themselves are not all of one mind. A majority among them have opted for a peaceful, gradualist approach to bring about the desired Islamic order. Their reasoning is that the best way to do so under the present complex circumstances is to demonstrate the practical superiority of Islamic principles in spheres of life where this is possible—including business transactions. However, other activists, a minority to be sure, believe that an Islamic order cannot be brought about through piecemeal reforms and that state power must be seized, forcibly if need be, to implement the true vision of Islam. Hence they resort to violence either defensively or offensively. These are the ones the mass media often focus on; and with whom all fundamentalists and other activists are often lumped.

These militants are symptomatic of a crisis within the Muslim world, rather than being a vanguard of its salvation. Contemporary

Islamic resurgence or activism is a much broader and deeper phenomenon which involves quests for self-assertion, cultural authenticity, national independence, economic development, and social justice. The crisis which Islamic activism is responding to is no different from that facing many societies in the Third World. The fact that Islam is invoked in confronting this crisis is simply a function of the historical and cultural specificity of Muslim societies. This is nowhere clearer than in the area of political discourse to which we now turn, using Egypt as a case in point.

ISLAMIC ACTIVISM IN EGYPTIAN POLITICS

No other major religion was born as "political" as was Islam. It has remained so ever since. As we already indicated, Islam does not separate between this world and the next; the here-and-now and the hereafter; the temporal, the material, and the spiritual. A good Muslim is enjoined to work for the here-and-now as if he would live forever and to work for the hereafter as if he would die tomorrow. Islamic activists in Egypt have taken this commandment very seriously since the 1920s.

The interwar period (1918–38) witnessed the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate (1922), representing the collapse of the last great Muslim empire. This brought with it the sprouting of explicitly (or implicitly) secular-based politics, created by Western-educated élites with liberal orientations; but more often than not, with authoritarian–totalitarian orientations. Though never complete, the separation between state and religion in these new polities alienated a significant number of devout Egyptian Muslims. After their initial shock, the latter organized themselves in what came to be known as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), led by the charismatic Hassan al-Banna.

Since its establishment in 1928, the MB has been the backbone of Islamic activism in Egypt and much of the Arab world. In its sixty-two years of legal, quasi-legal, and illegal existence, the MB has been one of the most potent political opposition groups in Egypt. All attempts to suppress or liquidate the MB have ultimately been doomed to failure. The MB and the Egyptian state have alternated in their use of violence against one another. The two political actors have also had their moments of tenuous 'peaceful coexistence.'

At the risk of oversimplification, it is possible to identify three distinct phases in the life of the MB as a social movement. The first phase, extending from the late 1920s to the late 1940s, was one of advocacy and organization-building. The MB remained fairly small for much of this phase. Only in the 1940s, thanks to the socioeconomic strains accompanying the Second World War, did its membership grow phenomenally.

The second phase, extending from the late 1940s to the 1960s was one of frequent violent confrontations with the state, both in monarchical Egypt (1946–50) and Nassers's revolutionary Egypt

(1954–66). Many of the MB leaders were killed, assassinated, or executed in these confrontations. Many more of its members were jailed and imprisoned.

The third phase, extending from the early 1970s to the present (early 1990s), is one of nonviolent struggle, under Presidents Sadat (1970–81) and Mubarak (1981–90). In this phase the MB's surviving leadership made a conscious decision to give up violence and to carry out its opposition to the regime peacefully. It was this latter decision which caused several splits in the MB. The splinter groups were to extend and continue their violent confrontations with the state and/or society over the last two decades.

Despite their nonviolence, the MB has remained faithful to its avowed principles—that is, setting up an Islamic state, with the Quran as its constitutional foundation, and Islamic Shari'a as its legal foundation. The MB has changed only its methods in pursuing these objectives. Some observers believe the change to be tactical, others believe it to be strategic.

Ten years ago, this author identified the major issues over which the MB opposed President Sadat.5 These included, (1) the Open-Door Economic Policy, (2) controlled democratization, (3) alignment with the West (especially the United States), and (4) reconciliation with Israel. Ironically, these four major policies of Sadat represented a total departure from Nasser's regime, which the MB vehemently opposed. In other words, the MB was on the whole in favor of Nasser's policies but not his politics; hence their violent confrontations. With Sadat it was nearly the exact opposite—that is, the MB were in discord with his policies but in accord with his politics; hence their peaceful coexistence almost until the end of his regime. The break between Sadat and the MB happened in the summer and fall of 1981 when he arrested hundreds of them—that is, on the eve of Sadat's assassination (6 October 1981).

Under President Mubarak, the MB continued its opposition to Sadat's policies insofar as Mubarak continued to condone them. But it is during Mubarak's tenure that the MB has evolved as a viable and effective opposition force. It has done so through a multi-pronged strategy, which includes the following dimensions.

PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS

Though still unable to restore its pre-1954 legal status, or obtain a license as a political party, the MB participated fully in the parliamentary elections of 1984 and 1987. In 1984, the MB joined in a coalition with Egypt's oldest and most liberal–secular party, the Wafd. Under the latter's election lists, the MB managed to win seven seats. In 1987, having switched to a new coalition with two smaller parties, the Socialist Labor party (SLP), and the Liberal party (LP), in what was called the Islamic Alliance, it managed it to win thirty-five seats[6]—that is, five times more than three years earlier. Though still quite a small number out of the total 455 members of the People's Assembly,

the MB deputies made their presence markedly felt by their articulateness and parliamentary skills, which the majority party (the National Democratic party, NDP), or, for that matter, most other opposition deputies, cannot match. The MB has not managed to pass any legislation in full accord with its Islamic ideology, but it has managed on several occasions to influence public policies through the parliamentary platform it enjoys. This is particularly true with regard to the state-controlled mass media, public education, and social affairs. The MB has also managed to shape the agenda of public debate on several issues, even though it rarely wins such debates. Finally, the MB deputies have surprised many skeptical observers by their relative moderation. While continuing the Islamic quest, the MB has made clear that it seeks its objectives via a gradualist approach, that is, the MB does not expect Egypt to turn into an Islamic state over night, not even if they secured a majority in parliament. These and other signals have earned the MB deputies growing respectability even among their most dedicated rivals.

PENETRATING CIVIL SOCIETY

The second prong in the MB nonviolent strategy has been the steady penetration of organizations of civil society, especially professional associations (PAs). In some ways, PAs in Egypt are more crucial than political parties, for, as in many Third World countries, Egypt's political parties are still 'underdeveloped.' Here, the MB and its other Islamic sympathizers have done much better over the last ten years than they did in parliamentary elections. This is well documented in a recent paper by Amani Kandil,[7] in which recent elections in major PAs are analyzed. In the most prestigious PA, the Egyptian Medical Association (EMA), MB candidates have steadily increased their share of members on the executive board in the last decade. In 1986 they managed to secure a majority, and by 1988 they obtained a landslide victory, by winning all seats, except the chairpersonship, which they willfully left to the ruling NDP candidate (Mamduh Gabr). The MB repeated the same scenario in the 1990 EMA elections. With their ascendance in the EMA, membership participation in elections has also increased, as may be seen from Table 1:

Table 1
Membership participation in Egyptian Medical Association elections

	Membership	No. of voters	% voters/ total members
1980	40,000	3,000	7.5
1986	79,000	11,800	14.9
1988	88,000	19,100	21.7
1990	96,000	21,500	22.4

The same trend held in three other equally prestigious PAs—the engineers, university professors, and pharmacists. The case of the Egyptian Pharmacists Association (EPA) is particularly interesting. Since its establishment, the EPA had been dominated by Christian Copts, who are disproportionately attracted to the pharmacist profession. But by the end of the 1980s, the MB had managed to dislodge them from the syndicate board and even the post of chair.

Several factors are advanced by Kandil and others to explain the MB's growing ascendance in PAs. Among these is the preponderance of younger professionals in these associations. About one half of their respective membership graduated in the 1980s—that is, they are under the age of thirty-five. As youngsters, they experienced the traumatic events of Egyptian society since 1967. Many of them had already been recruited into one of the Islamic groups during their secondary school or college years. Beginning their professional careers in the 'Open-Door Egypt' of the 1970s and 1980s, they encountered immense difficulties. Older colleagues were already in control of their respective professions. A young doctor, engineer, or pharmacist would be hard-pressed to find an apartment in overcrowded Egyptian cities to start a practice, much less to live. With the old guard in control of both the professions and their respective associations (which function as trade unions), little was done to help the younger professionals. The accumulated resentment of the latter toward the former has been exploited by the MB.

Equally important in this regard is the fact that PAs have become a freer arena than political parties for sociopolitical discourse. PA elections are far freer and fairer than their parliamentary counterparts, which are widely believed to be unfairly manipulated by the government in favor of the ruling NDP. This belief has been strengthened by a series of court rulings that seem to substantiate this charge,[8] leading many politically-minded professionals to use PAs to express their points of view and vent their frustrations vis-à-vis the government.

Finally, we must indicate that, so far, MB candidates have been winning seats in a situation in which only a small minority turn out to vote in the elections of their respective associations. Taking the EMA again as an example, the turnout of voters in the best of cases (the 1990 elections) was still less than 23 percent of the total membership (21,500 out of 96,000). But out of the minority which turned out, the MB won by obtaining 59 percent of the votes cast, that is, 12,900 votes, which represents only 13 percent of the total EMA membership.

In other PAs where election turnout is over 50 percent (for example, the Bar Association, Union of Social Professions, and labor unions), the MB candidates do not do nearly as well. Nevertheless, the systematic penetration by MB of all PAs has become a cause for alarm to the government and other secular forces alike.

ISLAMIC BUSINESS AND FINANCE

As part of its nonviolent struggle to establish an Islamic order in Egypt, the MB has encouraged many of its own members as well as sympathizers to set up Islamic economic institutions. Helped by many of the MB members who escaped to the oil-rich countries during the Nasser years and accumulated reasonable fortunes, this initiative materialized in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of Islamic banks and investment companies. The essential feature of these economic institutions, as constantly self-proclaimed, is that they are 'usury-free'—in strict observance of a principal dictum of Islamic Shari'a.[9]

The initial success of early Islamic enterprises tempted many non-MB interlopers to follow suit, using the same religious appeal and usury-free slogans for their enterprises. By the mid-1980s, the original, as well as the interloper Islamic entrepreneurs, had amassed substantial deposits from a broad strata of Egyptian Muslims. They gradually began to outstrip the state-owned and other conventional private institutions. Press reports estimated that the volume of Islamic venture capital held by some 180 institutions was between $5 billion and $10 billion in 1987.[10]

It was rumored that the Islamic Alliance, of which the MB is the backbone, received generous donations from these Islamic enterprises to finance its 1987 election campaign. Such rumors added to the belated alarm of the Egyptian government at the growing power of the Islamic financial institutions. In the summer of 1988, the government waged a press and legal campaign against Islamic investment companies. And indeed several of them turned out to be fraudulent—mainly the non-MB interlopers.

Nevertheless, the Islamic economic enterprises have enhanced the MB's quest. They proved to be able to mobilize small savings, give a high to moderate rate of return on investments, and most important of all, provide thousands of jobs to young Egyptians.

SERVICE INSTITUTIONS

The MB and its sympathizers have not confined themselves to profit-making enterprises, politics, or professional associations. A broad range of health and social services are rendered under the catchword "Islamic." Many of these were started by original Muslim Brothers in the 1970s. Among the widespread facilities are the medical services to be found in more than twenty thousand non-governmental mosques. Many have operating facilities for minor surgeries, and quite a few are full-fledged medical complexes.[11] The Islamic clinics charge their clients a nominal or modest fee for a generally better and more compassionate service than their state-run counterparts. Similar educational and other social services are rendered by nonviolent Islamic activists. Often these are located on the premises of non-governmental mosques. They are run on a low-cost overhead basis, and generally provide good quality services given

the donated time and expertise of their volunteer workers. More recently, Islamic economic entrepreneurs have also involved themselves in providing similar services on a graded service–charge basis, according to ability to pay. Thus al-Rayan, the controversial and well-publicized investment company, used to advertise daily for its newly established nurseries, schools, medical clinics, restaurants, and publishing houses.

This strand of Islamic activism has therefore set about establishing concrete Islamic alternatives to the socioeconomic institutions of the state and the capitalist sector. Islamic social welfare institutions tend to be better run than their state–public counterparts, less bureaucratic and less impersonal, if slightly more expensive. They are definitely more grassroots-oriented, far less expensive, and far less opulent than the private institutions created under Sadat's *Infitah* (Open-Door Economic Policy), which mushroomed in the late 1970s and provide an exclusive service to the small elite of the country's population.

Political Islamic activism has thus developed a substantial socioeconomic muscle through which it has managed to baffle the state and other secular forces in Egypt. The Islamic non-governmental organizations are operating within the bounds of Egyptian law but independent of the state. So far they are displaying a high degree of vitality and viability that is envied by their secular counterparts. And so far, attempts to smear or discredit them by the state media have had little impact. The irony is that while the Egyptian public is often be exposed to hostile editorials against such organizations, they are also exposed to positive promotional advertising by the Islamic organizations, usually in the same daily newspapers and weekly magazines. In fact, most of these institutions are quite sophisticated in their advertising. Their style combines the appeal of Islamic authenticity and a Madison Avenue-like attraction. The atmosphere they have created is also beneficial to the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood.

VIOLENT ISLAMIC ACTIVISM

Though nonviolent Islamic activism is no doubt the most influential in the long and medium term, it is the violent factions which attract the headlines at home and abroad. These violent factions, although numerous, can generally be grouped in two broad categories: those which are only anti-state or anti-regime; and those which are hostile to the entire societal order (state and regime included).[12]

THE ANTI-REGIME ACTIVISTS

The anti-regime Muslim groups represent some of the factions that broke away from the main body of the Brotherhood and have been acting on their own since the early 1970s. The militant violence of these groups was aimed at toppling the regime (Sadat's and later

Mubarak's) and bringing about an 'Islamic state.' Proponents of this tendency contend that the present decadence and corruption that characterizes society is rooted within the ruling political élite, and that no amount of preaching, religious consciousness-raising, or behavior-modeling is sufficient to change this state of affairs. Nor would any amount of nonviolent political activism bring about the desired result, as contended by the mainstream trend within the Brotherhood. In their view, Egyptian society at large is redeemable if, and only if, its leadership becomes truly Islamic. Thus the struggle must be directed against the rulers, to remove them or force them to submit to the Islamic will.

This anti-regime tendency has been embodied in the Islamic Liberation Organization *(Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami)* and the Jihad group. The first, otherwise known as the Military Academy group, MA, *(Gam'at al-Fanniya al-'Askariya)*, entered into a bloody confrontation with the Sadat regime in April 1974. The second, the Jihad, is believed to be an ideological, if not also an organizational extension of MA. The Jihad group has been by far the bloodiest and most deadly in its confrontations with the state. Despite the preventive detention of hundreds of its members by the state in September 1981, it still had sufficient organizational capability to plan and successfully carry out the assassination plot that took the life of President Sadat on 6 October 1981. And despite a second roundup of its members in the aftermath of the assassination, the Jihad was still able to storm the main police headquarters in the governorate of Asyut, and kill or wound tens of state security men. Some members were tried for direct involvement in the assassination of President Sadat, receiving death sentences or varying terms of imprisonment. A second trial, involving 302 Jihad members charged for the Asyut events and membership in an unlawful organization, resulted in 110 convicted, receiving prison sentences ranging from two to forty years.

After a four-year lull under President Mubarak, the Jihad and other like-minded groups resumed their confrontations with the state through acts of defiance and violence. In 1986, several attacks and bombing incidents were directed against nightclubs, video shops, alcohol stores, and taverns. In 1987, assassination attempts were made on the lives of two former ministers of the interior—Hassan Abu Basha and al-Nabawi Isma'il—and a leading journalist, Makram M. Ahmad. The first two were targeted by Islamic militants for their alleged role in ordering the torture of Muslims while in jail between 1981 and 1984. The third was singled out for his relentless smearing of Muslim groups in his editorials in the weekly magazine *al-Musawwar*. Between August 1987 and November 1987 several skirmishes and shootouts took place between the Egyptian authorities and Islamist 'militants,' resulting in scores of dead and wounded, as the authorities attempted to arrest and charge suspects in the assassination attempts.

In a few cities in Upper Egypt, namely Asyut, Suhag, Minya, and Bani Swef, Islamic militant students have harassed other students, ei-

ther for being too "liberal" or for being Christian Copts. They have been occasionally audacious enough to hold hostages and make demands on the authorities in return for their release. They often also issue their own religious pronouncements and edicts *(fatwas)* and proceed to implement them directly, bypassing religious (al-Azhar) and state authorities.

The ideological underpinnings of this violent, anti-regime, Islamic tendency are outlined in a small booklet, *al-Farida al-gha'iba* ('The Absent Commandment'), attributed to Muhammad Abd al-Salam Farag. The 'absent commandment' is *jihad* ('struggle in the name of religion'), and hence it became the name given by the authorities to this group led by Farag which assassinated President Sadat in 1981. Farag takes his cues from Ibn Taymiya (A.D. 1263–1328), a noted Islamic thinker of more than six centuries ago. Both have described their respective societies as an abode in between the 'abode of peace' *(Dar al-Salam)* and the 'abode of war' *(Dar al-Harb)*. This 'in-between' status means that the majority of subjects (citizens) are basically good Muslims, but are living under "non-Islamic" laws and "non-Muslim" or "nominally Muslim" rulers. The implication of this characterization is that it is the duty (commandment) of good Muslims to fight their ungodly rulers and liquidate their laws. In Farag's words:

> This state is ruled by heathen laws despite the fact that the majority of its people are Muslims. These laws were formulated by infidels who compelled Muslims to abide by them. And because they deserted *jihad*, Muslims of today live in subjugation, humiliation, division, and fragmentation. The Quran has aptly scolded them in the verse, "Thou believers, why if told to rise up for the sake of God, you hedge closer to the ground? Are you more content with the earthly life than with the hereafter? The pleasures of the earthly life are little compared to those of the hereafter. If you do not rise up, God will torture you most painfully." Thus, the aim of our group is to rise up to establish an Islamic state and restore Islam to this nation. . . . The means to this end is to fight against heretical rulers and to eradicate the despots who are no more than human beings who have not yet found those who are able to suppress them with the order of God Almighty.

This combatant spirit, combined with religious passion, has made Islamic militants quite deadly in their confrontations. Often the leaders have no illusions about a quick victory over the "heathen state" and its rulers. Nevertheless, they are willing to "rise up in anger for the sake of God" *(ghadba li-llah)*, for they take their death in battle, or subsequent execution after trial, as akin to a martyrdom that takes one directly to heavenly paradise *(al-janna)*.

The anti-regime Islamic tendency appeals to educated and motivated youngsters of rural or small-town and lower-middle-class backgrounds, but who are often found living in large cities and away from their families at the time of their recruitment. Contrary to common stereotypes that claim that these radical groups generally attract a disproportionate number of 'misfits,' 'alienated,' 'marginals,' or otherwise 'abnormal' characters, our fieldwork showed Egypt's Islamic militants to be almost 'model young Egyptians.'[13]

THE ANTI-SOCIETY MUSLIM GROUPS

The second tendency, the anti-society Muslim groups, also broke away from the Brotherhood in the early 1970s, believing that the Brotherhood's analysis of societal affairs was incorrect and that a different strategy and tactics were required for the situation at hand. Initiated by Shukri Mustafa, this tendency deplores the corrupt, decadent, and sinful nature of Egyptian society in its totality. Thus they believed that moral change was required not only among the rulers, but from the grassroots upward. The group's strategy, therefore, is necessarily one of patience. In view of such a comprehensive objective and long-term goals, it calls for building a nucleus "community of believers" who can act out "the true life of Islam." This Islamic community of believers, it is claimed, would gradually grow in number, in spirit, and in material strength, until it is capable of marching and bringing down the already crumbling sinful social order of Egypt at large. Shukri Mustafa and his young followers cite the example of the Prophet Muhammad who, surrounded and harassed by the *jahiliya* people of Mecca, fled to Medina with a few followers, and there established the first true Muslim community. Ten years later, and much stronger, the Prophet marched on Mecca and terminated the state of *jahiliya*.

The notion of removing oneself, literally or metaphorically, from the present corrupt society is akin to a *hijra*—holy flight—from *jahiliya*, a condition of infidelity, decadence, and obvious ignorance, similar to that prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia. Hence, the name given by Egyptian authorities to the group formed and led by Shukri Mustafa in the early 1970s was "*al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra*" literally, 'Repentance and Holy Flight' (RHF).

While not against the use of violence, RHF would only resort to these means in its final struggle against the *jahiliya* society. Unlike the Jihad, RHF was not bent on engaging the state in a continuous and immediate war of attrition, but rather on striking one final blow later. Thus, the major bloody confrontation in 1977 between the RHF and the Egyptian government was not part of its long-range plan. The group had scarcely begun building its "model community" somewhere in an unpopulated hinterland on the edge of the Nile Valley. According to RHF militants, the 1977 confrontation was forced on them by the regime. Egyptian security forces had arrested several of their "brothers" and detained them without trial. Their pleas to be tried or set free were repeatedly ignored. In retaliation, RHF kidnapped Sheikh A. H. al-Dhahabi, a former minister of *awqaf* (religious endowments), and held him as a hostage until their brothers were freed. When their deadline passed without a positive response from the government, they had nothing left but to kill their hostage as they had threatened. Their credibility was at stake.

The shootouts that followed between RHF and the government left some sixty dead or wounded. Ultimately, the state prevailed and sev-

eral hundred RHF members were arrested and tried. Five RHF leaders, including Shukri Mustafa, were sentenced to death, while others received varying prison sentences ranging from five to twenty-five years.

At present there is no evidence that RHF still exists as an organized group. But the tendency that RHF embodied is still alive. Several small groups have sprung up, influenced by the same ideas, but bearing different names—the 'Saved from Hellfire,' and 'Pause and Reveal' groups. The intellectual roots of this anti-society tendency are to be found primarily in the writings of Sayid Qutb, the Brotherhood veteran who was executed by the Nasser regime in 1965. In his famous book, *al-Ma'alim fi-l-tariq* ('Landmarks on the Road'), Qutb declared the entire Egyptian society as a *jahiliya* society. His arguments have been compelling to thousands of Muslim youngsters in Egypt and elsewhere. To date, this book has been reprinted more than thirty times in Egypt alone. In addition, this tendency has been influenced by the writings of the modern Pakistani Islamic thinker, Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi, and Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, an eighteenth-century Arabian thinker, as well as by the Kharajite *(al-Khawarij)* tradition (which goes back to the middle of the first Islamic century).

At present, the anti-society Islamic groupings in Egypt are small. Their membership tends to have the same sociological profile as the membership of the anti-regime Islamic tendency: young, educated, high achievers, from rural or small-town lower-middle-class backgrounds. They represent the raw nerve not only of the Islamic movement but also of Egyptian society at large. Three decades earlier their counterparts of similar backgrounds responded readily to Nasser's Arab Nationalism and Arab Socialism. And six decades ago, the youth of Egypt also responded readily to Saad Zaghloul's anticolonial, liberal–democratic call.

Thus, successive sociopolitical movements of mass following in Egypt—such as liberalism, nationalism, and socialism—have had their respective share of militants in past times. We ought not to confuse the bulk of a grassroots trend with the behavioral manifestations of its most extreme elements. The anti-regime and anti-society Islamic militants represent the margins of the otherwise moderate grassroots Islamic activist movement that is a major force in Egypt today.

CONCLUSION

Islamic activism, with its various tendencies, is dominating much of the political space and discourse of Egypt at present. In recent years, a day has hardly passed by without some form of media coverage of an act of violence by one of these Islamic groups. There is also alarm over their growing economic power or their ascendancy within the political forum. In passing, we mentioned a number of the conditions responsible for the upsurge of Islamic activism in Egypt. However, a

broader explanation of the phenomenon is in order. Here, the Egyptian case must be placed in the wider Arab–Islamic context.

To begin with, Islamic activism under various names, has always been an integral part of Arab–Islamic history. In fact, much of that history is one of successive religious movements striving to return to the pure sources of Islam and to put their vision into effect. Some of these movements have succeeded in seizing power at one time or another, and some have failed. Seizure of power did not always lead to implementation of the promised vision—in fact, that often triggered others to take up the challenge. Ibn Khaldoun, the fourteenth-century precursor of modern social science, noted the cyclical nature of these attempts, in which asab*iya* (ésprit de corps) coupled with religious zeal, punctuated the rise and fall of ruling dynasties in Arab–Islamic history. The cycle was roughly one hundred years—the life span of four generations in the Islamic Middle Ages.

Focusing on the last two centuries, we note the disruption of Islamic society's traditional modes of life by Western intrusion. By the end of the nineteenth century no Muslim country was free of direct or indirect domination by one or more of the Western powers. This swift domination was both traumatic and humiliating. It generated three model reactions in Muslim countries. One response was to attempt to emulate the West in its ways in order to befriend or fight back. A second response was to reject Western ways completely and to fall back on the glorious heritage of Islam and adhere to its pure sources as the only means of successful resistance. The third response was one of attempting to reconcile the best elements of Islamic heritage with the best elements of Western civilization.

The emulators, the rejecters, and the reconcilers have coexisted, debated with one another intellectually, and competed and even conflicted politically over the last hundred years. These three trends have been labeled "liberal," "fundamentalist," and "nationalist," respectively. The emulators and reconcilers included all types of secular combinations, some even involving socialist, Marxist, or even fascist elements. Each trend has gone through expansions and contractions and has had its ups and downs during the past century. But none of them has completely disappeared. At brief historical moments they have even cooperated.

The liberals and nationalists dominated the political scene during the fight for independence and in the early decades thereafter. However, with mounting problems during the stage of modern nation-building, especially because of failures to check the new hegemonic design of outside powers, the liberals and nationalists began to lose their credibility. To many, the defeat of Arab armies at the hands of Israel in 1967, for example, was not just a military one. It was a defeat of political regimes and their secular ideologies. Furthermore, it was a blunt reminder of the century-long humiliation suffered by the Arabs at the hands of the West, which is seen by Arabs and Muslims as the patron and supporter of Israel. The USSR, which had

befriended some of the defeated Arab regimes, did not fare much better in the Arab–Muslim view. The rejecters of everything foreign (Western, Zionist, and Communist) were ready with their explanation of the defeat and with their prescription for salvation: the Arabs had lost because they had strayed and forgotten their traditions, and the only solution was the return to the purest source of Islam. In the late 1960s and 1970s the fundamentalist call found many to heed its message.

We submit that a fuller interpretation of the spread of Islamic activism must be sought in understanding the century-long crisis of Muslim societies. The salient dimensions of this crisis are the frustrated quests for true independence, social equity, political participation, and economic development. The culprits behind these frustrations are said to be capitalism, communism, and Zionism; or, the West (especially the USA), the USSR, and Israel.

Islamic activists have no difficulty in amassing evidence to corroborate this assertion. Along with outside culprits, they also blame those whom they consider domestic perpetrators of secular ideologies who they believe to be, at best, misled or brainwashed, and at worst outright agents of some foreign power.

Regardless of the truth of its claims, the above explanation is simple, clear, and enhances amorphous but deep-rooted sentiments in the Arab–Islamic world. And while many Arab secular political forces may share with the Muslim activists at least part of their above explanation of the present crisis, it is only the Islamic activists who have displayed daring and effectiveness. They ousted the hated pro-Zionist Shah; they shot down the pro-Western Sadat; and, they forced the US Marines out of Lebanon. They are also bleeding Israel with their guerrilla attacks. Many of the secular political forces in the Arab–Islamic world may have wanted to achieve these objectives, but it was only the militant Islamic activists who managed to do so.

Whether Islamic activists in general, or their militant elements in particular, can offer more than suicide missions, displays of martyrdom, investment companies, and service institutions, is still to be seen. For the time being at least, Islamic activism has galvanized the imagination and mobilized the energy of thousands of Islamic youth. In Egypt, Islamic activism is still on the rise. Its achievements so far are impressive. Its future depends on its own ability to come up with creative solutions to problems—not only current problems from previous centuries, but more importantly, the looming challenges of the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. The closest thing to this term in Arabic is *usuliya*—'religious rootedness' or 'authenticity.' Both the English and the Arabic terms are hardly used by Islamic groups or native scholars studying them. The Western reader must be forewarned not to associate with Islamic groups the connotation invoked by the term 'fundamentalism' when referring to Christian fundamentalist groups

in the West. We use the term 'fundamentalism' here very reluctantly, and only because it is commonly used in Western academic and journalistic writings.

2. Much of this account on the belief system or ideology of Islamic fundamentalists is abstracted from their literature and empirical research conducted by the author; see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Islamic Militant Groups," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 12, no. 4, December 1980; and Nimat Ginina, 'The Jihad Movement,' M.A. thesis, American University in Cairo, 1985.
3. A saying *(Hadith)* of the Prophet Muhammad.
4. Here we find a marked difference between Sunni and Shia Islam. The latter assigns a far more important religious and political role to the *'ulama'*. We are mainly concerned here about Sunni Islamic fundamentalist thought.
5. See S.E. Ibrahim, "An Islamic Alternative in Egypt: The Muslim Brothers and President Sadat," paper submitted to a conference on "Political Islam," Boston, 23–25 June 1980; later appeared in the *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 2, Spring 1982.
6. The opposition parties contested a greater number of seats (seventy-eight).
7. Amani Kandil, "The Islamic Trend in Organizations of Civil Society: The Case of Professional Associations," an unpublished paper, June 1990.
8. In early 1990, a court ruled that the elections of 1987 had been carried out unfairly and were therefore null and void, but the ruling NDP, which dominated the People's Assembly at that time, refused to recognize the ruling. In May 1990, Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court declared the then parliament illegitimate.
9. The principal pioneers in this regard were the Sherif brothers, whose enterprises are now estimated to be worth over LE2 billion (about $1 billion).
10. See an interview with 'Atif Sidqi, Egypt's prime minister, in *al-Ahram*, 14 August 1987.
11. Such as Mustafa Mahmud Mosque in Giza, and al-Fath Mosque in Ma'adi, Cairo. For more details, see Iman Rushdi, "Religious Medical Centers in Cairo," an M.A. thesis presented to the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, American University in Cairo.
12. Much of the following account is abstracted from S.E. Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 12, 1980, pp. 423–53; and "Egypt's Islamic Activism in the 1980's," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 10(2), April 1988, pp. 632–57.
13 S.E. Ibrahim, *"Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups."*

4

The Changing Face of Egypt's Islamic Activism

1995

INTRODUCTION

Concepts and phrases such as 'Islamic revival,' 'Islamic resurgence,' 'Islamic fundamentalism,' 'Islamic militancy,' 'political Islam' and the like have had wide circulation in academia and in the mass media during the last two decades. Dramatic events in the Middle East such as the Iranian Revolution (1978–79), the assassination of Egypt's President Sadat (1981), and the escalating violence in Algeria and Egypt (1992–94), have added to the growing interest and anxiety at home and abroad concerning the possible implications of the Islamic phenomenon.

In this paper we have chosen the less value-loaded term of 'Islamic activism' to tackle the subject. We use it to refer to collective sociopolitical action aiming at changing the status quo in the direction of what is believed to be the proper Islamic order. Such action may range from peaceful to violent. Islamic activism, in this paper, is to be distinguished from the official or semiofficial Islamic establishment—that face of Islam represented in Egypt by al-Azhar, the Ministry of Religious Endowments *(awqaf)*, and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs. These can be seen as an extension of the state in regulating the religious lives of Egyptians in concordance with state objectives. Islamic activism is also to be distinguished from Sufi Islam, represented by many *tariqas* (orders), which is apolitical, emphasizing spirituality and religious mysticism. Different as they may be, both establishment and Sufi Islam pose no political or security threats to the regime or the state. On the contrary, if well tuned and properly functioning, establishment and Sufi Islams would reduce Islamic activism to political and sociological irrelevance.

Activists who raise Islamic banners in their quest for power have existed since the first *hijra* century (the eighth century A.D.). In modern Egypt, Islamic activism appeared forcefully in three waves—at the beginning, the middle, and toward the end of this century. Each wave climaxed in violence and assassinations of top political figures: Prime Minister Butrus Ghali in the first wave, Prime Ministers Ahmad Mahir and Mahmud F. al-Nukrashi in the second, and President Sadat in the third. As each wave of Islamic activists tapered off, the genesis of a new one was being born.

Our research suggests that these waves of Islamic activism are not random in their contextual appearance, the social strata to which

they appeal, their religious textual discourse, strategy, tactics, or the action they resort to. Our concern in this paper is with the third wave which started in the mid-1970s and which has escalated since the early 1990s. Longer in duration, larger in following, more pervasive in its penetration of society, and more brutal in its violence, the third wave of Islamic activism poses an unprecedented internal threat to society, the regime, and the modern state in contemporary Egypt.

Since the beginning of this third wave, the Egyptian state has managed to prevail in the successive rounds of armed confrontations with Islamic militants. There is no compelling reason to believe that the Egyptian state will not continue to do so in the foreseeable future. However, the human and material price is becoming progressively more costly.

BEGINNING OF THE THIRD WAVE

The symbolic date of the start of Egypt's third wave of Islamic activism is 18 April 1974. On that day, a group of young cadets aided by some of their civilian comrades (brothers) took over the Technical Military Academy in the 'Abbasiya district of Cairo, seized its arsenal, and prepared to march on the Arab Socialist Headquarters where President Sadat and his top aids were meeting. Their plan was simple. They were to arrest (or kill) Egypt's political élite, take over the nearby radio and television building, and declare the birth of the Islamic Republic of Egypt.

Their attempt was foiled before they actually marched out of the Military Academy grounds. Nevertheless, over several hours of shootouts with the state security forces, several people were killed and wounded; the rest were arrested and eventually tried and sentenced to death or to long terms in prison. Though these youngsters are known as the MA group, they would turn out later to be the precursors of the violent wing of Egypt's Islamic movement which calls itself the *Jihad* ('holy struggle') organization. It is the same group which plotted the assassination of President Sadat on 6 October 1981.

Other militant Islamic groups have sprung up and engaged the Egyptian state in similar violent confrontations during the last two decades (1974–94). Most well-known among them are the 'Repentance and Holy Flight' (*Takfir wa-l-Hijra*) and the 'Islamic group' (*Gama'a Islamiya*).' These militant groups are all splinters from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928.

The MB had itself gone through a violent phase (1945–65) before most of its leaders decided to disavow violence and pursue their quest for an Islamic order peacefully. This decision was made after heated debates while the MB elders were in Nasser's prisons during the late 1960s. At the time, the majority opinion was shaped by the then Supreme Guide of the MB, Hassan al-Hudhaybi, whose stand was formulated in a book entitled, *Advocates Not Judges*. A steadfast minority of younger MB members, however, rallied behind the views of another elder, Sayid Qutb. In his book, *Landmarks on the Road*,

Qutb asserted that the contemporary state and society were sinfully repugnant, irredeemable and must be destroyed in order to clear the ground for a truly Islamic order.

Following Nasser's death in 1970, President Sadat needed to consolidate his power in the face of many detractors—Nasserites, leftists, and pan-Arabists. In this quest, he called upon the MB, negotiated with their remaining elders inside and outside prisons, and concluded a 'deal.' He would release them from prison in return for support against his opponents and a commitment not to use violence against his regime. MB members did in fact honor their side of the deal.

Sadat did not know at the time of concluding this deal of the ideological and tactical split among the MB. Sayid Qutb had been executed by Nasser in 1965, and his followers were too young and unknown to Sadat or his aides. The young dissidents were, nevertheless, released along with their elders. It was a few years later, too late in fact, when the regime discovered the truth about the implications of that early split.

STREAMS OF EGYPT'S ISLAMIC ACTIVISM

By the late 1970s, Egypt's Islamic activism had unfolded into two broad groupings: nonviolent and violent. While having the same ultimate objective of capturing state and society and transforming them into an ideal Islamic order, the two groups have gone about it differently.

The nonviolent mainstream of Islamic activism consists of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), their sympathizers, thousands of Islamic private voluntary organizations, and tens of Islamic investment companies. Legal and quasi-legal components of this mainstream have managed to take advantage of the state's defective performance and, to slowly and steadily infiltrate Egypt's public space. During the last two decades, this variety of Islamic activism had become particularly entrenched in the mass media, formal education, and community social services, before systematically marching into electoral councils at both the national and local levels. With a definite agenda, the MB has mobilized these forms of associational Islamic activism and managed to obtain a decent representation in the People's Assembly (Egypt's parliament)—twelve seats in 1984, and thirty-eight seats in 1987 out of 455.

But the more stunning performance of the MB has been its growing ability to capture the majority of seats of Egypt's major professional syndicates—doctors, engineers, dentists, lawyers, pharmacists, commerce, and university professors. The same applies to university student unions.

While not formally linked to the MB, Islamic PVOs (private voluntary organizations) registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) now outnumber secular PVOs (eight thousand out of a total of four-

teen thousand). Islamic PVOs are generally better financed and managed. In times of crises, such as Egypt's earthquake in October 1992, Islamic PVOs and the MB-controlled professional syndicates outperformed not only their secular counterparts, but also the state itself, or so it appeared to the public and to the foreign media.

Though much smaller in numbers, the more militant versions of Islamic activism have captured the headlines, thereby embarrassing the Egyptian state. The three main Islamic groups which have engaged in violent confrontations with the Egyptian state since 1974 were the Jihad, the Takfir wa-l Hijra, and the Gama'a Islamiya. To be sure, politically motivated violence has not been the monopoly of Islamic militants. But it is the militant Islamic activists who have appropriated the lion's share of it.

Table 1 shows selected indicators of sociopolitical unrest in Egypt since 1952. Some of this unrest was of a spontaneous type (for example, riots), while some was instigated by interest groups (for example, workers and students). However, much of the sociopolitical unrest relates to Islamic activists during the three successive regimes of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. Table 1 indicates a quantum jump in the incidence of unrest from one regime to the next. The annual average of such incidents doubled between the Nasser and Sadat years; then tripled between the Sadat and Mubarak years. It may legitimately be argued that the rise of unrest is commensurate with that of Egypt's population growth (from 22 million in 1952 to 60 million in 1994). However, like all averages the figures conceal the specificities of particular years and sub-periods within each regime. In the Nasser period, much of the unrest was in the early years (1950s); that of Sadat was in the later years (1974 to 1981); and that of Mubarak is also quite recent (since 1986). This observation renders a simple demographic explanation of the volume of unrest less convincing.

This point is further illustrated by a closer examination of data related to politically motivated violence during Mubarak's twelve-year presidency. For example, row 10 of Table 1 shows the number of casualties (killed and wounded) resulting from politically motivated violence. During the forty-one years since 1952, of some 1,811 casualties, 86 percent occurred in the last twelve years—that is, during Mubarak's presidential tenure. More dramatic still is the fact that during the first four years (1982–85) of Mubarak's term, there was hardly any violence—a total of thirty-three casualties, averaging eight casualties annually. The third four years (1990–93) were by far the bloodiest, not only of the Mubarak presidency but also of this century. There were 1,164 casualties—averaging 291 casualties annually. To put it differently, of the first twelve years of Mubarak's presidency, the last four appropriated nearly 92 percent of all the casualties due to politically-motivated violence involving Islamic activists.

The specter of political violence has taken its worst turn in the last two years. Some ominous observations are worth noting.

Table 1
Selected indicators of sociopolitical unrest, 1952–93

	Nasser years 1952–70		Sadat years 1971–81		Mubarak years 1982–93		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Demonstrations	10	*16*	16	*26*	36	*58*	62
Strikes	2	*7*	13	*42*	16	*52*	31
Riots	3	*5*	6	*9*	55	*86*	64
Attempted coups	2	*50*	2	*50*	0	*0*	4
Attempted assassinations	2	*13*	2	*13*	12	*75*	16
Assassinations	0	*0*	2	*11*	16	*89*	18
Arrests (detention orders)	14,000	*24*	19,000	*33*	25,000	*43*	58,000
Hard labor sentences	42	*24*	69	*40*	53	*36*	164
Death sentences	27	*37*	20	*27*	27	*37*	74
Casualties	49	*3*	205	*11*	1,557	*86*	1,811
Total	14,137	*24*	19,315	*32*	26,772	*45*	60,218
Annual average	783		1,737		2,231		1,423

Source: Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, files of Islamic Activism Research Project

1. The number of total casualties in 1993 was nearly four times that of 1992 (1,106 compared to 322).

2. While the total number of casualties of Islamic activists was twice that of the security forces in 1992 (122 compared to 61) in 1993, the two figures indicate a growing parity (363 versus 301). In terms of those killed there were more policemen (120) than Islamic activists (111) in 1993.

3. In both years the number of civilian bystander casualties caught in crossfire exceeded that of both police and activists (139 and 442 in 1992 and 1993, respectively).

Noteworthy also is the fact that several assassination attempts were made by Islamic activists on the lives of high-ranking public figures. Two of them were successful—Rifa't al-Mahgub, the former speaker of parliament (October 1990); and Farag Fouda, Egypt's most outspoken secular intellectual (June 1992). The activists also managed to assassinate four police generals, including the top ranking anti-terrorist officer (General R. Khayrat on 9 April 1994). There were attempts on the lives of two cabinet members (the ministers of information and the interior, in April and August 1993, respectively) and on the prime minister (in November 1993).

THE CHANGING FACE OF ISLAMIC MILITANTS

By all counts, 1993 was the year in which violent Islamic activists seemed to have had the upper hand in armed confrontations. They

were more daring than ever before. They took the initiative in operations, and often outmaneuvered the government forces. Their choice of targets widened to include Christian Copts, secular Muslim thinkers, foreign tourists, and what they considered as "repugnant" objects—cinemas, cafés, video shops, and Nile cruisers.

Their methods also showed greater sophistication. Not only did they demonstrate skillful use of arms, explosives, and remote control devices, but also manufactured some of them themselves. They displayed the remarkable abilities of their intelligence system. Some of these upgraded skills were no doubt the result of experience accumulated over the previous two decades. But equally important is the combat experience many of them acquired as volunteers with the Mujahidin in Afghanistan against Soviet occupation forces during the 1980s. As a result, their operations in the early 1990s became more protracted—from hours or days in the 1970s to weeks and months in the 1990s.

Unlike their counterparts, in the 1970s and early 1980s, Egypt's Islamic militants in the 1990s acquired modern communication skills which were used in psychological warfare against the Egyptian state and for maximum media exposure. For example, among the 1,557 casualties during Mubarak's tenure, only eleven were foreign tourists. But that figure (comparable to similar casualties in the state of Florida) resulted in destroying two tourist seasons (1992 and 1993), and depriving Egypt of badly needed hard currency worth $3 billion. In short, the activists' confrontations with the Egyptian state had by 1993 become an all-out war of attrition.

But the greatest change of all was that of the socioeconomic profile of the 1990s Islamic militants. Compared to their counterparts in the two previous decades, they have become younger and less educated. Many of them come from rural, small-town and shantytown backgrounds. Table 2 indicates some significant comparisons, compiled from available data on those killed, wounded, and arrested.

The average age of Islamic militants, arrested and charged with acts of violence, has dropped from twenty-seven years in the 1970s to twenty-one years in the 1990s. Of the thirty militants arrested, tried, and convicted for attacks on tourists, seven received death sentences in December 1993. Three of them were below the age of twenty (nineteen, eighteen, and sixteen years old).

Likewise, there has been a sharp drop in the formal education of Islamic activists arrested and charged for acts of violence. In the 1970s, as many as 80 percent were college students or graduates. In the 1990s, that percentage dropped to 20 percent. Among them, those who were students or graduates of élite majors (such as medicine, and engineering) dropped from 51 to 11 percent in two decades.

The above data suggests that the degree of alienation and discontent which drives to extremism has now spread to younger and less educated Egyptians. This may in part explain their disposition to lethal violence. And as part C of Table 2 shows, the same sense of

Table 2
Socioeconomic profile of Egypt's Islamic militants 1970s–1990s (percentages)

	1970s	1980s	1990s
Age			
Under 20	5	11	23
20–25	28	31	48
25–30	61	53	24
Over 30	6	5	5
Formal education			
Below secondary	2	5	9
Secondary	8	12	29
Junior college	11	24	42
College and postgraduate	79	59	20
Elite majors (e.g. medicine)	51	27	11
Residence			
Villages	0	7	18
Shantytowns (*'ashwa'iyat*)	8	16	36
Towns	37	43	31
Large cities	55	34	15

Source: Ibn Khaldoun data files from the Islamic activism research project
[a] Estimate in January 1996 by CAPMAS

despair seems to have spread from large cities (55 percent in the 1970s compared with 15 percent in the 1990s) to rural areas and shantytowns in the 1990s (8 percent in the 1970s compared to 54 percent in the 1990s). Ominous is the fact that while there were no rural residents among the arrested activists of the 1970s, the Egyptian public began to hear for the first time about villages in the Governorate of Asyut (such as Sanabu, Walidiya, and Salamun) as scenes of sustained armed confrontations between Islamic militants and state security forces.

Likewise, a new scene of such confrontations has been the so-called *'ashwa'iyat* or shantytowns on the rural–urban fringes of major cities. While these areas accounted for fewer than 8 percent of the arrested and charged militants in the 1970s, their share jumped to 36 percent in the 1990s. A case in point is a shantytown by the name of Western Munira on the edges of the old district of Imbaba, Giza, across the Nile from Cairo's élite suburb of Zamalek. About the same geographic size (twenty-one square kilometers), W. Munira has more than ten times the population of Zamalek. With no schools, hospitals, clubs, sewage system, public transportation, or even police station, the highly dense area of W. Munira had become a 'Hobbesian' world of violence and vice by the late 1980s. A small group of Islamic militants led by a twenty-seven year old man, Sheikh Gabr, took over W. Munira and practically ruled it for three years—collecting taxes, imposing their own law and order, and Islamic codes of morality. In December 1992, the Egyptian state finally took action, dispatching

some twelve thousand security forces with armored vehicles to reclaim the area. It took three weeks, one hundred casualties (on both sides), and the arrest of some six hundred suspected militants before W. Munira was pacified.

TOWARD AN EXPLANATION

The data reviewed in this paper sketch only a part of the story of the present wave of Egypt's Islamic activism. We suspect that when the data is more complete and better analyzed, the story of the third wave will not be all that different in its sociological inner logic from that of the first and second waves of Egypt's Islamic activism. In fact it may not be much different from a similar story unfolding in Algeria in the 1990s, or for that matter from other religio-political movements throughout Arab–Islamic history in the last thirteen centuries—that is, politicized Islam as an idiom for expressing profound worldly grievances.[1]

Staying close to the Egyptian case, it seems clear to us that the swift rise and spread of Islamic activism, with all its violent and nonviolent strands, is associated with real or perceived crises—social, economic, political, cultural, regional, and international. The social crisis has to do with worsening equity, rising unemployment, structural misery, and the spreading sense of relative deprivation. The economic crisis has to do with Egypt's narrow resource base, rapidly growing population, external debt, and inadequate investments—factors which have depressed the real rate of economic growth to an annual average of 2 percent in the last decade. The political crisis has to do with slow and sluggish democratization—that is, failure to effect a transition from the highly mobilized society of the 1950s and 1960s to a genuinely participatory one in the 1980s and 1990s. The cultural crisis has to do with the persistence of the century old debate between advocates of 'authenticity' and 'modernity'—that is, inward- and past-oriented vs. outward- and future-oriented value–normative system.

The regional crisis has to do with the perception of Egypt's declining role in molding the march of events in the Arab Middle East vis-à-vis Israel, Iran, and the oil rich Arab countries. The international crisis has to do with a growing collective sense that Egypt has become more dependent on the West than ever before during the last half century, and is unable to chart a meaningful course in a fast changing world.

The reality or perception of these multiple crises is affecting Egypt's various socioeconomic groups differently, at least in degree if not in kind. The new middle class (professionals, technocrats, and bureaucrats) is becoming impoverished and feels a loss of its century-old role as the leading political force in society. The 'lumpenproletariat' is the fastest growing of Egypt's socioeconomic formations. No longer confined to small pockets in big urban centers, the lumpenproletariat

now forms about one-third to one-fourth of Egypt's total population, and has spread to rural areas and rural–urban fringes of middle-size towns. It is the most flammable and manipulable socioeconomic formation. Out of its ranks, lower-middle-class Islamic activists can easily recruit, indoctrinate, and deploy followers. The third significant socioeconomic formation is the upper class, which in the last two decades has grown much richer, thanks to Sadat's Open-Door Economic Policy, and less socially and civically responsible. Internationalized in the sense of connections, multiple foreign residences, and bank accounts, this class has grown more detached from the rest of the society and less culturally sensitive—flaunting its wealth and conspicuous lifestyle. While concerned, like most Egyptians about the rise of militant Islamic activism, members of this detached upper class would probably leave the country in a few days, or even on a few hours notice, should anything too serious occur. In this respect, they would not be much different from their Iranian or Kuwaiti counterparts in 1979 and 1990, respectively.

What makes for a crisis is a quantum worsening of a societal problem, which the state or the ruling élite is unable or unwilling to contain, or resolve in time. During the Sadat–Mubarak years, the state has retreated from Nasser's populist 'social contract.' Among other things, that contract traded off the provision of immediate goods and services, and promised a loftier future vision in return for the temporary suspension of basic freedoms and democratic participation. For better or worse, the populist social contract seemed to have the consent of a majority of Egyptians till the 1967 Arab–Israeli war. With the crushing defeat, many Egyptians began to harbor doubts about the populist social contract. When Sadat began to capitalize on these doubts in de-Nasserizing Egypt, most Egyptians did not initially object in any serious manner.

However, the regime retreat from the populist social contract seemed to be disorganized. Dazzling in the Sadat years and lacking luster in the Mubarak years, the alternative social contract—sociopolitical–economic liberalization—has became bogged down. It has left sizable sections of Egyptian society with neither adequate socioeconomic safety nets nor with satisfying political participation. The most adversely affected by this state of affairs have been young and ambitious members of the lower-middle class—a substratum that has always been the 'sensitive nerve' of Egyptian society. From its ranks, all of Egypt's potent sociopolitical movements and articulate leadership—'Urabi, Zaghloul, Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak—have risen in the last century. At present, this substratum is the most alienated and discontented. From its ranks come the leaders and most of the cadres of the third wave of Islamic activism. As this substratum and the lumpenproletariat have grown in size and have become more disenfranchised, Islamic activism has also grown in size and propensity for violence.

What made the situation even worse in recent years is the short supply of political imagination of the ruling élite, and the near com-

plete absence of the circulation of power. The average age of present cabinet members is sixty-three (it would have been sixty-seven if it were not for two new members who are in their forties). The average age of an Islamic militant, as we saw, is twenty-one—that is, a gap of forty-two years or nearly two generations.

The hardening of Egypt's political arteries is made worse by a heavy and inefficient bureaucracy. Demoralized and increasingly impoverished, its upper rungs have become disposed to grand corruption, and its lower rungs to petty corruption. Petty corruption has long been taken for granted, and even sympathetically tolerated. It is revelations of grand corruption which have stunned Egyptians in recent years.

Gallant but clumsy Egyptian security forces have had to confront growing Islamic militants practically alone for much of the last decade—that is, without supportive and politically mobilized public opinion. Two successive ministers of the interior have repeatedly complained in the People's Assembly of the lack of eyewitnesses ready to come forth and testify, even when acts of violence are committed in broad daylight in a marketplace (such as the assassination of a police general and his drivers in Manflut, Asyut in 1993).

However, the situation seems to be slowly coming under control—thanks to strategic and tactical mistakes committed by the Islamic militants, the steady improvement of the capabilities of security forces, and a growing (though reluctant) opening of 'political dialogue' with opposition parties. But most important may be the uprising of Egypt's civil society against extremism, especially the artistic community.[2] For the first time in three years, the months of April to June of 1994 witnessed a decline in the incidence of violence compared to the same months since 1991. Hopefully, this will not lull the Mubarak regime into a premature sense of 'victory' against Islamic militants or make it oblivious to badly needed sociopolitical reform.

CONCLUSION

The persistent vibrancy of Egypt's Islamic activism is a cause for concern but not for panic. Despite its marked problems, the Egyptian state remains strong, and will no doubt prevail in the present armed confrontation with radical Islamic militants. The state possesses tremendous resources in this respect, most of which have hardly been tapped—a political culture which values moderation, continuity, and stability; a potent civil society; a powerful media; a cohesive loyal professional army, and internal security forces; its own religious establishment; and its good regional and international relations.

In the short run, the legitimate concern, not panic, is over the regime's inability to mobilize and manage these tremendous resources. So far, the regime has relied on its security forces alone in confronting the Islamic extremists. Even with limited use of its resources, the

Egyptian state is already turning the corner on them. But the problem is not merely achieving a physical victory over Islamic extremists in the present round, but in dealing forcefully with the root causes which give rise to extremism. Here, it is imperative that the regime evolves a clear and comprehensive strategy of reform.

So far, the Mubarak regime has been solely obsessed with economic reforms. While necessary and vital, such one-sidedness has had serious negative sociopolitical repercussions which threaten the positive effects of these economic reforms. It may not be a sheer coincidence that the present round of escalating violence began in the summer of 1991, three months after signing the structural adjustment agreement with the IMF (April 1991). The undermining of two successive tourist seasons (in 1992 and 1993) as a result of the escalating violence is estimated to have cost Egypt some $3 billion, (LE10 billion). Belatedly, the government is earmarking several billions of Egyptian pounds for social upgrading of depressed areas in Upper Egypt and for creating about a half a million new jobs. Belatedly, also, the regime announced plans for a 'National Dialogue' with the long neglected and marginalized opposition parties and professional associations. Had these two measures started a few years earlier, much of the violence may have been averted. Late as they may be, these and similar measures (in education and the media) illustrate the imperative of comprehensive reform—that is, social and political as well as economic.

While evolving a comprehensive reform package is mainly the domestic responsibility of the Egyptian regime, state, and society, there remains a significant role to be played by external actors, especially the United States, which have a stake in the regional stability of the Middle East and the Arab world. Egypt is the cornerstone of such stability—not only because of its demographic and military weight, but more because of its moral and cultural weight. A stable, prosperous Egypt is a necessary condition for an Arab Middle East stability. Hence, whatever comprehensive reform package Egypt evolves must be fully supported, morally and materially, by those who are keen on enhancing the processes of peace, development, and regional cooperation in the area.

NOTES

1. For elaboration of this thesis, see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Islamic Activism as a Means of Conflict and Change," in *Security Dialogue*, 1994, vol. 25 (2), pp. 377–81.
2. Reference is to a series of antiterrorism TV dramas and films which appeared earlier in 1994 and were well received by the public.

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5

Islamic Activism and the Western Search for a New Enemy

1995

Until the summer of 1993, Arab–Muslim Third-Worlders used to lament the sensational Western media for its gross oversimplification and distortions of our complex realities at home. However, those of us who lived or were educated in the West, could blame such oversimplification on the inner dynamics and time imperatives of the Western electronic media industry.

But when a renowned American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, writes in the prestigious, sophisticated *Foreign Affairs Journal* about "The Clash of Civilizations?"[1] in a manner not so different from that of the mass media, the matter becomes a cause for serious alarm. Huntington's article borders on a quest for a search for a 'new enemy' for the West in the post-Cold War era. In the words of a critic,

> Huntington has found his civilizations whole and intact, watertight under an eternal sky. Buried alive, as it were, during the years of the Cold War, these civilizations (Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, etc.) rose as soon as the stone was rolled off, and they dusted themselves off, and proceeded to claim the loyalty of their adherents.[2]

The most damning part of Huntington's article is its 'battle cry' conclusion: "the paramount axis of world politics will be 'the West and the Rest.' The central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic–Confucian states."[3] Then he goes on to delineate the ways and means of managing this conflict to subdue Muslims and Confucians—some 3 billion or nearly half of the world population.

I have no intention here to take issue with Huntington's propositions. Suffice it to say that what he has done in his "Clash of Civilizations?" is to engage in 'cultural stereotyping' and/or 'ethnocentrism,' which we as sociologists have been trained to study but to refrain from.

Instead, this paper will briefly say something about 'stereotyping' as a concept long studied by sociologists and social psychologists. Then, it will peek into a leaf of Western history which bears a stunning resemblance to some of what the Arab–Muslim world is going through today. This will entail an account of what seems to have frightened Huntington and many of his likes in the West at present—that is, Islamic activism. The paper concludes with a plea for a serious disaggregation of the complex and simultaneous sociopolitical processes now unfolding in the Arab–Muslim world. It is a renewed plea for 'cultural relativism,' a requisite for the 'bridging,' not the

'clashing' of civilizations. After all, cultural relativism is the diametrical opposite of cultural stereotypes. Both are collective mental constructs—that is, they start in the minds of humans. But one leads to understanding, compassion, and cooperation. The other leads to misunderstanding, hate, and conflict.

Stereotypes are categorical beliefs about groups, peoples, nations, and even whole civilizations. Stereotypes are invariably over-generalized, inaccurate, and resistant to new information or empirical testing. Stereotypes are ahistorical, absolutist cultural constructs.

In this sense, stereotypes are causal ingredients and effects of prejudices, racism, and discrimination. The worst aspect of it is the possibility of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy, so that a group perceived in a stereotypical manner by another is subjected to treatment which makes it respond in ways concordant with the stereotype.

The Western stereotype of the 'Arab–Muslim world' is a case in point. To start with, not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs. Yet the two are often lumped together, and judged as "irrational, violent, rigid, fanatical, and anti-Western."

Second, not all Arabs are the same—to the same degree that not all Europeans (Russians, French, and Danes) are the same. Nor are all Muslims (that is, Indonesians, Moroccans, and Bosnians) the same—to the same degree that not all Christians are the same (such as Filipinos, Brazilians, Italians, Swedes, and Irish).

In other words, stereotyping peoples and countries of an 'Arab–Muslim world' not only misses the nuanced variations but also the major differences.

So much for the concept. Let us engage in some critical historical cultural relativism.

This represents an attempt to demystify contemporary Islamic activism in its many facets. My message here is simple. Political Islam has always been an idiom for expressing profound worldly grievances and the quest for the good life here on earth. Like radicals everywhere throughout history, Islamic radicals moderate once accommodated and incorporated in the sociopolitical mainstream. If radicals do not moderate in time, they perish or become sociologically irrelevant cults. History is a graveyard of radical groups which did not moderate in time. The regimes of the mighty Soviet Bloc are the most recent cases in point.

I shall start with a leaf from Western history. On 25 February 1534, in the German town of Munster, Anabaptist zealots staged an armed uprising and installed a radical dictatorship. All who refused to undergo rebaptism into the new faith were driven from the city during a snowstorm, without food or belongings. The new regime impounded all food, money, valuables, and canceled all debts. Mobs burned the financial records of all local merchants. Housing of the fleeing well-to-do was reassigned to the poor. Former beggars capered in the streets, decked in plundered finery. The religious positions of

the new regime were equally radical. Under the new moral order it imposed, all books other than the Bible were burned. All "sins," including swearing, backbiting, complaining, and disobedience, were to be punished by instant execution. Soon the regime instituted polygamy. Unmarried women were ordered to marry the first man who asked them—and forty-nine women were executed and their bodies hacked into quarters for failing to comply. Before long, however, the outside world reacted. Munster was soon besieged by its bishop who had escaped and recruited an army of mercenaries. Surrounded and cut off, the city was beset by growing confusion.

Then, out of the rebel ranks, there arose a new and absolute leader, John Bockelson, who assumed the name of John of Leyden and claimed to have been appointed by God to be king of the last days. A 'this-worldly' rebellion now firmly became 'other-worldly.' The rebels did not need to win victory over their temporal rulers, for all was now in the hands of God in these last days before the Last Judgment, announced by John of Leyden to be coming before Easter 1535. Anyone in Munster who opposed or expressed doubt about this prophecy was executed. On 24 June 1535, the bishop's troops made a surprise assault in the night and took the city. John of Leyden was arrested. Over the next few months, he was led by a chain from town to town, and in January 1536 back to Munster, where he was tortured to death with red-hot irons in front of a large crowd. His body was put in an iron cage and suspended from the church tower. The cage still hangs there today.[4]

There was nothing very unusual about the rebellion in Munster, or in the fact that it took the form of a religious movement. Similar events were commonplace in Europe at the time, especially in the growing commercial towns. The few decades preceding and following the Munster episode were replete with intense 'worldly' discontent, shrouded in religious discourse and conflict. A quick glance at the annals of the first half of the sixteenth century would substantiate this proposition. Eighteen years before the Munster uprising, Sir Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* (1516). A year later (1517), in protest against the sale of 'indulgences,' Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the Palast Church in Wittenberg, beginning the Reformation. Actually by the time of the Munster rebellion, Martin Luther had completed the first translation of the Bible into German, and two years later he held his "Table Talks" (1536). Two years after the execution of John of Leyden, Calvin was expelled from Geneva to settle in Strasbourg (1538). In 1542, Pope Paul III established the Inquisition in Rome; and a year later the first Protestants were burned at the stake in Spain (1543). In 1544, Pope Paul III called a general council at Trent. The council met a year later (1545) to discuss reformation and counter-reformation.

This was a period of great transformations ushered in by dramatic geographic explorations, scientific discoveries, and sprouting capitalism. By the time of the Munster uprising, the Americas had

been discovered (1492); some twenty-five universities had been founded all over Europe; and the printing press had already turned out some ten million copies of published books in various European languages. Before the mid-sixteenth century, religious reformation and counter-reformation would sweep Germany, France, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Poland, Spain, and Sweden.

Viewing sixteenth century Europe in retrospect is very instructive in understanding what is happening in the Arab–Muslim world in the late twentieth century. The so-called Islamic revival is as much an expression of 'worldly' concern as it is a religious quest for 'other-worldly' salvation.

The seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca at the end of 1979 by a group of Muslim zealots led by a young man, Juhiman al-'Utyabi, resembles in many ways the Munster rebellion. The leader and his followers were all in their twenties and early thirties. They were of Bedouin tribal origin, newcomers to the rapid urbanizing centers of Saudi Arabia. In their youthful lifetime they had already witnessed the profound, but confusing, socioeconomic transformation of their country resulting from the oil boom. In the ten years preceding their rebellion, Saudi Arabia had doubled its total population, tripled its urban population, and increased its financial wealth tenfold. There were as many expatriates as native Saudis. The expatriates poured into the country in unprecedented numbers, especially after 1973. They came from as many and as far lands as Korea, Australia, Scandinavia, and America. While Saudis may have been used to Arabs and Muslims coming in for the pilgrimage, the oil-boom waves of expatriates had nothing or very little in common with the Saudis. Different in languages, religions, and lifestyles, the expatriates were running much of the economic life of Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the sudden wealth from skyrocketing oil prices was not equitably distributed. Nor was political power equitably shared. Estrangement or alienation of Saudis in their own country was growing as rapidly as the oil wealth in those years. Like youth everywhere, young Saudis, especially those with some education, felt the brunt of such estrangement more than others. With restricted participation in socioeconomic life because of limited skills and insufficient training for the modern institutions being built, and no political participation under the autocratic Saudi regime, long allied with the religious monopoly of the Wahhabi establishment, young Juhiman al-'Utyabi and his fellow zealots must have felt the same way as John of Leyden four-and-a-half centuries earlier. The end was nearly the same. The Grand Mosque of Mecca was soon besieged by Saudi government troops. The needed pronouncements of condemnation were quickly issued by Sheikh Bin Baz, the head of the Wahhabi religious establishment. However, unable to dissuade the rebels to surrender and with the Saudi troops unable to storm the Grand Mosque, the Saudi regime called on French mercenaries to do the job. Several of the zealots were killed in the process; others were arrested, quickly tried, and beheaded. The uprising was crushed. The whole thing ended within three weeks.

Similar episodes had taken place in Egypt in 1974 and 1977, and one in Tunisia just a few months before the Grand Mosque seizure (1979), and one in Tehran about the same time. The zealots in all of these cases were not the poorest of the poor, nor were they the misfits of the earth. They were all young and among the relatively better educated in their societies. They were all newcomers to the big city from tribal and rural origins. Like their counterparts in Munster, their tocsin was against "king and pope." In the Arab–Muslim world, that reads repressive political regimes and allied religious establishments. The counter weapon of the discontented zealots is equally a combination of the political and the religious.

More than Christianity, and other religions, Islam lends itself to being a mobilizing political weapon. In its precepts and dicta, Islam is as much 'worldly' as 'other-worldly.' It promises a glorious life on earth to the believers who adhere to its teachings in letter and spirit. Hence, the battle cry of today's activists, "Islam is the Solution." The idealized history which Muslims learn in school and hear about in mosques has a simple, unidimensional message: Islam in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and the Guided Caliphs (A.D. 610–61) enabled Muslims to be virtuous, just, prosperous, and strong. The true believers conquered the world and built the greatest civilization humanity had ever known. When Muslims strayed away from the straight path of Islam, they became decadent, poor, and weak. The culprits are sinful rulers at home and enemies of Islam abroad. To restore on earth the "paradise lost," it is the duty of every good Muslim to strive by deeds and words to restore the true Islamic societal-moral order.

Striving mainly by "deeds" is what sets Islamic activists apart from other Muslims. Acting on such beliefs is what puts some of them in lethal confrontations, not only with their respective states and regimes, but also often against the rest of their own societies.

The first Muslim state of Medina, set up by the Prophet Muhammad and his four Guided Caliphs (successors), lasted for only forty years (A.D. 622–61). For the following fourteen centuries, the imagination of successive generations of Muslims has been galvanized by the purified glorious tales of those four decades. The history of Muslims since A.D. 661 is replete with religio-social movements in quest for the "paradise lost." Not all such movements succeeded in seizing power; and none has managed to restore the "paradise lost." The political success, rise, religious failure, and fall of those dynasties, had always sown the seeds of new religio-social movements.

Ibn Khaldun (A.D. 1332–1406/A.H. 723–808) the great Arab social intellectual, noted the cyclical nature and success prerequisites of such movements for seizing political power and establishing dynasties of their own. According to him, it is always a combination of an *'asabiya'* (ésprit de corp) and a 'religious mission.' The *asabiya*, a primordial form of solidarity, often embodied in a strong tribe or a tribal coalition, provides the muscles of political–military success. The religious mission provides the spiritual raison d'être and legiti-

macy for success. To put it in other terms, every new movement has to provide an alternative 'king and pope,' to a decaying 'king and pope.' The last literal manifestations of the Khaldunian paradigm were the nineteenth century Saudi Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sanusi movement in North Africa, and the Mahdist movement in the Sudan.

In Khaldunian times (fourteenth century), the would-be 'tribe–movement' was often initiated in the hinterland, at an unreachable distance from the seat of political power. That hinterland was dubbed in the times of Ibn Khaldun as *"bilad al-siba"* or the unruly country—in contrast to *"bilad al-maghzin"* or the obedient and tax-paying country. As the central power weakened, the *siba* country expanded and inched closer to the capital until the moment was right for the coup de grâce against the decaying ruling élite. A new 'tribe–dynasty,' legitimized and empowered by a religious vision, takes over to restore the 'Islamic paradise lost.' The rest of the cycle unfolds over three to four generations, until another *siba* hinterland tribe and another religious vision coalesce into a new movement.

This elegant Khaldunian paradigm accounted for much, if not all, of medieval Arab–Muslim history. With sociocultural changes and growing integration into a world system since the late eighteenth century, the paradigm no longer accounts for the march of modern Arab–Muslim history. But some of its internal logic may still be operative. The mobilizing power of an Islamic vision in the quest for a 'paradise lost' still appeals to the marginals, the relatively deprived, and the powerless.

In this century, the 'tribe' alone may no longer be a viable organizational base for a religio-social movement. However, in the recent Yemeni elections (1993) and civil war (1994), we note an alliance between the Hashid tribe and the Islamic Reform (Islah) party. A year later, the same alliance would march with modern North Yemeni army units to expel the South Yemeni ruling élite and consolidate their hold on all of Yemen. More often, however, it is now an 'under-class' which substitutes the tribe in fueling religio-social movements in the Arab–Muslim world. Algeria and Egypt are striking cases in point. In both, one-party populist regimes ruled for thirty to forty years before they were forcefully challenged by sprouting Islamic movements.

Initially, the single-party populist regimes had an attractive vision of their own. The vision promised tremendous worldly rewards: consolidation of newly gained independence, rapid development, economic prosperity, social justice, and cultural authenticity. Though not quite paradise on earth, the populist vision promised something very close to it. There were implicit conditions, however, for delivering on the populist promises: the 'masses' were to work hard without demanding liberal political participation. With no previous firm traditions of participatory governance anyhow, this populist tradeoff formula seemed acceptable to the vast majority. For the first decade or two, the populist social contract seemed to be working. Remark-

able expansion in the provision of education, industrialization, health, and other services was effected. With these real gains, a new middle class (NMC) and a modern working class (MWC) grew steadily under state tutelage.

However, there were unintended aversive consequences of populist policies: rapid population growth, urbanization, and bureaucratization. In the first twenty years of Algeria's populist regime (1962–82), its population doubled, its urbanization tripled, and its bureaucracy quadrupled. In Egypt, it took slightly longer—about twenty-seven to thirty years for all of the above to occur. By the third decade of populist rule, the regimes in both countries were no longer able to effectively manage their society and state. A new socioeconomic formation grew rapidly. For the lack of better than a Marxist term, this is the 'urban lumpenproletariat' (ULP). With high expectations, but little or no employable skills, capital, or civic norms, the swarming millions of rural newcomers to the cities made up the ULP. They crowded the older city quarters or more often created their own new slum areas. Called bidonvilles in Algeria and *'ashwa'iyat* in Egypt, these densely overpopulated slum areas would become the late twentieth century equivalent of the Khaldunian *siba.* Their human stuff is proving to be the most flammable materials in Arab–Muslim societies today. In Egypt and Algeria they constitute between 25 and 35 percent of the total population. Its youth is an easy prey for manipulation by demagogues, organized criminals, agents provocateurs, and Islamic activists.

Other compounding factors have made things worse for populist regimes. The lower rungs of the new middle class have been steadily alienated as a result of dwindling opportunities for employment or upward sociopolitical mobility. They began a mass desertion in the 1970s in Egypt, and in the 1980s in Algeria. From their ranks, Islamic activists and other dissidents have sprouted. They have manipulated the ULP of the new *siba* in staging their challenge vis-à-vis the now aging and decaying populist ruling élite.

To use the Khaldunian analogy, a typical armed confrontation between an activist Islamic-led new *siba* and the Egyptian state (new *maghzin*) took place in December 1992. By official count, some seven hundred shanty areas (*'ashwa'iyat*) have sprung up in or around Egypt's major urban centers over the previous two decades (1970–90). At present (1995) their total population is estimated between 10 million and 12 million. Western Munira (WM) is one of them. Located on the northwestern edge of Imbaba in Greater Cairo, it is less than three kilometers across the Nile from the aristocratic upper-class district of Zamalek (the residential area of most of the *maghzin* élite). At two square kilometers, that is, less than one-fifth of the territorial size of Zamalek, WM has nearly one million dwellers, ten times the population of Zamalek. With nearly fifty times the density of Zamalek, at the time of the 1992 confrontation, dwellers of WM had no schools, hospitals, sewage system, public transportation, or police station

within walking distance. For many years, WM represented a 'Hobbesian world,' run by thugs, criminals, drug dealers, and infested with every known vice. With no state presence, WM was also used as a hide-out for many Islamic militants on the run. In the late 1980s, one of them, Sheikh Gaber, felt safe enough to operate in the open. He preached and recruited several followers, and in a very short time, he emerged as a 'community leader.' He began to weed out the vice lords, impose order, veil women, arrange marriages, and collect "taxes." The Egyptian state did not take note of him until a Reuters reporter filed a story with the provocative title, "Sheikh Gaber, the President of the Republic of Imbaba." Angered and embarrassed, the Egyptian authorities ordered the Reuters reporter out of the country and staged an armed expedition to arrest Sheikh Gaber. By official count, some twelve thousand armed security forces laid siege to WM, then stormed the place. The operation took three weeks before Sheikh Gaber was arrested and six hundred of his followers were killed, wounded, or arrested.

Similar confrontations have been frequent in both Egypt and Algeria since 1991. The casualty toll has escalated in Egypt from ninety-six in 1991 to 322 in 1992 to 1,106 in 1993—that is, more than a tenfold increase in three years. In 1994, however, the number of casualties decreased to about seven hundred. In Algeria, the toll has rapidly been escalating: from less than one thousand in 1992 to about ten thousand in 1993 to about twenty thousand in 1994. In April 1995,[5] the Algerian Minister of the Interior (A. Mizyan Shirif), announced that the total number of casualties had topped thirty thousand persons and material losses amounted to over $2.2 billion in three years (January 1992 to January 1995). This amount of money, according to him, was more than enough to build 400,000 housing units—that is, for more than 2.4 million people. A war of attrition has been the order of the day in both countries. It is a war between an Islamic-led new *siba* and the state.

The profile comparisons between typical challenger militants and the challenged populist rulers are stark. Of equal or superior formal education, the Islamic militant is at least forty years younger. Nearly 90 percent of those militants arrested or killed in armed confrontations with the Algerian state in the last three years were born after independence (1962)—that is, after the present populist regime came to power. Some of Egypt's militants who were recently arrested, tried, and sentenced to death were under 18 years old—that is, born after President Mubarak came to power (as vice-president in 1975), and after the beginning of the uninterrupted tenure of at least four of his present cabinet members.

Not only did the populist regimes fail to renew their ranks by infusing new blood and new ideas, but worse, for a long time they repressed or circumvented other orderly social forces from sharing the public space. The middle and upper rungs of the middle class, men and women, were not allowed enough margin of freedom to evolve

autonomous civil society organizations. Had such a civil society been in place during the period of populist state retreat (the 1970s and 1980s), both Egypt and Algeria could have weathered the Islamic-led new *siba* storm. Egypt has nearly come to a standstill in its timid democratization, begun in the early 1980s. Algeria rushed clumsily into it in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the situation in both countries could be markedly improved.

Surprisingly, what Michael Hudson calls the "modernizing monarchies" of the Arab–Muslim world have been more able to weather the Islamic-led *siba* storms. Different in many ways from their populist neighbors, Arab modernizing monarchies in Morocco and Jordan faced similar socioeconomic structural problems during the 1980s—growing population, urbanization, bureaucratization, huge external debt, and shrinking state resources. They had their share of urban lumpenproletariat (ULP), the new *siba*, and food rioting in the 1980s. But instead of repression, dragging, or rushing, the two monarchs engineered an orderly gradual democratization. They initiated public debates on governance and constitutional issues in which all political forces participated. A 'national pact' or a 'new social contract' was implicitly or explicitly formulated. Municipal and parliamentary elections were held, with a marked degree of fairness. The secular opposition in Morocco and the Islamic forces in Jordan won an impressive number of seats. Women were elected for national parliaments for the first time in both countries.

Morocco and Jordan are not, and may not for a long time be constitutional monarchies. Nor is there any illusions about their participatory experiments of governance soon becoming a Westminster-style democracy. But their sociopolitical march in the last five years has been far more orderly than that of Algeria and Egypt. There has been no politically motivated violence, killing, or rioting in either country. Islamic militancy hardly exists in Morocco, and is fairly tamed or under complete control in Jordan.

In Kuwait (1992), Lebanon (1992), and Yemen (1993) Islamists participated in parliamentary elections. They came second in Kuwait and Yemen and had an impressive showing in winning several of the seats assigned to both Shia and Sunni Muslims in Lebanon.

Even in Egypt, though not officially recognized as a legal party, the Muslim Brothers (MB) ran for parliamentary elections under the banner of other parties—in 1984 with the Wafd, and 1987 with the Socialist Labor party. In both elections, the MB won several seats and came out in third place among nine contending parties.

Beyond the Arab world, Islamists have regularly run for elections in Pakistan and Turkey since the 1980s. In Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, Islamists have been peacefully engaged in local and municipal politics, and are petitioning for recognition and expansion of pluralistic politics on a national level.

There are a number of lessons to be drawn from the contrasting

cases of Algeria and Egypt on one hand, and the rest of the Arab–Muslim world on the other.

Political Islam has grown and spread in the last two decades as an idiom of protest against repression, social injustice, hardening of the political arteries, and the threat to collective identity. Its radicalism is commensurate with the degree to which these ills are felt or perceived by the young, educated, lower-middle-class Muslims. Political Islam has not been the only appealing vision to these young Muslims. They have responded strongly to other secular visions in this century, such as Arab nationalism, interwar liberalism, and socialism.

Despite their initial radical messages and/or actions, Islamic militants are tamable, through accommodative politics of inclusion. Running for office, or once in office, they recognize the complexities of the real world and the need for gradualism and toleration. The 'worldly' concerns increasingly overtake the 'other-worldly' in their consciousness, language, and actions. The Islamists of Iran are a case in point. Starting as pronatalist, Iran's Islamic Revolution is now feverishly pursuing an antinatalist population policy. In this respect, Islamic activists are no different from their Chinese communist counterparts.

People in Muslim societies, like people everywhere, may give new visions and promised solutions a chance when the old ones fail. But at the end of the day, they judge the new ones by their concrete results. The Islamists in Jordan lost one-third of the number of seats between the 1989 and 1993 elections. Despite the majority of seats won in the last aborted parliamentary elections, Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) lost one million net votes between 1990 and 1991. In both Jordan and Algeria, the initial flare of the 'Islamic alternative' lost some of its glare once Islamists were tried in office.

Peoples of the Muslim world have increasingly been integrated in the international system. The radical Islamists among them can not ignore this fact. Even their anti-Western rhetoric is an idiom of protest against worldly grievances. Once fairly or equitably addressed, cooperation becomes not only possible, but also desirable. In this respect, Islamic radicals are no different from their nationalist counterparts of an earlier generation. The problem of Muslim peoples with the West is like their problems with their own repressive corrupt regimes. Not only does the legacy of Western colonialism lurk in Muslim collective memory, but it is easily invoked with every contemporary Western act or policy which smacks of double standards. The reaction of the West to the massacres of Muslims by non-Muslims in the marketplaces of Bosnia or the mosques of Palestine seemed muted at best. The Western pressure on Arab and Muslim countries to sign an unlimited Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), without asking their archenemy Israel to do the same, is to them a blatant double standard. Equally, Algeria's short-lived experiment with pluralistic politics was a test of whether Islamists could reconcile with democracy. But it was as much a test of whether the West could reconcile

with Muslim democracy. The West has long been on the best of terms with Muslim despots, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran's Shah, and Pakistan's Zia ul-Haq. Once these inconsistencies are seriously and credibly addressed, not only militant Islamists, but most Arab–Muslim people would have no legitimate misgivings vis-à-vis the West.

As a thoughtful Western observer recently noted, Islamic societies now find themselves in the opening rounds of what the West went through in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in redefining both the relationship between God and the individual, and between the individual and the state.6 We believe that Muslim societies will emerge from this process as more rational and more democratic. The process, however, could be much shorter and less costly if the West lends an honest hand on the side of democratic forces. The West has recently been militarily intervening in the affairs of Muslim societies—from Libya to Somalia, and from the Gulf to Kurdistan. It has equally been carrying out economic intervention—directly, or through the IMF–World Bank-prescribed structural adjustment policies. The West has yet to do the same politically for democracy. If democracy brought into office some radical Islamists, they would soon lose either their "radicalism" or "Islamism." Muslims everywhere have taken note that the Islamic Afghani Mujahidin are fighting each other for worldly gains (power), as their counterparts had previously done in post-Shah Iran. Muslims recognize that the Islamists are not saints. But they may be less devilish than their present old repressive rulers.

I conclude with a plea to all social scientists and humanists alike to continue to engage in a serious disaggregation of the complex processes now unfolding in various regions of the world.

It is a renewed plea for the rehabilitation of the concepts of cultural diversity and the practice of cultural relativism as a requisite for the 'bridging' not the 'clashing' of civilizations. Boundaries will always exist so long as human groups continue to exist. But they need not be hostile boundaries. We neither need another Great Wall of China or Berlin Wall. Neither wall stood the test of time. Their remnants in China and Germany are now sheer tourist attractions. Let us hope that Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations?" will turnout not to be a self-fulfilling prophecy but a sheer intellectual tourist attraction.

NOTES

1 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp. 22–49.
2 F. Ajami, "The Summoning," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept.–Oct. 1993, pp. 2–9, cit. p. 2.
3 Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" p. 48.
4 Abridged from a full account in, Stark, Rodney, and Williams Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).
5 Quoted in *al-Ahram*, 8 April 1995.
6 Robin Wright, "Islam, Democracy, and the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1992, pp. 131–45, see p. 133.

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6

Cairo: A Sociological Profile

1987

The history and sociology of Cairo are those of Egypt and, to some extent, those of the entire Arab region. Its size, splendor, power, and functions have been a reflection of this fact for the past eleven centuries. It is of little surprise, therefore, that the Egyptians themselves have used the same name for their country and their capital city, *Misr*, interchangeably, and the Arabs have admiringly dubbed this complex entity as 'the Mother of the World' *(umm al-dunya)*.

This equation does not merely relate to a concrete physical entity, but describes a state of mind and spirit. To the Egyptians and their fellow Arabs, Cairo is at once a seat of political power, of artistic creativity and cultural pacesetting, of religious shrines and religious learning, of scholarships and higher education, of industry as well as entertainment. For Egyptians and fellow Arabs, Cairo, therefore, represents singularly what so many cities may pluralistically represent to their respective nations. In terms of regional influence, Cairo is the equivalent of the likes of Paris, the Vatican, Oxford, Hollywood, and Detroit combined.

As a giant national, regional, and international center with all the above functions and feats, Cairo is also gripped by giant problems. As much as the city is enriched and stimulated by the inputs of these concentric zones, it also carries their burdens. No one has analyzed the unfolding of this dialectic better than Janet Abu-Lughod in her masterpiece *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). She skillfully recounts the story of Cairo, woven into a broader national, regional, and international canvas. In the following few pages, I propose to explore a number of sociopolitical forces which have been at work in shaping this unique city in more recent times.

Present-day Cairo has evolved historically through a series of grand political designs. The four physical formations which constituted premodern Cairo were all envisioned and initially carried out by great military–political commanders or empire-builders. Al-Fustat was built by Amr Ibn al-'Aas, in 641 (A.H. 21); the Abbasid dynasty built al-Askar northeast of it, in 751 (A.H. 133); Ahmad Ibn Tulun added a third settlement adjacent to the second called al-Qita'i', in 870 (A.H. 256); and the Fatimid Jawhar al-Siqilli built al-Qahira northeast of the three settlements, in 969 (A.H. 358). These four formations all started as military settlements for commanders and soldiers, with a mosque and often a palace at the center of each. They were spaced by the hundred-year 'Khaldunian Cycle' of the rise and fall of Muslim dynasties. The four settlements were finally joined and fenced by yet

another great military–political commander, Salah al-Din (Saladin), before he set out on his campaigns against the European crusaders in 1187. After that time, premodern Cairo assumed its physical unity and functioned as a single city. Many of the developments—physical and sociocultural—which were to take place in the following three centuries under the Mamlukes occurred within the confines of this single entity, measuring about two square miles. So long as Cairo remained a seat of Egyptian power it thrived and prospered. As Cairo (Egypt) lost its political–military eminence with the Ottoman conquest (1517), the city began to decline in all spheres.

Not until the beginning of the nineteenth century was Egypt, and hence Cairo, able to start the struggle for autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. In this quest Cairo was the seat of two of that century's most ambitious empire builders. The first, Napoleon, headquartered himself in the city briefly (1798), and tried to unlock its intricate physique and deep cultural secrets. To him, Cairo and hence Egypt, was a challenge and a gateway to the rest of the 'Orient.' To Cairo, and hence Egypt, Napoleon was equally a challenge. He was a symbol of another world which had remained almost forgotten since the last showdown with the crusaders six centuries earlier. Many waters had run under that other world's bridges, but water had stood still and stagnant under Egypt's bridges. Napoleon stirred the waters too violently for the taste of Cairo. The hitherto slumbering city revolted against the French, and finally forced them out, ending the longest three years in Egypt's modern history. The traditional city may have been too weak to resist Napoleon's initial onslaught, but it proved strong enough to foil his dreams.

Meanwhile, Cairo and Egypt were never to return to being a backwater of the Ottoman Empire. There appeared another rising star, Muhammad 'Ali (1805). More shrewd and more resilient, he attempted to modernize Egypt by circumventing its traditional structures. He created modern institutions parallel to the old, and allowed a lifeline to connect both. With these arrangements, he provided a strong material and labor base which in a matter of two decades enabled Egypt to emerge as a giant regional power. Not only did Egypt secure a de facto independence, but also it posed a deadly threat to the Ottoman Empire itself. This story is too well-known to recount here. But in the process of his quest for modernization and empire-building, Muhammad 'Ali laid the seed for the dual development of Egypt and Cairo. Muhammad 'Ali also began the process of expanding modern Cairo—alongside the traditional Islamic city—to the northwest. Although most of Mohammed 'Ali's dreams were foiled by the European powers, the seeds and directions he laid for the future expansions of Cairo have proven more lasting.

Since Muhammad 'Ali's rule (1805–49), there have been four major modernization attempts: under Khedive Isma'il (1863–79); during Egypt's Liberal Age (1922–52); under Nasser (1952–70); and under Sadat (1970–81). Each of these attempts left a lasting impact. Be-

tween Isma'il's demise and the Liberal Age (that is, 1881–1922) Egypt was under complete British occupation. Even then, Egypt and Cairo did not cease developing. But it was a development mostly initiated by an alien power to serve its interests.

Isma'il's vision of modernization was to turn Egypt into a piece of Europe and to make Cairo a European city. Turning his back on the traditional Islamic city, he moved the seat of power from the Citadel to 'Abdin Palace. He seized the opportunity of opening the Suez Canal to hurriedly build new districts in the European style, complete with parks, broad streets, an opera house, street lights, and additional palaces to accommodate his European guests. Many of these developments were to the west of the Islamic city—from Azbakiya to the eastern banks of the Nile between Bulaq and Qasr al-'Aini, and across into Gezira Island. Isma'il's vision ended in a nightmare for Egypt. His designs and extravaganza saddled Egypt with heavy debts to European governments and banks, allowing growing intervention in Egyptian affairs by foreign powers. As a result, he was deposed, and a popular rebellion led by Egyptian officers again deposed his successor, Khedive Tawfiq, in 1880–81. British occupation of the country began in 1881. Isma'il had already opened the doors of Egyptian society and the economy to thousands of foreigners. With British occupation, hundreds of thousands flocked to Egypt in search of fame and fortune. Most of them settled in Cairo and Alexandria. They settled in the new quarters created by Isma'il or constructed their own. They started and operated Western-like institutions, and appropriated disproportionate shares of Egypt's wealth—thanks to the capitulations, the legal shelter provided by the Mixed Courts, and the protection of foreign powers. The construction of Garden City, Zamalek, Heliopolis, and Ma'adi occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries The old city was very much left alone. While its population was steadily growing, its area remained fixed and its infrastructure completely neglected. As a result, population density skyrocketed and living conditions severely deteriorated. The more ambitious and successful among its population moved out to the newer quarters. The old city, while still containing nearly half of Cairo's population in the second decade of this century, steadily became socially and economically marginalized. The decline of its guilds and crafts, its *'ulama'* and merchants had begun with Muhammad 'Ali a century earlier. But with British rule, the pace of decline was accelerated. While foreigners were the immediate beneficiaries of this process, a new native social formation emerged of technocrats and bureaucrats, who had been sent to Europe for training and higher education under Muhammad 'Ali. However, it took almost a century for this new middle class (NMC) to fully mature.

The new middle class has knocked on the doors of power many times since 'Urabi's Revolt in 1879. It opposed the alliance between the royal aristocracy and foreign powers. In 1919, it managed to mobilize the entire population in a two-month uprising, reminiscent

of the Cairo revolts against Napoleon's armies. As a result, the door to power was partly-opened—enough to let the upper half of the NMC in. Between 1920 and 1950, Cairo lived a quasi-liberal age. A bicameral parliament was created to fulfill the quest for political power. An Egyptian banking industry was established to mobilize economic power, and a modern university was created in response to educational needs. Likewise, cinemas and theaters flourished, and a literary movement thrived. The upper echelon of the NMC was in its heyday in the interwar period. It was quickly turning into a bourgeoisie. Its successful banking encouraged an industrialization venture. The Banque Misr group implemented many projects, ranging from large-scale industries such as textile factories to motion pictures. In the process, a new working class was being created, which, like the NMC, had been unable to grow before, due to local despotism and foreign domination.

Cairo was the center of all these socioeconomic developments. The upper echelons of the NMC moved in large numbers to the newer and better quarters of Cairo—now as partners to and not intruders on the foreign residents. A tacit alliance was soon to develop between the new members of this class and foreign interests. The latter, long sensing the winds of change, were only too happy to meet their Egyptian counterparts more than midway. The 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty symbolized this new partnership. This treaty left out the lower echelons of the NMC, the growing modern working class, and the traditional Cairenes in the old city, all of whom grew restless during the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s. New parties and mass politico-religious movements appealed to them—notably the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt Socialist Party *(Misr al-Fatah)*. Their misgivings vis-à-vis the Egyptian upper class were no less than those against the British and the royal family. The Second World War added to their sense of relative deprivation and alienation. The burning of the modern business district of Cairo (developed under Isma'il, the British, and during Egypt's Liberal Age) in January 1952 was a dramatic display of their anger.

The 1952 revolution was to take place six months later, ushering in yet another major modernization attempt in Egypt's modern history. The implementers of this project were the lower strata of the NMC—those who had not benefited from the developments of the previous three decades. They soon allied themselves with the new working class and the rural peasantry. Many of the structural changes effected by the July Revolution were naturally for the benefit of this new alliance. One of the earliest acts of the revolution was to tear down the Qasr al-Nil Barracks—a symbol of both Royal and British Cairo. The whole upper class (grande bourgeoisie and landowners) was removed from political power, and its economic power dramatically reduced. Urban rent controls were soon to follow, hitting owners of real estate and benefiting tenants, predominantly the lower middle class and workers. This measure, while having an immediate

equitable redistributive effect, was to have an adverse impact on the supply of urban housing in the long run.

Massive public housing projects were carried out in poor districts of Cairo (such as Zaynhum, 'Ayn al-Sira, Imbaba, Helwan, and Shubra al-Khayma). New areas were subdivided for the housing of technocrats, who provided the backbone of the revolution. It is not accidental that Nasr City was designed not only for residential housing but was also the preferred site for the state's planning organs—the Ministry of Planning, the National Institute of Planning, and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Likewise, the Mohandisin City (Engineers City) was designed to accommodate the housing needs of this group—vital in any industrialization effort.

Cairo grew in population size and area during the Nasser years (1952–70). Big industries were started in the southern suburb of Helwan and the northern area of Shubra al-Khayma. New bridges were constructed across the river. New institutions of education and culture mushroomed throughout the city. Urban planning in those years may have left a lot to be desired from an aesthetic point of view, but for the forces who backed the revolution and grew in size and power through its programs, such developments were far superior than what had come before.

Nasser's revolutionary drive also turned Cairo into an Arab capital in the political sense of the word. His pan-Arabism induced thousands of Arab students, artists, journalists, and activists to make Cairo a favorite destination. The city's international flavor was further enhanced by Nasser's role in the Non-Aligned Movement and his support for national liberation movements in Africa and Asia.

Nasser's dreams may have overloaded both Cairo's and Egypt's capacity. These dreams came to a tragic halt in 1967. His military defeat at the hands of Israel reversed Cairo's fortunes as well. For several years following 1967, with most of the country's resources earmarked for the war effort, Cairo's infrastructure was not properly maintained, let alone expanded to keep up with continuing population growth. The rent control measures did not encourage the private sector to step in and help ease the growing housing shortage either.

When Sadat came to power (1970), he inherited these heavy burdens. By 1974, Sadat had evolved his own vision to deal with the problems—the Open-Door Economic Policy. His vision was reminiscent of Khedive Isma'il. Sadat wanted to develop Egypt along Western lines, with Western economic aid, and with Western technology and Western experts. If Paris and Rome were favorite models for Isma'il, Los Angeles and Houston were favorite models for Sadat. He let loose private developers and speculators. When the cost of land skyrocketed, he proudly declared that his policies "had made Egyptian land very valuable." New luxury high-rise buildings mushroomed throughout the city, replacing private villas, through massive slum clearance (for example, Bulaq). Five-star hotels and new highways and overpasses were constructed, including the impressive Sixth of October Bridge.

This rapid and frantic urban development was aided by the inflow of billions of dollars from Egyptians working in oil-rich Arab countries. A new wave of foreign influx (this time mostly Americans) added further stimulation and intensified the demand for luxury housing.

Sadat's vision was supported by an alliance of the old bourgeoisie and landowners (who were never physically liquidated by Nasser); the nouveau riche who made their fortunes in Arab countries or from shady activities; and leaders of public sector corporations who had already reached the ceiling of promotion while still in their forties or fifties. It was a very potent alliance politically and economically, but small numerically. Left out of this bonanza were the vast lower-middle class, junior bureaucrats and urban working class. As they saw their share in power and wealth steadily eroded and that of others growing, these groups became more critical of the system.

An early sign of frustration was the food riots in Cairo and other cities in January 1977. Reminiscent of Black Saturday, twenty-five years earlier, rioters in Cairo burned and sacked many of the overt symbols of Sadat's city—night clubs, expensive cars, and police stations. The army was called in to put down this uprising, which left some one hundred people dead and several times as many wounded in Cairo. Significantly, most of those killed and wounded were from Bab al-Shi'riya, Bulaq, Shubra, and Imbaba—the most densely populated districts of Cairo.

This early warning did not alter Sadat's vision. After a brief pause, his previous policies continued. In the following four years, dissent and anger were channeled through militant religious groups—both Islamic and Coptic. Religious confrontations and interreligious strife grew rampant. The most serious incidents took place in Zawya al-Hamra, one of the poorest and most crowded districts of Cairo, during the summer of 1981. A few months later, convergence of several events culminated in a massive crackdown on the opposition and all religious dissidents. On 6 October 1981, President Sadat, and probably his dazzling visions, were assassinated by one of these extremist religious groups.

Cairo's development in Egypt's modern age must be seen against this sociopolitical sketch. But to complete the picture, we turn to less dramatic but equally important and more pervasive forces shaping Cairo's development—demographic forces.

While Egypt's population grew twelvefold in the last 200 years, Cairo's increased thirtyfold during the same period. The story of the dramatic growth of the country and its capital is not unique in Third World annals. The difference is one of scale.

The country went through its 'demographic transition' in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Death rates began their slow but steady decline; birth rates remained at their previous high levels. The inevitable result, with no migration out of Egypt, has been a steady population increase. With less than five million inhabitants at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by 1900 the population had doubled to reach the 10 million mark. Since then the doubling time

has become shorter and shorter. The second doubling, from 10 to 20 million, took 50 years (1900–50). The third doubling, took merely 28 years, that is, from 20 to 40 million between 1950 and 1978. Over the last thirty years, rates have hovered between 2.4 and 2.8 percent annually.

Egypt's urban areas grew exponentially. Sluggish at the beginning, this growth accelerated late in this century. Not only have urban areas matched the countryside in natural increase, but they also began to incorporate rural overspill in the form of a rural-to-urban migration. Urban population grew from 19 percent of Egypt's total in 1907 to 33 percent in 1947 to 44 percent in 1976 (see Table 1). At present it is estimated that half of Egypt's population resides in cities.

Table 1
Urban and rural populations, 1907–76 (thousands)

Years	Total	Urban		Rural	
		number	%	number	%
1907	11,183	2,125	19	9,058	81
1917	12,670	2,641	21	10,030	79
1927	14,083	3,716	26	10,367	74
1937	15,811	4,382	8	11,429	72
1947	18,806	6,202	33	12,604	67
1960	25,771	9,651	37	16,120	63
1966	29,724	12,037	40	17,687	60
1976	36,556	16,092	44	20,554	56
1986	48,254	23,162	48	25,092	52
1996[a]	60,236	30,118	50	30,118	50

Sources: Computed from official census figures.

Rural-to-urban migration has been one of Egypt's many silent revolutions in this century, although its impact on the daily life of Egyptian cities is not so silent. The crowding, the confusion, and the noise of people and things are rampant. There are many reasons for the century-long trend of rural-to-urban migration: pressure on limited cultivable land, neglect of the countryside, lack of employment opportunities, and the attraction of cities, where power and wealth and services are concentrated.

Like other Egyptian cities, Cairo has absorbed an increasing volume of the rural-to-urban migration. The city proper grew from an estimated two hundred thousand in 1800 to six hundred thousand in 1900, to 2.4 million in 1950 to 5.7 million in 1970 to 8.8 million in 1980 (see Table 2). This is a fifteenfold increase in this century alone, compared to only a twofold increase in rural population, and a fourfold increase in overall urban population. As Table 3 shows, Cairo was adding as many persons by natural population increase as it was from migration. The dominance of Cairo over Egypt's demographic and urban landscape needs no elaboration. Currently, the city accounts for nearly 25 percent of the country's total population and about 50 percent of the country's urban population.

Table 2
The demographic evolution of Cairo and Egypt

	Cairo		Egypt	
	Population	Average annual growth rate (%)	Population	Average annual growth rate (%)
1800	200,000	–	3,000,000	–
1900	600,000	1.4	10,000,000	1.5
1920	875,000	1.6	13,000,000	1.3
1930	1,150,000	3.0	1,000,000	1.1
1940	1,525,000	2.1	19,000,000	1.2
1950	2,350,000	4.8	21,000,000	1.8
1960	3,747,000	4.1	26,000,000	2.4
1970	5,700,000[a]	4.1	33,000,000	2.5
1980	8,778,000[a]	3.0	42,000,000	2.5
1990[b]	11,411,000	3.0	52,547,000	2.3

Sources: Figures for 1900–1950 are based on adjusted census figures taken regularly every ten years from 1897 to 1947 prorated to even decades. The 1960 figure is an actual census figure.

[a] Estimates issued by the Governor of Cairo, published in *al-Misawar*, 13 July, 1984, pp. 22–25, for Greater Cairo, which includes Cairo proper and the adjacent urban areas of Giza and Qalyubiya governorates.

[b] CAPMAS: *Estimates of Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt*, January 1996

Table 3
Net migration to Cairo, 1907–80

	Number of migrants	Average annual rate of migration (percentage)
1907–17	158,000	2.0
1917–27	297,000	2.8
1927–37	359,000	2.6
1937–47	606,000	2.8
1947–60	953,000	2.2
1960–70	702,000	2.1
1970–80	1,100,000	1.9
1980–90	1,430,000	1.7

Sources: Figures for 1907–60 are from M. S. Abdul-Karim, "Emigration to Cairo," a report submitted to the Greater Cairo Planning Commission, 1968. The figure for 1960–70 is from Gamal Askar, "The Population Explosion in Cairo," *al-Ahram al-iqtisadi* (1 Dec, 1972) and cited in John Waterbury, *Egypt: Burdens of the Past, Options for the Future*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1978, p. 127. The figures for 1970–80 and 1980–90 are based on figures given in *Egypt's Human Development Report*, Institute of National Planning, Cairo, 1994, p.178.

Cairo's land mass expanded steadily beyond its original Islamic core—the so-called 'traditional' or 'medieval' city. Until the early decades of the nineteenth century this built-up area was no more than two square miles. By the end of the century it tripled to six square miles. Semi-empty quarters adjacent to the Islamic core filled up

Azbakiya and Bulaq. The genesis of new quarters to the north, northeast, and west were soon to witness an embryonic growth by the second half of the nineteenth century. Shubra, 'Abbasiya, Isma'iliya, Munira, Qasr al-'Aini, Tawfiqiya, and Hilmiya. The names of most of these new quarters bear those of Egypt's successive rulers during the nineteenth century. The areas west of the Islamic City to the Nile had already been filled up, and bridges were constructed to connect Cairo proper to Giza on the other side. By the turn of the century both Garden City (an area between Qasr al-'Aini and the eastern bank of the Nile) and Zamalek (an island in the Nile across from Bulaq) were to become the choice spots for residence of the upper class—foreign and native. By 1920, the land mass of Cairo proper had expanded around the Islamic core in three directions (west, north, and south) to an area of approximately twelve square miles This rapid expansion to nearly six times the original medieval city, was aided by the introduction of tramways starting in 1896.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the physical consolidation of quarters built a few decades earlier as well as the development of two new suburbs—Heliopolis and Ma'adi, to the east and south of nineteenth-century Cairo These were designed in a European fashion, at least in terms of physical layout. They were to be residential areas for the rising foreign and native bourgeoisie who could not be accommodated in Garden City and Zamalek. The gallant attempt of Baron Empain, builder of Heliopolis, to give one of them an Islamic–Arab character may have succeeded to the extent of outer appearances. But the socioeconomic contents and functions of Heliopolis, like those of Ma'adi, belonged to a different age, hardly Arab or Islamic. This was the age of incorporating Egypt's economy and the upper stratum of society in the world capitalist system.

All in all, it may be said that between 1850 and 1950 the bulk of the present metropolis had developed. Pre-nineteenth century Cairo was no more than 10 percent of this urban mass. It was to shrink further in relative size during the three decades following the Egyptian Revolution of July 1952.

The three decades following 1950 witnessed the tripling of Cairo's population and more than doubling of its built-up urban mass. The area of Cairo proper grew from less than forty to eighty-eight square miles. Major new districts have been created since 1950—notably Nasr City to the east of the old Islamic core in the triangle between 'Abbasiya and Heliopolis, Muqattam City to the southeast, and New Ma'adi to the south. The housing strip stretching south along the Nile from Misr al-Qadima and Helwan has steadily claimed previously agricultural land. Helwan itself was quickly transformed from a leisurely suburb to an industrial district for much of Egypt's heavy industries.

Across the Nile from Cairo proper, Giza extended westward the nine miles to the Pyramids and northward all the way to Imbaba, incorporating several villages and transforming them physically and

socioeconomically in the process. For all sociological purposes this was an extension of Cairo, thus adding another sixty square miles to its already 132 square miles. Along with the site of Cairo University, the National Zoo, the Orman Gardens, and many villas along the western bank of the Nile, Giza has become the major recipient of Cairo's population spillover. New districts were planned and developed: Mohandisin ('Engineers') City, Professors City, and Sahafayin ('Journalists') City. Designed as single dwelling areas in the 1950s, these districts soon turned into high-rise boom areas in the 1970s.

To the north of Cairo proper, the stretch between Shubra and rural Qalubiya was quickly filled with both residential and industrial functions. Known as Shubra al-Khayma, this area, like Giza, has become socioeconomically an integral part of Cairo, adding another eighteen square miles.

Table 4
Greater Cairo: components of growth, 1960–76
(population in thousands; percentage average annual growth rate)

	1960	1966	1960–66	1976	1966–76	1986	1976–86
Cairo proper	3,353	4,220	3.9	5,084	1.9	6,069	1.2
Giza	419	571	5.3	1,233	8.0	2,278	8.4
Shubra al-Khayma	101	173	9.4	394	8.6	805	11.5
Total	3,873	4,964	4.8	6,711	3.5	9,152	3.6

Source: Computed from official census data.

Thus, all in all, the sociophysical entity called Greater Cairo is roughly 140 square miles, and is the home of more than 10 million of Egypt's population. In the early 1980s, Cairo proper accounts for roughly 63 percent of the total urban mass and about 70 percent of its population. Cairo proper has one of the world's highest densities—12,800 inhabitants per square mile. It has about four hundred and fifty thousand buildings and 2.5 million residential units.

Over the last century and a half, the old Islamic core of the city has shrunk in relative size and population. In Table 6, the data for Cairo proper is broken down by four major divisions: eastern, western, northern, and southern. The old medieval city is entirely located in the eastern division. As the table shows, the city has grown all around it, reducing its relative size steadily. Up until 1907, the eastern division still accounted for half of Cairo's total population. By 1937 its share fell to no more than one-third, and by 1976 its share fell to 19 percent. Measured against Greater Cairo, the population of the Islamic core accounts for less than 10 percent today.

The population of the Islamic core is only part of the eastern division of Cairo, which includes a freak residential area of cemeteries referred to in urban literature as 'the City of the Dead.' Separated from Islamic Cairo to the southeast by Salah Salem Road, along which it stretches for several miles, the City of the Dead has been absorbing

Table 5
Greater Cairo: changing relative weight of components, 1960–76 (percentage)

	1960	1966	1976	1986
Cairo Proper	86.57	85.01	75.76	66.31
Giza City	10.82	11.50	18.37	24.79
Shubra al-Khayma	2.61	3.49	5.87	8.90
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Computed from Table 4, above.

the spillover population of the Islamic core as well as the homeless from other parts of Cairo—including recent rural migrants. Cairo's traditional burial places usually include an underground grave, one or two adjacent rooms, and an open courtyard *(hawsh)*, all surrounded by a fence. This is to enable relatives of the deceased to come for extended visits. Most of these structures are spacious, airy, and sunny, and could accommodate the living as well as the dead. For centuries the City of the Dead had a small population of burial-related functionaries, such as watchmen, undertakers, stonecutters, and Quran reciters. At times, criminals and fugitives found shelter there. In the last four decades, however, the area began to attract other categories of population who could not find cheap housing elsewhere. In 1937 some ten thousand people were already residing in the City of the Dead. Thirty years later that population had grown tenfold to about one hundred thousand. At present it is estimated to be close to two hundred and fifty thousand.[1]

Cairo authorities have reluctantly accepted the de facto situation and extended some municipal services—including water, electricity, schools, bus lines, and even a police station. Meanwhile, the residents of the cemeteries engage in normal activities found in similar quarters of Cairo. Groceries, bakeries, and other service shops opened, and even some traditional industries (for example, glass blowing) are located there.

By international standards, the City of the Dead would be considered a slum area. But by Cairo standards it offers better living conditions than many other poor areas of the city. The population density (about 12,000 persons per square mile) is not as high as it is in the Islamic core across the Salah Salem Road, where it is about 36,000 per square mile. The general density average for Cairo as a whole is 12,800 per square mile. Some districts like Bab al-Shi'riya suffer from a density of sixty thousand per square mile. Although the Islamic core of Cairo is densely populated, it is richly endowed with traditional culture and material symbols. It is the site of al-Azhar mosque and university, the Citadel, Cairo's most famous mosques, khans, Mamluke tombs, traditional arts and crafts, bazaars, and traditional coffee shops and restaurants. However, several new functions have been introduced in that district, notably warehouses and wholesale trade. These, along with a growing population density, pose the greatest physical and cultural threat

to the Islamic core and its historical treasures. It is being squeezed from within and from without. Surrounded by other newer and faster growing districts, the demand is mounting for highways cutting across the Islamic core. The underground water level for its own population use and that of neighboring districts is rising, posing an added threat to its fabulous monuments.

In more than sheer metaphor, the Islamic core of Cairo has become an enclave of a remnant urban traditional culture, surrounded by a teaming megalopolis. Its fate is not entirely in the hands of its residents or even those who profess a keen obligation of guarding it. It is not clear in whose hands lies the fate of this Islamic enclave. Yet the enclave continues to muddle its way through the ups and downs of modern Egyptian history. Its 'traditional culture' gallantly negotiates its survival with other modern and quasi-modern cultures of the megalopolis. One saving grace in this dialectic is that the megalopolis itself represents a bigger enclave in an otherwise semi-traditional society. Thus, the Islamic enclave within greater Cairo draws some of its strength from the larger society outside Cairo.

The larger society has continuously injected Cairo with waves of newcomers. While some of them are 'select migrants' and hence 'modern-oriented,' the majority of newcomers are non-select migrants and hence bearers of a traditional culture. This injection has kept the terms of cultural exchange somewhat balanced within Cairo. Even some of the select migrants to Cairo in recent years, mostly university students or university graduates, have shown an aversion to modern metropolitan culture, if it means as it often does, 'Western culture.' The growing Sufi orders and militant Islamic groups are embodiments of this trend. Thus, the Islamic enclave in Cairo is not entirely helpless or powerless in negotiating its survival with other subcultures. It has its own reservoir as well as voluntary secret cultural agents diffused throughout the city. In the 1970s, an estimated three hundred new nightclubs were opened in Greater Cairo—double the number for the previous twenty years. This was more than matched by the building of some four hundred new mosques, mostly by private initiative—also double the number for the previous twenty years.

To say that Cairo has overwhelming problems is to state the obvious. Its first problem is one of size. Greater Cairo now contains about one-fourth of Egypt's population. This in itself poses major problems of administration and manageability. None of Egypt's successive regimes in the last hundred years has been able to check its growth. Unwittingly, all of these regimes stimulated the city's growth by concentrating power, economic activities, and services there. Table 6 shows a few indicators of such concentration. A vicious circle is at work—the greater concentration of production and service functions in Cairo is at the expense of other cities and rural areas. The ambitious and needy population of the latter come to Cairo, often at rates faster than the city can accommodate. The government spends a disproportionate share to keep Cairo's population from revolting. But it can never spend enough.

Table 6
Cairo proper: different growth rates of its major divisions 1882–1976 (population figures in thousands; percentages of total population)

	Cairo	Eastern		Western		Northern		Southern	
	pop.	pop.	%	pop.	%	pop.	%	pop.	%
1882	400	213	54	130	32	31	9	23	6
1897	590	320	54	160	27	76	13	34	6
1907	680	348	50	18	27	112	16	36	6
1917	800	376	47	216	27	170	21	40	5
1937	1,312	457	35	350	33	450	34	55	5
1947	2,091	670	32	512	24	800	38	109	6
1960	3,353	770	23	775	23	1,600	48	208	6
1966	4,220	840	20	928	22	2,110	50	338	8
1976	5,084	966	19	1,027	20	2,645	52	458	9

Sources: Computed from official census figures, following J. Abu-Lughod's classification of districts and extending it to cover 1966 and 1976. See Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971, pp. 172–80.

A few examples may suffice. With only one quarter of Egypt's population, Cairo appropriates about half of Egypt's public spending on limited income housing. Yet at present it suffers from a shortage of 250,000 housing units. Cairo consumes about 45 percent of Egypt's food. Yet, occasional food shortages and long lines in front of food cooperatives are familiar scenes in several of Cairo's districts. The city consumes about half of Egypt's purified water, yet water shortages are frequent, especially in the summer months, and dwellers of higher floors eternally complain. Cairo's daily water consumption is 105 million cubic feet. But the capacity of its sewage and drainage network is only 70 million cubic feet. The excess (35 million) gushes out and creates sizable hazardous ponds in most of Cairo's poor districts (and sometimes even in well-to-do districts). This phenomenon has been directly responsible for the collapse of many buildings, especially those with shaky foundations.

As population has grown, demand for land for housing and public buildings has mounted, and Cairo's green areas have steadily shrunk. Slightly more than one square yard per capita of green two decades ago, the share now is less than seven square inches, compared to nineteen square yards per capita in Europe.

Cairo has equity problems. In the late 1970s about 40 percent of its population lived under the 'poverty line.'[2] Relations between education, occupation, and income are no longer congruous. Many of the poor are 'new poor'—often with high school or university degrees. Many of the rich are 'nouveau riche,' often engaged in trade, smuggling, illegal currency exchange, land speculation, or other parasitic and dubious activities. Some of the nouveau riche are skilled, self-employed manual workers, such as plumbers, mechanics, electricians, and masons. Nearly all the poor of Cairo (old and new) live in

Table 7
Selected indicators of concentration in Greater Cairo in 1976 and 1986 (percentage of Egypt's total)

	1976	1986
Population	20.0	20.0
Manufacturing establishment	–	52.8
Industrial workers	–	46.7
Industrial production	–	50.3
Public investment	–	36.6
Public investment in water-delivery	–	46.2
Food consumption	42.5[a]	42.1
Telephone lines	60.0[a]	55.8

Sources: Computed or cited from official sources by John Waterbury, "Patterns of Urban Growth and Income Distribution," in G. Abdel Khalek and R. Tignor (eds.), *Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt,* Holms and Meier, New York, 1982, pp. 319–24 and 328. For 1986, provided by the Cairo Demographic Center, in *Population and Development in Egypt,* Cairo, 1994, pp.161–64.

[a] 1983: statement by Governor of Cairo, *al-Misawar*, 13 July, 1984. p. 3.

substandard housing. The governor of Cairo (*al-Misawar,* 13 July 1984) stated that 35 percent of Cairo's 2.3 million housing units are too old and dilapidated to conform to safety health regulations. He further stated that about 25 percent of all new housing units are built illegally and randomly without proper monitoring for safety and health standards.

Another side of Cairo's equity problem is the emergence in the 1970s of parallel service institutions with vast differences in quality. Thus, alongside public schools and hospitals, for example, private alternatives have been established: the new services cater to the top five percent of Cairo's population; the former cater to the other 95 percent. Similarly, much of the public expenditure on the city's transportation system has disproportionately gone to owners of private automobiles. In the ten years of 1972–82, the number of private vehicles more than tripled; public and semi-public vehicles also increased but at a slower pace. The new highways, overpasses, and ringroads obviously cater mainly to commuters who own private cars.

The growing inequity in Cairo is reflected throughout Egypt. The top five percent of the country's population has raised its share of national income from 15 percent to 24 percent during the 1970s, while the share of the lowest 20 percent dropped from 17 percent to 13 percent. But it is in Cairo that this inequity is most glaring. About 200,000 of Egypt's estimated 250,000 millionaires are residents of Cairo. Another aspect of the glaring inequity is the vast salary differential among employees of the government, public sector, and modern private sector. Three persons with equal qualifications employed in the different sectors could receive a monthly salary of LE100, LE200, and LE1000, respectively. The inequity has created instability in the job market, with a frantic race for modern private employment, which provides no more than 10 percent of Egypt's annual total.

Table 8
Greater Cairo: motor vehicles 1972–82

	Private autos	Public and semi-public vehicles[a]
1972	80,559	17,736
1974	87,388	20,710
1975	94,564	31,481
1977	133,599	33,571
1982[b]	250,000	45,000

Source: For the years 1972–77, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), October 1978, cited in John Waterbury, "Patterns of Urban Growth and Income Distribution," in G. Abdel-Khalek and R. Tignor (eds.), *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt,* Holms and Meier, New York, 1982, p. 333.

[a] The figures include taxis and private buses which transport tourists and employees of public and private companies.

[b] Estimates by the Governor of Cairo, *al-Misawar,* 13 July, 1984, p. 23.

All in all, Cairo's overcrowdedness, deteriorating physical infrastructure and public services are compounded for the majority of its population by glaring inequities of power and wealth. As there is a struggle for Cairo's soul, there is an even more intense struggle for its limited resources and privileges. Cairo's élite in recent years has been oblivious to the fate and conditions of the majority of the rest of the city's poorer quarters. The physical development of Cairo in the 1950s and 1960s was shaped by the lower-middle class and technocrats. It may have been austere and lacking in aesthetics, but not lacking in equity. In the 1970s Cairo's development was more vulgar and replete with social inequities. The fight over Cairo's body and soul is far from being settled.

The poor are crowded in older quarters, cemeteries, wild-cat housing, and squatter settlements. The nouveau riche continue to be oblivious to the rest of the city so long as their immediate districts and homes are in good shape, and as long as they can escape periodically abroad. It is the middle classes, especially the lower rungs, which feel the squeeze, and the youngsters are steaming with frustration and anger. Much of Cairo's future, and hence Egypt's, may very well lie in their hands.

NOTES

1. Some scholarly accounts put figures at nine hundred thousand. See, for example, M.F. al-Kurdi, "Cairo's Cemeteries: Population," in *Annual Book of Sociology,* no. 6 (in Arabic), 1984, pp. 17–132. The figure is cited on p. 19.
2. For details see, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Social Mobility and Income Distribution in Egypt," in G. Abdel Khalek and R. Tignor, eds., *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 375–434.

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Egypt's Landed Bourgeoisie

1994

INTRODUCTION

This essay deals with a crucial but understudied socioeconomic formation in the evolution of modern Egypt: the big landowning bourgeois class. The main propositions explored in this essay are the following:

1. Fertile land has been a scarce commodity, hence the most valuable asset, in the otherwise arid country of Egypt. Control and management of this asset have constituted much of the sociopolitical discourse in modern Egypt.

2. The concept of landowning was initiated by the Egyptian state in the mid-nineteenth century, and the country's modern class structure has been woven around it, as has its main social conflict.

3. Once under way, the processes involved in obtaining and owning land sorted and sifted out an 'upper class' which continued a century-long striving to maximize its share of Egypt's land. In the process, the upper class has engaged in a complex interplay with the state, the rest of society, and the outside world.

4. In the interwar period (1918–39), big landowners engaged in bourgeois-like economic activities. Hence, the same landowners also became a major integral part of the grande bourgeoisie. During the same period this social formation has become a 'class in itself' as well as a 'class for itself.'

5. In its quest for total domination of state, economy, and society, this Egyptian upper class changed its domestic and internal alliances more than once, and grew more oblivious of and insensitive to the classes below, especially the lower-middle class. Growing in number but not as much in wealth or power, the latter was steadily alienated. Ultimately in 1952, through its own young army officers, it revolted against the Egyptian upper class and its domestic and foreign allies.

6. The period 1952–72 witnessed a dramatic rise of the middle class to power, and a steady decline in the power and wealth of Egypt's upper-class landed bourgeoisie. This is the 'populist–nationalist' period in modern Egyptian history, and the worst one for the old upper class. Control of state power by a middle-class military–technocratic élite was employed domestically for sociopolitical mobilization, redistribution of wealth, and rapid economic development. It was a period that also witnessed the rise of pan-Arabism and the projection of Egyptian regional power within a context of non-alignment vis-à-vis the two superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union.

7. The populist–nationalist phase, symbolized by Nasser, began to draw to an end after Egypt's defeat by Israel in 1967. In the subsequent seven years (1967–74), the old upper-class landed bourgeoisie resurfaced and allied itself with the new 'embourgeoised' elements of the Nasser era at home and its Arab and Western counterparts abroad. This alliance inched its way up to state power under Sadat. By the early 1980s the old upper-class landed bourgeoisie had been completely rehabilitated and renewed, and had succeeded in amalgamating itself with aspiring like-minded elements from below and relinking with the world capitalist system. The Open-Door Economic Policy *(Infitah)* was the result of its lobbying, and has been the context of its socioeconomic comeback. This comeback has been accompanied by a gradual political pluralism, in the form of a restoration of a limited multiparty system.

8. Elements of the current enlarged bourgeoisie are now members of Egypt's top political élite and sub-élites. Through the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and some opposition parties (such as the Wafd), this class has been engaged in a renewed quest for total political domination of the state, the economy, and society. Its success in this quest is contingent not only on its own internal cohesion and skillful use of its resource base, but also on its ability to manage and expand the Egyptian economy in general, to accommodate the minimum interests of other classes from below, and incorporate in its own ranks the ambitious members of these classes.

9. Early indications, fifteen years after the start of its comeback, suggest that Egypt's landed bourgeoisie has not as yet succeeded in evolving the kind of credible vision of socioeconomic performance which would make the progress of its ascent to total power proceed without serious challenge from below. Some of the symptoms which had caused its earlier decline (1942–52) and fall (1952–72) have reappeared, and are generating the same discontent, alienation, resentment, and frustration among other classes.

10. The same lower-middle class which led the fight against Egypt's landed bourgeoisie in the 1940s and 1950s, under populist–nationalist slogans, is now engaged in a similar fight under populist–Islamic banners. The question in the 1990s will be only whether such a fight will be with ballots or with bullets. The 1980s witnessed previews of both possibilities, such as the killing of a president (1981), and the participation of Islamic activists in parliamentary elections (1984 and 1987).

This essay will only concentrate on the century-long rise, decline, fall, and comeback of the landed bourgeoisie. While this long march of one class is our focus, it goes without saying that the analysis would be incomplete, indeed meaningless, without understanding the rest of the domestic scene (that is, the state and other social classes) and the international setting in which it evolved.

THE FORMATION OF EGYPT'S LANDED BOURGEOISIE

Social classes do not form overnight. While the moment of their inception might be roughly fixed within a relatively short period in time,

their unfolding as fully-fledged 'classes' is a protracted social process which may take several generations or even centuries. Egypt's landed bourgeoisie is no exception. When the 1952 Revolution fought and defeated it, this class was already one century old. During that century, Egypt's big landowners had struggled to institutionalize the legal ownership of land, which until 1862 was all state-owned and merely leased for use. They eventually succeeded also in consolidating and expanding their own land holdings. Only in its third generation did the descendants of this class venture with their surplus capital into commercial, banking, and industrial activities, thus becoming a 'landed bourgeoisie.' In the process, a class consciousness, a value system, and a lifestyle crystallized. Its political involvement, alliances, and coalitions at home and abroad varied and shifted over time, sometimes guided by 'enlightened self-interest,' and often misguided by narrow 'selfish interest.'

THE GENESIS OF THE LANDED BOURGEOISIE

Initially made up of big landowners, this class owes its genesis to Muhammad 'Ali's land distribution scheme that was implemented between 1847 and 1889. He granted sizable plots of land to members of his own family (at an average of five thousand to ten thousand feddans each), to top aids and army commanders (at an average of a thousand feddans each), to high state officials and Bedouin tribal chiefs (at an average of five hundred feddans each), and to middle state functionaries and local notables (at an average of fifty to hundred feddans each).[1] All in all, this land amounted to half of all of Egypt's cultivable area at the time, and involved some two thousand individual grantees. Except for members of his own family, Muhammad 'Ali did not at the beginning make these grants outright legal properties. He allowed the recipients and their descendants the right to hold, utilize, and rent the land, but not to sell it. He seemed to have intended to create a stable class of big landowners over several generations to come. He was also attempting to circumvent the possible fallout from the implementation of the London Treaty of 1840, which called for opening the Egyptian economy to foreign activities—including investment in agricultural land and urban real estate.[2]

Consolidation and Egyptianization

Complete property rights were obtained, however, during the rule of Muhammad 'Ali's successors—namely under Sa'id, Isma'il, and Tawfiq (under British occupation).[3] This in turn allowed for the sale and exchange of land among members of this privileged class and their descendants, and between them and other Egyptians and foreigners alike. Thus, while in the mid-nineteenth century the original two thousand big landholders were mostly of Turkish–Circasssian–Albanian background, by the end of the century they had become more diverse, with a majority of native or mixed Egyptians, Syrians, and an assortment of Europeans. Interestingly enough, big urban merchants

and successful professionals joined this category by buying land as an investment or for prestige. Likewise, during and after the First World War, several of the original big landowners invested some of their surplus in commercial and industrial activities. As we shall see later, all of the original founders of Banque Misr, the first major Egyptian bank, were from this landed aristocracy. So intensive was this interchangeability during the interwar period, which coincided with Egyptian independence (1922), that the entire upper class consisted of both landowners and shareholders in urban businesses and industrial enterprises. This fact was overlooked by several Marxist and leftist analysts who assumed an inherent conflict between big landowners and industrial–commercial capitalists.

Concentration of Landownership

By 1950, this upper class (owners of more than fifty feddans) had consolidated its hold on nearly 50 percent of Egypt's total cultivable land (of about six million feddans). Land also became more concentrated in the hands of fewer owners and bigger holdings. At the turn of the century owners of more than fifty feddans numbered about fourteen thousand, holding about two million feddans (at an average of 143 feddans each). By 1950 their number had declined to twelve thousand, owning 2.6 million feddans (at an average of 217 feddans each). A counter trend took place among poor peasants during the same period, that is, the number of owners of smaller holdings increased. Thus, at the turn of the century the number of owners of less than one feddan was seven hundred and eighty thousand, owning a total of three hundred and sixty-four feddans (at an average of half a feddan each). By 1950 their number had grown to about two million owning a total land area of seven hundred and twenty-four feddans (at an average of less than one third of a feddan each).[4]

FACTORS OF EXPANSION

The ability of the Egyptian upper class to expand and tighten its hold on this very valuable means of production—fertile land in an otherwise vast, arid country—was aided by several factors. Among these were certain historical moments—the American Civil War in the 1860s, the two world wars, and the Korean War—in which demand for agricultural products, especially cotton, rose very sharply. The windfall profits were reinvested in buying or reclaiming more land. Meanwhile the concentration of large landholdings continued. When small landowners could not pay their taxes or make ends meet, as happened frequently, big landowners bought them out. Even Khedive Isma'il, under pressure to pay public and personal debts, was forced to sell some of his vast holdings to owners of large and middle-sized holdings. The British occupation, too, assisted in this process of land concentration. It courted the landed upper class early on (1882 to 1922) in the hope of creating for itself a friendly social base in Egypt, or at least of neutralizing the attitude of its members. In fact, both

sides shared a common interest, since Britain was the major buyer of cotton. Thus, banks operating in Egypt, which until 1922 were merely extensions of London banks, advanced credit facilities to big landowners to finance and capitalize on their agriculture or to reclaim more land.

However with the coming of independence in 1922 big landowners reaped the greatest benefits. Dominating the parliament, under different party banners, its members passed several laws advancing their own interests. Land taxes were held to a minimum, and a government-sponsored agricultural credit bank, supposedly established to help small farmers through low-interest credit, ended up aiding the big landowners more.[5] The native Egyptian elements of this class, the only ones who could run for and sit in parliament, passed successive laws (between 1922 and 1951) restricting, then prohibiting foreigners from ownership of cultivable land.[6] These laws (especially Law no. 37/1951) had the effect of transferring some 12 percent of the country's total agricultural land (about six hundred thousand feddans), previously held by foreigners, to native Egyptian ownership, mostly big landowners.

Another means by which big landowners expanded their economic base was through pressure on the government to sell them its own holdings. In 1893, the year which marks the complete institutionalization of private ownership of land, the Egyptian government was in possession of more than half a million feddans, about 10 percent of the country's cultivable land. Shortly after independence, a heated debate (similar to the current one on privatization) broke out over whether the government should own or could manage agricultural land. Critics of the government invoked considerations of 'optimum management' and 'rational utilization' of the country's resources which, it was claimed, could only be ensured by 'private ownership.'[7] In the end, the government yielded to pressure, and sold 507,000 feddans—about 132,000 in small plots (of less than ten feddans) and about 344,000 feddans in bigger plots (twenty to hundred feddans) which went mostly to landowners of middle and big land holdings.[8]

The demand for land, as a scarce resource, reached an all-time high in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the average price of a feddan rose to LE1,000 (at the time LE1 equaled $2.6). In other words, the total landholdings of this Egyptian upper class (2.6 million feddans) was valued at LE2.6 billion (more than $6 billion). The steep rise in cotton prices at the time (because of the Korean War) also sent the annual rent up to an unprecedented high of LE100 per feddan.[9]

EMBOURGEOISATION OF THE LANDED ARISTOCRACY

Having reaped windfall profits from the sale of agricultural products during the First World War, Egypt's upper class was bound to search for new investment opportunities, besides buying more land and/or indulging in intensive capitalization of agriculture. Individual bank deposits rose more than fivefold between 1914 and 1919.[10] Some of

these accumulated savings went into import-substitution industries to meet inelastic domestic demands, and benefited greatly from governmental tariff protection. This trend was to expand after independence, during Egypt's Liberal Age (1922–52).

Banque Misr, established in 1920 by eight Egyptians, all of whom were also big landowners,[11] rapidly grew to become a conduit and a blender of native landed and business bourgeoisie. By the early 1930s the number of its shareholders rose from the original eight founders to about ten thousand. The bank's deposits rose rapidly from LE200,000 in 1920, to LE5.5 million in 1927, to LE45 million in 1947, to about LE80 million in 1952. In three decades (1920–50), Banque Misr took the initiative in establishing more than twenty industrial and commercial enterprises, ranging from textiles, to airlines, to motion pictures.[12] It also helped establish the Egyptian Federation of Industries (EFI) as early as 1922, which acted as an effective lobby with both parliament and the government for the entire period of the Liberal Age. Twelve prominent members of the EFI became cabinet members and prime ministers, and many were members in both houses of parliament. In fact, the upper house (the Senate or the Council of Sheikhs) was almost exclusively confined to this class, since eligibility for membership, according to the law, required that members owned at least a certain minimum amount of wealth.[13]

Other native Egyptian industrial groups, besides Banque Misr, appeared and flourished between 1922 and 1952. Prominent among them were the Ahmed Abboud Group, the Yehia Group, and the M. Farghaly Group. They competed with each other, and all of them competed with foreign-held companies. In the same way they had dealt with landownership, the Egyptian upper bourgeoisie also lobbied to squeeze foreign interests out of the commercial and industrial fields. First, they managed to overhaul the entire customs and tariff system in 1930, making it much more protective of their interests.[14] Second, they managed to pass a law (Law no. 138/1947) making it mandatory that native Egyptians possess at least 51 percent of all shares in any new joint-stock company registered in the country. This, along with earlier measures, mainly the 1937 Montreux Treaty terminating the Capitulations, increased the share of Egyptians in new joint-stock companies from less than 5 percent in 1920, to 9 percent in 1933, jumping to 47 percent in 1939, and to 84 percent in 1948. However, there were older joint-stock companies in which the majority shares were still held by foreigners, and these remained so until 1956, when, following the Suez War, all such foreign holdings were nationalized.

The industrialization of Egypt grew steadily between 1914 and 1945, and was especially aided by the two world wars. In 1914 the share of industry in the GNP was less than 2 percent. By 1947 it had increased more than fourfold to 8 percent. With the sprouting of an Egyptian bourgeoisie, a modern 'working class' was bound to grow. The number of industrial workers grew from less than a 100,000 in

1917 to 274,000 in 1937 to over 400,000 in 1947.[15] The total capital invested in industry by 1950 was estimated at about LE550 million, at least 40 percent of which (LE220 million) belonged to some eleven thousand major shareholders, that is, averaging LE20,000 each. Many of these were members of the same families.[16]

Thus, it is safe to conclude that the same twelve thousand families of big landowners who held some 50 percent of all of Egypt's cultivable land also included the eleven thousand major shareholders who held some 40 percent of Egypt's joint-stock companies. At the time of the 1952 Revolution these owners and their families represented less than half a percent of Egypt's population. Such figures attest to the glaring concentration of wealth that existed at the time.

STATE AND POLITICS OF THE LANDED BOURGEOISIE IN THE LIBERAL AGE (1922–52)

During its consolidation and embourgeoisation, Egypt's landed aristocracy had two other major political factors to contend with in its quest for control of the state: British occupation and the monarchy. The relationship between these three major actors on the Egyptian socioeconomic political scene was complicated by shared interests, rivalry, and antagonism. Hence, each side of the triangular relationship zigzagged along a cooperation–conflict continuum but was never subjected to a total rupture. The British streamlined the government's previously troubled fiscal affairs, improved Egypt's irrigation and transportation systems, and provided stable markets for the country's agricultural products, especially cotton—measures which mutually enhanced the interests of both sides. However, the terms of economic exchange and relative share of power remained a matter of contention between Egypt's landed bourgeoisie and the British, with the former steadily feeling shortchanged. As for the monarchy, it had larger common economic–political interests with the landed bourgeoisie. For one thing, Egypt's royal family was the biggest landowner at the turn of the century, and despite previous sales (between 1870 and 1890), the family still owned some 250,000 feddans of the best agricultural land, thus having a definite common interest with other big landowners.[17] As other landowners of large holdings initiated commercial–industrial activities in the interwar period, members of the royal family followed suit, becoming shareholders and presidents of many of the newly created joint-stock companies.[18] While the royal family and the landed bourgeoisie shared the common objective of reducing British power or ridding Egypt of it altogether, there remained the question of how much of that power would go to each side.

Between 1918 and 1952, the political behavior of the upper class bourgeoisie went through two distinct phases, roughly separated by the years 1936–37. In the years immediately following the First World War, this class allied itself with the middle and lower classes in lead-

ing the national struggle for independence from the British and constitutionalism vis-à-vis the monarchy. The struggle, culminating in the 1919 Revolution, resulted in a series of remarkable national gains: a declaration of partial independence in 1922, a national constitution in 1923, elections and the beginning of parliamentary life in 1924, a consolidation of political independence through the 1936 treaty with Britain, and the 1937 International Montreux Treaty ending the Capitulations. However, every one of these gains seemed to have fallen somewhat short of the expectations of the classes below. Growing numbers from the lower classes were disgruntled and began to desert the implicit 'grand coalition' of the 1919 Revolution as symbolized at the time by the Wafd party, and to form their own political parties.

The second phase stretched from 1939 to 1952, and it was during this time that social issues were added to the agenda of Egypt's political discourse. Barring some notable exceptions, the majority of the upper bourgeoisie maintained its hold on the machinery of the state and the practice of politics as usual. Most of the bills addressing social issues that were submitted to parliament were variously ignored, harshly trimmed, or rejected out of hand. For example, several land reform bills, quite moderate compared with what came after the July 1952 Revolution, were rejected. Warnings by authors of such bills about a 'coming crisis' fell on deaf ears.[19] The Second World War, as noted earlier, had a positive economic impact on the fortunes of the upper bourgeoisie, but an extremely negative one on the lot of other classes. Hence it compounded the effect of the already existing income disparities.

Despite tension and occasional conflict among various wings of the upper-class landed bourgeoisie, or between them and either the palace or the British, the three actors remained in broad agreement on maintaining the socioeconomic status quo. If the state was to interfere at all in an otherwise free-market economy, it was to enhance the interests of the landed bourgeoisie. In the seven years between the end of the Second World War and the 1952 Revolution, some elements of this bourgeoisie increasingly entered into partnership with foreign counterparts, thereby partly reversing the interwar trend of Egyptianizing the national economy. Some bills that became law relaxed earlier stringent conditions for such partnerships. In other words, when it had suited their interests to squeeze out foreign economic involvement, the Egyptian bourgeoisie had invoked 'national independence' to pass necessary laws to this effect. Later, when it served their interests to link up with foreign capital, this same bourgeoisie invoked 'economic rationality' and 'national interest' to pass laws to this effect. Meanwhile, by the late 1940s neither the free-market system nor this new partnership with foreign capital was developing the economy fast enough to create the necessary jobs for an ever-increasing number of the young and the poor, or trickling down enough benefits to pacify the middle class.

The nationalist zeal of the upper bourgeoisie had long since eroded with the 1936 treaty, and that fact, coupled with the use by the British of an ultimatum to force the king to install a government of their choice in 1942, and the defeat in Palestine in 1948, meant that by 1950 it was no longer possible to trade off the neglect of the social issue with a political cause. Widespread and frequent flare-ups in both rural and urban areas were clear indications not just that the rule of the upper-class landed bourgeoisie was opposed by the lower classes, but that the entire system had lost its legitimacy. When the 1952 revolutionaries struck against both the system and the landed bourgeoisie, few if any voices were raised in defense of the latter. Indeed no social force with any real weight was willing to stand up on behalf of the old regime.

THE FALL OF THE LANDED BOURGEOISIE

The long march of Egypt's landed bourgeoisie was suddenly and harshly brought to a halt in 1952. In fact, by 1956, it looked as if this class was completely destroyed economically and politically, though not socio-demographically. However, three decades later it turned out that its resilience and co-optation skills should not have been underestimated. In this part of the essay we look at the years of defeat and retreat of Egypt's landed bourgeoisie (1952–72), and then at its recovery and comeback.

The army officers' coup d'état of 23 July 1952, was soon to emerge as a fully-fledged social revolution, transforming the role of the state and the structure of society in mid-century Egypt. The July Revolution promptly forged a sociopolitical coalition of three social classes: the middle petite bourgeoisie, the urban working class, and the rural poor. The target enemy of this coalition was Egypt's upper-class landed bourgeoisie. As the conflict unfolded, whether by design or due to the swift march and logic of events, the Egyptian state grew bigger in size and strength, and its links with the region and the world altered qualitatively from those before 1952.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE

A review of the eighteen years between 1952 and 1972 reveals clearly that all three parties of the July Revolution's coalition benefited markedly, both at the expense of the upper-class landed bourgeoisie and as a direct result of the state's expansionist–interventionist role.

To start with, the officers who staged the 1952 coup d'état were all from the middle petit-bourgeois class. Their entry into the Egyptian Military Academy, as cadets, had followed the signing of the Anglo–Egyptian Treaty of 1936, which allowed the Egyptian government a greater measure of freedom to build a bigger national army. The need for more officers opened the door wide, for the first time in this century, to youngsters of the middle class to join the officer corps. As young officers, they were part of that generation which had experi-

enced the waning power and increasing failure of the ruling élite and the politically dominant landed bourgeoisie.

The initial declarations of the young officers who led the 1952 revolt indicated clearly that their movement was a populist one, that is, encompassing general objectives which addressed the aspirations of the vast majority of Egyptians. What was not immediately clear were the ways and means of achieving these objectives. Thus there was a phase (1952–56) in which the young revolutionaries essentially just tried to do the same things that had been done by the old regime that they had just ousted, but in better ways, mainly by streamlining the governmental machinery to make it more efficient and less corrupt. With the exception of the agrarian reform laws, the general socioeconomic orientation of the Liberal Age continued, but with more zeal, and without favoritism or corruption. The first series of economic laws, passed during 1952–54, all aimed at expediting development and industrialization. These laws were intended to encourage domestic and foreign investment through tax exemption on profits for five to seven years. They were as generous and as liberal as in the heyday of the bourgeois-dominated Liberal Age of an earlier time, and as generous and liberal as those of twenty years later under Sadat's Infitah policies.

At first the new ruling élite held the simplistic belief that political power and economic power could operate separately or independently from one another. An equally mistaken view that also prevailed then, possibly under the influence of Marxist thought at the time, was that big landowners represent a separate 'feudalist class' whose interest is in direct conflict with a 'capitalist class,' as was the case in seventeenth-century Europe. On both counts, the expected outcomes based on these assumptions did not materialize. The big landowners and industrial capitalists being one and the same, the Egyptian landed bourgeoisie—badly hurt by agrarian reform—was not about to risk whatever capital it had in more industrial investments under a government in which it had little or no say. The appeal to their patriotism and the incentives built into the new economic laws of 1953–54 fell on deaf ears. With the reluctance of indigenous capitalists in evidence, potential foreign investors showed even greater hesitance. As a result, little in the way of development came from the private sector in this initial phase after the 1952 Revolution. Whatever was done in this regard came from the government itself or through bilateral agreements with other governments.[20]

Nor was it much of an inducement for the private sector to invest when the young revolutionaries Egyptianized what remained of foreign interests in Egypt following the 1956 Suez Crisis. Six major laws were then passed in 1957–58 transferring the majority share of all joint-stock companies, as well as their management and top personnel, to mostly private Egyptian hands[21]—a result that the nationalist movement in general, and the Egyptian landed bourgeoisie in particular, had fought for with only partial success since the 1920s. The

Egyptian bourgeoisie welcomed these measures, and did take advantage of them, but it was not sufficiently attracted to inject enough new capital investment of its own, as the young officers had hoped. Upper-class skepticism or fears vis-à-vis the officers' total monopoly of political power persisted, and thus discouraged private capital investments.

It was only in the late 1950s, some seven years after seizing power, that the leaders of the July Revolution fully recognized that politics and economics are inseparable, on both the internal and external fronts. Attaining their vision of a strong, independent, and just society in Egypt would take more than conducting 'business as usual,' albeit in cleaner and more efficient ways. The young revolutionaries concluded that the state itself had to undertake all the major socioeconomic tasks. Starting in 1959, they embarked on the task of overhauling the entire economy and society as well. Central planning, the establishment of a public sector, massive nationalization, major income-redistribution policies, and other social policies were undertaken. Together, these policy measures and practices came to be known as 'Arab Socialism.'

By the mid-1960s the public sector had assumed control of over 80 percent of all such related activities. This phenomenal expansion came about as a result of a series of nationalizations of major privately owned Egyptian joint-stock companies. Starting in February 1960, with control of the two largest banks in the country, the National Bank of Egypt and Banque Misr, the government was able to use the necessary resources and tools to launch its first five-year plan (1960–65).[22] In June and July of the following year (1961), six laws and about ten presidential decrees were issued, aimed at transferring total ownership of the country's forty-two largest companies from private to public hands, and the transfer of majority shares (more than 50 percent) of the next largest eighty-two companies to ownership of public-sector organizations. Moreover, concessions to major public utility companies were terminated (for example, Lebon Gas, the Electricity Company of Alexandria, and the Cairo Tramway), and their assets transferred to state hands. All in all, the largest two hundred enterprises in the country had come under state control. These included all banks, insurance companies, industrial transportation, and a variety of commercial, financial, import–export, and land-reclamation companies. Clearly the state intended not only to control the 'heights' of the economy, but also wished to prevent the creation of strong private enterprises of any sort. Additional presidential decrees stipulated that all state construction and public works whose contract value exceeded LE30,000 be carried out by companies owned totally or mostly by the state.[23]

Though no direct measure was proclaimed specifically to have been designed to benefit the Egyptian middle class (petite bourgeoisie), the overall policies of the July Revolution gave that class the biggest gains. In fact, the new rulers of Egypt came right from the midst of this

class and consequently symbolized its values, aspirations, and also its limitations. To begin with, the removal of every member of the older upper class from every position of political and economic power automatically meant an opening and an opportunity for a middle-class member to move up and fill the vacancy. Furthermore, the exit of every foreigner previously residing and working in Egypt meant a handsome house or flat and a well-paid job for some middle-class Egyptian.

Likewise, the expansion of the machinery of the state (the civil bureaucracy, the armed forces, and the public sector) was primarily an act by the middle class for the middle class. In 1952, Egypt had three hundred and fifty thousand public employees comprising 2.2 percent of the population. By 1970 the figure increased nearly four-fold to 1.2 million state employees (3.8 percent of the population).[24] In similar fashion, social services in education, health, and the like were considerably expanded.[25]

WAR OF ATTRITION AGAINST THE LANDED BOURGEOISIE

The above measures were officially proclaimed as necessary to expedite economic development, ensure social justice, and consolidate national independence. Many of the same measures were also applied to Syria, which had been united with Egypt in 1958 as the United Arab Republic. When Syria seceded from the union after a coup d'état in September 1961, it was blamed on "reactionary forces." Hence, one added justification for the above measures and new nationalizations and sequestrations in Egypt was deemed as "protection of the people from counter-revolutionary forces," which generally meant the landed bourgeoisie.

Another proclaimed reason for the massive nationalizations was "social justice." While this objective had been stated earlier as one of the six basic principles of the 1952 Revolution, it had remained hitherto (until 1961) largely confined to the first agrarian reform law, of September 1952. Another, but far smaller, measure was urban rent control in 1958.[26] But it was in 1961 that several more drastic measures were implemented with far-reaching redistributive effects. They were all clearly in favor of the three social classes that made up the sociopolitical coalition of the 1952 Revolution, and in effect amounted to a 'war of attrition' against the landed bourgeoisie. Of these measures, the following four were the most far-reaching.

Agrarian Reform

We have already alluded to the first land reform law of 1952, which limited maximum ownership to two hundred feddans per family (excluding adult offspring). Then this ceiling was successively reduced, in two stages, down to fifty feddans. Equally far-reaching, but less discussed in the literature, was the rent regulation of agricultural land, which put an end both to speculation and to the arbitrary dismissal of tenant farmers by landowners. Indeed, this latter measure

made about one million small tenants de facto owners of the land they tilled. All in all, some nine hundred thousand feddans (about 14.5 percent of Egypt's agricultural land at the time) were taken from big landowners (about two thousand families) and redistributed to small farmers and destitute peasants. About 1.3 million of the poorest Egyptian men (comprising with their families some 7.5 million people) benefited immensely from these specific redistributive measures. There were other socioeconomic ramifications, which we need not go into here, but which had the added effect of improving the overall income distribution in the Egyptian countryside.27 The net losers in the whole process were the members of the landed bourgeoisie.

Progressive Taxation

In 1950, a progressive income tax was already in effect, reaching 70 percent of individual incomes above le50,000. Following the July Revolution, the tax rate was rapidly increased and eventually reached, in 1961, a rate of 90 percent on annual incomes above LE10,000. In the same way, the taxes on real estate were steeply raised. The annual transfers resulting from these laws did not go directly to other classes (as in the agrarian reform), but rather to the state, thus enabling it to pursue more of its expansionist–interventionist socioeconomic policies. Again, the net loser was the landed bourgeoisie.

Labor-Related Measures

The second major constituency of the 1952 Revolution was the urban-based working class. It benefited both from the direct measures which addressed its previous grievances, and indirectly from measures which promoted overall social equity and economic development issues. A series of labor laws addressed outstanding labor issues: the working day was reduced to seven hours; a social insurance system was created to cover all workers; a mandatory 25 percent of annual company profits was set aside for provision of social services to companies' work forces; workers were represented on company boards of directors. These measures along with others that prohibited arbitrary dismissal, and the establishment of a new ministry of labor and a special labor court, had the effect of empowering Egypt's working class as never before.

Indirectly, the overall state-sponsored economic expansion, especially through industrialization, nearly tripled the job opportunities for the working class, thereby greatly increasing its size in the eighteen years between 1952 and 1970.28 This class (together with many in the middle class too) also benefited indirectly from two rent reductions of urban housing (in 1958 and 1961), totaling some 40 percent of the previous rents.[29] Their children (along with the children of all classes) also now enjoyed free and expanding education at all levels, as well as free medical care.[30]

The organized working class considered the new expanding public sector to be its own, and in later years (the 1970s and 1980s) it

would defend it relentlessly against all liquidation or privatization attempts. On the other hand, Egypt's landed bourgeoisie perceived these same measures as one more blow to its economic power.

Stripping the Landed Bourgeoisie of Sociopolitical Power

More direct measures were enacted to reduce the sociopolitical power of Egypt's landed bourgeoisie. One of the earliest measures (September 1952) was the abolition of 'civilian titles.' Symbolic as they may seem, such titles as pas*ha*, *bey*, and *effendi*, carried immense social prestige. More drastically, many of the landed bourgeoisie and other prerevolutionary public figures were deprived of all political rights.[31]

All in all, in a series of steps over a ten-year period (1952–62), the July Revolution managed to remove the landed bourgeoisie from its previously privileged position at the top of society—both socially and politically. To many observers at the time, it looked as if a class, which took one long century to form and become established, was irreversibly destroyed in one short decade. For nearly twenty years, the leading names and faces of that class were blacked out in the public media, with the possible exception of the obituary page in some newspapers.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE EGYPTIAN BOURGEOISIE (1974–90)

Though politically marginalized and with their wealth drastically reduced, the old upper class (grande bourgeoisie) still owned the legally allowed maximum of agricultural land (fifty feddans per person by 1968), real estate, and shares in non-nationalized companies. Hence, despite demoralization and a low profile, the prerevolutionary upper class continued to enjoy considerable wealth and social status. Consequently, often the upwardly mobile middle-class elements, who distinguished themselves with more power or wealth than the average ranks of their own class, frequently displayed a marked eagerness to intermarry with the old upper class. A case in point was President Sadat's children, who married into that class.[32]

With the debacle of the Nasser regime in 1967, the old upper class felt increasingly emboldened to make a comeback. Its spokesmen attributed Egypt's mounting difficulties in the late Nasser years to socialism, the absence of liberal democracy, and anti-Western policies. This argument was gradually endorsed by some elements of the middle-class intelligentsia. The following decade (1967–77) was to witness a gradual resurrection of Egypt's landed bourgeoisie. Those ten years brought about several major turning points in Egypt's recent socioeconomic–political development: Nasser left the scene (1970), a successful war was waged by his successor, President Anwar Sadat (1973), a new Open-Door Economic Policy (Infitah) was adopted, and Egypt's regional and global alignment shifted Westward. Thus, the comeback of Egypt's landed bourgeoisie coincided with and was encouraged by a host of domestic, regional, and international factors.

The reemergence of the landed bourgeoisie was not an exact replay of their old years of privilege. Nor did it entail for them the same degree of their old political dominance of state, economy, and society. For one thing, those who did 'come back' were mostly a new generation, the descendants of the prerevolutionary era. Second, they were more 'bourgeois' than 'landed.' Third, they returned to an arena which had become far more complex during their eclipse (1952–72)—one in which the population had doubled, new classes, ideas, and values had become established, and the state had become vastly expanded and unwieldy. In this section we look at some of these conditions.

THE LANDED BOURGEOISIE AND THE NEW SOCIAL COALITION UNDER SADAT

The formal declaration of the Open-Door Economic Policy, or Infitah, in February 1974, marked a qualitative shift in Egypt's economic course from what it had been since 1960. The debacle of the 1967 war brought into question the regime's socialist orientation. It was considered by one side of the debate as not just a military but a total defeat of the sociopolitical–economic orientation of the Nasser years. Secure in power, and with a victory of sorts in the October 1973 war, Sadat, who sided with this point of view, forged and presided over a new sociopolitical coalition made up of the old landed-bourgeois class and the upwardly mobile middle class. Regional and international factors at the time (early 1970s) reinforced this new coalition and the new Infitah.

THE CHANGING MIDDLE CLASS

As indicated earlier, the biggest gains from the expanding state and the socialist orientation of the Nasser years were made by the middle class. By the late 1960s the upper slice of that class had nearly exhausted what it could get from the state's socialist orientation. This slice was typically made up of top state bureaucrats, technocrats, and managers of the public sector. To this group two other groups from the same class may be added. The first was that of medium-sized private contractors, suppliers, and distributors to whom the expanding public sector had farmed out numerous subcontracts. The second was that of high-level labor working abroad, especially in the oil-rich Arab countries. The two groups had accumulated substantial private savings, with no real opportunities to invest either in Egypt's state-controlled economy or in the oil-rich host countries (which only allowed their own citizens such opportunities).[33]

By no means did the three aforementioned groups constitute a numerical majority of their own middle class. However, they were so articulate and strategically situated as to be of tremendous influence. Several of their members had already occupied cabinet posts in the 1960s under Nasser and early 1970s under Sadat.

Their advocacy of deregulating socioeconomic affairs was couched in nationalistic political terms—a call for "a stronger more prosperous Egypt."[34] Such advocacy entailed promises for more opportunities and better incomes for the rest of the middle class and for the working class, both inside Egypt and in the Arab world generally.[35] The fact that the real growth rates of GNP had been falling since 1967 strengthened their argument.

A NEW ENLARGED BOURGEOISIE

Thus, the upper slice of Egypt's middle class, including top professionals (doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers, and accountants), was ready and eager to engage in free-enterprise activities. They would join the surviving ranks of Egypt's old landed bourgeoisie to constitute a formidable socioeconomic–political coalition. As it turned out, the various wings of the coalition complemented one another. The old landed bourgeoisie had the name, prestige, and Western (especially European) connections. The former managers and technocrats of the public sector had the recognized entry into and the organizational skills useful to the state bureaucracy, while the middle-sized entrepreneurs, subcontractors of the public sector, and high-level manpower working in rich Arab countries had the capital and the regional connections.

Though different in background, values, experience, and lifestyles, these groups had common economic interests that were quickly to amalgamate them into a new enlarged bourgeois class around a core of the surviving members of the old landed bourgeoisie. The 'embourgeoisation' of the upper slice of the middle class was promoted by a marked incidence of intermarriage among the offspring of old and new money on one hand and the ruling élite on the other.[36] The process was encouraged by both regional and international factors.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

The 1967 defeat discredited Nasser and other like-minded progressive regimes in the Arab world. The fact that they had to turn to conservative Arab regimes for financial aid at the Arab Summit in Khartoum in 1967 added humiliation to injury. The magnanimous and compassionate response of the conservative regimes to the hard-pressed Arab progressives gave the former a new lease of life and enhanced their pan-Arab standing. In a sense, the conservatives benefited indirectly from the progressives' debacle in 1967. They were also to benefit even more from the progressives' victory in 1973. Under the pretext of helping the latter, the conservative Arab regimes, led by Saudi Arabia, imposed a partial embargo on the production and export of their oil to pro-Israeli Western countries.[37] With a contrived shortage of oil supplies, oil prices more than tripled between October and December 1973, resulting in a spectacular rise of rev-

enues for the oil-rich countries. Thus, the Arab defeat of 1967 strengthened the conservative Arab regimes politically, and the Arab victory of 1973 benefited them financially.

Despite their launching of ambitious development plans, the conservative regimes could not absorb the surplus money they were fast accumulating.[38] In other words, they had more to dispense in aid, loans, and direct investments elsewhere. Capital-short Egypt was in dire need of some of that surplus. The obstacle to getting it, as was said at the time, were the tight state controls, fear of nationalization, and lack of investment incentives. It was argued that if these apprehensions were addressed, Arab capital would flow into Egypt. The aforementioned new social coalition, which was in the process of forming in Egypt at that juncture, wasted no time in endorsing this message. It was an added argument in its advocacy of changing Egypt's socioeconomic course.[39]

On the international front, Egypt's ruling élite and the new sociopolitical coalition became convinced that inasmuch as the Soviets helped in wartime it was only the capitalist West that could help the country in its postwar reconstruction. The West, especially the United States, also gave signals to this effect, again indicating that the only obstacle to the flow of Western capital, technology, and managerial know-how was apprehension about state controls, nationalization, and lack of investment incentives. If these considerations were seriously addressed, it was argued, there would be a Marshall Plan for Egypt.[40] Thus, the Egyptian stage was set for a new socioeconomic reorientation, and a new set of policies to put it into operation. The Sadat regime provided those policies which came to be known as the Open-Door Economic Policy.

THE OPEN-DOOR ECONOMIC POLICY (INFITAH)

Although some liberalization of the economy had already begun as early as 1968,[41] it was the sweepingly liberal nature of Law no. 43/1974, which provided considerable incentives to attract foreign investment, that in reality ushered in Sadat's Open-Door Economic Policy. Passed only four months after the 1973 October War, it strongly indicates a close link between external and domestic turning points in Egypt's modern evolution. This suggestion is reminiscent of similar links in the past: in 1840 (the Muhammad 'Ali development campaign and the British–Turkish intervention), 1882 (the 'Urabi revolt and British occupation), 1919–22 (revolt, independence, the Liberal Age, and the flourishing of a newly sprouting bourgeoisie), and 1956 (Suez Crisis, Egyptianization, and nationalization).

Pillars of the New Policy

Law 43 provided very generous incentives and iron-clad guarantees to Arab and foreign investors. It released them from many of the import–export restrictions and labor law requirements, and provided a tax exemption for the first five years of operation. Coinciding with

greatly improved relations with the United States and other Western countries, and with the oil boom in neighboring Arab countries, Law 43 was hailed in these quarters as a political–economic breakthrough. Several other measures were taken to supplement Law 43, including the lifting of earlier restrictions on labor migration and importing through private-sector companies, as well as the termination of the public-sector monopoly on trade representation of foreign corporations.

Other laws supportive of the new policy were issued in the subsequent three years. Complaints from the private sector, about the tremendous economic edge that public-sector holding companies still had, led to the issuing of new laws intended to 'reorganize the public sector.' Public-sector firms were allowed to operate autonomously and were given the freedom to invest or enter into joint ventures with private capital, and to transact with all parties with no preferential treatment given to public-sector units, as had been the case before. Moreover, all privileges granted to foreign investors were also extended to Egyptian capital, including the right of private entrepreneurs to possess and transact business in foreign currency with external firms. Presidential decrees, which lifted the earlier restrictions on the employment of former top public-sector officials in the private sector at home or abroad, were also issued. Another measure was enacted returning previously sequestered properties and assets to their original owners. These laws were considered a great triumph for Egypt's enlarged bourgeoisie, the old core and the new wings alike.

Immediate Impacts

The above liberalizing measures set in motion several new socioeconomic dynamics, the evaluation of which has been polemical among Egyptian writers.[42] Firstly, there was massive labor migration of all levels of Egyptian labor to oil-rich Arab countries, which reached an estimated peak of three million by the early 1980s. Secondly, there was an exodus of top managers from the public sector to the newly flourishing private sector. Thirdly, there was the return of hundreds of members of the former Egyptian upper class and businesspeople who had been living or working abroad since the early 1960s. Finally, many elements of the old bourgeoisie resurfaced and took an active role in economic life. Many of the last two groups quickly established or revived connections with their Western, especially European, counterparts.[43]

Sequence of Infitah Enterprises

Some of the earliest investments were in new banks or branches of foreign banks,[44] many of which were established with joint private and public Egyptian capital. Next to come were trading, tourist, and consumer-goods companies. Many of these were joint ventures between foreign capital and elements of the old Egyptian bourgeoisie. At a later stage (late 1970s) more names of former leaders of the public sector and ex-government officials began to appear among

major shareholders of Infitah companies, and also by that time enterprising Egyptians working in the oil-rich Arab countries began to figure prominently among major shareholders.[45] In the early 1980s two new sub-formations joined the previously mentioned Infitah business élite. One group, which had no previous record in public or private economic life, had capital from unknown sources, though it is believed to have accumulated such capital from illegal and parasitic activities.[46] The second came into the picture under the popular banner of 'Islamic investments.'[47] By the mid-1980s, there was a marked mixing among the five sub-groupings.

CONCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF THE INFITAH BOURGEOISIE

Revived and enlarged, the current generation of the Egyptian bourgeoisie has been treading shrewdly in economic and political affairs. It has gradually and persistently worked toward liberalizing the economy and politics, and in the process has so far successfully shielded itself behind international and regional covers. With every gain achieved, this bourgeoisie lobbied for more liberalization.

Thus, the early Infitah laws (1974–77) were advocated by the bourgeoisie under the pretext of attracting Arab and foreign capital, modern technology, and better management. In that phase, the Egyptian bourgeoisie confined itself to brokerage, representation, and minor partnerships with Arab and foreign capital. Once these were established, it pushed for similar (Law no. 32/1977) or better treatment (Law no. 230/1989) for purely indigenous investors. By 1990 the Egyptian bourgeoisie was pressing for the privatization of public-sector companies, floating the Egyptian pound, and for doing away with, or at least reducing, public subsidies on most basic goods and services. In this respect, the Egyptian bourgeoisie has the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Paris Club, and other aid donors as formidable allies. The ruling élite of the Mubarak regime is divided and generally inept at responding to such demands. But on the whole it ends up by yielding piecemeal.

One of the most successful tactics used by the Egyptian bourgeoisie in putting pressure on the state to push it in the direction desired consists of withholding or slowing down investments, a move which invariably acts as a brake on Arab and foreign capital. The phenomenon of 'internationalization of capital' makes such a tactic quite effective. Some sources estimate private Egyptian capital abroad at about $50 billion, that is, equal to Egypt's foreign debt in 1990. President Mubarak and other Egyptian officials keep pleading with "fellow citizens" to bring this money home.[48] The representatives of the bourgeoisie argue that such capital would return to the country if the state acted favorably to their "reasonable demands." The recent events in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have added tremendous weight to those arguments which call for the dismantling of the

public sector, deregulation, and privatization.[49] The counter-arguments are becoming increasingly feeble.

Politically, Egypt's bourgeoisie has organized itself in what seems on the surface to be an apolitical manner, such as business associations, chambers of commerce, unions of industries, and the like. But since these organizations have former and current senior office-holders—such as prime ministers and prominent ruling National Democratic party (NDP) figures—as leading members, they have become very effective pressure groups.[50] Two of these pressure groups illustrate the point. The first is the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (ACCE), which was initiated in 1981 with the blessing of President Sadat and subsequently authorized by his successor, President Mubarak, the following year.[51] Its membership list in 1985 included the names of ten cabinet members, including those for defense, foreign affairs, economy, finance, energy, petroleum, tourism, and agriculture.[52] The same list included the names of eleven former ministers, and five others who became ministers after 1985. Along with these political figures, the membership included most of the leading Egyptian bankers and businessmen,[53] and 312 institutional members. The last category comprises "American companies with branches, agents, or representative offices in Egypt, Egyptian companies with American equity, and Egyptians who have significant business relationships with the United States."[54] The ACCE has been an active lobby in promoting Egyptian–American economic and political links as well as in advocating privatization in Egypt. It has persuaded US authorities to earmark a growing percentage of the annual aid to Egypt as credit facilities for the Egyptian private sector, and more recently another portion for facilitating the transfer of publicly owned companies to private hands.[55]

The other case in point is the Egyptian Society of Businessmen (ESB), which was established in the late 1970s, again with the blessing of the late President Sadat. Unlike the ACCE, the ESB's membership is confined to Egyptian citizens, and has had a much higher profile in public debates on socioeconomic–political issues. Its annual meetings have become the functional equivalent of parliamentary hearings. Hardly any top decision-maker, including all prime ministers since 1979, has declined an invitation to speak to members of the ESB, as each eagerly hopes to obtain an endorsement of their policies.[56] Like the ACCE, the ESB has been outspokenly pro-privatization, and also favors more liberal laws for investment and taxation. There is a considerable overlap in the membership of ACCE and ESB, which together read like a who's who of the old landed-aristocracy and the new bourgeois families.

In the more overtly political arena, growing numbers of Egypt's enlarged bourgeoisie have joined political parties, been elected to parliament (the People's Assembly), and have been appointed to the cabinet as ministers. It has been observed that members of the new wings of the present bourgeoisie, especially former ministers and

managers of the public sector, tend to join the ruling NDP, while members of the older landed bourgeoisie tend to join the major opposition Wafd party. But both generally advocate the same socioeconomic policies in their respective parties. Should any of them change party affiliation, it is generally to the other party (that is, from the Wafd to the NDP, and vice versa) but rarely to any of the other minor opposition parties that are right or left of center. In other words, the NDP and the Wafd have evolved into favorite centrist parties of the various wings of Egypt's bourgeoisie. The Wafd has been more consistent in its advocacy of a liberal market economy since its prerevolutionary beginnings in the 1920s. The NDP still oscillates between a historical commitment to Nasser's populist orientation and Sadat's Open-Door policies, with a growing tilt toward the latter. It is through membership of these two major parties that a growing number of the bourgeoisie (old and new) has been elected to the People's Assembly since 1976. Some eighty members of them (from a total of 450) were elected as deputies in the 1987 Assembly, compared with fewer than twenty in 1976.[57]

In cabinet appointments, the percentage of businesspeople and professionals rose steadily in the 1970s and 1980s: from 2.4 percent in 1970, to 9.8 percent in 1971–72, to 14.7 percent between 1974 and 1981 (post-Infitah years).[58] Their percentage in the successive cabinets under President Mubarak (1981–90) has risen further to about 20 percent. In this respect many of the gains by businessmen and professionals have been at the expense of the military, whose percentage of representation in cabinet posts has steadily declined from 38 percent in 1970 (Nasser's death), to 27 percent in 1972–74, to 12 percent since 1974 (post-Infitah).[59] Equally interesting is the fact that many former cabinet members who have no previous business experience are quickly picked up by the private sector as board chairs, presidents, general managers, or advisers of major Infitah companies.[60] Thus, there is a growing interchange between the political and business élites.

In conclusion, the enlarged Egyptian bourgeoisie has made a spectacular comeback after twenty years (1952–72) of total eclipse. It has done so on the coattails of Arab and foreign investments and still shields itself behind them, though in reality it is the major economic actor of the Open-Door policy. Its share in total private investments since 1974 has risen to more than 64 percent, compared with about 20 percent Arab and 16 percent foreign capital. After inching its way into the economy, this bourgeois class has started doing the same in politics.

Nevertheless, in its present round, the Egyptian bourgeoisie is still far from attaining the level of political–economic domination it enjoyed in the Liberal Age (1922–52), and probably will never be able to do so. The reason, as previously mentioned, is that the socioeconomic scene it 'came back' to (in 1974) had grown far more complex than when it had been removed from it (in 1952). Now, there is a

population which has more than doubled, a working class which has more than quadrupled, lower-middle and middle classes which have more than tripled, a public sector which still controls some 60 percent of the nonagricultural formal economic activities, and a state bureaucracy which has grown fourfold. To deal with, much less accommodate, all these actors has not been—and probably will never be—an easy task. Making the task more difficult is the modest performance, so far, of the bourgeoisie in helping Egypt out of its numerous socioeconomic problems. Though the enlarged bourgeoisie has done extremely well for itself since 1974, the country as a whole is suffering from a growing heavy external debt (from $1.6 billion in 1973 to $55 billion in 1990) and widespread unemployment (from less than 10 percent in 1973, to over 15 percent in 1973, to over 25 percent in 1990).

The Egyptian bourgeoisie may not be solely responsible for the negative indicators above, especially as its representatives do not fully control the decision-making process. However, the fact that its comeback has been associated with the Infitah policies (1974) makes the bourgeoisie look partly, or even totally, responsible for Egypt's problems in the eyes of the disadvantaged and the more deprived. On some occasions this perception has translated into mob-rioting and looting against the state and, more significantly, against the properties and institutions associated with the bourgeoisie, such as the food riots of 1977 and the Central Security riots of 1986.

If rioting and looting are the response of the 'absolutely deprived' urban lumpenproletariat, Islamic militancy has been the response of the 'relatively deprived' youngsters of the lower-middle class. Both kinds of response represent a growing threat to the Egyptian state and the Egyptian bourgeoisie in the 1990s.

NOTES

1. See more details in A. Ramadan, *Class Conflict in Egypt: 1937–52* (in Arabic) (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1978), pp. 33–187; and Ali Dessouki, *Big Landowners and Their Role in Egyptian Society* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Dar al-Thaqafa al-Gadida, 1975), pp. 13–51.
2. Ramadan, pp. 54–57.
3. Dessouki, p. 10.
4. Ramadan, pp. 74–84.
5. ibid., pp. 130–42.
6. Dessouki, pp. 210–80.
7. The newspaper debate over this issue reported in *al-Siyasa*, 8 August 1924, *al-Ahram* 29 April 1925, *al-Siyasa*, 20 July 1926, all cited in Dessouki, pp. 40–45.
8. ibid., p. 42.
9. Charles Issawi, *Egypt in Revolution: An Economic Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 34–37.
10. Ramadan, p. 95.
11. ibid., p. 98.
12. ibid., pp. 199–200.
13. Dessouki, pp. 210–14. The requirement for candidacy to the Upper House

(Council of Sheikhs) was the ownership of a minimum of 150 feddans of land, according to Article 50 of the 1923 Constitution.

14. Until 1930 there was a uniform tax of 8 percent on all imports. The new system (1930) had a different tax structure on imports, reducing such taxes to as low as 5 percent on essentials and raising it to as high as 50 percent on luxury items and those products that have an equivalent which is produced domestically. See Afifi Hafiz, *On the Periphery of Egyptian Politics* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriya, 1938), pp. 101–92.
15. The figures for industrial workers vary widely in successive Egyptian statistical annual records, and sometimes even for the same year, depending on the definition adopted in each, which may or may not include workers in extractive industries, gas, and electricity. The above figure of four hundred thousand for 1947 does include them.
16. For documentation of names and families see Ramadan, pp. 106–40, and M. Murad, *Who Rules Egypt?* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Madbuli, 1975).
17. Dessouki, pp. 32–33.
18. ibid., p. 94. For example, King Farouk had twenty thousand shares in the Pepsi-Cola Company. His uncle Sherif Sabri was the president of a chemical company of the Ahmed Abud Group.
19. The best known of these land reform proposals was submitted as a bill to the parliament by the deputy Muhammad Khattab in 1945. It took two years of protracted deliberations in subcommittees of both houses, then was finally rejected on 24 March 1947.
20. These governmental efforts, nevertheless, resulted in an average rate of economic growth of about 7 percent annually during the period 1952–60. For figures and details, see A. Mohyeddin and S. E. Ibrahim, "State Socialism and Economic Development" in S. E. Ibrahim, ed., *Egypt in a Quarter of a Century: Social Change and Development 1952–1977* (Beirut: Arab Institute of Development Studies, 1980), pp. 301–35.
21. ibid., pp. 331–32.
22. ibid., p. 332.
23. Issawi, pp. 58–59.
24. For an elaborate treatment of the state machinery, both civil and military, see Nazih Ayubi, *Bureaucracy and Politics in Contemporary Egypt* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980).
25. S. E. Ibrahim, "The Social Project," in Ibrahim, *Egypt in a Quarter of a Century*, pp. 139–43, and S. E. Ibrahim, "Income Distribution and Social Mobility in Egypt," in G. Abdel Khalek and R. Tignor, eds., *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981).
26. Reducing urban rents by 25 percent, and making it virtually impossible for real estate owners to raise the rents or evict tenants or their descendants.
27. M. Adel Fadil, *Development, Income Distribution and Social Change in Rural Egypt: 1952–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 17–102.
28. The reduction of the number of working hours, and the real expansion of the industrial base contributed to an absolute increase of nearly nine hundred thousand workers between 1952 and 1970. See Qassem, *Evolution of Egyptian Industry*, p. 349, and CAPMAS, *Statistical Indicators 1952–73* (Cairo, CAPMAS, 1974), table p. 206.
29. For details see S. E. Ibrahim, "The Social Project of the July Revolution," in S. E. Ibrahim, ed., *Egypt, Arabism, and the July Revolution* (in Arabic) (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1982), pp. 133–36.
30. ibid., p. 138.
31. ibid., pp. 121–46.
32. S. E. Ibrahim, *The New Arab Social Order* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 65–68.
33. S. E. Ibrahim, "The Social Project," pp. 138–43. For a more elaborate treatment see Abdel Khalek and Tignor, *The Political Economy of Income Distribution.*

34. For an account of the debate, see Ibrahim Issawi, "The Internal Factors Leading to the Infitah (Open-Door)," in Abdel Khalek, ed., *The Open-Door Policy (Infitah)*, pp. 71–90.
35. Ibrahim, *The New Arab Social Order*, pp. 67–69.
36. See an elaborate documentation of this amalgamation in Mata Za'aluk, "Commercial Agents in Egypt: A Case Study in Development," Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Hull, 1982: e.g., all three daughters of Sadat's second wife, Gihan Sadat, married into the old upper class, one to a big landowner, another to the son of a former pasha, and the third to a grand-bourgeois capitalist.
37. Ibrahim, *The New Arab Social Order*, pp. 130–32.
38. Galal Amin, "The External Factors Leading to the Infitah (Open-Door)," in Abdel Khalek, ed., *The Open Door Policy*, pp. 91–124.
39. Adel Hussein, *Egyptian Economy From Independence to Dependency: 1974–79*, 2 vols., (in Arabic) (Cairo: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabiya, 1982), pp. 200–34.
40. Enid Hill, "Legislating Development in Egypt: 1971–86," paper presented to the Conference on Dynamics of States and Societies in the Middle East, Center for Political Research and Studies, Cairo, 17–19 June 1989, p. 3.
41. ibid., pp. 7–12.
42. The Infitah (Open-Door policy) has come under sharp criticism, especially from leftist writers. See for example Hussayn, *Egyptian Economy*; and F. Mursi, *This Open-Door Economic Policy* (Beirut: Dar al-Wihda, 1981).
43. Samia Imam, *Who Owns Egypt? An Analytical Study of the Social Origins of the Infitah Elite: 1974–80* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabiya, 1986), pp. 22–122.
44. Ibrahim Mukhtar, *Egypt's Banks* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Kitab al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi, 1988), pp. 37–54.
45. Imam, pp. 83–122.
46. ibid., pp. 123–36.
47. On these companies see, *Islamic Investment Companies: The Rise, The Collapse, and the Future* (Cairo: Kitab al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi, June 1988).
48. See for example, President Mubarak's speech on the 38th Anniversary of the July Revolution, published in *al-Ahram*, 23 July, 1990.
49. See a typical argument of the bourgeoisie as in *al-Wafd* newspaper, 8 July 1990, reporting on a seminar of Egyptian investors in London, held 29 June–2 July 1990.
50. For a detailed documentation and analysis of their effective lobbying see Amani Kandil, "Public Policy-Making in Egypt: A Case Study of Economic Policy: 1974–81," Ph.D. dissertation in Political Science, submitted to Cairo University, 1985, and also by the same author "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy," paper presented to the Second Annual Conference of Political Research, Cairo University, 3–5 December 1988.
51. See the introduction to *The American Chamber of Commerce Membership Directory, 1984/1985*, Cairo: American Chamber of Commerce, 1984, p. 5.
52. ibid., p. 15.
53. ibid., pp. 15–22.
54. ibid., p. 23.
55. Kandil, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy," pp. 6–7, 10–11 (for details of the ACCE meeting with President Mubarak, 8 March 1988).
56. See the detailed list of top Egyptian officials who have addressed the Egyptian Society of Businessmen (ESB) in the Society's *Annual Report 1987*, published in April 1988.
57. The figures are for those who identified themselves or were identified by the newspapers as known businessmen. There may be more who choose to be identified by some other affiliation. Other than "farmers" and "workers," the Egyptian Constitution lumps "professionals" and "national capitalists" under the label "categories."

58. Raymond Hinnebusch, "Egypt under Sadat: Élites, Power Structure, and Political Change in a Post-Populist State," in *Social Problems*, vol. 28, no. 4, April 1981, pp. 442–63. The figures are extracted from table 2, p. 448.
59. ibid., p. 448.
60. For more documentation and analysis of this phenomenon, see Imam, *Who Owns Egypt?*, especially appendices 1–8, pp. 241–347.

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8

Governance and Structural Adjustment

THE EGYPTIAN CASE[1]

1994

"There is nothing more difficult to arrange, more doubtful of success, and more dangerous to carry through than initiating changes in a state's constitution. The innovator makes enemies of all those who prosper under the older order, and only lukewarm support is forthcoming from those who would prosper under the new. Their support is lukewarm partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the existing laws on their side, and partly because men are generally incredulous, never really trusting new things unless they have tested them by experience. In consequence, whenever those who oppose changes can do so, they attack vigorously, and the defense made by the other side is only lukewarm, so both the innovator and his friends are endangered together."

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, VI

GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC REFORM IN EGYPT

Egypt's Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) started in 1990, but was formally ratified in May 1991 through agreements with the IMF and the World Bank. The ERSAP has been set in three phases. The first two (1991–93) have been judged by both international institutions as fairly successful; the third phase is still underway.

Egypt's ERSAP has the same standard components as elsewhere in many developing countries. These consist of dealing with the same chronic economic ills: severe budget and trade deficits; high inflation; a huge inefficient public sector; and, heavy external debts. Egypt's inability to service its debts by the late 1980s was the most dramatic of several danger signals. The Egyptian government's reluctance to initiate ERSAP was finally overcome in 1990–91 due to a host of regional and international factors, among which were the financial rewards for Egypt's role on the side of the international coalition in the Gulf crisis (1990–91), and the promise of canceling a substantial part of the country's external debt.

During the first three years of ERSAP (1991–93), Egypt witnessed an unprecedented wave of politically motivated violence, mainly between Islamic activists and the state. While there may be no direct correlation with ERSAP, the fact that the violence was concentrated in the country's most socioeconomically depressed areas casts a se-

rious question on the governance capacity of Egypt's ruling élite. There were other signals to the same effect. Labor unrest in the public sectors escalated steadily in 1993 and 1994. Major opposition parties boycotted President Mubarak's reelection to a third term in October 1993. Reports by Amnesty International, Middle East Watch, the U.S. State Department, and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights indicated that Egypt's human rights situation had deteriorated. The issuance of several laws restricting basic freedoms alienated Egypt's civil society and intelligentsia. At the end of 1993, more than one half of Egyptians sampled in a national survey felt that their life had deteriorated since the preceding year, while two-thirds of the sample respondents said it had deteriorated compared to five years earlier.

Most of the discontented Egyptians are among the short-run 'losers' in ERSAP. They include the lower and lower-middle classes which represent over 75 percent of the population. The most vulnerable of the 'losers' are: (a) the young, educated, and unemployed; (b) the workers and white-collars of the public sector and civil service; and (c) the rural and urban poor and those dependent on fixed incomes for whom subsidized goods and services constitute most of their basic needs. On the other hand, the short-term 'winners' of Egypt's ERSAP are few, and, for the most part, are loosely connected businesspeople.

Some key governance problems must be rectified before economic reform proceeds. To begin with, there is a severe 'credibility–legitimacy–effectiveness gap,' a deeply alienated civil society, and a sluggish democratization process. The short supply of political capacity has forced the state to rely disproportionately on its coercive capacity. The Egyptian case provides intricate theoretical and substantive material for testing this research project's two main hypotheses[2], namely that:

(1) Positive adjustment is contingent on effective design and political articulation of a national project that convincingly translates immediate losses into future benefits (material and non-material).

(2) Beyond the short-term needs of ERSAP, sustained growth and development require a radical departure from the standard mode of state–society relations.

The stage setting for Egypt's ERSAP entails a brief review of the country's socioeconomic performance and its modes of governance during the previous four decades (1952–91). This account provides a base line for the visions accompanying both President Nasser's quest for "socialist transformation" (1952–70), and President Sadat's quest for an "open society" (1970–81). Sadat was in fact a prelude to Egypt's ERSAP under Mubarak some ten years later. The nature of tradeoffs in Nasser and Sadat's competing visions had become integral parts of Egypt's socioeconomic landscape, political culture, and collective consciousness. Mubarak had attempted a synthesis of both in his first ten years in office (1981–91). Since 1990, however, he has clearly been tilting toward a Sadat version of his own with ERSAP.

NASSER'S VISION

Along with some one hundred officers, Nasser led a military coup d'état on 23 July 1952, against the royalist regime, which had been perceived by most Egyptians as alien, corrupt, and decadent. He presided over the Free Officers and the Revolutionary Command Council. With its drastic agrarian reform measures (September 1952), dissolution of political parties, abolition of the monarchy, declaration of the Egyptian republic (1953), the agreement forcing the British to evacuate the Suez Canal Zone (1954), and the setting-up of national bodies for streamlining and energizing production and services (1954), Nasser's Free Officers transformed their coup into a full-fledged revolution which was positively received by most Egyptians.[3]

Nasser's July Revolution, as it came to be called, compiled an impressive list of achievements: resisting Western military pacts, championing the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), furthering pan-Arabism, and instituting ambitious socioeconomic development plans. By 1960–61, the revolution had nationalized most of Egypt's large and medium scale economic enterprises, effected another land reform further reducing maximum ownership from two hundred to one hundred feddans of land for each family, instituted urban housing rent control, and provided free education and health services. These and other measures had vast redistributive effects in favor of the middle and lower classes in urban and rural areas alike. Together they were dubbed 'socialist transformation' and 'Arab Socialism.'

Increasing its political controls, restricting basic freedoms and human rights, and running the country through a single party (the Liberation Rally, then the National Union, and, finally, the Arab Socialist Union), the regime had all the marks of a developing country 'populism.' With Nasser's charisma, marked socioeconomic achievements, and regional and international preeminence well into the late 1960s, this populist formula seemed acceptable to a vast majority of Egyptians. It was a 'social contract' that satisfied basic needs, consolidated a sense of social equity, opened the doors for social mobility through meritocracy, and afforded the people pride and dignity as Egyptians and as Arabs. The 1955–65 decade witnessed a remarkable rate of investment, averaging 17 percent, and an equally impressive rate of economic growth, about 7 percent annually. Egypt's total civilian debt in 1970 (on Nasser's death) was $1.7 billion, most of which went toward financing the Aswan High Dam and other industrial projects of the first five-year plan (1960–65). All young Egyptians were guaranteed jobs and salaries that enabled them to afford housing, start a family, and live decently though modestly.[4]

The foreign policy of Nasser's populist regime served its overall purpose. In the height of the Cold War years (1950s and 1960s), the regime managed to play a balancing game between the two blocs and to exact the maximum amount of foreign aid from both to finance its ambitious development plan of the Aswan High Dam, industrialization, and an ample wheat supply for the country.[5] Although tilting

toward the Soviets, the regime maintained a credible posture of independence and neutrality in international forums. It also maintained, both in words and deeds, its support for liberation movements in developing countries. Although he created many enemies among Western and pro-Western conservative regimes in the Middle East (for example, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia), Nasser enjoyed widespread popular support in the region and beyond.[6]

Nasser's populist regime offered a vision and a set of credible policies that ensured smooth governance for at least fifteen years. Nevertheless, the stunning military defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967 raised serious questions about the regime's policies at home and abroad. Between his defeat (1967) and his death (1970), Nasser began revising both his vision and state policies. Elements of such a revision were foreshadowed in a public document known as the March 1968 Declaration. The people and the leadership, however, were too absorbed preparing a new war of liberation against the Israeli occupation to put the March 1968 Declaration into effect. His successor, President Sadat, would implement the changes, and in the process he would 'de-Nasserize' Egypt.

SADAT'S VISION

Nasser's death in September 1970 was a source of profound grief, both in Egypt and throughout the Arab world. His successor, President Sadat, did not initially appear charismatic, resourceful, or forceful. To consolidate his power base and to enhance his legitimacy, Sadat vowed to hold to his predecessor's legacy and to carry on the war of liberation against Israeli occupation. In October 1973 he staged a successful war, which was hailed by the powerful state media as the "October Victory." Feeling more confident, Sadat issued the October Paper, which included elements of what would be a vision of his own, although it invoked Nasser's March 1968 Declaration as its preface. During the following four years, those elements became a full-fledged socioeconomic–political project, which lasted until Sadat's assassination in October 1981.

The economic pillar of Sadat's new vision was the first to be announced and implemented. As with other pillars of his program, Sadat presented it in a token homage to Nasser, asserting that his predecessor would have blessed it because the policy had been contained in the March 1968 Declaration.[7] The economic component of the new Sadat vision was debated, deliberated, and finally formulated into a policy in early 1974, under the title of "Infitah," or the "Open-Door Economic Policy" (ODEP).

ODEP was embodied in Law no. 43/1974, which was designed to encourage private investments—initially Arab and foreign capital, but ultimately Egyptian funds as well (Law no. 32/1977). It also provided for foreign banks to establish branches in Egypt or to enter into joint banking ventures with their state-owned counterparts. Import–export and currency regulations were markedly liberalized. Egyptians

could open accounts in foreign currencies, and remit and transfer without any questions asked.[8] Aided by regional developments, mainly the skyrocketing oil prices that followed the October 1973 war, ODEP was in many ways quite timely. Millions of Egyptians migrated to the oil-rich countries. They earned, saved, and remitted billions of dollars from the mid-1970s onward.[9] Oil-rich countries or their respective development funds also extended grants and loans to Egypt. An estimated $3 billion annually poured into Egypt from these two sources alone. Western foreign aid, especially from the United States, averaged about $2 billion a year. The annual rate of growth was estimated to be around 8 percent of GDP from 1975 to 1981.[10]

ODEP was clearly intended to transform Egypt into a more outward-looking, capitalist–market economy. The private sector was to be given a forceful push, even at the expense of the huge public sector inherited from the Nasser years. ODEP was initially well received by the vast majority, including the working classes whose members looked forward to the new opportunities to be found both at home and in neighboring Arab countries.[11] More sustained enthusiasm for ODEP would come from the upper and upper-middle classes, the older landed bourgeoisie, professionals who made fortunes abroad, and senior or retired managers of the public sector eager to move onward and upward. The early years of ODEP also witnessed the sprouting of a new class of businesspeople, entrepreneurs, agents, and brokers for foreign corporations. This group would become an additional and substantial constituency for Sadat's ODEP who would collaborate with and marry into the older upper classes.[12]

Along with ODEP, Sadat's vision included three other policies. The first was a limited political opening toward a more pluralistic democratic society, with the promise of more to come. Initiated in 1976, multiple forums were first permitted within the single party inherited from the Nasser years, the ASU. Soon after (1977), a multiparty system was reinstated for the first time since 1952. Though restricted to three, then five parties, including Sadat's own,[13] most Egyptians welcomed this new political pluralism. It seemed well-suited to the new economic liberalization, but it was also an overdue response to a demand of Egypt's middle classes.[14] The new parties were allowed to publish their own newspapers and to compete in elections in 1976 and 1979. Even the Muslim Brotherhood, banned since 1954, was allowed to operate de facto and to issue publications. All the opposition parties took the matter seriously, and the regime's policies were heatedly debated and criticized.

The opposition parties, however, complained of irregularities in elections and a lack of fairness in access to the electronic media (radio and television), which remained a state monopoly for the almost exclusive use of the National Democratic party (NDP), headed by Sadat. By 1979, President Sadat began to display signs of impatience with the opposition parties, especially their disagreement with his peace initiative with Israel and the growing linkages with the West. In the

1979 parliamentary elections none of the major opposition parties won a single seat. Growing segments of Egyptian public opinion lost their faith in the regime's commitments to democratization. By September 1981, the margin of open legal dissent had greatly diminished. Between 3 and 5 September 1981, scores of opposition figures from various parties were arrested and detained without formal charges.

The other two elements of Sadat's vision were related to foreign policy. Immediately after the 1973 October War, the Egyptian regime grew steadily closer to the West, especially the United States. This was clearly a strategic shift away from twenty years of close relations with the USSR. Sadat had deliberately cooled those ties as early as 1972, when he expelled some twenty thousand Soviet experts from Egypt.[15] Egypt resumed its diplomatic relations with the United States and started receiving aid following President Nixon's visit in the spring of 1974. By the late 1970s, Egypt become the second greatest recipient of United States aid after Israel. The USAID mission in Cairo grew to become the largest mission in the world.[16]

Closely related to this strategic shift in global alignment from East to West was President Sadat's reconciliation with Israel. Following the 1973 War, Egypt signed a number of disengagement agreements with the Jewish state. But it was Sadat's historic journey to Israel in November 1977 that would decisively pave the way to a historic compromise between the two countries. Two accords were signed at Camp David in 1978, followed by a full-fledged peace treaty in 1979. This brought an end to a thirty-year state of war between the two countries.[17] Much of the Arab world was alienated by these swift developments. Egypt's membership in the Arab League was suspended; the League's headquarters were moved from Cairo to Tunisia; Arab governmental aid to Egypt was stopped; and diplomatic relations with Arab countries (except Sudan and Oman) were severed. Western aid was increased to make up for the loss, while Egyptian laborers in the oil-rich Arab countries and their remittances were not markedly affected.

All in all, Sadat had managed to package and propagate a vision that was dazzling to many Egyptians. It promised a more open economic system and democratization at home, closer ties with the 'advanced West,' and regional peace. These policies were promoted by a powerful state media as the vehicle to put an end to the suffering of Egyptians from war and deprivation, and as paving the way to progress and prosperity. Most Egyptians were initially receptive to this vision. Toward the end of the Sadat years, however, they became more disillusioned, frustrated, and alienated. The massive food riots of 1977—when the government, on the advice of the IMF and World Bank, announced the reduction of subsidies for some basic commodities—were an early warning that more trouble was to come.[18] Although the army was called in to put down the riots and the subsidies were restored, Sadat would not reverse his course. Most Egyptians sensed the end of the legacy of Nasser's egalitarianism.[19]

On 6 October 1981, while attending a military parade celebrating the eighth anniversary of the October Victory, President Sadat was assassinated by a group of the same soldiers he was proudly reviewing. The four years separating the food riots and the assassination witnessed accumulating signs that Sadat's vision was losing its appeal for most Egyptians. Despite the huge flow of foreign aid and remittances, Egyptian external debt had skyrocketed from less than $5 billion in 1970 ($1.7 billion in civilian debt and an estimated $3.3 billion in military debt) when Sadat ascended to the presidency, to about $30 billion in 1981, when he was killed.[20] The seeds of the mounting Egyptian civilian debt were sown in the 1970–75 period, when it jumped by 350 percent, from $1.7 to $6.3 billion. The annual rate of growth of Egypt's debts in those five years was 23 percent, compared with only 9 percent in the 1960s.[21] Tales of corruption among officials in high circles, including members of Sadat's own family, had become rampant. Social equity had worsened. The lower-middle and lower classes found their circumstances increasingly strained, as they witnessed the nouveau riche flaunting their wealth conspicuously. Although most Egyptians had not been happy in the late Nasser period, they now lamented those years with nostalgia.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MUBARAK PERIOD

Most Egyptians were torn somewhere between the two contrasting legacies of Nasser and Sadat, as was the newly elected president, Hosni Mubarak. When Mubarak took over, he was cognizant of the heavy burdens inherited from his predecessors. The heaviest of those burdens was Egypt's economic dilemma. Early in 1982, he convened an economic conference of the country's renowned economic and political figures. They deliberated for three days and made several policy recommendations for reforming and revitalizing the ailing economy—curbing imports, reducing the military budget, rationalizing investments, and reducing external borrowing.[22] According to Galal Amin, however, "few, if any, of these recommendations were sincerely followed. Instead, the policies after 1981 remained essentially an extension of those of the 1970s."[23]

The reluctance of the regime to act on the policy recommendations was attributed to both Mubarak's extremely cautious style, and the emboldened leftist opposition—hostile to economic reform along IMF–World Bank lines. The result of such reluctance was a rapid accumulation of external debt during the next nine years (1981–90) from $30 billion to $48 billion, that is, about 150 percent of Egypt's GDP—the highest in modern Egyptian history.[24] Several renowned Egyptian economists sent loud warnings from the mid to the late 1980s that further delay in implementing economic reform would make things worse for the rulers and ruled alike, and that the inevitable ERSAP would be more costly.[25]

The unfolding Egyptian economic crisis of the 1980s compelled the regime in 1991 to embark on the course it had been unwilling to

follow since 1981. The irony is that the first term of Mubarak's presidency (1981–87) coincided with the years of the regime's greatest governance capacity. There was ample goodwill toward the new president, and few acts of violence or sociopolitical unrest. In the domestic context those early years would have been the most promising for the introduction of ERSAP. By the time it was finally initiated (1991) much of the public goodwill had diminished, and the regime's capacity had been eroded. This lack of synchronization between the political and the economic has had seriously adverse effects on Egypt, with unprecedented violence in its modern history (since 1897).

ECONOMIC REFORM: UNDERLYING CAUSES AND GOVERNMENT DISCOURSES[26]

EGYPT'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE 1980S

Toward the end of the 1980s, it had become clear that the economic policy package of the 1980s was unsustainable in the long run. In the years immediately following the adoption of the Open-Door Economic Policy (1974), Egypt's earnings from its major sources of foreign exchange (foreign aid, tourism, the Suez Canal, worker remittances, and oil exports) grew rapidly, inducing strong growth in the domestic economy. Under the more adverse (but probably more normal) external conditions that prevailed after the mid-1980s, GNP per capita fell by 10 percent (from $670 in 1986 to $610 in 1990) while the real wage per worker declined by 14 percent between 1986 and 1991. At the same time, unemployment continued to grow, reaching around 15–20 percent, perhaps twice the level of the mid-1970s. Between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, some 70–90 percent of all new jobs came from emigration and government employment, two areas in which expanded employment in the foreseeable future seemed unlikely.[27]

In its dealings with the outside world, the performance of Egypt's economy had also been bleak. Between 1980 and 1989, the foreign debt increased from $20 billion to $49 billion,[28] revealing that the 'rents' earned from oil and from the country's strategic position were insufficient to maintain an acceptable external balance. At the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the country's debt arrears (unpaid interest on foreign loans) amounted to some $10 billion.[29] There was no reason to expect any significant improvements in the future.

The revolutions in Eastern Europe made the long-run expectations for future foreign exchange inflow even gloomier: the elimination of the West's main political protagonist threatened to reduce the long-term ability of countries such as Egypt to bargain for aid. Suggestions in early 1990 that the United States should reallocate some of its foreign aid from the Middle East (Egypt included) to Eastern Europe confirmed such fears.[30]

All these events suggest that the policy package of the 1980s was not sustainable. Falling real incomes and rising unemployment threat-

ened to produce exactly what some feared would be the result of orthodox economic reforms: riots and political instability. On the international stage, Egypt was turning into an eternal beggar for debt forgiveness and emergency loans. In 1990 the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank affiliate that provides soft loans to the world's poorest countries, reclassified Egypt as belonging to this group, a symbol of the country's deteriorating status.[31]

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

The late 1980s saw the rejection of a state-led economy in Eastern Europe and the overthrow of most of the governments that had pursued this path. It also appeared that developing countries with dominant private sectors, most importantly a group of Southeast Asian countries, had been more economically successful than others. The resulting international ideological atmosphere was summarized as follows in the *Economist* (12–18 October 1991): "In the past few years a new consensus on economic policy has emerged. In many respects this consensus looks a lot like 'Bank/Fund orthodoxy.' This change has gone so far that, increasingly, the Bank and the IMF find their borrowers running ahead of their advice in both the scope and pace of economic reform." Following this trend, in his speech on May Day 1991, President Mubarak came out in support of policies of the IMF and the World Bank, in contrast to statements in the late 1980s, when he compared the IMF to a "quack doctor prescribing fatal doses of medicine."[32] For Egypt, close relations with the West in general, and the United States in particular, since the mid-1970s had reinforced the new more favorable view. As part of aid programs, thousands of Egyptians studied or attended conferences in the United States and in Western Europe, while even larger numbers benefited materially from aid. Moreover, praise of the virtues of a capitalist strategy had been freely bestowed upon the Egyptian élite by innumerable foreign experts and researchers.

At the same time that the international and local ideological atmosphere changed, Egypt's foreign donors and creditors, especially the IMF and the World Bank, strengthened their coordination and stiffened their negotiating positions, partly in reaction to their disappointment with Egypt's failure to implement reforms promised in earlier agreements.[33] Egypt's precarious balance of payments situation enhanced the ability of the IMF and the World Bank to influence domestic economic policy.[34] The IMF required Egypt to implement a large share of the program prior to the signing of the May 1991 standby agreement, including measures designed to reduce the budget deficit and liberalize the foreign exchange rate system.[35] The World Bank's $300 million Structural Adjustment Loan, signed in November 1991, hinged on the IMF agreement and was disbursed in two installments, the second of which depended on World Bank approval of reform measures, especially the privatization program.[36] The agreement with

the IMF was also a preliminary requirement for the May agreement with the Paris Club on phased debt write-offs (amounting to $10 billion), a 30 percent cut in interest rates on the debt, and the rescheduling of a portion of the remaining debt. Continued debt reductions were conditional on IMF approval of new reform measures.[37] There were also signs that the Gulf countries would make IMF and World Bank approval a precondition for their future contributions.[38]

Changes in Egypt's position on both the international and Arab stages may also have encouraged orthodox reforms. As noted by Springborg, one consideration behind Egypt's reluctance to fully embrace IMF advice in the late 1980s was its desire to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union and to avoid being seen as a US pawn. This was especially important given Egypt's vulnerable position as the only Arab country that had signed a peace treaty with Israel.[39] Such considerations were less valid after the demise of the Soviet Union and the readiness of nearly all Arab governments to conclude peace agreements with Israel.

DOMESTIC POLITICS: REFORM BY STEALTH

Ultimately, policy changes require political decisions by policy-makers , who operate in the context of a domestic power balance. One important long-run trend generated by Egypt's open-door policies was the growth of the private sector.[40] By the end of the 1980s, it was clear that this sector had been able to translate its more significant role into political influence.[41] A comparison between Egypt's organizations for businesspeople and its trade unions clearly shows that businesspeople had emerged as a strong and unified force relatively independent of government influence since the late 1970s, while the trade unions were under considerable government control. Businesses also favored most, but not all, of the orthodox reform package,[42] and its members were able to pressure government officials directly. The trade unions, in contrast, were opposed to most elements in the orthodox program, but they were divided. Their stance sometimes depended on whether they represented workers in the public or in the private sector. Since Egypt's General Confederation of Labor in the mid-1980s was regarded as a 'veto group,' this weakness may have been a necessary condition for the implementation of the orthodox reforms.

While the government may have been subject to long-run pressures, it enjoyed a fair degree of short-run independence.[43] This may be ascertained by identifying the immediate winners and losers from key economic policy changes associated with the reform program—the liberalization of interest and foreign exchange rates, the sales tax, and the gradual reduction in the real wages of state employees.

The previous system of fixed interest rates and foreign exchange rates benefited those who were able to get access to loans and foreign exchange at a discount—the public sector and privileged elements in the private sector. Liberalization in these areas hurt the groups most

closely connected to the state machinery. The winners were less well-connected parts of the private sector.[44] Similarly, the introduction of the sales tax was to the immediate detriment of most of the population. It is evident that those who lost due to the policy of gradually reducing real incomes of state employees were some 30 percent of Egypt's labor force. As to the last two policies, there were no immediate beneficiaries. The gain expresses itself as a gradual improvement in macroeconomic performance—lower inflation, higher growth, and a lower foreign deficit. These policies, therefore, hurt those groups that were closely connected with the state—an observation which supports the notion of short-run government autonomy.

Such a conclusion is reinforced by the findings of Grindle and Thomas who, on the basis of a large number of case studies of reform in the Third World, find that governments in a state of perceived crisis (as opposed to "politics as usual") enjoy a fair degree of short-run autonomy. They argue that, in crisis, the senior policy-makers are more strongly involved in making the decisions and the government is less likely to be the captive of micro-political and bureaucratic concerns.[45] Following their argument, the Egyptian state (and its executive arm, the government), in 1991, enjoyed a short-run autonomy, while its policy élite experienced a crisis. Effective reform resistance was quite limited, at least in the first two years. It was only in 1993 and 1994 that we begin to observe serious labor unrest such as in Kafr al-Dawar textile industry.[46]

Moreover, compared with the 1980s, the experience of the early 1990s suggests that government policy management had somewhat improved, at least in the fiscal area. Policy-makers also perceived a quiescent population that would make serious political instability unlikely. Fears of a repetition of the widespread food riots of January 1977 had been a major obstacle to reform according to both the Egyptian government and analysts. An improvement in economic policy management was evident from the timing and the manner in which unpopular policy changes were introduced. One key government practice has been referred to as "reform by stealth": subsidies are maintained but the subsidized items themselves gradually disappear and are replaced by slightly modified and costlier items.[47] Another practice, exemplified by the introduction of price hikes and a general sales tax at the start of *'id al-fitr* (a religious holiday) in 1991, is to choose major holidays as the time to announce unpopular new policies, presumably on the assumption that people are less likely to take to the streets at such a time.[48] The government has also struggled to make the new economic reforms more palatable by giving them a stamp of 'Egyptianness'—although supported by the IMF, Egypt's economic policies are presented as locally designed. One reflection of this is the announcement of a "1,000-day" program of economic liberalization in December 1990, some five months before the conclusion of the agreement with the IMF. Another indication is Mubarak's insistence that, while the advice of the IMF is wise and welcome, the ideas be-

hind the reforms are "purely Egyptian."[49] This relatively skilled public relations management stands in sharp contrast to the manner in which the subsidy cuts of January 1977 were announced as part of an agreement with a foreign agent, the IMF. Since then the government has been able to introduce more substantial subsidy cuts than those of January 1977, with little or no political instability. Along with Wahba, one may therefore conclude that the riots of 1977 should be viewed more as a reaction to the style with which the subsidy cuts were announced than to the cuts per se.[50] It may equally be argued that in the eleven interim years (1977–91), Egyptians have become less accustomed to governmental "largesse."

Another consideration encouraging the introduction of the 1991 economic reforms was the absence in parliament of the major opposition parties (the New Wafd and Labor–Islamic parties), and the weakness of the other parties which suggested that there was no serious threat to political stability. Most other dissident groups apparently lacked the ability to mobilize a population which, in any case, was unorganized and appeared "apathetic."[51] If disturbances were to have occurred, the government in 1991 was and is still much better equipped than it was in 1977 to handle them.[52]

THE TIMING OF THE ECONOMIC POLICY SHIFT

The more precise timing of the policy shift was probably linked to the Gulf War. After its conclusion, an expected economic upturn and a relatively comfortable foreign exchange situation increased the political feasibility of the orthodox reform package. In general, the feasibility increases for any reform package if, after the reform begins, conditions are not immediately perceived as getting worse. Orthodox reform programs are at a disadvantage since, at least in the short-run, they tend to shrink economic activity. During the Gulf crisis, the producing sectors and the general public (as opposed to the government) went through some bad times due to a decline in foreign exchange earnings from tourism and worker remittances, higher transportation costs for international trade, and an uncertain economic climate. Other things being equal, a general upturn would have been expected in the aftermath of the war as conditions went back to normal, including the return of tourists to Egypt and Egyptian workers to the Gulf.[53]

More specifically, during the Gulf War, contributions received from Western and Arab governments doubled official foreign exchange reserves.[54] In the same period, Egypt was forgiven debts to the United States and Arab Gulf countries amounting to a total of some $14 billion. After the agreement with the IMF, the Paris Club decided to cut Egypt's foreign debt gradually by another $10 billion, and to reschedule and cut interest rates on $10 billion of the remaining debt.[55] In addition, Egypt's major donors promised increased foreign aid over the next few years (while doubts prevailed regarding the longer run). Together this meant that Egypt's debt service burden had dimin-

ished significantly and that the country's foreign exchange situation was quite comfortable in the foreseeable future, making it possible to avoid rapid devaluation of the Egyptian pound while permitting it to float in a relatively unregulated market.[56] Nominal exchange rate stability had the benefits of stabilizing the economy, increasing Egypt's credit worthiness, reducing capital flight, and limiting inflationary pressures from cost increases for imported goods. But as noted in a later section, the pursuit of nominal exchange rate stability may, however, be highly questionable for a country with higher inflation than its major trading partners.

These factors—a stable currency and the multiplier effects of increasing foreign exchange earnings from tourism and migrant workers—were not a result of the government's policy shift. Their combined impact was nevertheless to make the new policies more palatable to the Egyptian public than would otherwise have been the case. However, the same considerations would also have made it easier to continue for some time without any reforms—there is no urgent need to change anything when the economy is improving and plenty of foreign exchange is available. Thus, while these two factors may be necessary conditions for a change in economic policy, they are by no means sufficient and should be viewed in the context of the international and domestic conditions discussed earlier.

THE ECONOMY SINCE 1991: POLICIES AND TRENDS

STABILIZATION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

Some indicators of recent trends in stabilization policy and their effects are shown in Table 1. A key shift in this area is a substantial reduction in the government budget deficit, according to Central Bank data, falling from some 15 percent in the most recent pre-reform years to roughly 4 percent in 1991/92 and 1992/93.[57] This drop is due both to spending cuts (the steady reduction of subsidies to energy and selected food products), and to revenue-boosting measures.[58] In the latter area, the 1991 introduction of a general sales tax is a major contributor. The money supply growth rate (according to the narrow M1 measure) is slightly downward, reflecting in part the fact that the government budget deficit since 1991 has been primarily financed by weekly treasury bill auctions, and reflecting a clear break from the earlier reliance on borrowing from the Central Bank.[59] While interest rates were previously permitted to fluctuate within narrow limits, banks were given in 1991 the freedom to set virtually all deposit and lending rates. In practice, the interest rates on treasury bills have provided an anchor for bank interest rates. As a result, interest rates on bank deposits are close to or slightly above the inflation rate.[60]

Policies related to the foreign exchange rate have also changed. In February of 1991, the government merged the multiple rates of ear-

Table 1 Indicators of recent stabilization policy and performance

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Government spending[a]	43.6	43.5	37.9	40.9	34.2	33.9
Government revenue[a]	25.9	27.7	22.8	25.7	29.8	30.4
Budget deficit (all as % of GDP)	17.6	15.8	15.1	15.2	4.4	3.5
Money supply (M1) (% growth/p.a.)	12.8	9.2	16.6	8.1	8.8	12.1
Inflation (%/p.a., CPI)	17.6	21.3	16.8	19.8	15.0	12.5
Real GDP (% growth p.a.)[a, b]						
Earlier estimates	3.9	3.0	2.6	2.3	2.8	na
Revised estimates	5.4	5.0	5.7	1.1	4.4	1.7
Current account surplus[a] ($ million)	-544	-469	-634	1,373	3,737	4,774

[a] Data for fiscal years (1988/89, etc.).

[b] Real GDP data refer to GDP at market prices. Earlier and revised real GDP data are from IMF, *International Financial Statistics,* April 1993 and May 1994, respectively, except for 1993 estimate, from Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report* 1992/93

Sources: Carr [1990:231]; Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report* (1990/91), p. 99; (1991/92), p. 232; (1992/93), pp. 10, 159); EIU, *Country Profile* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993/94), p. 37; EIU, *Egypt Country Report* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 3/1992), p. 5; (4/1993), p. 3; (1/1994), p. 3; IMF, *International Financial Statistics* (Washington D.C.: IMF, May 1994); US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends* (Cairo: US Embassy, 1989), p. 21.

lier policies to a single rate, and depreciated the Egyptian pound by some 10 percent against the US dollar.[61] The capital account was also liberalized (that is, most restrictions on access and transfers to abroad were removed for dollars and other currencies), putting an end to a flourishing currency black market.[62] Since then, government exchange rate policy has aimed at maintaining a stable Egyptian pound rate vis-à-vis the dollar, a goal achieved via frequent Central Bank interventions in the currency market.[63]

Lower budget deficits, less money supply growth, higher interest rates and the shift from gradual depreciation to a fixed nominal exchange rate have brought about a lower rate of inflation. Data on annual real GDP growth are very uncertain, as illustrated by the display of two alternative series in Table 1.[64] Although this makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about this key indicator of economic performance, it is noteworthy that both series show positive growth, averaging 2.3 percent in the early 1990s. However, uncertainties exist and are compounded by the strong presence of an informal sector, the size and growth record of which is not precisely known. The standard assessment is that its size corresponds to 25–50 percent of GDP.[65] Investments improved slightly, followed by a decline as the contractional effects of the program made themselves felt. Recent acts of Islamist violence, primarily aimed at government officials, tourists, and Copts, have deprived the economy of foreign exchange earnings from tourism and worsened the investment climate. The likely impact is a still lower growth rate in the near future.[66]

The fact that nominal interest rates exceed inflation signals that Egypt, for the first time in decades, has positive real interest rates. A combination of liberalized capital flows, nominal interest rates far above international levels, and the expectation of a stable nominal exchange rate led to a much higher real return from placing funds in Egyptian pounds compared to dollars or any other major currency.[67] The result was a strong incentive for workers abroad to remit current earnings back home.[68] Together with the exceptional circumstances of the 1990–91 Gulf crisis (high oil prices and large transfers to the government) this has led to a positive net on the current account of the balance of payments in 1990/91–92/93. Additional inflows on the capital account were also encouraged, leading to large short-term capital inflows. Taken together, these developments have generated a large increase in Egypt's foreign currency reserves, from $2.7 billion in 1990 to an unprecedented level of $17 billion in the second half of 1993.[69]

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

In the area of structural change, the shift in policy direction covered pricing policy, foreign trade, public sector reform, privatization, and the conditions for private sector activities. In terms of the reform program, the overall purpose is to get closer to a competitive market economy where producers and consumers face prices approximating opportunity costs for traded goods based on the international price level.[70]

Administrative Price Controls

Egypt has, since the beginning of the reforms, witnessed significant changes in price and foreign trade policy. Among the goods with administrative price controls are petroleum products, whose prices were raised from 35 percent to 80 percent of the international level between 1990 and the end of 1992, whereas electricity prices increased from 22 percent to 69 percent of the long-run marginal cost (that is, the marginal cost of additional production capacity).[71] For the industrial sector, all prices, except for pharmaceuticals and a few other goods, have been decontrolled.[72] Subsidies on controlled food prices were reduced substantially in 1991 and 1992, although the socially and politically important bread subsidy remains largely intact.[73] In the agricultural sector, subsidies on most inputs were terminated.[74] Between 1990 and 1992, cotton prices rose from 50 percent to 66 percent of the international level, and in 1993 they were above the international level for some varieties, illustrating the continued presence of obstacles impeding a more close alignment with international prices.[75]

Foreign Trade

With respect to foreign trade, restrictions were reduced significantly in terms of non-tariff and tariff barriers. Other things being equal,

this means that new export opportunities were opened up and local production became more exposed to competition from imports, tending to bring domestic relative price levels closer to their international equivalents.

Streamlining Public Enterprises

In 1991, a reorganization of the public sector was initiated. More than three hundred public companies became subsidiaries under independent holding companies, replacing the previous general organizations that controlled state enterprises along the lines of government ministries. In principle, the companies should be run along commercial lines, competing on equal terms with the private sector. Companies may be leased or sold to the private sector.[76] The impact of the reform on the management of public sector companies is not yet clear. This is also the case for the privatization process—completed sales of public sector companies have so far been limited to a few hotels, land assets, two bottling plants, and small projects owned by the governorates.[77]

The privatization issue is highly controversial. There are fears that, given the absence of clear limits on sales to foreigners, national independence will suffer. The notion that the private sector is more efficient than the public sector is also contested.[78] Moreover, the determination of what constitutes the 'true' value of the companies is hotly disputed.[79] Other factors which so far have limited the extent of privatization are concerns that it will generate higher unemployment, and the negative impact of the downturn in tourism on the value of some of the most attractive assets. In addition to government hesitation, other factors are the complicated and time-consuming bidding procedures. Outside pressures are reduced due to the fact that, according to Egypt's current agreement with the World Bank, the government is not obliged to sell any assets if it considers the price as unfair.[80]

It seems, nevertheless, that conditions for the already existing private sector have improved. One indicator is stronger guarantees for investors and less complicated investment approval procedures; in 1991, automatic approvals were issued for investments in all areas except those which appeared on a 'negative' list which, in turn, is becoming more limited.[81] Similarly, in agriculture, controls on the cropping pattern have been lifted step by step; in 1993, they were limited to cotton and sugar cane.[82]

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND EFFECTS OF REFORMS

With a per capita GNP of around $600–$700 in 1993, Egypt is a border case between the groups of low- and middle-income countries, following the World Bank classification. According to UNDP's broader "Human Development Indicator," Egypt was ranked 124 out of 173 countries on the basis of data for 1990.[83] Some 20–25 percent of the population may live on a total monthly income below a poverty

line of $350.[84] Available information suggests that the size distribution of income is relatively equitable (compared to other LDCs) and stable over time; in the 1980s it may have deteriorated slightly.[85] An analysis of the impact of recent economic reforms on poverty, income distribution, and social indicators would require reliable and up-to-date time-series for the above-mentioned indicators. In the absence of such information, any discussion has to rely on indirect indicators.

The share of GDP at factor cost accruing to labor (with the remainder represented by rents for capital and land) is positively related to income equality on the reasonable assumption that labor income is more evenly distributed than other factor incomes and that labor income itself is not becoming less equally distributed.[86] If labor income represents a predominant share of the incomes of poor groups, changes in real wages should be positively related to poverty elimination. Assuming that these conditions are met, the information suggests that income distribution became more unequal and poverty increased in the years preceding the economic reforms, while, in the first reform year, this trend was discontinued and a marginal change in the opposite direction took place. One violation of this assumption is recent changes in government subsidies. Data in Table 2 show that these recently have declined as a share of GDP.[87] Given that subsidized goods, primarily foodstuffs, represent a relatively large share of the expenditures of low-income households (thus raising the CPI of this group relative to the aggregate CPI), these cuts have had a negative impact on the real incomes of these households, both in absolute terms and relative to better-off groups.

Table 2
Indicators of social impact of reforms

	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93
Wages (% of GDP)	36.8	35.5	32.8	26.1	27
Real wage (91/92 LE)	2,973	2,741	2,678	2,513	2,586
Subsidies (% of GDP)	3.4	4.3	5.0	5.2	2.6

Note: The wage share is the share of GDP at factor cost paid to labor, using current LE data except for 1992/93 for which 1991/92 LE data were used. The real wage is computed as total employment divided by total labor income, adjusted for changes in urban CPI. In 1991/92, the exchange rate was LE3.33 per US$.

Sources: CAPMAS, [1993:308, 310]; World Bank, *Arab Republic of Egypt: Public Sector Investment Review*, vol. 1, main report no. 11064-EGT (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1993), p. 233; Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report* (1992/93), p.94; (1991/92), p. 163.

In summary, data limitations prevent anything but very impressionistic judgments about the social impact of the recent reforms. Even if better data were available, it is still far too early to judge the long-term impact of partially implemented structural reforms. With these caveats, it appears that in the pre-reform years, poverty became more widespread and income distribution less egalitarian. Since the start of the reform program, the situation of the average citizen

has not changed drastically. However, subsidy cuts have reduced real living standards for vulnerable groups in the absence of increases in disposable income from higher wages or some alternative system of support to poor households.

POSTSCRIPT

From 1994 to early 1996 economic policy was an extension of the policy shift pursued since 1991, although at an even slower pace.[88]

In response to political instability, the government budget emphasized security and social programs, including services and infrastructure to low-income areas. A new labor law was formulated giving employers more freedom to hire and fire thus improving the climate for private-sector investments.

The pace of reform slowed down further for two primary reasons.[89] In addition to domestic political instability, the government had to deal with structural reforms such as privatization and trade liberalization, that are politically more difficult and sensitive. The outcome was continued slow GDP growth, moderate inflation, and slightly lower but still substantial surpluses on the current account of the balance of payments.

Following parliamentary elections in November of 1995, a new cabinet under Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzuri took over early in 1996. Within weeks, they began forcefully to make up for lost time by enacting a series of laws and decrees speeding the privatization of state companies, freeing up urban rentals, and easing ownership of land by foreign investors. At the time of this postscript (April 1996) these and similar measures have been well received by most political forces. In a departure from his predecessor, the new prime minister has made a point of frequently meeting opposition leaders, labor and business leaders, and the media to explain policies, answer questions, and mobilize support.

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM

STABILIZATION AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE

In the area of stabilization, we have seen that Egypt's policies in recent years led to positive real interest rates, and lower budget deficits and inflation rates, while generating a balance of payments surplus without any drastic fall in GDP growth. In terms of structural change, the government has significantly reduced price distortions, partly liberalized foreign trade, including measures in favor of stronger exports, and taken steps toward privatization and public sector decentralization. These seem to be positive achievements, especially considering the initial pre-reform state of the Egyptian economy. Analyses of a wide range of country experiences suggest that, inter alia, GDP and income growth in LDCs is enhanced by positive real inter-

est rates, stability (indicated by low budget deficits and low inflation), reliance on the private sector, and export orientation.[90]

However, major short- and medium-term problems are found in the area of foreign trade and exchange rate management. The aim of reducing Egypt's chronic deficit in goods trade has not been fulfilled, meaning that the domestic economy has been deprived of an important potential source of demand stimulation during a period of otherwise contractionary policies. Any reduction in the goods trade deficit is made difficult by recent exchange rate appreciation: although Egypt's inflation has been higher than that of its main trading partners, the Egyptian pound has remained relatively stable vis-à-vis the currencies of these countries.[91] This combination of circumstances undermines the competitiveness of Egypt's production of tradables (exports and import substitutes).[92] Accordingly, domestic producers find it increasingly difficult to face foreign competition.[93] The continuation of this exchange rate policy may undermine the political viability of import liberalization. One fear is that the industries most successful in securing protection from foreign competition are those with the most political clout, not those with the strongest economic rationale for being protected (for example, a strong future export potential).

Sooner or later expectations of a nominal depreciation will build up (unless trade liberalization is discontinued), encouraging capital flight, turning depreciation into a self-fulfilling prophecy, and causing a severe blow to the build-up of confidence in the Egyptian pound.[94] The result—real exchange rate instability (without much impact on the long-run level of the nominal exchange rate) is likely to reduce long-run growth.[95] To minimize the risk of instability, it is essential to further cut inflation, encourage exports, and, at an appropriate time, devalue the currency to restore competitiveness. After this, the experience of many countries speaks in favor of a shift to a policy of maintaining a stable, realistic exchange rate via frequent changes in the nominal rate to account for inflation differentials, perhaps via a crawling peg arrangement.[96]

MISSING PREREQUISITES FOR LONG-RUN GROWTH

In addition to the problems raised above, there are other absent factors that may be necessary for higher long-run growth. It is widely agreed that a highly skilled labor force is a prerequisite for rapid and broad-based growth.[97] As noted earlier, Egypt in 1993 was ranked 124 out of 173 countries according to UNDP's Human Development Index, a ranking which the Institute of National Planning considers "both unsatisfactory and indicative of a faltering human development status."[98] The GDP share for government spending on education and health is commonly used as a proxy for the relative emphasis on investment in human capital. Data presented by the INP suggest that, between 1986/87 and 1991/92, this share fell from 5.7 percent to 5.2 percent.[99] By 1994 it had become clear that government invest-

ments in the area of human development were not sufficient to bring about any significant qualitative improvement. Subsequent efforts have been made to raise education budgets and reform the crumbling system of public education. There is reason to fear however, that the nutritional and health standards of Egypt's poorest groups suffer as a result of general subsidy cuts in the absence of income growth or a social security network targeting the most needy.

Maintaining a cadre of motivated and talented administrators is becoming increasingly important as the reform process generates high demand on government management using new tools. The fact that average real salaries for this group declined drastically in the 1980s, both in absolute terms and relative to most other groups, does not bode well in this regard.[100] However, it seems that in 1992/93 this trend was reversed, with a slightly higher wage increase for government workers relative to the economy-wide average and a 6 percent increase in real terms.[101] Labor-intensive growth in the economy as a whole would obviously facilitate the relocation of large numbers of underemployed government administrators, thereby making it feasible to raise the real salaries of those remaining.

Along with investments in Egypt's human resources, high levels of efficient physical investments are essential for rapid growth. The GDP share for Gross Fixed Capital Formation (that is, investment in physical capital) declined between 1988/89 and 1991/92, both according to earlier and revised estimates, a trend which continued in 1992/93. One consequence of increased reliance on markets and the private sector is that the government has relinquished some of its control over investment levels—a strong upsurge in business investment requires (and would reinforce) growth and optimism about the future.

Finally, as the government is creating a decentralized market economy, the current lack of open access to timely, detailed, and accurate data lowers the quality of decisions and adds to uncertainty. Together with limited government credibility (discussed below), this discourages the private sector from carrying out irreversible investments and threatens to lower the efficiency of the investments that are undertaken, both leading to losses in growth and incomes.

ASPECTS OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

The sequencing of its different steps and the credibility of the reforms may have a strong influence on their economic effects. The sequencing of reforms in LDCs undergoing programs for stabilization and structural adjustment has been subject to plenty of research in recent years. For a country with Egypt's pre-reform characteristics (in essence, a highly regulated economy with macro imbalances but relatively moderate inflation), the emerging consensus favors simultaneous macro stabilization and liberalization of the domestic economy and international trade, followed by liberalization of international capital flows.[102] Egypt deviated from this in

its early liberalization of international capital flows. Most likely, exchange rate overvaluation has already reduced net demand for Egypt's production of tradables and thus its overall economic growth.[103] As noted, growth may also suffer in the future as uninhibited capital flows threaten to add to exchange rate and domestic price instability.

A program may be defined as credible if the government seems both determined and able to carry it out. Given the emphasis on the private sector in the Egyptian program, credibility is needed in particular to convince this sector to embark on relatively irreversible capital investments in activities that would be profitable in a more liberal environment. If in doubt about future policies, private investors have the option of keeping their capital in liquid form, thereby adding to economic stagnation. If they conclude that liberalization will be discontinued, they may invest in activities that are profitable under current policies, thereby reducing the gains from and adding to the resistance to future liberalization.[104]

For Egypt, credibility was boosted by the prompt initiation of a series of measures in 1991 as well as by continued budget deficit cuts. The conditional support for the reforms from the IMF and the World Bank, with associated carrots and sticks, added to this boost.[105] However, it soon became clear that the Egyptian government had opted for a very gradual and slow implementation of the reform program. From the perspective of credibility, gradualism is a double-edged sword. On the positive side, a gradual reform program has a better chance of short-run political survival; it is easier to monitor its effects and respond. In addition, there is more time for labor to move between sectors in response to liberalization measures, thereby minimizing transitional unemployment and related negative political repercussions. On the other hand, if change is introduced very slowly and with great hesitation, credibility may suffer as doubts arise as to whether the government intends to ever implement the program.[106] Unfortunately, in part this seems to be happening in Egypt: hesitant implementation of trade liberalization, public sector reform, and privatization has been the subject of continuous complaints from economists as well as the World Bank and the IMF.[107] Slowness has also been the hallmark of the Social Fund for Development, the purpose of which is to facilitate structural adjustment by supporting, inter alia, small labor-intensive projects and public works. In its first year, it did not implement or support a single project. More recently, it has become more active—by January 1994, it had disbursed $97 million out of $613 million in donor pledges, creating a claimed 95,000 jobs (some of which are temporary).[108] Nevertheless, the limited size of the fund and the absence of an effective social security network add to government hesitation about reforms that have short-run negative social effects. Moreover, one gets the impression that some important reform measures have been implemented primarily in response to pressures from the IMF and the World Bank;[109] is creating

doubts about whether the reforms would continue in the absence of such pressure.

GOVERNANCE CAPACITY AND EGYPT'S ERSAP

In this section we look at governance capacity, the moral and spiritual locomotive of which is often an ability to articulate a 'vision.' We hypothesize that the success of Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) in Egypt will rely on an accompanying effective vision advanced by the ruling élite.[110] A vision is defined as the political articulation of national objectives or a 'national project,' inspiring and mobilizing large segments of the effective public behind a set of instrumental policies. It is normal that a vision and its concomitant policies promise greater, but somewhat delayed, gratification than was previously offered by the status quo. In this sense a vision may be thought of as a 'promissory note' of later compensation for immediate sacrifices.

When President Mubarak came to power, Egyptians' collective memory had been already tuned to two quite different visions—Nasser's and Sadat's. Egyptians had initially received both visions with enthusiasm, but were profoundly disappointed toward the end. Obviously, for most Egyptians, the eventual pay-off was either too small or outright negative. Mubarak was cognizant of the fate of his predecessors and their respective visions. On several occasions during his first term in office (1981–87), Mubarak made known his aversion to ideologies, slogans, big words, and what he once called 'sales of dreams which often turn into disillusion and disappointments.'[111] He believed he had to be frank and to level with his people.[112]

MUBARAK'S SEARCH FOR A VISION

Despite his noted aversions, Mubarak did carve and publicly use his own slogans. Whatever Mubarak could politically achieve would be hailed de facto as if it were a part of a 'vision.' In his first year in office, it was the "cleansed or purified society" *(al-mugtam'a al-attahara).*[113] This was in an obvious reference to combating corruption, whose tales were rampant in the last years under President Sadat. In fact, the regime investigated and brought to trial several public figures, including the brother of his predecessor (Ismat Sadat) on charges of corruption.

Also, among Mubarak's early slogans were allusions to "production," "productivity," "combating waste," and correcting the "excesses" of the Open-Door Economic Policy.[114] It was clear that the economy was an obsession with the new president. He saw in its streamlining and invigoration, "the key to all of Egypt's other problems."[115] However, while he remained cautious in effecting any major policy change, he continued to exhort Egyptians to "produce more and consume less for the sake of Egypt."[116] Toward the end of his first term (1986), Mubarak saw Egyptian revenues, from oil and remittances, decline

sharply. Despite changing his prime minister and the cabinet members responsible for the economy at least three times, Egypt's economy did not show marked signs of improvement. Nevertheless, the Mubarak regime continued to borrow from abroad and to resist the IMF and the World Bank suggested ERSAP. Regionally and domestically, the regime was doing fairly well. Egypt was steadily normalizing its relations with the rest of the Arab world, thanks to the Iraq–Iran war, which made the Arab Gulf countries appreciate Egypt's strategic assets more than ever. Some one million Egyptians were working in Iraq, and Egypt was exporting some $1 billion worth of weapons and ammunition to Iraq annually.[117] Domestically, public opinion including the major opposition parties continued to lend their general support to President Mubarak, hailing his integrity, despite misgivings vis-à-vis some governmental policies and cabinet members.[118] These achievements seemed to reinforce Mubarak's cautious orientation and his aversion to developing an overall political vision.

With his second term (1987–93), President Mubarak began to use overarching slogans in his political discourse—the call for a "national awakening" *(al-sahwa)*, and a "national renaissance" *(al-nahda)*. With the economy still dominating his discourse, Mubarak began to call for curbing population growth, reforming education, and emphasizing science and technology as imperatives for entering the twenty-first century.[119] Completing the full rehabilitation of Egypt in the Arab world (1989), Mubarak added to his public discourse "regional peace and cooperation" as integral parts of Egypt's strategy for the future.[120] These regional dimensions of a budding vision, coincided with the formation in 1989 of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) comprising Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen. The emphasis on Arab links bore some resemblance to that of Nasser's, but without the militant ideological edge. At the time, it seemed to promise an Arab common market that would give Egypt a vital economic sphere—direct aid and outlets for its surplus labor and hence more remittances. However, this vision and the hopes it raised were short-lived with the Gulf crisis (1990–91), following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Egypt opposed its three other partners in the ACC (Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen) and sided with the Gulf Arab countries and the Western-led Coalition.[121]

By 1991, Mubarak's public discourse was reasserting the value of his earlier caution of enacting measures of gradual political and economic changes at home. In self-congratulatory tone, Egypt's orderly change was contrasted with the disorderly change in Algeria and the Soviet Union. Egypt's leadership in regional affairs and its stature in international fora were highlighted by Mubarak and the state media.[122] The promise of additional foreign aid and cancellation of some of its external debts, during and shortly after the Gulf crisis, were presented as a reward and vindication of Egypt's leadership and sound policies. That being the case, Egypt could confidently embark on more deliberate economic reform that was urgently needed, but "home ini-

tiated, formulated, and consented to by the IMF and the World Bank" and not the other way around.[123] Egypt was to continue its leading role in the Arab world, the Middle East, and Africa as a peacemaker and a bulwark of stability.

Piecing the above elements together, a vision of sorts emerges as the Mubarak regime launched its ERSAP. The vision is one of Egypt's national independence being consolidated politically and economically. Its regional leadership is asserted, as a stable and strong peacemaker. Its future is charted on a reformed sound economic base. Its education system and work force are to be revamped in preparation for the twenty-first century, while the basic needs of the poor and equity for all are assured.[124] Meanwhile, the regime continued to pride itself on respecting basic freedoms and orderly democracy.[125]

TEST OF CAPACITY: ERSAP PACKAGING

The biggest concern of the regime over ERSAP has been the working class. The consent of the middle classes and the support of the upper class were, mistakenly it turned out, taken for granted. Mubarak has been keen on eliciting support for, or at least neutralizing organized labor toward ERSAP. He regularly attends the Labor Day Celebration (1 May), organized by the Egyptian Federation of Labor Unions (EFLU). The second most important constituency for him has been Egyptian private investors. He has repeatedly visited their new industrial projects and held lengthy meetings with them in the new industrial towns such as Tenth of Ramadan and Sixth of October. Mubarak has gone to great length in showing that without economic reform, the country would collapse, "Without any exaggeration, our situation is awesomely frightening. . . . For decades we have been consuming more than we are producing, and borrowing more than our ability to pay back. We are losing the trust of international financial institutions. The only other alternative to serious economic reform is total breakdown."[126] Economic reform was described as a bitter medicine, or even an "inevitable evil."[127] This fear-arousing technique was relatively effective during the first year of implementing ERSAP. Few expressions of labor unrest were displayed in 1991 (thirty incidents). Throughout 1992 and 1993, expressions of labor discontent grew dramatically (137 and 183, respectively).[128]

Nasser blamed the prerevolutionary regime for neglecting the poor, the working classes, and the industrialization of Egypt, and hence his remedy was 'socialist transformation.' Sadat blamed some of Nasser's policies for "closing Egypt," and causing the flight of national and foreign investors, and hence his remedy was the Infitah. Mubarak has blamed all three previous regimes: "It is our destiny to reform the structural imbalances accumulating since the end of the Second World War."[129] Nasser's public sector and massive subsidies were blamed for losses and debts. Sadat's ODEP is blamed for "excessive conspicuous consumerism and parasitic wealth in the hands of the few."[130]

In expounding the urgent need for economic reform, Mubarak has reiterated on public occasions how the working class has always been the vanguard of the Egyptian people in the great national battles of the past, and his confidence that they will continue to be so in the present. National pride soars with every product bearing "made in Egypt," "Every drop of workers' sweat is like every soldiers' drop of blood, all for the renaissance of Egypt."[131] Mubarak also emphasizes that the ERSAP is an Egyptian scheme, dictated by our own needs assessment, taking our own social reality into account. "We are not doing it in response to dictation from international creditors or institutions."[132] The Egyptian president reminds his fellow citizens of the Economic Conference he convened upon assuming office—that economic reform has been high on his agenda, and that he has tried his best to make it as gradual and as bearable as possible, paving the way for some harsh but inevitable measures.[133]

With ERSAP underway in the spring of 1991, Mubarak assured workers and public sector employees that in no way would their jobs or incomes be adversely affected. If there is to be any privatization, "the government will make sure that no single worker will be out of a job. This is to be ensured through a variety of means, including retraining and redirecting labor."[134] The Egyptian president has been keen to promote ERSAP as, "the only way to protect real wage value against inflation; to generate more productive jobs for our youngsters; and to insure a better future for Egypt."[135]

Mubarak has promised that during the "temporary hard times ahead, subsidies for bread will not be removed. We are planning to raise wages and salaries, but without sacrificing the objective of budget deficit reduction, which can only be done with production and productivity increases. . . . We are committed to helping the honest Egyptian citizen achieve his legitimate aspiration for a better life and to minimize his burdens. For that reason the Social Fund has been created. It is to extend aid to limited income groups and easy credit to youth to start their own small enterprises."[136]

Preparing workers for the hard times ahead, Mubarak has asserted that he is keen on involving workers as full partners in coping with the economic problems and challenges facing the country.[137] He also reminded workers of past attempts by "the unpatriotic few to back-stab the country in times of difficulties, but to no avail, thanks to the majority of workers shielding national production."[138] He expressed his confidence that the Egyptian working class would remain alert and vigilant against irresponsible acts of neglect or sabotage.[139] Apparently, such warnings had a limited effect after the first year of ERSAP. *Al-Taqrir al-istratiji al-'Arabi* (ASR) did not report any single act of labor sabotage in 1991, but reported seventy-six in 1992, and eighty in 1993.[140]

On frequent occasions, Mubarak has implored well-to-do Egyptians to save and invest at home, considering it a patriotic duty. In return, he promises that it is his "duty to remove bureaucratic ob-

stacles, pass the necessary laws and decrees to create the proper investment climate" for them.[141] Cabinet members often accompany the president on his field visits to new investment projects, listen to complaints or requests, and often react to them on the spot, or immediately after. All of this is invariably shown on the state television. This approach has had moderate success. A substantial part of the business community is still skeptical of the government's total commitment to ERSAP, as indicated earlier.

The Mubarak regime persuaded labor and business leaders to hold joint meetings in the late 1980s and early 1990s to review the suggested ERSAP. By early 1991, a draft labor–business accord was issued, committing both to cooperation with each other and the state to see Egypt through its economic predicament. The accord was circulated and widely debated. Some members of EFLU had reservations on the accord as they felt it was tilted in favor of business.[142] But the regime has used the non-binding accord as a broad-based consensus for its anticipated ERSAP.

The Mubarak regime has floated plans for public-sector workers and employees to become shareholders in the newly privatized companies. This is to be done through easy credit from state banks or the Social Fund.[143] Government officials have gone to great lengths in assuring workers and the public that such privatization is meant to improve management and raise productivity, and in no way would 'strategic industries' be privatized or sold to foreign investors. Only 'loss-making' companies will be put up for sale, and Egyptian and Arab investors would be given priority when that happens. The issue of privatization and various schemes for public sector and worker participation have been the subject of a lively debate in the last two years.[144]

The biblical story of Joseph's vision of 'seven lean years' in Pharaonic Egypt to be followed by 'years of prosperity' has been invoked by Mubarak as he implored Egyptians to work harder, consume less, and be patient. "We should all have good reasons for optimism after the few lean years needed to get out of the current bottleneck. We will all be better off in the years of plenty which lie ahead."[145]

Up until early 1996, in the packaging and promoting of ERSAP, President Mubarak was the main, if not the only, spokesman and advocate. The rest of the ruling élite confined themselves to carrying out orders and implementing the ERSAP measures. The few who spoke out have displayed marked differences. Until the cabinet reshuffle in October 1993, four ministers ventured to address ERSAP. Two of them often contended that only loss-making public-sector companies would be privatized and none would be liquidated.[146] Two other cabinet members assured the Egyptian private sector, foreign investors, and international creditors that privatization was a general strategy applying to all public companies, whether in bad or good shape.[147] These discordant voices, coming from the same government, left public opinion at home and interested parties abroad quite confused, at

least during the first two years of ERSAP. After the reelection of President Mubarak to a third term and the formation of a new cabinet (October 1993), much of the discordance diminished.

PUBLIC DISCOURSE OVER ERSAP

When the Mubarak regime started ERSAP in 1991, it was already in its tenth year of office. Mubarak's early packaging and promotion of ERSAP seems to have been lacking in effectiveness. All major opposition parties and other social forces had something negative to say about it. The right of center political parties, mainly the New Wafd party (NWP) and the Liberal party (LP), while agreeing with the need and principle of liberal economic reform, expressed serious misgivings about its implementation, and more often on the absence of "political reform" that should have preceded or at least accompanied it. The left of center political forces, mainly the Arab Democratic Nasserite party (ADNP) and the Progressive Unionist party (PUP), have objected to ERSAP out of principle, but especially because of the absence of "social reform" that should have preceded or accompanied it. More serious challenges, however, come from trade unions, labor groups and the Islamic camp, mainly the Socialist Labor party (SLP), Muslim Brotherhood (MB), and other militant Islamic groups.

Labor response to ERSAP

The modern Egyptian working class grew rapidly in the Nasser years (1952–70), thanks to his ambitious industrialization policy. Despite many socioeconomic benefits obtained under Nasser, he restricted the political autonomy of the working class in his corporate-like system. All trade unions were grouped by activity sector in one general union (such as the General Union of Textile Workers Syndicates). All general unions were then organized in the Egyptian Federation of Labor Unions (EFLU) as of 1957. Despite this loss of autonomy, the Egyptian working class felt secure under Nasser, who often accorded it benefits it had not asked for, or even aspired to (for example, constitutional amendments in 1961 which allocated a mandatory minimum of 50 percent of seats in all elected bodies to workers and peasants). After the 1961 Socialist Laws, a separate Ministry of Labor (MoL) was created, and it has become customary for the president of EFLU to assume its cabinet portfolio. Thus the top leadership of EFLU was quite pacified by the regime. Under Sadat and Mubarak, however, organized labor began to feel growing alienation. The 1977 food riots, for example, were triggered by workers on their way from a downtown Cairo commuter train station to the Helwan industrial district 20 kilometers south of the capital.[148]

During the first year of ERSAP, EFLU and its constituent general workers unions engaged the state in intensive discussions about a newly enacted law, Law no. 203/1991, entitled the Public Enterprise Sector Law which was to overhaul state-owned companies. It pro-

vided for the creation of some thirty holding companies with some three hundred subsidiaries. Management was given broader and more flexible authority to reorganize, become more competitive, and become independent of state subsidies. Implicit and explicit in the parliamentary and public debates around Law 203 was the understanding that should a public company fail to live up to competitive market forces within a specified period, it would be sold or liquidated. Understandably, the new Law sent numerous negative waves into the Egyptian working class, and there were many attempts by the regime and the top leadership of EFLU to allay the apprehensions and fears of workers.[149]

In the second year of ERSAP (1992), some of those fears materialized. Some companies—namely the Nile Company for Exporting Agricultural Crops and the larger and older Eastern Cotton Company—were liquidated. Disputes, sit-ins, and demonstrations erupted in both companies. EFLU appealed to the prime minister, then to the president to reconsider the liquidation decisions.[150]

Law 203 and its implementation has become the main bone of contention between the regime and organized labor. The regime's strategy of non-reversal of any of its ERSAP laws and measures has led to several repercussions. Among these has been a growing, though silent, tension between the top leadership of EFLU and the regime; between EFLU and its constituent general unions; and between several general unions and their individual syndicates and local workers committees. Invariably, each lower level of the EFLU structure charges the higher level with not standing firm enough on workers' rights.[151]

With ERSAP well underway, it has become obvious that the corporate structure of EFLU is no longer functional. The constituent parts of EFLU have been increasingly acting independently to defend their rights. They petition, demand, hold rallies, stage sit-ins and strikes, and demonstrate without permission and/or support from the upper levels of EFLU. Workers' petitions and demands focus on the right to participate in decisions bearing on the future of their companies; immunities against arrest when engaged in peaceful demonstrations; and support funds for striking workers. Many of the strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations reported since 1990 have to do with the above union-like demands, but more specifically over wages, firing, and liquidations of whole companies.

Al-Taqrir al-istratiji al-'Arabi listed workers strikes, demonstrations, and sabotage as having gone up from ten in 1990, to thirty in 1991, to 137 in 1992, to 183 in 1993—that is, a 1,830 percent increase in four years.[152] The eighteenfold increase in labor unrest between 1990 and 1993 was made ominous by the fact that the Central Security Forces (CSF), specialized in quelling uprisings and mass rioting, have been called in increasingly to break workers' strikes and/or demonstrations—three times in 1991 and eleven times in 1993. While no one was reported killed, tens were wounded. It is worth noting that

no serious acts of sabotage were reported, despite the rising incidents of labor unrest. Egypt's privatization program is still in its early stages. Some two hundred public companies are to be privatized in 1994–95.[153] As the process unfolds, more labor unrest is to be expected.

The opposition parties and ERSAP

At present, Egypt has thirteen legally licensed political parties.[154] Other than the ruling NDP, only five have any political weight to speak of. In order of importance, as indicated by previous election results, they are the New Wafd party (NWP), the Arab Democratic Nasserite party (ADNP), the Socialist Labor party (SLP), the Progressive Unionist party (PUP), and the Liberal party (LP). The other seven are too small or too new to have any impact on the current Egyptian political scene. We will only sketch here the discourse advanced by the five significant opposition parties over ERSAP, in particular, and the Mubarak regime in general.

The NWP and LP are in general agreement with the Mubarak regime over the need for ERSAP. The NWP predates the 1952 Revolution, going back to the 1919 Revolution. Though dissolved by decree in 1954, it resurfaced in 1977 when a multiparty system was reinstated. It has a well-established liberal tradition, and now represents the old landed bourgeoisie, the well-to-do professionals, and the upper-middle class. The LPs constituency consists of middle-class professionals and small entrepreneurs.

The NWP's objection is not to the principles of ERSAP, but to its implementation in a totally "unhealthy political situation, at the hands of an unqualified, inept, and corrupt ruling regime."[155] The NWP also believes that because the regime has dragged its feet for ten years, it now has to accept the humiliating conditions of the IMF and other international creditors. This has meant a hasty implementation of economic reform which has led to grave sociopolitical consequences. Among these is growing discontent, some of which is expressed in armed resistance to the authority. This in turn has led the government to become more dictatorial. Thus, we are now suffering from two evils: the regime's dictatorship and counterviolence, and the terrorism of the discontented. The way out of this dual predicament was outlined recently by the NWP chair Fu'ad Sirag al-Din: "The prerequisite for successful economic, social, and educational reform is political reform, which means constitutional change to ensure fair and honest elections under judicial supervision and peaceful change of government."[156]

The same NWP views on ERSAP are echoed by the smaller Liberal party (LP). The only added emphasis by the LP is its concern over the harm that some of the ERSAP's measures may cause to Egypt's budding industrial capitalism—such as reduction or removal of tariff protection. The LP has also been vocal against the sales tax (introduced in 1992) as it was imposed across the board, including pro-

duction inputs, which raises prices for end-users of Egyptian products at home and makes them less competitive on the international market. As the LP leader puts it, "Such contradictions are evidence that NDP policy-makers are inept and self-defeating."[157]

Both the NWP and LP do not perceive the Mubarak regime as having a well-articulated 'national project,' nor a broad-based consensus around ERSAP or any of its other public policies. Spokespeople for both parties view ERSAP as "a stopgap measure implemented under external pressure and not out of real conviction."[158] In brief, the two parties, which are often viewed to be right of center, agree with the Mubarak regime (NDP) only on the dire need for ERSAP, but disagree with it on nearly everything else—timing, implementation, and absence of other conditions of success.

Two other important legal opposition parties, the Progressive Unionist party (PUP) and the Arab Democratic Nasserite party (ADNP), are generally viewed as left of center. Both oppose ERSAP in principle. The economic spokesman of PUP, Gouda Abdel-Khalek, calls it "economic deform." He contends that "it stunts Egypt's economic growth and impoverishes the masses. There were several alternatives to the course taken by our government. But it lacks economic and political imagination, and has not been willing to listen to those who have it. Our party (PUP) has submitted comprehensive proposals as early as the 1982 Economic Conference. We have updated those proposals, but the regime has continued to ignore them because it is averse to anything that comes from popular forces. The economic policy of the regime is a product of bureaucratic–technocratic–parasitic forces with no political vision."[159]

The views of the ADNP on ERSAP are essentially the same. A prominent economist and former minister of planning[160] maintains that ERSAP is still command economics, but the commander is no longer the Egyptian state, but the IMF and World Bank. The Egyptian state has become a mere implementer and watchman."[161] ADNP's major concerns are social equity, economic development, and preservation of Egyptian independence. The party sees the three quests as having been totally sacrificed at the "altar of the IMF."[162] The alternative to externally imposed ERSAP, for both PUP and ADNP, is the rehabilitation of the public sector, support for national capitalism, combating corruption, progressive taxation, human development, and Arab regional integration.[163]

The fifth major legal opposition party is the Socialist Labor party (SLP). Its vice-chair, Hilmi Murad, and secretary-general, 'Adil Hussayn, are prominent Egyptian economists. Their weekly columns in the SLP *al-Sha'b* reflect the party's views on ERSAP. Both have maintained the same objections in principle to ERSAP, as PUP and ADNP. Egypt's economic ills, as seen by SLP economists, are the result of waste and corruption at home and "conspiracies" from abroad.[164] Exposing corruption at home has been the crusade of Hilmi Murad for years, and he has been frequently detained for interroga-

tion by the authorities on charges of inciting public opinion by sensational accusations, some of which touched cabinet members and President Mubarak's own children.[165]

Since 1987, the SLP has coalesced with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in a bloc called the Islamic Alliance (IA), entered parliamentary elections the same year, and won some sixty-five seats. It made the IA the second biggest bloc in Egypt's People's Assembly (the parliament) after the ruling NDP (with some 370 seats). This impressive showing has tempted the SLP to move steadily toward an Islamic discourse. Thus, while it shares with PUP and ADNP their total rejection of ERSAP, the SLP has proposed an "Islamic alternative" for delivering Egypt from all its chronic ills. Ambiguously defined as it may be, the Islamic alternative in economics calls for banning interest (considered as usury), repugnant economic and commercial activities (such as production or sale of liquor); substituting *zakat* (alms tax which amounts to 2.5 percent of annual earnings) for current Western-like taxation systems; and internalizing Islamic work ethics and values of austerity and compassionate mutual help *(takaful)* throughout society. A regular columnist in the SLP biweekly, Mustafa Mashhur, propagates these notions of Islamic economics.[166]

But of more importance to the issue of governance is the SLP tacit defense of the more militant Islamic activists. Stopping short of endorsing the latter's terrorist acts, SLP has invariably blamed government policies, including ERSAP, for mass unemployment, social injustice, and corruption which drive young Egyptians to despair and/or "unfortunate acts" (rarely, if ever, described as 'terrorism'). Meanwhile the Egyptian government's abridgment of Islamists' human rights are always dramatized.[167]

Since the late 1970s, the SLP's newspaper, *al-Sha'b*, had remained a weekly with a circulation of around 50,000 copies. In early 1992, it began to publish twice a week, with its circulation quadrupling to about 200,000. This jump in popularity has coincided with both the initiation of ERSAP and the escalation of violent confrontations between the state and Islamic militant groups. The SLP and its newspaper have become the most vehement attackers of the Mubarak regime, the West, and Israel. They have also become the main source of alternative news and defense of Islamic militants.

Nearly all of Egypt's opposition parties had become alienated from the Mubarak regime by mid-1993. One expression of that alienation was their boycott of Mubarak's reelection for a third time, and standing by as the regime battled with violent Islamists. Sensing this growing estrangement, Mubarak called for a "National Dialogue" with the opposition in his inauguration speech (13 October 1993). Initially, all the opposition parties responded positively to the presidential invitation. However, some eight months passed before any concrete steps were taken to start the dialogue. The first step declared by the president, in mid-May 1994, was the naming of a forty-person preparatory committee, and an agenda of four topics for the dialogue. Thirty

out of the forty were NDP members; and the four topics (economic, social, and educational reform, and guarding national unity) did not include 'political reform.' The opposition parties considered the step insulting, and two of the major parties, NWP and ADNP, withdrew from the dialogue on the first day, with other opposition parties expressing their dismay over what was considered "condescending and heavy-handed procedures."[168] With the Muslim Brotherhood not invited to start with, the outcome of the National Dialogue has proved disappointing. Alienating these three major opposition forces, the Mubarak regime missed one more opportunity to create national consensus over ERSAP and other major public policies.

POLITICS OF ALIENATION

An alienated civil society

Despite the qualified support that the regime enjoyed from all five major opposition parties till 1990, it has not been able to hold on to it. The following three years (1991–94) witnessed a steady erosion in the support of even the two parties which accept ERSAP in principle—namely the NWP and LP. The other three parties have totally rejected ERSAP and grown more hostile to all of the regime's public policies. In this section, we examine the other salient forces of Egypt's civil society, mainly professional associations, or as they are called in Egypt, 'syndicates' *(al-niqabat al-mihaniya)*, of which there are twenty-four, with a total membership of about 3 million—that is, 20 percent of Egypt's total labor force. Distinct from workers trade unions, in that their membership are university graduates with white-collar occupations, the syndicates are Egypt's organizational embodiment of its intelligentsia. They are the backbone of what M. Halpern[169] calls the "new middle class" (NMC), a social formation which has been the most dynamic political force in the country since its inception over a century and a half ago. The NMC enjoyed many privileges in the Nasser era, but its younger and lower rungs have seen their income and prestige deteriorate under Sadat's ODEP and Mubarak's ERSAP. Its discontent has been expressed peacefully by many, and violently by a few. Those under the age of forty, that is, some 60 percent of the membership of the syndicates, have increasingly voted for anti-government candidates, most of whom are Muslim Brothers (MB). By 1993, six of the seven biggest and most important were controlled by Islamists—the Bar Association, Engineers, Doctors, Pharmacists, Dentists, and Commerce syndicates.

The Teachers' syndicate became the only major syndicate not totally under Islamist control. The government's reaction to this peaceful march of the Islamists was to issue Law no. 100/1993, restricting their internal democracy by mandating a 50 percent quorum of all members for election results to be valid.[170] Otherwise, the government would appoint provisional boards of its own choice. The Law was seen by most professionals as a further meddling in their affairs

by a regime lacking political skill and disposed to dictatorial tendencies.[171]

Other disturbing acts of interference followed. During recent violent confrontations with Islamists, security forces complained that eyewitnesses, especially in Upper Egyptian villages, would not cooperate with them. Elected village mayors were blamed for this lack of cooperation. The regime's response was to pass a law in April 1994, doing away with the election system for village mayors. Now they are to be appointed by the Ministry of the Interior.[172]

Another important arena of contention between the opposition and the Mubarak regime has been Egypt's fourteen universities. On both faculty and student levels, pro-government elements have become a distant second or third in campus elections. While unable yet to do much with student elections, the government surprised Egyptian professors in May 1994 by amending the universities Law no. 49/1972 so as to replace the election system of deans and departmental chairs, with a system of appointment by the minister of education. The fact that the draft of the amended law was never debated by the academic community or even the parliament, was considered an insult to Egyptian academics, including those who are on good terms with the regime.[173]

Other than political parties, professional associations, and universities, Egypt has some fourteen thousand private voluntary organizations (PVOs). Despite the restrictive measures of PVO Law no. 32/1964, non-violent Islamic groups have managed to establish or take over the boards of nearly half of those PVOs. During the October 1992 Cairo earthquake, within hours, Islamist-controlled PVOs and syndicates managed to outdo the government in relief efforts. The foreign media took note and highlighted the difference. The regime's reaction to this unflattering publicity was to decree a ban on direct relief efforts by PVOs—that is, all relief would be channeled through the government. When aid did not materialize in time, several riots broke out in afflicted districts of Cairo.[174]

The earthquake episode is only a case in point which illustrates the regime's limitations in providing goods and services to needy Egyptians on the one hand, and its clumsy way of preventing those who could, for fear that in the process such Islamic PVOs would earn political mileage at the expense of the government. All in all, the salient forces of Egypt's civil society have increasingly been alienated from the Mubarak regime. Although non-violent by definition and practice, these forces have been subject to increasing pressures and restrictions by the regime. In turn, they have escalated their criticism of public policies, including ERSAP. The Doctors and Engineers Syndicate, and Bar Association organized conferences and seminars to debate ERSAP during 1992 and 1993, the tone of which were quite critical. Many of their conclusions were not much different from those of political opposition parties—that is, the dire need for concomitant sociopolitical reform.[175]

Politically-motivated violence

Probably the clearest litmus test of governance is the ability of a ruling regime to maintain law and order. While non-violent Islamists, as we saw, have appropriated many of the alienated and discontented civil organizations, some of the latter have opted to challenge the regime through violent means.

Though much smaller in numbers, the more militant Islamic groups are the ones that have captured the headlines, thereby embarrassing the Egyptian state since 1974, including groups such as the *Jihad*, the *Takfir wa-l-Hijra*, and the *Gama'a Islamiya*.[176] To be sure, politically motivated violence has not been the monopoly of Islamic militants. In modern Egyptian history, other political groupings have also resorted to these tactics on and off. But it is the militant Islamic activists who have recently appropriated the lion's share of violence.

During the forty-two years since 1952, there have been some 1,811 casualties due to political violence, 86 percent of which occurred in the last twelve years—that is, during Mubarak's presidential tenure. More dramatic still, is the fact that during the first six years (1982–88) of Mubarak's presidency, there was hardly any violence—a total of thirty-three casualties, averaging less than five casualties annually. The last four years (1990–93) were by far the bloodiest, not only during Mubarak's presidency but also throughout this century. There were 1,164 casualties—averaging 291 casualties annually. To put it differently, of the twelve years of Mubarak's presidency, the last four have appropriated nearly 92 percent of all the casualties due to politically motivated violence. The specter of political violence has taken its worst turn in the two years following the implementation of ERSAP—that is, 1992 and 1993.

A new scene of violent confrontations has been the so-called *'ashwa'iyat* or shantytowns on the rural–urban fringes of major cities. While these areas accounted for fewer than 8 percent of the arrested and charged militants in the 1970s, their share jumped to 36 percent in the 1990s. A case in point is a shantytown by the name of Western Munira on the edges of the old district of Imbaba, Giza, across the Nile from Cairo's élite suburb of Zamalek. About the same geographic size (twenty-one square kilometers), W. Munira has more than ten times the population of middle-class Zamalek. With no schools, hospitals, clubs, sewage system, public transportation, or even a police station, the dense area of W. Munira had become a 'Hobsian' world of violence and vices by the late 1980s. A small group of Islamic militants led by a twenty-seven year old man, Sheikh Gabr, took over W. Munira and practically ruled it for three years—collecting taxes, imposing their own law and order, and Islamic codes of morality. In December 1992, the Egyptian state finally took note of what was happening, and dispatched some twelve thousand security forces with armored vehicles to conquer the area. It took three weeks, some one hundred casualties on both sides,

and the arrest of some six hundred suspected militants before W. Munira was pacified.

Deteriorating human rights and feelings of insecurity

One clear victim of the escalating violence in Egypt is human rights. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) documents the various types of violations committed by the government and opposition. These were confirmed by the US Department of State in its annual *Country Reports on Human Rights, Egypt*; and by independent researchers.[177] However, two new elements have been noted in the last three years. First is the issuance of several laws further restricting basic freedoms, expanding the powers of the executive to detain citizens without charges, and trying civilians before military courts, where due process is not as stringently guaranteed.[178] Second is the increased violation of human rights by non-state actors—namely militant Islamic groups.[179]

The above developments have resulted in a collective sense of insecurity among Egyptians. In a recently commissioned national sample survey by the UNDP and Egypt's Institute of National Planning (INP), it was revealed that more Egyptians felt more insecure in all areas of life in 1993 (52 percent) than in 1992 (37 percent). The comparison was even more stark between the present and five years earlier—nearly three times as many people (67 percent) said they are less secure now than they were five years before (23 percent reported the opposite).[180]

The above attitudinal assessment is confirmed by aggregate data compiled and indexed by the UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) for various years in relative terms over time as well as in comparison with other countries. Between the 1990 and 1993 HDR, Egypt's rank slipped from 110 to 124 among the countries covered [UNDP HDR, 1990, 1993 table 1]. Despite the country's progress on several development indicators, what seems to have mainly depressed Egypt's rank is the drop of income per capita from nearly $680 in 1987 to $610 in 1993.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) and governance in Egypt has not been a unilinear one. On first glance, the Egyptian case reveals relative success in the former and relative failure in the latter. While regional and international factors were conducive to Egypt's timing of ERSAP, domestic factors were mixed. Both governance and ERSAP are complex variables which are best disaggregated by cross-relating the components. For example, governance may be defined as the capacity to mobilize, control, regulate, and coordinate to get things done. As such, it entails the élite's mastery and deployment of means of inspiration (that is, 'vision') as well as means of coercion, with a host of other institutional means in between (for example, the legislature, judiciary, media, or civil society).

By the same token, ERSAP entails some measures (such as stabilization) which could be formulated, initiated, and completed successfully by a small insulated team of able technocrats tied to the top decision-maker (such as a president or prime minister). These measures neither require much attitudinal change nor massive involvement of the bureaucracy. Their direct impact on various constituencies is not immediately felt. On the other hand, some measures of ERSAP, such as privatization, involve a greater number of actors, and arouse vested interests and heated passions.

To be tested properly, the hypotheses relating governance to ERSAP must be broken down to several sub-hypotheses, so as to account for the nature and direction of correlation between the sub-components. For example, much of the initial success of Egypt's ERSAP was due to the fact that it only involved stabilization under favorable regional and international timing, with no direct or immediate impact on the mass of Egyptians. Thus, even when the politically active opposition parties opposed those measures, the regime's governance capacity was neither fully deployed nor fully tested; only partly so. The outcome of the first phase of Egypt's ERSAP (1991) was a success. But the litmus test has begun with the second phase (1992). The story here gets quite complex: ERSAP has scored some successes, but at a very high human–sociopolitical cost. More of the coercive means of the regime's governance arsenal are being used.

In retrospect, much of this heavy cost could have been averted. There was a time in which both external and internal factors were mutually enhancing. This was during President Mubarak's first term in office (1981–87). Remittances, oil prices, tourism, and foreign aid were still relatively high. Mubarak was enjoying a grace period (or honeymoon). Egyptians' expectations of him were quite modest; and they were tuned to the imperatives of economic reform after the 1982 Economic Conference which he convened. Dragging his feet for nearly ten years has meant that, for Mubarak's ERSAP to succeed sociopolitically as well as economically, he had to couple it with a compelling 'vision' or a 'national project.' He has only recently tried, but it seems to have come too late and too pale. The actual or potential winners from ERSAP could have provided a political base to support him during the initial inevitably lean years. But most of them have not clearly recognized those actual or potential gains. Those who may have are either too scattered or are organized under different banners—the NWP or LP. As such they would only lend political support in return for some kind of a power sharing scheme, which Mubarak and his entourage have so far been reluctant to even consider.

While all Egyptians may be better-off in the long run as a result of a successful ERSAP, what matters politically is the short-run. That is when the losers feel the outcome most harshly. If they are many and have nothing or little more to lose, the potential for collective unrest grows proportionately. The four main social formations which have

clearly or amorphously experienced this situation in Egypt during the last four years are: (1) the modern working class (MWC), (2) the urban poor, (3) the young, and (4) the new middle class (NMC). At one point or another during the first three years of ERSAP, they have all seen their material conditions deteriorate with little moral or spiritual compensation in return for the time being, nor delayed but credible material payoff in a foreseeable future. A 'vision' or a 'national project' provides this function. Had the regime introduced ERSAP ten years earlier (when Mubarak took over), it would have at least had the benefit of the doubt, concerning whichever future compensation it might have promised. But ten years down the road, with a performance record ranging between modest and dismal, it was unlikely to get that benefit of the doubt again, especially from those social formations which had already been losing before ERSAP. Hence, the losers have become disposed to confront the Mubarak regime sooner, rather than later.

These four alienated social formations, differing in size, composition, and political subculture, make up the vast majority of Egyptians. The reactions of each to ERSAP and the regime which introduced it have differed. The NMC's preferred mode of action has been through professional associations (PAs), and the peaceful quest for democracy, human rights, decent employment, and decent income. The MWC's preferred mode of expressing discontent has been through peaceful and quasi-peaceful sit-ins, strikes, and demonstrations. The urban poor outside modern economic institutions are what Marx dubbed urban "lumpenproletariat" (ULP). In the Egyptian case, the ULP is now concentrated in slum areas (*'ashwa'iyat).* The ULP is disposed to rioting upon medium intensity provocation, and hence is easily manipulated. Young, educated Egyptians represent the raw and most sensitive nerves of society at present. Their discontent is channeled either through PAs or more militant and violent-prone Islamic groups.

The Mubarak regime's management of collective expressions of discontent leaves much to be desired. On the whole it has been slow in perceiving the early signs of discontent, and when it finally does, it has often overreacted. The confrontations with the Bar Association in 1994 are a case in point.[181]

Furthermore, the regime has hardly resorted to 'political' means in managing the growing discontent, much less socioeconomic measures to deal with its root causes. The regime's favored way of dealing with discontent is to resort to security measures, followed by a state media blitz. Disregard for due process and abridgment of human rights have become rampant in the last three years (1991–94). The short supply of political imagination of the ruling élite, and the near complete absence of élite power circulation, have worsened the situation. The average age of present cabinet members is sixty-three. The average age of an Islamic militant, as we saw, is twenty-one—that is, a gap of forty-two years, or almost two generations. The hard-

ening of Egypt's political arteries is made worse by a heavy and inefficient bureaucracy. Demoralized and increasingly impoverished, its upper rungs have become disposed to grand corruption and its lower rungs to petty corruption. Exaggerated tales of grand corruption have been rampant in the last few years. Petty corruption has long been taken for granted, and even sympathetically tolerated.

The persistent vibrancy of Egypt's Islamic activism is a cause for concern but not for panic. Despite its marked problems, the Egyptian state remains relatively strong, and will no doubt prevail in the present armed confrontations with radical Islamic militants. The state possesses tremendous resources in this respect, most of which have hardly been tapped: a political culture which values moderation, continuity, and stability; a potent civil society; a powerful media; a cohesive loyal professional army, and internal security forces; its own religious establishment; and its good regional and international relations.

The legitimate concern, not panic, is over the regime's ability to mobilize and manage these tremendous resources. So far, the regime has relied mainly on its security forces in confronting the Islamic extremists. But the problem is not merely to score a 'physical victory' over Islamic extremists in the present round; but rather to grapple forcefully with the root causes which give rise to extremism, and to the deep alienation of Egypt's civil society, without whose support ERSAP could easily be undermined. Here, it becomes imperative that the regime evolves a clear and comprehensive strategy of reform. Belatedly, the government is earmarking several billions of Egyptian pounds for social upgrading of depressed areas in Upper Egypt and for creating about half a million new jobs. Belatedly, also, the regime has announced plans for a "National Dialogue" with the long neglected and marginalized opposition parties and professional associations. Had these two measures started a few years earlier, the regime's governance capacity would have been greatly enhanced, and much of the violence may have been averted. Late as they may have come, these and similar measures in the fields of education and the media illustrate the imperative of comprehensive reform—both social and political, along with the economic reforms, and, better still, an inspiring vision for the country's future. Since the harder part of ERSAP is now under way, these two sociopolitical sides of the reform triangle are more needed than ever. The Mubarak regime can not go on much longer with ERSAP and "politics as usual."

NOTES

1 Dr. Hans Lofgren (American University in Cairo) and Mr. Said Abdel Messih (Ibn Khaldoun Center) assisted in the research and drafting of this paper.

2 I. Atiyas, L. Frischtak, *Political Determinants of Successful Adjustment*, a framework document for the World Bank Project on Governance and Structural Adjustment, 1993.

3 S.E. Ibrahim, ed., *Egypt in a Quarter of Century: Social Change and Development 1952–77* (Beirut: Arab Institute of Development Studies, 1980).

4 S.E. Ibrahim, "Social Mobility and Income Distribution in Egypt, 1952–77," in G. Abdel Khalek and R. Tignor, eds., *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 375–434.
5 G. Abdel Khalek, "Foreign Economic Aid and Income Distribution in Egypt 1952–77," in Abdel Khalek and Tignor, eds., *The Political Economy*, pp. 435–68.
6 M. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Rivals, 1958–70* (London: Oxford Press, 1971).
7 S.E. Ibrahim, *The Vindication of Sadat in the Arab World*, this volume.
8 ibid., pp. 4–5.
9 S.E. Ibrahim, *The New Arab Social Order: A Study of the Impact of the Oil Wealth* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Reiner, 1982).
10 G. Amin, *The Dilemma of the Egyptian Economy* (Cairo: Misr al-'Arabiya, 1994), pp. 27–31.
11 EFLU, *Egypt's Federation of Labor Unions in 35 Years, 1957–92* (Cairo, 1992), pp. 247–48.
12 Ibrahim, *The Vindication of Sadat*, p. 5.
13 This was the Egypt party, and later the National Democratic Party (NDP), presided over by Sadat himself and presented as a "centrist" party. The Liberal party (LP) was presented as "right-wing"; the Progressive Unionist party (PUP) as "left-wing"; the Socialist Labor party (SLP) as "left of center"; and the New Wafd party (NWP) as "right of center."
14 Ibrahim, *The Vindication of Sadat*, p. 6.
15 ibid., p. 7.
16 Abdel Khalek, "Foreign Economic Aid," pp. 458–60.
17 Ibrahim, *The Vindication of Sadat*, pp. 8–9.
18 G. Amin, *The Dilemma of Economy and Culture in Egypt* (Cairo: al-Markaz al-'Arabi li-l Bahth wa-l-Nashr, 1982).
19 F. Ajami, "The Open-Door Economy: Its Roots and Welfare Consequences," in Abdel Khalek and Tignor, eds., *The Political Economy*, pp. 511–12.
20 Amin, *The Dilemma*, pp. 23–31.
21 ibid., p. 24.
22 ibid., pp. 32–33.
23 ibid., p. 32.
24 ibid., p. 37.
25 I. Shihata, *A Program for Tomorrow: Challenges and Aspirations of the Egyptian Economy in a Changing World* (Cairo: Dar al-Shiruk, 1987), pp. 5–10.
26 Sections 2–4 of this paper are an updated and condensed version of Lofgren 1993a; 1993b.
27 Data are based on the following sources: Carr [1990:227] (current account of the balance of payments); World Bank, "Arab Republic of Egypt: Public Sector Investment Review," vol. 1, main report no. 11064-EGT, 1993, p. 233 (GNP growth); CAPMAS [1993:310] and Central Bank of Egypt, "Annual Report," 1993, p. 94; ibid. 1992, p. 163 (real wages); H. Handoussa, "Crisis and Challenge: Prospects for the 1990s," in H. Handoussa, G. Potter, eds., *Employment and Structural Adjustment: Egypt in the 1990s* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1991), pp. 5–6; A. Richards, "The Political Economy of Dilatory Reform: Egypt in the 1980s," *World Development Report*, vol. 19, no. 12 (December, 1991), pp. 1729; R. Assaad, "Structure of Egypt's Construction Labor Market and its Development Since the Mid-1970s," in Handoussa and Potter, *Employment and Structural Adjustment*, p. 140, (other labor market conditions).

The dangers of relying on migration abroad as a solution to domestic labor market problems were vividly illustrated during the Gulf crisis when some 400,000–700,000 Egyptians, most of whom were workers, returned within a few months (*MEED*, 5 July 1991; *al-Hayat*, 17 December 1991).
28 World Bank, *World Debt Tables 1990–91: External Debt of Developing Countries*, vol. 2. (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1991), p.102.

29 *The Economist*, 6 April 1991; *MEED*, 31 May 1991.
30 *al-Ahram*, 26 October 1991, p. 5; R. Springborg, "Egypt: Successes and Uncertainties," *American–Arab Affairs*, summer, 1990, p. 94. Along these lines, former prime minister Abd al-Aziz Hijazi predicted that the revolutions of Eastern Europe would lead to the reallocation of a large part of Western aid away from the Third World (*al-Ahram Weekly*, 5 September 1991).
31 K. Sherif, "More Donor Aid Nothing to Brag About," *Middle East Times*, 3 December 1990.
32 *al-Ahram*, 2 May 1991; *MEED*, 6 December 1991; *The Middle East*, July 1989.
33 The primary reason for the breakdown in the 1987 agreement with the IMF was the government's failure to meet targets for budget deficit reduction (US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends and Their Implications for the United States: Report on the Republic of Egypt* (Cairo: US Embassy, 1992), p. 5.
34 This was in apparent contrast to the situation in 1987 when the United States, in a sudden turnaround, forced the IMF to accept a policy package the United States itself had considered inadequate a few months earlier (Y. Sadowski, "The Sphinx's New Riddle: Why Does Egypt Delay Economic Reform?" *American–Arab Affairs*, no. 22, fall, 1987, p. 37). Carr, a USAID economist, asserts that donors in the late 1980s were becoming shrewder in their negotiating tactics with the Egyptian government [1990:242].
35 US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1989, p. 10; *MEED*, 1 February, 22 February, and 7 June 1991.
36 *MEED*, 25 January, 26 April, and 5 July 1991; *al-Hayat*, 24 November 1991.
37 *MEED*, 7 and 14 June 1991.
38 It has been reported that the activities of the $10 billion Gulf Fund—the primary vehicle for Gulf state support to friendly governments—would be partly oriented by the IMF and the World Bank, and focused on direct support to the private sector in countries liberalizing their economies (R. Baker, "Imagining Egypt in the New International Order: Foreign Policy, Politics, and the Prospects of Civil Society," paper presented to the Middle East Studies Association meeting in Washington, D.C., November, 1991, p. 20; *al-Hayat*, 5 February 1992, p. 9).
39 R. Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: The Fragmentation of the Political Order* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989), p.40.
40 One indicator is the private sector share in industrial investment. In 1970–74, it was around 4 percent; in 1975/76 it had more than doubled to around 10 percent, while, for the period 1987/88–91/92, it had reached 49 percent [Ikram 1980:248; Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report* (Cairo: CBE, 1992), p.154].
41 For example, in the fall of 1991, government resistance to IMF pressures to impose higher taxes on its private sector was attributed to the political leverage wielded by business groups (*al-Hayat*, 15 November 1991). Awad argues that other government decisions may be explained by the influence of private business groups (I. Awad, "Sociopolitical Aspects of Economic Reform: A Study of Domestic Actors' Attitudes Towards Adjustment Policies in Egypt," in Handoussa and Potter, *Employment and Structural Adjustment*, p.292).
42 Key examples of economic policies that Egypt's private sector are opposed to include the structure of import tariffs, the sales tax, credit ceilings, and "high" interest rates (*al-Hayat*, 11 November 1991, and *al-'Alam al-yawm*, 5 December 1991).
43 Along these lines, Hinnebusch argues that the failure of Egypt's government to pursue reforms in the 1980s was not due to lost autonomy but reflected the absence of a "national project" guiding policy (R. Hinnebusch, "The Politics of Economic Reform in Egypt," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1993, p. 163).
44 The same conclusion applies to the reduction of controls on imports and investments. The same group has gained from moves to close the gap be-

tween the interest rates charged from private and public sector firms (see *al-Ahram Weekly*, 12 September 1991).

45 M.S. Grindle and J.W. Thomas, *Public Choices and Policy Change: The Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 5, 7, 164–65. Similarly, Fitzgerald [cited in J. Waterbury, *The Political Economy of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p.14] has argued that state autonomy in the Third World is accentuated during periods of political and economic crisis [see E.V.K. Fitzgerald, *The Political Economy of Peru, 1956–78* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 4–5].

46 Between 27 September and 7 October 1994, some fifteen thousand workers of the public sector Misr Weaving and Textile Company in Kafr al-Dawar went on a strike protesting new policies, measures, and regulations regarding layoffs, wages, and incentives. The unrest culminated in a violent confrontation between security forces, workers, and their families on 2 October 1994. Three workers were killed and more than a hundred were wounded (*al-Sha'b*, 4 October 1994).

47 J. Waterbury, "The Political Management of Economic Adjustment and Reform," in A. Roe, et al., eds., *Economic Adjustment in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey*, EDI Policy Seminar Report, no. 15 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1989), p.63.

48 *MEED*, 26 April 1991.

49 *al-Ahram*, 2 May 1991.

50 M. Wahba, "On the Implementation of Economic Policy in Egypt," *Business Monthly*, journal of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, vol. 5, no. 7, July, 1989, and A. Youssif, "The Politics of Power," in İ.H. Abd al-Rahman, ed., *Economic Reform in Egypt and International Developments, Kitab al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi*, no. 43, September, 1991, pp. 77–79, have properly noted that this raises a number of important questions for research: Which social groups are most strongly affected by the current economic reforms? What is their capacity to hinder or influence the reforms? The ultimate danger to the present order would arise if economic grievances were successfully utilized by an ideologically-based organization able to mobilize the great mass of the population, such as the movement behind the Iranian Revolution (see, Waterbury, "The Political Management," p. 58).

51 The term 'apathy' is used when describing the Egyptian public by Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, p. 295; D. Brumberg, "Democratization Bargains and the Policies of Economic Stabilization: The Case of Egypt in Comparative Perspective," paper presented to the Middle East Studies Association meeting, Toronto, 1989, p. 21; and A. Abdalla, 1991, "Structure of Political Participation in Egypt," paper presented to the Middle East Studies Association meeting, Washington, D.C., 1991, p. 9. The author does not agree with the above proposition—in view of empirical evidence of several uprisings, riots, and politically-motivated violence in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s.

52 This is most clearly manifested by the emergency laws (in effect since Sadat's assassination in 1981), extended for another three years in May 1991. When commenting on the 1991 extension, the then interior minister, Musa, linked it directly to the economy, saying that they were needed "to secure our internal front, and this is vital for economic reform," (*MEED*, 7 June 1991). N. Ayubi notes that government preparations in this area were upgraded after the 1977 riots ["Implementation Capability and Political Feasibility of the Open Door Policy in Egypt," in M. Kerr and S. Yasin, eds., *Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. 82]. The quick response to Kafr al-Dawar labor unrest lends support to this observation.

53 Accordingly, at the time of the reforms, and in spite of their implementation, the expected real GDP growth rates for 1991 and 1992 were not very different

from those of the late 1980s [EIU (Economist Intelligence Unit), *Egypt: Country Report* no. 3/1991, London, pp. 4–5].

54 *MEED*, 3 May 1991.

55 Thus, after the debt cuts from the United States and the Gulf states, the foreign debt fell to $35 billion (*MEED*, 15 February 1991). Assuming that the Paris Club cuts are implemented in full, Egypt's foreign debt in mid-1991 was around $25 billion.

56 Shihata, *A Program for Tomorrow*, pp. 34–39; Amin, *The Dilemma*, pp. 39–41.

57 According to IMF data and definitions, the deficits were 6.4 percent and 4.7 percent of GDP in 1991/92 and 1992/93 respectively, (EIU, *Egypt: Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 37). For 1993/94, the IMF target is 2.6 percent (EIU, *Egypt: Country Report* no. 1/1994, p. 6).

58 I. Shihata, *Toward Total Reform* (Cairo: Dar Su'ad al-Sabah, 1993), pp. 152–53.

59 Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report*, 1992, p. 230.

60 *MEED*, 18 January and 24 May, 1991; US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1991, p. 7; EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 38.

61 *MEED*, 15 March 1991.

62 EIU, *Country Report* 3/1992, p. 15; M. Giugale 1992, *Capital-Account-Based Stabilization: Lebanon's Lesson for Egypt*, first draft, Mimeo: November, 1992, p. 5. In preceding years, when official rates overvalued the Egyptian pound, there was excess demand and (non-price) rationing of dollars, giving rise to a large black market. Among the rationales for capital account liberalization are encouragement of foreign direct investments and discouragement of capital flight.

63 EIU, *Country Report* 4/1992, p. 15.

64 These are not the only alternatives. As an example, according to the World Bank, *Arab Republic of Egypt: Public Sector Investment Review*, vol. 1, main report, report no. 11064-EGT, p. 31, the real GDP growth rates were 2.5 percent (1989/90), 2.3 percent (1990/91), and 0.3 percent (1991/92). The EIU, estimate for 1992/93 is 0.5 percent (EIU, *Country Report* no. 1/1994, p. 3).

65 US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1994, p. 7; EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 15.

66 Shihata, *Toward Total Reform*, p. 167.

67 For example, if investors would keep their funds in US dollars, they would grow at a rate of some 3 percent per year, whereas, if shifted into Egyptian pounds for one year and subsequently transferred back into dollars (at a fixed nominal exchange rate), the growth rate would be some 15 percent (ignoring transaction costs).

68. Shihata, *Toward Total Reform*, p. 157.

69 EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 44.

70 Shihata, *Toward Total Reform*, pp. 159–61.

71 Richards, *The Political Economy*, p. 1729; U.S. Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1993, p. 7.

72 ibid., p. 7.

73 EIU, *Country Profile* 1992/93, p. 18; *MEED*, 10 July 1992.

74 EIU, *Country Report* 2/1993, p. 25.

75 EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, pp. 21–22; U.S. Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1994, p. 10.

76 *MEED*, 28 June and 23 August 1991, 12 March 1993; US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1992, p. 6; EIU, *Country Report* 4/1992, pp. 15–16; *MEED*, 12 March 1993. Close to fifty state-owned companies active in the following areas will be unaffected by the law: military production, oil, banks, iron and steel, aluminum, and the Suez Canal (*MEED*, 28 June 1991).

77 *MEED*, 12 March 1993; *al-Hayat*, 4 January 1993; US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1994, p. 6.

78 G. Abdel-Khalek, "Economic Liberalization: A Misconception and an Erroneous Strategy," in *al-Yasar*, February 1992, p. 17.
79 H. Badawi, "The Government Proves its Shrewdness to the IMF," in *al-Yasar*, April 1993; M. Maraghi, "Economic Reform ... or the Largest Swindle in History," in *al-Yasar*, April 1993.
80 EIU, *Country Report* 1/1994, pp. 5, 13.
81 US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1991, p. 10; *MEED*, 7 and 21 June 1991; EIU, *Country Profile* 1992/93, p. 29; EIU, *Country Report* 1/1994, p. 6.
82 EIU, *Country Profile* 1992/93, pp. 22-23.
83 UNDP's "Human Development Indicator" is a composite measure based on life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, and real per capita GDP adjusted for the purchasing power ratio [INP (Institute of National Planning), *Egypt: Human Development Report*, (Cairo: INP, 1994), p. 6].
84 EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 15.
85 INP, *Human Development Report*, 1994, pp. 20-21.
86 Amin asserts that "most wage earners, taken as a whole, belong to the lower or middle income groups and that hence, income equality is positively related to the share of wages in GDP" [G. Amin, "Adjustment and Development: The Case of Egypt," in El-Naggar, ed., Adjustment Policies and Development Strategies in the Arab World (Washington, D.C.: IMF, 1987), p. 101]. Similarly, the INP points to higher rents relative to wage income as a source of inequality (INP, *Human Development Report*, 1994, p. 12).
87 The same conclusion also holds if government subsidies are measured in real Egyptian pounds or real pounds per capita. The subsidy figures reflect budgetary outlays which are only approximate indicators of actual subsidy value due to bank borrowing and repayments by the subsidizing agency. The trend is also the same if, alternatively, the subsidies are measured by budgetary authorizations (EIU, *Country Profile* 1993/94, p. 36).
88 In December 1993, a new 'unified income tax' law was passed by the parliament. According to this law, taxes are divided into three categories—salary tax, movable capital tax, and a unified tax (on commercial and industrial profits and non-commercial income). Its impact on revenue is unclear since, while many rates are lowered, tax evasion may also be reduced (EIU, *Country Report* no. 1/1994, p. 15; US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1994, p. 8).
89 As an indicator of this slowdown, the government, in early June 1994, announced its postponement of the two future stages of broadening the sales tax to the wholesale sector and later to a full value-added tax (*al-Ahram*, 2 June 1994; EIU, *Country Report* no. 1/1994, p. 6).
90 J.A. Frenkel and M.S. Khan, "The IMF Approach and its Implications for Economic Development," paper presented to a joint session of the AEA/AAEA, Atlanta, December 28–30, 1990, pp. 27–30; M.S. Khan, "The Macroeconomic Effects of Fund-Supported Adjustment Programs," *IMF Staff Papers*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1990, pp. 218–19; R. Dornbusch, "Policies to Move from Stabilization to Growth," *Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics*, 1990. Supplement to the *World Bank Economic Review* and the *World Bank Research Observer*, p. 41; T.N. Srinivasan, "Development Thought, Strategy, and Policy: Then and Now," background paper for *World Development Report 1991*. Preliminary draft. October, 1990, pp. 105–7.
91 According to the World Bank, *Public Sector Investment Review*, p. 35, the Egyptian pound appreciated in real effective terms by 25 percent between 1991 and 1993. The fact that non-oil exports have been stagnant since 1989/90 may be an indicator that the exchange rate is overvalued (see floor discussion of Corden's paper, [M. Corden, "Macroeconomic Policy and Growth: Some Lessons of Experience," *Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics*, 1990. Supplement to the *World Bank Research Observer*, p. 97]).

92 J. da Silva Lopes, "Policies of Economic Adjustment to Correct External Imbalances," in Roe, et al., eds., *Economic Adjustment*, p. 29, suggests that reduced protection against imports be accompanied by depreciation—since the devaluation in February 1991, Egypt has done the opposite. Handoussa, *Crisis and Challenge*, pp. 11, 15, strongly emphasizes that Egypt's manufactured exports are highly sensitive to the real exchange rate and that poor export performance in the 1980s was partly due to an overvalued exchange rate. It is, however, striking that the debate in the Egyptian press is focused on tariff changes and the removal of import bans, not on the very crucial issue of the appreciating real exchange rate.

93 *al-Ahram Weekly*, 4–10 February, 8–14 April 1993.

94 In this context, it is important to emphasize that the large capital inflows of recent years were attracted by a higher than expected return from investment in Egyptian pounds compared to other currencies. These inflows may turn into outflows at short notice if the expected return on the pound declines, for example due to an expected devaluation. This danger is intensified whenever Egypt's foreign exchange earnings decline for exogenous and/or non-economic reasons—such as the recent weak oil market and fall in tourism revenues.

95 Corden, "Macroeconomic Policy and Growth," p. 82.

96 da Silva Lopes, "Policies of Economic Adjustment," p. 28; Dornbusch, "Policies to Move," p. 27; S. Edwards, "The Sequencing of Structural Adjustment and Stabilization," *Occasional Paper* no. 34, (San Francisco: CA: International Center for Economic Growth, 1992), pp. 16–19. For a crawling peg, the rate of depreciation would approximately equal the difference between the rates of inflation in the country in question and its major trading partners.

97 Amin, "Adjustment and Development," p. 110; H. Shapiro and L. Taylor, "The State and Industrial Strategy," *World Development*, vol. 18, no. 6, 1990, p. 871; S. Fischer and V. Thomas, "Policies for Economic Development," paper prepared for presentation at the December 1989 meetings of the Allied Social Science Associations in Atlanta, May, 1989, p.17.

98 INP, *Human Development Report*, p.13.

99 ibid., p. 54.

100 World Bank, *Egypt: Alleviating Poverty During Structural Adjustment* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1990), p. 178.

101 More specifically, this piece of information applies to the category of 'social service' workers, dominated by government administrators financed via the government budget. Central Bank of Egypt, *Annual Report*, 1992/93, pp. 88, 94.

102 Edwards, "The Sequencing," pp. 16, 17, 19.

103 This concern has been expressed by the IMF (EIU, *Country Report* no. 4/1992, p. 4).

104 R.N. Cooper, "Economic Stabilization in Developing Countries," *Occasional Paper* no. 14 (San Francisco, CA: International Center for Economic Growth, 1991), p. 64; Dornbusch, "Policies to Move," pp. 43–44; Fischer, Thomas, "Policies for Economic Development," p. 11, 24.

105 Dornbusch, *Policies to Move*, pp. 43–45; Cooper, *Economic Stabilization*, p. 65.

106 M. Bruno, "Opening Up: Liberalization with Stabilization," in R. Dornbusch and L.C.H. Helmers, eds., *The Open Economy: Tools for Policy Makers in Developing Countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 230–31.

107 *MEED*, 5 March and 28 May 1993; EIU 2/1993, p. 5; *al-Hayat*, 27 February 1993.

108 *al-Hayat*, 10 December 1992; U.S. Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1992, pp. 6–7; ibid., 1994, p. 7.

109 In 1991, the budget deficit reduction and the foreign exchange reform were preconditions for the IMF agreement (*MEED*, 1 and 22 February, 7 June 1991; US Embassy, *Foreign Economic Trends*, 1991, p. 10). Energy prices were raised

in the summer of 1992 after an IMF decision to suspend the second review of its agreement by three months (*MEED*, 10 July 1992). In March 1993, trade liberalization and steps toward privatization led to the release of the second tranche of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Loan (*MEED*, 12 March 1993). Along these lines, the former minister of planning, Muhammad al-Imam has stated that "reform, until now, has taken place unwillingly, under some kind of pressure, and without a clear view" (*al-Ahram*, 13 August 1993).

110 Atiyas and Frischtak, *Political Determinants*, p. 4.
111 In an audience with the author on 19 April 1982, President Mubarak poked fun at those who try to persuade him to adopt a "national project" *(mashru'a qawmi)*.
112 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1982.
113 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 23 July 1982.
114 Mubarak cited in *al-Ahram*, 6 October 1982.
115 Mubarak's speech to the Economic Conference, cited in *al-Ahram*, 22 February 1982.
116 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1983.
117 Al-Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies, *al-Taqrir al-istratiji al-'Arabi* ('The Arab Strategic Report,' ASR) (Cairo: al-Ahram Foundation, 1987).
118 *ASR*, 1986.
119 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1987; 6 October 1988; 23 July 1989.
120 *ASR*, 1989, pp. 558–69.
121 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 15 December 1990.
122 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 3 March 1991.
123 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1991.
124 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 23 July 1992.
125 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1991.
126 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1992.
127 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1993.
128 *ASR*, 1991–93.
129 1 May 1989.
130 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1991.
131 1 May 1990.
132 Mubarak, 1989.
133 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1993.
134 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1992.
135 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1993.
136 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1991.
137 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1989.
138 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1991.
139 ibid.
140 *ASR*, 1991–93.
141 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1990.
142 *ASR*, 1991, pp. 410–12.
143 *ASR*, 1992, pp. 338–40.
144 M. Wahba, 1994, *New Egyptian Capitalism and Sale of Companies to Foreigners* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Akadimiya, 1994), pp. 29–110.
145 Mubarak, cited in *al-Ahram*, 1 May 1992.
146 *ASR*, 1991, 1992; interviews by the author in 1993.
147 *ASR*, 1991, 1992.
148 EFLU, *Egypt's Federation of Labor Unions*, pp. 245–69.
149 ibid., pp. 340–49.
150 *ASR*, 1993, pp. 339–40; EFLU, *Egypt's Federation of Labor Unions*, pp. 350–56.
151 *ASR*, 1993, p. 340.
152 *ASR*, 1990, pp. 474–480; ibid., 1991, pp. 445–456; ibid., 1992, pp. 375–393.
153 *al-Ahram*, 15 June, 1994.

154 Law no. 40/1977 regulates the establishment of political parties. The Law is very restrictive and it places the licensing squarely in the hands of a government committee dominated by the ruling party. Nine of the existing thirteen parties were initially denied a license and were forced to obtain one through judicial rulings.
155 I.D. Abaza, NWP vice secretary-general, 1994, in an interview with the authors.
156 F. Sirag al-Din, "Political Reform as a Key to Real Reform," a speech delivered in the opening meeting of Egypt's National Dialogue Preparatory Committee, reprinted in *al-Wafd*, 16 June 1994.
157 M.K. Murad, interview on Liberal party's views on Egypt's ERSAP, 1994.
158 ibid., Abaza, 1994, interview on New Wafd party's views on Egypt's ERSAP.
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ties, they declared a strike (work stoppage for an hour in courts) on 15 May, in which some 100,000 lawyers from all over Egypt are said to have participated. Since this did not yield any results, the syndicate declared a peaceful march to the Abdin Presidential Palace (three kilometers from the syndicate). Security warned the lawyers against marching, but they ignored the warning. As soon as some three hundred lawyers stepped out into the street, the police let off tear gas. There were physical clashes between the demonstrators and the security forces. Thirty-seven people were arrested and detained, and the rest dispersed. Over a month later the lawyers were still in detention (Ibn Khaldoun, *CSDTAW* monthly newsletter, June 1994).

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Management and Mismanagement of Diversity

THE CASE OF ETHNIC CONFLICT AND STATE-BUILDING IN THE ARAB WORLD

1994

AN OVERVIEW

All the world's armed conflicts since 1988, with the possible exception of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, have been over internal ethnic issues. In fact since 1945, ethnic conflicts have claimed some 16 million lives, several times those resulting from interstate wars. At present, ethnic conflicts span three old continents. Typical examples are those in Burma and Sri Lanka in Asia; Somalia, Sudan, and Rwanda in Africa; the former USSR and Yugoslavia in Europe.[1]

With only 8 percent of the world's population, the Arab Middle East has suffered 25 percent of all the world's armed conflicts since 1945. Most of these conflicts have been ethnically-based. Table 1 shows the balance of interstate and inter-ethnic armed conflicts in the region in terms of human and material cost. Though considered by all concerned as the principal one, the Arab–Israeli conflict (some six wars and a continued Palestinian and Lebanese struggle against Israeli occupation) has claimed some 200,000 lives in forty years. In contrast, during the same period, ethnic conflicts have claimed several times as many lives. The Lebanese civil war (1975–90) alone matched the same number of casualties as all the Arab–Israeli wars. The Sudanese civil war (on and off since 1956) has claimed at least five times as many lives as all the Arab–Israeli wars. The same relative costs apply in terms of population displacement, material devastation, and financial expenditure.[2]

In the 1990s, we expect that the armed conflicts in the region will be more of the intrastate than of the interstate variety. Militant Islamic activism is to be added to the ongoing sources of armed civil strife in a score of Arab Middle Eastern countries. Algeria and Egypt are currently two prominent cases in point. Thus, the greatest threat to security of states in the region is likely to be internal.[3] The civil war in Yemen in 1994 was a possible preview of things to come. The ideological and regional dimensions of the conflict were entangled with sectarian ones—that is, it was a conflict between a Sunni, Shafi'i, allegedly socialist élite in the south and a Shia, Zaydi, tribal élite in the north. The manipulation or spill-over effects of internal armed

Table 1
Cost of armed conflicts in Middle East and North Africa, 1948–1993[35]

	Period	Number of casualties	Estimated cost (US$ billions, 1991 value)	Estimated population displacement
Interstate Conflict				
Arab–Israeli	1948–90	200,000	300	3,000,000
Iraq–Iran	1980–88	600,000	300	1,000,000
Gulf War	1990–91	120,000	650	1,000,000
Other	1945–91	20,000	50	1,000,000
Subtotal		940,000	1,300	6,000,000
Intrastate Conflicts				
Sudan	1956–91	900,000	30	4,500,000
Iraq	1960–91	400,000	30	1,200,000
Lebanon	1958–90	180,000	5 0	1,000,000
Yemen	1962–72	100,000	5	500,000
Syria	1975–85	30,000	0.5	150,000
Morocco (Sahara)	1976–91	20,000	3	100,000
S. Yemen	1986–87	10,000	0.2	50,000
Somalia	1989–91	20,000	0.3	200,000
Other	1945–91	30,000	1.0	300,000
Subtotal		1,690,000	120	8,000,000
Total		2,630,000	1,420	14,000,000

Source: Files of the Arab Data Unit (ADU), Ibn Khaldoun Center for Developmental Studies.

conflicts could, of course, lead to interstate conflicts as well. This paper, however, deals with only ethnically-based internal conflicts.

The disproportion of ethnic conflicts vis-à-vis interstate conflicts is more surprising in view of the global sociocultural demographics of the Arab world. The broadest definition of 'ethnicity' refers to contiguous or coexisting groups differing in race, religion, sect, language, culture, or national origin.[4] However, the Arab world is one of the more ethnically homogeneous areas in the world today.

In 1993, the Arab world had a population of slightly over 236 million. The overwhelming majority (80 percent, that is, 190 million) share the same ethnic characteristics. Racially, they are a Semitic–Hamitic–Caucasian mix. Religiously, they are Muslims of the Sunni denomination. Culturally and linguistically, they are native speakers of Arabic. In terms of national origin, they have been rooted for many centuries in the same 'Arab homeland' (extending from Mauritania, on the Atlantic Ocean, to Oman, on the Arabian Sea). This 80 percent increases as we include groups which differ in only one ethnic variable perceived by the respective group itself as being a marginal element in the definition of its identity. For example, most Shia Muslims and most Christians living in the Arab world consider their 'Arabism' as the primary axis of their identity, superseding their Shiism or Christianity. For them, the cultural–linguistic variable is the more

salient ethnic divide. On this basis the Arab 'majority' jumps to over 86 percent of the population of the Arab world. Table 2 shows the major ethnic groupings in the Arab world along four dimensions: cultural–linguistic, religious, denominational, and racial.

Despite the apparent ethnic homogeneity on the pan-Arab level, we observe marked ethnic heterogeneities in several countries—for example, Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Bahrain, and Yemen. In these nine countries, as many as 35 percent or more of the population differ from the Arab–Muslim–Sunni–Caucasian majority in one or more of the four ethnic variables (of language, religion, sect, or race). It is noted that nearly all nine countries are located at the outer rim of the Arab world, often intersecting a cultural borderland. In all nine countries, there has been some overt form of ethnic tension. In four of them—Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen—such tensions have flared up in recent decades into a protracted armed conflict. The unity and territorial integrity of each has been seriously threatened.[5]

Despite the preponderance of ethnic conflicts in the Arab world, Arab social scientists and political activists alike have not given the phenomenon its due share of attention. The last book written on this subject by a contemporary Arab scholar, Albert Hourani, was in 1947—that is, some forty-eight years ago.[6] Marxists, nationalists, and Islamists have tended to ignore the ethnic question or write it off as a residual of some other problems—the 'foreign factor' (for example, imperialism and Zionism) has been offered as a common explanation underlying most ethnic conflicts in the Arab world. While such a factor is not to be dismissed, a new generation of Arab social scientists

Table 2
Major ethnic divides in the Arab World at the beginning of the 1990s

	Number (millions)	% of population	Countries of concentration
Arabic-speaking, Sunni Muslim, Caucasian	190	80	All Arab countries except Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain
Islamic minorities (non-Sunni)	20.8	8.8	Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, the Gulf
Cultural–linguistic minorities (non-Arab)	32.3	13.7	Morocco, Sudan, Algeria, Iraq
Religious minorities (non-Muslims)	17.9	7.6	Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Occupied Palestine
Racial minorities (non-Semitic–Hamitic–Caucasian)	8.7	3.7	Sudan

Source: Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 1994, "Sects, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups in the Arab World" (Arabic), Cairo, Ibn Khaldoun Center, p. 86.

is now going far beyond such conspiratorial explanations of ethnic conflicts.[7] The remainder of this paper offers an account of these new endeavors, discussed under the following four *problematiques* as they bear on the ethnic question in the Arab world: (1) Competing loci of identity; (2) Dilemmas of modern state-building; (3) Socioeconomic cleavages; (4) Vulnerabilities to external factors.

The four *problematiques* are generally interconnected in all Arab countries, but their interplay is particularly acute in those countries with greater ethnic heterogeneity. The disintegration of traditional Islamic polities in the nineteenth century, the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1922), and the concomitant or subsequent Western colonial designs, led to the fragmentation of the Arab world and the embryonic beginnings of modern 'territorial states' in the inter-war period (1918–39).[8] As these states gained political independence during the period between the 1940s and 1960s, they inherited equally fragmented ethnic minorities. The political space was replete with challenges that entailed forging a national identity, state-building, consolidating independence, achieving socioeconomic development, and insuring reasonable measures of equity. Moreover, these challenges were to be met in an international system polarized by the ideological and geopolitical conflict of the Cold War (1945–90).

Although the immediate scope of this paper is the Arab world, it has substantial relevance to other Middle Eastern countries—Turkey, Iran, Israel, and Cyprus. In each of these countries, the ethnic question has flared up periodically. The most recent and dramatic case in point is that of the armed conflict between government forces and the Kurdish rebels under the Kurdish Worker's party (PKK), in southern Turkey, starting in late 1994 and continuing well into 1995. Some fifty thousand soldiers from the Turkish army and air forces have waged a campaign of "search-and-destroy" against the PKK in Turkey and a strategy of "hot pursuit" in neighboring Iraqi territory.[9]

The Turkish–Kurdish problem has similar characteristics to the Iraqi–Kurdish, Iranian–Kurdish, and to a lesser extent, the Syrian–Kurdish questions. The roots and subsequent dynamics are nearly the same—that is, the fragmentation of indigenous peoples and groups against their will to suit original colonial designs; and later on to suit the logic of the newly created territorial states. However, we will confine our attention to the Arab world—as a cultural–geopolitical area, distinct from the rest of the Middle East, though naturally sharing similarities with it in many ways.

THE IDENTITY *PROBLEMATIQUE*

Briefly stated, the main competing ideological paradigms in the Arab world since the turn of the century tend to exclude certain ethnic groups from full-fledged membership of the political community. At present, the Arab political–intellectual space is dominated by Islamic and secular nationalist ideologies. Each has its own locus of political identity.

THE ISLAMIST VISION AND ETHNICITY

The Islamists, naturally, base the political bond of culture, society, and state on religion. This automatically excludes non-Muslims—consisting of some 18 million, mostly Christians, together with a few hundred thousand Jews (see Table 3)—from the respective polities of the Arab world. In its extreme purist form, the exclusion would entail some 21 million non-Sunni Muslims as well (that is, various Shias and Kharajite sects). Mainstream Islamists would make that exclusion partial—that is, banning non-Muslims from assuming top commanding offices (such as heads of state, governors, and members of the judiciary).[10] Their rationale is that holders of such offices not only perform temporal roles but also carry out religious duties—that is, leading prayers, implementing the *Shari'a*, and commanding the faithful in *jihad* ('struggle in the name of religion'). The purist Islamists would make the exclusion of non-Muslims complete from any

Table 3
Non-Islamic religious minorities in the Arab World in the late 1980s

	Total number	Countries of concentration
Christians	12,000,000	
Greek		
Orthodox	1,900,000	Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine
Nestorians	900,000	Syria, Iraq, Lebanon
Monophysites	6,560,000	
Coptic Orthodox	5,600,000	Egypt, Sudan
Jacobite Orthodox	225,000	Syria, Lebanon
Armenian Orthodox	600,000	Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt
Catholics	3,250,000	Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine,
Western Latin Church	625,000	Egypt
Greek–Roman Catholics	500,000	Lebanon, Syria, Egypt
Syrian Catholics	8,000	Lebanon, Syria
Armenian Catholics	85,000	Lebanon, Syria
Coptic Catholics	170,000	Egypt, Sudan
Chaldeans	625,000	Iraq, Syria, Lebanon
Maronites	1,150,000	Lebanon, Syria
Protestants	200,000	Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt
Jews	4,700,000	
Orthodox	4,400,000	Occupied Palestine, Israel
Karaites	150,000	Occupied Palestine, Israel
Samaritans	150,000	Israel
Other Religions	,690,000	
Sabians	150,000	Iraq
Yazidis	125,000	Iraq
Bahais	50,000	Occupied Palestine, Israel, Iraq
Animists	4,500,000	Sudan
Total	22,390,000	

Source: Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 1992, "Reflection on the Question of Minorities" (Arabic), Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center.

state or governmental role at any level. To them, non-Muslims are to exist as "protected communities," *(ahl dhimma)*, run their own communal affairs, and pay the *jizya* (a poll tax).[11] So long as they respect the Muslim majority and recognize the sovereignty of the Islamic state, non-Muslim communities are to be treated with respect, compassion, and religious tolerance.

In this vision, all Muslims are considered equal regardless of their race, culture, or national origin. Accordingly, Muslim Kurds (in Iraq and Syria), Berbers (in Algeria and Morocco), and Blacks (in Mauritania and Sudan) are not considered 'minorities.' Together these Muslim (but non-Arab) groups number over 20 million. This Islamist vision of 'political order,' in which 'citizenship' is based on religion, would naturally be welcomed by non-Arab but Muslim members of the community. Obviously, in such a polity, non-Muslims in the Arab world feel quite threatened, as well as alienated.

THE ARAB NATIONALIST VISION

The Arab nationalist vision started to unfold in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. It emerged as a reaction to both Ottoman despotism and the Young Turks' taurine chauvinism. In its pure form, the Arab nationalist vision is predicated on culture and language as the pillars of political identity of state, society, and citizenship. In this sense, Arab nationalism has been a secular ideology. Accordingly, all native speakers of Arabic, bearers of Arab culture, and those who perceive themselves as 'Arabs' would be full-fledged members of the 'Arab nation,' enjoying full rights of citizenship—regardless of race, religion, or sect. The Arab nationalist vision would not recognize other non-Arab national or cultural groups living in the 'Arab homeland' as autonomous communities or independent entities in their own right. However, their individual members would be treated as equal 'Arab' citizens under the law.[12]

Thus, while the Islamists would exclude 'non-Muslims,' the Arab nationalists would exclude 'non-Arabs' from full-fledged membership of the polity. At present (1995), the size of the latter is some 20 million. On the other hand, non-Muslim Arabs are to be fully integrated in the national political community. At present (1995), these amount to some 18 million (mostly Christians).

Naturally, non-Arabs would feel threatened by the Arab nationalist vision. This is particularly the case with sizable non-Arab communities which have national aspirations of their own (for example, the Kurds) or who are keen on preserving their cultural integrity and language (such as the Berbers). Also, some non-Muslim communities fear that despite its secular appearance, Arab nationalism has Islamic underpinnings. This apprehension is to be found explicitly among the Maronite Christians of Lebanon, and implicitly among the Christian Copts of Egypt.[13]

Thus each of the competing paradigms of identity in the Arab world would exclude what the other would include in their respective defi-

nition of the political community. We will see how modern state-builders, in practice, have tried to cope with this dilemma, by the subtle evolving of nation-state–based patriotism, referred to as *wataniya.*[14]

THE INTRACTABLE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

In the Arab world, as elsewhere, the question of identity is one of the most vexing sociopolitical cleavages. It taps cultural, symbolic, and existential notions of individual and collective self. Unlike other cleavages (of class, profession, education, and political ideology), ethnic identity and the conflicts it generates are "intrinsically less amenable to compromise than those revolving around material issues."[15]

Both the Islamic and nationalist visions have failed to take into account sub-identities within their own broad primordial frame of reference. Thus, Islamic visionaries have tended to downplay sectarian cleavages within and between fellow Muslims. In the Lebanese civil war (1975–89), more Shia and Sunni Muslims killed each other than they killed Christians. Indeed, more Shia Muslims killed each other than they killed Sunni and Druze Muslims, and Christians of all sects. By the same token, more Christians were killed by other Christians than by Muslims.[16]

Nor would proponents of the Islamic vision of a political identity take much comfort from the infighting among the Afghani Muslim Mujahidin which claimed more Muslim casualties in three years (1990–93) than the entire ten-year war of resistance against the Soviet and Soviet-backed regime (1980–90).[17] Equally, proponents of the pan-Arab nationalist vision have been seriously discredited by the actions of regimes espousing that vision. The quarter of a century rivalry between the two Baathist regimes in Iraq and Syria is a dramatic case in point. It just happens that the élite of each regime belongs to a different religious Muslim minority sect in their respective countries.[18]

Much of the tension in North Yemen (1970–90) and then in unified Yemen (1990–94), which escalated into a full-fledged civil war in mid-1994, has not been without its Muslim sectarian undertones. Despite official denials by all parties in the conflict, the hidden but persistent cleavage has been between the Shia Muslim Zaydis of the North and the Sunni Muslim Shawafi of the South.[19]

As elegant and neat as the two competing visions of identities in the Arab world may be, they have failed in practice to project a coherent or consistent political program. They have failed to deal with sub-identities, let alone their interplay with other socioeconomic variables.

THE TASK OF STATE-BUILDING

The modern state-building process in the Arab world is some seven decades old. The earliest occurred in Egypt, in 1922, tackling the issue of identity through compromise. While Egypt's first constitution (1923) was clearly secular, basing full citizenship on birthrights,

regardless of religion, race, or creed, one article stipulated that "Islam is the state religion." But this was understood in Egypt, and other Arab countries with similar constitutions and stipulations, to mean only two things, which did not seriously impede the integration of non-Muslims in the polity. The first was that the head of state would be a Muslim;20 the second was that Islamic Shari'a would be a source (but not the only one) of legislation.[21]

In practice, nearly every Arab state today has avoided the clear dichotomies of choice—such as religious versus secular, or Arab nationalism versus patriotism (*qawmiya* versus *wataniya*)—in forging their political–cultural identities. Instead, each Arab state (or regime) has attempted its own reconciliation, with greater emphasis on one particular dimension but never to the total exclusion of the other. Hence, it is possible to plot the Arab states on the two continua of 'religious–secular' and 'homeland *(watan)*–Arab nation *(umma 'Arabiya)*,' as the following diagram shows.[22]

Religious (Islamic)	**Country patriotism** *(wataniya)*
Saudi Arabia	Morocco
Gulf states	Tunisia
Sudan	Algeria
Morocco	Sudan
Jordan	Lebanon
Libya	Saudi Arabia
Egypt	Gulf states
Algeria	Egypt
Yemen	Palestine
Tunisia	Jordan
Palestine	Libya
Iraq	Iraq
Syria	Syria
Lebanon	Yemen
Secular	**Arab nationalism** *(qawmiya)*

The above pragmatic handling of reconciling secular and religious considerations has not been the only issue in forging the identity of the new states. Early state-builders also had to contend with reconciling pan-Arab national considerations with those of sub-national identities (*qawmi* versus *qutri*). The leaders of the pan-Arab movement who had rallied around Shirif Hussayn of Mecca in the Great Arab Revolt (1916) were frustrated and felt betrayed as Britain and France reneged on their promises of Arab independence and unification (as was later revealed by the secret Sykes–Picot agreement). Yet Arab nationalist hopes remained alive. With the successive independence of one country after another in the middle of the twentieth century, early state-builders made another pragmatic reconciliation. In their constitutions or declarations of independence, it was often stipulated that while their country was declared an "independent sovereign state," it nonetheless would remain an integral part of the "Arab nation" or the "Arab homeland," waiting for the opportune

moment to "reunite with the other Arab parts."[23] The establishment of the League of Arab States in 1945 was a formalization of this compromise. It ensured the separate independence of its member states but kept the future door open for gradual measures of cooperation, integration, and unification.

Thus, while Arab ideologists debated their competing visions, some of which were mutually exclusive, practical statesmen and politicians engaged in the "art of the possible." The above two compromises were cases in point, and operated reasonably well during the early decades of independence in several Arab countries which adopted a 'liberal' or 'quasi-liberal' system of governance—for example, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco. Where sizable ethnic groups existed they were accommodated politically under such 'liberal' systems. In some cases (for example, Lebanon and Jordan), ethnic groups were formally or explicitly recognized and allotted a proportional share in elected and ministerial councils. In others (such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq), similar accommodations were implicitly made. In fact, the first Syrian prime minister after independence, Faris al-Khuri, was a Christian; Egypt had Coptic Christian prime ministers in Butrus Ghali and Yusif Wahba; Iraq had Shia and Kurdish prime ministers and speakers of parliament, such as I. Kuba. In other words, socioethnic diversity was matched by a political pluralism of one sort or another.

The end of the first liberal experiments in those Arab states during the 1950s and 1960s entailed potential problems for their ethnic communities. The military regimes which took power in many Arab countries adopted militant Arab nationalist ideologies and bold socioeconomic reforms. On both counts, they were bound to alienate one of the ethnic groups in their respective countries. In Egypt, for example, Nasser's July 1952 Revolution alarmed non-Muslim communities on several grounds. None of the one hundred Free Officers who staged the Revolution was a Christian, while Copts alone (apart from other Christian denominations) represented some 8 percent of the population. Nor were Egypt's Copts particularly enthusiastic about the new regime's Arab nationalist orientation. Worse still was the regime's socialist policies which in the aggregate hit the Christians harder, as they were disproportionately represented in the landed-bourgeoisie classes of Egypt. Something similar occurred elsewhere in the Arab world where military or single-party regimes ruled for several years. In countries with marked ethnic heterogeneity, this lack of political pluralism was bound to create tension. Even when military single-party regimes attempted to accommodate ethnic groups, this was often either nominal or arbitrary, depending on the whims of the rulers, thus leading to further alienation of these groups.[24]

In two extreme cases, ethnic majority rule was replaced by the rule of an ethnic minority. Thus, under the ideological guise of the Arab Socialist Baath party, an 'Alawite military rule has tightened its

grip on the Arab Muslim Sunni majority (65 percent of the population) in Syria since 1970. In Iraq, it is members of an Arab Muslim Sunni minority (35 percent) which, since 1968, has had the upper hand over all other ethnic groups, some of which are numerically larger—for example, the Shia Muslims account for about 45 percent of Iraq's total population.

In the Sudan, members of the ruling military élite have invariably come from one Arab Muslim northern province around the capital, Khartoum. Under populist, socialist, and now Islamic guise the three military coups d'état (of 1958, 1969, and 1989) have been staged by Arab Muslim northern officers. In none of them was there a single southern non-Muslim officer at the start. Later on, a few token southerners were added.

With the exception of Egypt, the alienation of ethnic groups vis-à-vis the ruling ideological–military single-party regimes has grown into overt unrest. In Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Algeria, Somalia, and Mauritania violent confrontations of varying degrees have erupted over the last three decades. At present, there is protracted armed conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, and Iraq. At times, it is not only the legitimacy of the ruling regime which is challenged by an ethnic group, but also the legitimacy of the state itself. Thus, the territorial integrity of the Sudan, Somalia, and Iraq are now being seriously questioned. Several decades of state-building is giving way to a reverse process of state-deconstruction.

THE SOCIAL QUESTION: MOBILIZATION AND EQUITY

The twin processes of Western penetration and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire led, among other things, to the breakdown of the traditional organization of ethnic groups in the Arab world. Their residential and occupational patterns have become less segregated. With independence, their social mobilization and integration into the societal mainstream was greatly expedited, and their political consciousness markedly heightened. Modern education, urbanization, expanding means of communication, and exposure to the mass media have all been instrumental in this respect.25

As elsewhere in developing regions, this social mobilization was accompanied or followed by a steady rise in expectations on the part of ethnic groups in the Arab world. Those expectations included quests for a greater share in power, wealth, and prestige in their newly independent countries. The brief liberal experiment in several Arab states satisfied the quest of ethnic groups for political participation, but not as much their quest for social justice—that is, an equitable share in wealth. The early years of ideological–military populist regimes satisfied ethnic groups, or promised to do so, as far as social equity is concerned. Put into effect were such redistributional measures as land reform, nationalization of foreign and upper-class assets, an open and free system of education, the provision of equal opportuni-

ties, and the adoption of a meritocratic system of employment. However, as these became consolidated and their tenure in power lasted, even the reality and/or promise of greater equity began to erode for all non-ruling groups, including ethnic minorities.

Thus, with political participation long curtailed, social mobilization continuing unabated, and progress in social equity coming to a halt or worsening, relative structural deprivation has been steadily rising since the 1970s. The most hard hit have been ethnic groups in society. Consequently, they have been the first and the loudest in expressing their resentment against the authoritarian–bureaucratic ruling classes, whose ideological trappings have faded into the background.

Instead of responding to such protests by resuming the march toward social equity or reopening the political system to more participation, most Arab authoritarian–bureaucratic regimes have responded by greater domestic coercion and/or foreign military adventures. Thus, the Syrian regime became embroiled in the Lebanese civil war (in 1975); the Iraqi regime in two Gulf wars (with Iran 1980–88, and in Kuwait in 1990–91); the Libyan regime in Chad (1975–88); the Algerian regime in a proxy war with Morocco in the Sahara (1976–90); the Somali regime in the Ogaden with Ethiopia (1977); and the Mauritanian regime in a series of armed skirmishes with Senegal (1990–91).

Both domestic coercion and foreign adventures have had the effect of earmarking a greater share of state budgets to arms purchases, thus depriving social programs of funding. Thus social equity has continued to deteriorate even further for all non-ruling groups, but more so for ethnic minorities. This has intensified the ethnic divide in several Arab countries.[26] The combination of class–ethnic deprivation has needed one more factor to lead to an eruption into open armed conflict—a foreign ally. This takes us to the external question.

EXTERNAL PENETRATION AND ETHNICITY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Over the last two centuries, the Arab Middle East, due to its strategic location and natural resources, particularly petroleum, has been subjected to foreign domination. In order to enhance their hegemony over the region, foreign powers have often exploited structural weaknesses within Arab society—in particular, the ethnic question.

As early as the late eighteenth century, rival Western powers were scrambling to sponsor various ethnic groups living within the declining Ottoman Empire—the 'Sick Man of Europe.' The foreign powers intended to gain control of certain provinces within the Empire as it lost control. France sponsored the Christian Maronites; Britain, the Druze Muslims; and Russia, the Christian Orthodox. All these groups were living within the province of Greater Syria (including Mount Lebanon). On the whole, ethnic groups in the Arab world remained

long reluctant and skeptical of such unsolicited foreign guardianship, but as corruption and despotism in the Ottoman Empire reached a climax, some of these groups accepted this tutelage for protection, not only against the central authorities but also against real or perceived threats from other indigenous ethnic groups.

This nineteenth century pattern of the major powers interfering in the ethnic affairs of the Arab world would continue into the twentieth century, both under direct colonial rule of fragmented Arab polities, as well as after their formal independence. The major players have varied over the two centuries, but the pattern has remained essentially the same. After the Second World War, the number of independent or new states in the Middle East increased, and with it, the number of regional players, often by proxy, in the ethnic affairs of the region. Some of the most notorious of these players have been Israel (in Lebanon, Iraq, and Sudan), Iran (in Iraq and Lebanon), and Ethiopia (in Sudan).27 On occasions, some Arab states interfered in the ethnic affairs of neighboring Arab and non-Arab states—Syria in Lebanon and Iraq; Iraq in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran; Sudan in Ethiopia.[28]

The major power rivalry during the Cold War (1945–90) added an extra ideological dimension to the Arab world's ethnic question. At times, factions of the same ethnic group were as much in conflict with each other as were their external patrons, regional or global. However, rarely did the external factor alone trigger serious ethnic conflicts. Indigenous factors of a political, socioeconomic, or cultural nature (as discussed above) were the primary motive.

The external factor acted to intensify, complicate, and protract such conflicts. This is especially the case with armed ethnic conflicts, which tend, over time, to create political economies and subpolitical cultures of their own—far beyond the original issues involved. The civil wars in Lebanon, Sudan, and Iraq are dramatic cases in point.

At present (1995), Iraq is de facto divided into three zones. Two areas do not come under the control of the central government of Baghdad: one in the north (where the Kurds live) and one in the south (where the Shias live). Only the third area—the middle zone which constitutes about one half of Iraq—comes under the total control of the Iraqi government since its defeat in the Gulf War (1991). The other two zones are now off limits to Iraqi air power, by orders of the UN and Western Allies. In 1992, the Kurds in the 'Protected Zone' in the north felt safe enough to elect their own Kurdish parliament and now have their own government.[29]

ETHNICITY, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND DEMOCRATIZATION

The ethnic question is one of the most serious challenges facing the Arab world as a whole, and, in particular, those Arab states with a marked ethnic diversity. The modern nation–state, as well as the Arab

intelligentsia, has failed to fully comprehend or deal with the ethnic problem, which may have been resolved with the existence of a number of socioeconomic conditions.

PARTICIPATORY POLITICS

Participatory political systems have proved to be the most effective modality of peaceful management of social unrest and ethnic conflicts. Primordial loyalties are often moderated, reduced, or even eliminated as modern socioeconomic formations (that is, classes and professional groups) freely evolve. Based on interest, the latter groups offer members of ethnic groups a substitute, or at least a partial alternative, for collective protection and enhancement of legitimate rights and needs. They allow the growth of the kind of modern, associational networks which have come to be lumped under the concept of 'civil society.' In its broad sense, civil society includes political parties, trade unions, professional associations, and other non-governmental organizations operating nationally or within the community. These kinds of networks provide a participatory political system, even when some of them are avowedly "apolitical."[30]

Participatory politics may, in some Arab countries, contribute to initial political instability or lead itself to various forms of demagoguery. Rival ethnic leaders may become embroiled in a conflict over the supremacy of one over the other. This was witnessed among the Kurds of northern Iraq in 1994. But in the medium and long terms, responsible democratic politics is bound to prevail. In countries with sizable ethnic groups concentrated in one province or a geographic area, 'separatist tendencies' may emerge once the political system is opened to free expression and free balloting—as has been vividly, and sometimes tragically, witnessed in the former USSR and Yugoslavia. While such a right must be conceded in principle, it can lead in practice to chaos.

FEDERALISM

Federalism, or even confederationism, are real options for avoiding the negative consequences of secession. The flexible and imaginative application of federalism could create a modern functional equivalent of the *millet* system which operated in earlier Muslim empires. Federalism would reconcile the legitimate impulse of Arab states to preserve their territorial integrity with the legitimate right of ethnic groups to preserve their culture, human dignity, and political autonomy.

The legitimate civil and political rights of minorities and ethnic groups can hardly be respected unless those of the majority are also respected. In fact, as the Lebanese social scientist Antoine Messarra once observed, "No political Arab regime has had a serious problem with an ethnic minority without also having a serious problem with the majority in the same country."[31] This is why the Kurdish national

movement calls for "democracy for all Iraqis and autonomy for the Kurds," and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (mostly consisting of southerners) has adopted a similar slogan: "democracy for all of the Sudan and federalism for the south."

Despite protracted armed ethnic conflicts in the Arab world, there are other instances where such conflicts have been well managed or averted altogether using a combination of participatory politics and decentralization or federalism. Of special note here is the case of the Berbers in Morocco and Algeria, who constitute approximately 25–35 percent of the populations of each country. Although they constitute a cultural–linguistic minority, they are of the same religious denomination as the majority of the population—that is, Sunni Muslims. The Berbers have been an integral and important part of Maghreb history since the seventh century A.D. They took part in the Arab–Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, and Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa. In modern times, they resisted the French colonialist policy of "divide and rule," and struggled gallantly for their countries' independence in the 1950s (Morocco) and 1960s (Algeria). In the post-independence decade, Berbers in both countries have evolved their own cultural aspirations as a distinct group. The Moroccan king has accommodated those aspirations, unlike the Algerian FLN—the ruling single party. In the 1990s, the Moroccan Berbers seem far more integrated in the national politics of their country than their Algerian counterparts. The latter have increasingly been agitating for cultural recognition. In the face of Islamic militancy, with its 'over-Arabization' tendencies, the Algerian Berbers' cultural quest is rapidly becoming a militant political protest.[32] At present, the Algerian state is under severe pressure from both Islamic and Berber militants.[33] Thus, while Morocco is sailing toward steady democratization, Algeria is disintegrating under the threat of militancy.

Sudan is another illustrative case. Since independence (in 1956), the country has had only ten years of relative calmness between the African–non-Muslim south and the Arab–Muslim north (1972–82). Those ten years of peace were a result of the Addis Ababa Agreement (AAA), which provided for self-rule for the southern people. When the Numeiri military regime reneged on the AAA in 1983 by restoring direct rule from Khartoum and imposing the Shari'a on non-Muslims, the south flared up again in insurrection. The situation has not improved despite a succession of three different regimes (in 1985, 1986, and 1989).[34]

The way out of the present dilemma facing all Arab states, but especially those with marked ethnic diversity, is a triangular formula of civil society, democracy, and federalism, enhanced by regional peace and economic cooperation. The ingredients are currently in place for a resolution of problems—all that is needed is some political imagination and the political will of new leaders who can bring together all the pieces into a harmonious regional mosaic.

NOTES

1 For a recent overview of worldwide ethnic conflicts, see Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

2 For details and documentation see, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Sects, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups in the Arab World* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center, 1994), pp. 15–18, 225–90, 323–69, and 601–29.

3 Ibid. pp. 725–49.

4 See also Diamond and Plattner's definition in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict*, p. xvii; Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest*, no. 16, summer 1989, pp. 3–18, and idem, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 201.

5 For a full account of civil armed conflicts in Iraq, Sudan, and Lebanon, see S.E. Ibrahim, *Sects, Ethnicity and Minority Groups*, pp. 225–90, pp. 323–60, and pp. 601–29.

6 Ibid. pp. 14–15; and A. Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

7 A full debate has raged among Arab intellectuals over a proposed conference on the "UN Declaration on Minorities Rights and Peoples of the Arab World and the Middle East" that was to be held in Cairo 12–14 May 1994. The prominent Egyptian writer and journalist, M. H. Heikal led the charge against the conference in an article, "The Copts are an Integral Part of the National Mass," *al-Ahram*, 20 April 1994. Some 240 Arab intellectuals joined the debate between April and September 1994. Two-thirds of the debaters denied the existence of or belittled the minorities issue in the Arab world. See editions of *Civil Society and Democratic Transformation in the Arab World* (CSDTAW), monthly newsletter of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, April–October 1994. See also a full documentation in, *Religious and Ethnic Groups in the Arab World* (in Arabic & English) second annual report, (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, 1995).

8 For an account of sociopolitical developments see, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *The Future of Society and State in the Arab World.* (in Arabic), (Amman: The Arab Thought Forum, 1988); Michael Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); G. Luciani, ed., *The Arab State* (Berkeley: University Press, 1990).

9 See an account of the Turkish–Kurdish issue in Robert D. Macburin, The Political Role of Minorities in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1979); and on more recent events in southern Turkey and northern Iraq, see *Time*, 24 April 1995, pp. 50–51, and *Newsweek*, 27 March 1995, p. 12.

10 George Korm, *Variety of Religions and Regimes: A Comparative Sociological and Legal Study* (in Arabic) (Beirut: al-Nahar Publishing Center, 1979), pp. 196–261; Fahmi Huwaydi, *Citizens Not Protected* (in Arabic), (Cairo: Dar al-Shiruk, 1990); see also a debate between Huwaydi and this author on this issue in *al-Ahram*, 14, 21, and 28 March and 4 April 1995.

11 Joseph Migizil, "Islam and Arab Christianity, Arab Nationalism and Secularism," in *The Seminar on Arab Nationalism and Islam*, pp. 361–84 (in Arabic); Constantine Zuraique, in his comment on Wagih Kawthrani in "The Christians from the System of Sects to the Modern State," in his book *The Debate on Arab Christians* p.75; Gamal al-Shayr, "What are the Reasons for Susceptibility and What are their Ranges?" in the *Debate on Minorities in the Arab East and the Attempts of Israel to Manipulate Them*, Amman, 12-15 September 1981, (in Arabic)

12 See the proceedings of the Constituent Conference of the Baath party as narrated in Michel Aflaq, *For the Cause of Baath* (in Arabic) (Beirut: al-Tali'a Publishing Center, 1978), Part I, p. 121; for more information about the Baath's attitude toward minorities, see, Mustafa Dandishli, *The Arab Socialist Baath*

Party, Part I: Ideology and Political History (in Arabic) (Beirut: al-Tali'a Publishing Center, 1979), pp. 92–95; A. al-Duri, "The Historical Roots of Arab Nationalism," in N. Hopkins and S.E. Ibrahim, eds., *Arab Society* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, second edition, 1985), pp. 20–35.

13 See Al-Sayed Yassin, et al; *Content Analysis of National Arab Thought* (in Arabic) (Beirut: the Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1980), p. 52.

14 See Sati al-Hosari, *What is Nationalism?* (in Arabic) (Beirut: The Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1985 (originally published in 1958)), p. 175.

15 Diamond and Plattner, *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict,* p. xviii.

16 Karim Packradoni, "Toward Ethnically Egalitarian Arab Societies," a paper submitted to the conference on "The UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities and Peoples of the Arab World and the Middle East," Limassol, Cyprus, 12–14 May 1994.

17 Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, *Al-Taqrir al-istratiji al-'Arabi, 1993,* (ASR) (Cairo: Al-Ahram Foundation, 1994).

18 The Iraqi élite led by Saddam Hussein's clan since 1968, comes from the Arab Sunni Muslim town of Takrit. The Sunni Muslims of Iraq do not exceed 35 percent of Iraq's total population—compared to over 45 percent Arab Shia Muslims, and 15 percent Kurdish Muslims. The Syrian élite led by Hafiz al-Assad's clan since the 1970s, comes from a small 'Alawite Shia sect town, Qirdaha. This sect constitutes no more than 16 percent of Syria's total population (see Tables 3 and 4).

19 See an analysis of recent events in editions of Ibn Khaldoun Center, *Civil Society and Democratic Transformation in the Arab World* (CSDTAW), monthly newsletter of the Ibn Khaldoun Center, Cairo, April–August, 1994.

20 Lebanon is the only exception among Arab states, where a constitutional tradition (since the 1940s) provides that the head of state be a Christian Maronite; the prime minister a Sunni Muslim; and the speaker of the house (parliament) a Shia Muslim. The 1980 constitutional reform did not alter this tradition, though it modified the powers invested in these respective offices and balanced the number of Muslim and Christian deputies in the parliament.

21 Review of constitutional texts and similar documents of Arab countries in, Ahmed Sarhal, *Political and Constitutional Systems in Lebanon and the Arab Countries* (in Arabic) (Beirut: al-Baath Publishing Center, 1980).

22 The first continuum (religious–secular) is based on the salience of religious symbols and rules of legitimation in basic documents of the polity—for example, Saudi Arabia's flag and state symbol is a drawing of the Holy Quran, flanked by two crossed swords. The second continuum is based on the salience and invocation of pan-Arab nationalist principles in a state's basic political charters. For more elaboration on these competing tendencies see, Ibrahim, *Future of Society and State.*

23 Ahmed Sarhal, *Political and Constitutional Systems.*

24 Ibrahim, *Future of Society and State,* pp. 400–50.

25 On the same topic in regard to the Arab world see Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," in the *American Political Science Review,* vol. 55, no. 3, September 1961, p. 493, and idem., *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundation of Nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, second edition, 1966); S. E. Ibrahim, *Bridging the Gap Between Decision-Makers and Intellectuals in the Arab World* (in Arabic) (Amman: the Arab Thought Forum, 1984), pp. 16–32; Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, ILL: Free Press, 1958); Iliya Harik, "The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 3, no. 3, July 1972, pp. 303–23; Burhan Ghalyum, *The Sectarian Issue and the Problem of Minorities* (in Arabic) (MMS, 1986), pp. 71–79.

26 Ibrahim, *Sects, Ethnicity and Minority Groups,* pp. 735–40.

27 ibid., pp. 840–60.

28 ibid.
29 Ibn Khaldoun Center, *Minority Concerns in the Arab World*, 1993 report (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center, 1994), pp. 282–83.
30 See Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Civil Society and Prospects of Democratization in the Arab World," in Augustus Richard Norton, *Civil Society in the Middle East*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 27–54.
31 Antoine Messarra, "Minority Rights in the Arab Mashrique," in 'Abd Allahi Ahmad Naym, ed., *The Cultural Dimensions of Human Rights in the Arab World* (in Arabic), (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center and S. al-Sabah, 1993), pp. 427–52.
32 "The Berbers Demand a Voice," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 20 October 1994, p. 5.
33 ibid.
34 Ibn Khaldoun Center, "Minority Concerns in the Arab World," 1993 report.
35 Most of the figures on population in Tables 1–3 are approximations, reached by two methods: the last official enumeration plus the percentage of natural increase—that is, the natural increase in the total number of inhabitants in the countries where those groups live in the years since the last census; or, taking the average of the maximum and minimum estimations mentioned in trustworthy references dealing with the topic.

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The Vindication of Sadat in the Arab World

1995

INTRODUCTION

As much as the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was hailed in the West as a man of peace, he was condemned by many fellow Arabs as having betrayed their most sacred cause, "the liberation of Palestine." From the moment his plane touched down at Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport in November 1977 to the moment of his tragic death on 6 October 1981, Sadat was a pariah among fellow Arab heads of state. His country was ousted from official Arab gatherings, and the Arab League headquarters was moved from Cairo to Tunis.

By 1987, ten years after his historic trip to Jerusalem, Egypt was rehabilitated back into the Arab fold, but its late former president was not. Only during the past three years has the Arab world hesitantly revised its image of President Sadat. To be sure, the man still has many sharp critics. But even these would grudgingly concede that Sadat was a commendable Arab leader and a statesman; that in many ways he was ahead of his time. His few longstanding Arab supporters now feel vindicated. They would go as far as to claim that before any other Arab or non-Arab leader, Sadat had anticipated the genesis of a 'new world order' in the making; and he had acted accordingly in all his major policies—domestically, regionally, and globally.

The saga of Sadat's rehabilitation is more than that of a leader's legacy being vindicated. In one sense it is part of a process of national 'growing up.' Any fair observer following the current Middle East peace process, from Madrid to Washington, with a former 'leftist Arab revolutionary' sitting at the negotiating table with ardent Israeli 'right-wingers,' must conclude that Arabs and Israelis have come a long way. The great risks that Sadat took some fifteen years ago when he made his historic journey to Israel, and even the ultimate price he paid—his own life some four years later—seem in retrospect to have been worth it. Sadat has indeed expedited the process of national maturation of both Arabs and Israelis alike.

As social scientists, we have been trained to de-emphasize the role of single individuals in the making of history. Primacy is always given to 'structural forces.' As true a rule as that may be, Anwar Sadat must be counted as an exception. Sadat definitely changed the historical course of the peoples of the Middle East; and he may have contributed to the historical change of the world at large.

THE RISE AND FALL OF SADAT

No other Arab leader in contemporary history has generated as much controversy as President Sadat. One day in the month of October 1973 marked the high point of his political career in the eyes of all Arabs. The same day eight years later, 6 October 1981, marked his literal and metaphorical downfall in the same Arab eyes. During the eight years separating the two October days, President Sadat had alienated one constituency after another inside Egypt and throughout the Arab world. Despite early warning signs of his steady sliding from the apex of Arab glory, Sadat continued on his course, building his own grand vision.

At the time, Sadat's vision was hailed by the West, but hardly shared or even understood by his own people. When he was assassinated, most Egyptians felt not so much grief, but deep sorrow for a leader who had gone astray. Other Arabs felt the assassination was an act of "divine justice" for betraying the "sacred cause of Palestine."

Ten years after the assassination, the pendulum has moved back to the center. There are more Egyptians and Arabs now who see Sadat as a great and prescient leader. In this paper, we concentrate only on the full cycle of public discourse over President Sadat—not so much on his performance in office, but on the perception and evaluation of that performance by the spokespeople of salient sociopolitical forces in Egypt and the Arab world. Such spokespeople broadly constitute the Arab 'intelligentsia' and occupy the arena that interprets the march of events and shapes public opinion. They comprise political activists, writers, academics, journalists, and other professionals. Being the most outspoken in society does not necessarily mean that they do so on behalf of the majority of their own people or even their own immediate constituency. And, in fact, we will discover in the case of Sadat that he was more in tune with more of his people than we were led to believe by the Arab intelligentsia who crowded the arena of public discourse.

THE RISE OF SADAT

Most Egyptians and Arabs received Sadat's succession into the presidency in a lukewarm manner. The sudden death of the charismatic Gamal Abdel Nasser on 28 September 1970 was bound to make any successor pale by comparison. However, the fact that Sadat was a fellow Free Officer in the 1952 revolution, and handpicked for the vice-presidency by Nasser himself in December 1969 made his nomination for the presidential succession acceptable to most Egyptians. But because he had not occupied any office of great significance between 1952 and 1969, most Arabs knew very little about him, and most Egyptians thought of him as a harmless caretaker. Other significant contenders for power among Nasser's inner circle thought of Sadat as a figurehead who they could manipulate while continuing to run the country themselves.[1]

Obviously Sadat sensed these impressions and designs, and may have reinforced them during his early months in office. As it turned out, Sadat embarked on a subtle course of consolidating his power. Feeling reasonably sure of himself by May 1971, he had his first showdown with top Nasserite figures who were still occupying strategically sensitive offices—ministries of defense and information, the head of intelligence, speaker of parliament, and leadership of Egypt's single political party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). By having them all arrested on 15 May, and subsequently brought to trial on charges of conspiracy to overthrow him, Sadat had managed in one strike to outfox and remove all his potential rivals.[2]

A year later, in July 1972, Sadat took a second daring step in consolidating his power, this time on the foreign policy front, vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Egypt's long-standing strategic ally. After the Arab defeat by Israel in 1967, more Soviet advisors, military and civilians poured into Egypt to beef up the country's military capabilities in the hope of liberating the Sinai and other occupied territories. Since his showdown with top Nasserites, some reputed to be strongly pro-Soviet, Sadat was suspicious of the USSR and its heavy presence in Egypt. Aiming to guard his back and maximize his margin of geopolitical freedom, Sadat ordered some fifteen thousand Soviet experts to leave the country within a week.[3]

These two daring steps amazed Egyptians and other Arabs alike, and transformed Sadat's image into that of a daring man of action. However, the chief concern of Egyptians and Arabs was still not addressed—washing off the humiliation of the 1967 defeat and liberating Egyptian and Arab land. Sadat's earlier promises of making 1971 (and then 1972) the "year of decision" in the battle of liberation came and went with the promises unfulfilled. His public standing was steadily eroding on that score. Nasserites and other leftists began to stir public unrest, especially on university campuses. Sadat's short-term responses to this adverse street politics was to release thousands of Muslim Brothers, incarcerated during Nasser's regime, and to leave them free to organize and combat the Nasserites and leftists. This tactic was effective in the short-term and yielded Sadat enough breathing room for his third major strike.

The October War of 1973 was Sadat's moment of glory. The crossing of the Suez Canal by Egyptian forces was a surprise to Israel and the world, but most of all to Egyptians themselves. The overall Arab performance, well coordinated, both militarily and diplomatically, was unprecedented in the history of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Sadat took much of the credit, and emerged from the war as a true champion in the eyes of Egyptians and other Arabs alike. Despite a notable reversal in the course of the fighting, namely the Israeli countercrossing of the Suez Canal, the war was hailed as an Arab victory. It was a redemption of Sadat's leadership in Egypt, and no less a redemption of Egypt's leadership role in the Arab world.

The De-Nasserization of Egypt

The "October victory," as it came to be called in the Arab and Egyptian media, not only consolidated Sadat's position inside the country, but also gave him a new legitimacy of his own. In his first three years in office (1970–73), Sadat still derived his legitimacy from that of Nasser. He presented himself as an extension, a continuation, and a guardian of Nasser's heritage and that of the 1952 revolution in general.

After the October victory, Sadat began to recast the recent past and shape the present in all his own ways. Thus the coup against his rivals in May 1971 was to be named the "Corrective May Revolution." An "October generation" was to replace the "July generation" in key positions of the state, with the major exception of Sadat himself, naturally. A newly drafted "October Paper" replaced the 1961 Socialist Charter, and a "constitutional" legitimacy was to replace the "revolutionary" legitimacy which prevailed from 1952 to 1973.

As it turned out, this was more than a mere change of political vocabulary, but the first of the dramatic changes in the following four years, from 1974 to 1978, which added up to a nearly complete 'de-Nasserization' of Egypt and the substitution of a new and different Sadatist vision, encompassing Egypt's socioeconomic system, and its regional and international policies. The changes brought about by Sadat have proven to be as profound as those earlier changes effected by Nasser's 1952 revolution. But while most of Nasser's changes had dissipated by the late 1970s, only ten years after his departure from power, those of Sadat have, to date, proven to be more resilient and tenacious. They are all still in effect, nearly two decades after their initiation.

The dramatic shifts from Nasser's to Sadat's vision fall under four major policy areas: the Open-Door Economic Policy; controlled democratization; alignment with the West; and peace with Israel. While each policy shift was initiated separately and gradually until 1978, they have added up to a cohesive four-pillared vision and a strategy that has dismantled Nasser's vision.

The Open-Door Economic Policy: Infitah

Carefully crafted, the Open-Door Economic Policy (ODEP) was officially proclaimed in February 1974, only four months after the 1973 October War, not to "undo Egypt's socialism, but to invigorate the public sector through competition; to attract Arab and foreign capital, and modern technology and management systems." The key instrument was Law no. 43/1974, which provided for setting up joint-venture companies with Egyptian partnership of no less than 51 percent. Shortly after, a series of presidential and ministerial decrees complemented Law 43 by easing banking controls and easing travel restrictions, permitting Egyptians to work abroad and remit money home, issuing a five-year tax exemption and allowing the transfer of profits of joint-venture companies. Many of the privileges accorded to

foreign capital in Law 43 were extended to Egyptian private capital in 1977. The latter was further permitted to operate widely in previously restricted areas such as health, education, and land reclamation.

Meanwhile, the government began to gradually reduce its subsidies of "non-basic" goods and services in the hope of streamlining Egypt's national accounts. But despite the ODEP, remittances by Egyptians working abroad, massive Arab and US aid, substantial revenues from restored Sinai oil fields, tourism, and a reopened Suez Canal, by 1977 Egyptian foreign debt continued to rise and government finance fell heavily into deficit.[4]

As it turned out, much of the early impact of the ODEP reflected itself in untamable imports of consumer goods, geared to the more well-to-do Egyptians and a growing expatriate community. Glaring income and lifestyle differentials became too conspicuous for a majority of Egyptians, especially in urban areas which had been used to Nasser's austerity and equity policies. Thus when Sadat's regime tried to slash the budget in January 1977 by further reducing public subsidies on some basic food items, riots broke out in all major urban areas. Sadat was forced to call in the army to restore law and order and to cancel the subsidy cuts.[5]

Rather than retract his ODEP, however, Sadat opted for continuation through a more gradual phasing out of subsidies and by external borrowing. When he took office in 1971, Egypt's debt was less than $1.5 billion. When he was assassinated in 1981, Egypt's external debt was around $29 billion.

ODEP endeared Sadat to one constituency and lost him another. He gained the support of the old Egyptian landed-bourgeoisie, the nouveau riche, Egyptians living abroad (some two million by the late 1970s), and actual or potential Arab investors. Also, would-be Western allies were heartened by the intentions of the policy if not by its manner of implementation. The same policy cost Sadat a bigger but less organized constituency of public sector, government employees and others on fixed incomes.

What happened with ODEP would happen with Sadat's other three major policy shifts. Each would initially be couched in careful nonprovocative terms, would be well-received in the early stages, and would then cause a societal sifting and sorting of protagonists and antagonists. Yet to his credit, though he may have softened some measures of each policy in the face of mounting opposition, he never reversed his course.

Controlled Democratization

The second pillar in Sadat's vision was the gradual democratization of Egypt's political system. Whether truly intended or not, he made it one of the outstanding issues of the purge of his Nasserite pro-Soviet rivals in May 1971. Accusing them of "authoritarian–totalitarian" tendencies and practices, Sadat blamed his Nasserite pro-Soviet rivals

for having blocked the 1952 revolution from fulfilling the sixth objective of its declared agenda.[6] Sadat claimed that those rivals had prevented Nasser himself from carrying out the 28 March 1968 declaration, intended in the aftermath of the 1967 defeat to make the regime more accountable to the Egyptian people.[7]

Thus, by riding the democratization issue and rooting it in the original 1952 revolutionary platform, Sadat managed to isolate his adversaries and to position himself on a moral high ground. This enabled him to win a sizable constituency of the new middle class and the old upper class liberals. After the May 1971 purge, however, Sadat pleaded for a short postponement of this promised political pluralism until after the war of liberation against Israel.

Soon after the October War, Sadat began a gradual easing of political controls. In a dramatic and symbolic act, with television on the scene, he literally took the first ax to one of Egypt's notorious political prisons, Tura, and released thousands of political detainees, mostly Muslim Brothers. He invited tens of political exiles back to Egypt, and removed the legal ban on many old politicians, enabling them to resume the exercise of their political rights. Similar measures were decreed to end property sequestrations for political reasons, to bring to trial those accused of gross violations of human rights during the Nasser era, and to remove press censorship.

Political pluralism in the form of a multiparty system, however, was to wait until 1976. When finally enacted, the multiparty system was limited to three political parties—left, right, and center. Sadat chose to lead the centrist Egypt party, and two of his fellow former Free Officers led the other two.[8] Contrived political engineering though it was, most Egyptians welcomed the experiment after nearly a quarter century of a single party system that had been at best a mere 'mobilizer' and at worst a rubber stamp.

Later in the same year, competitive parliamentary elections were held. They were judged by most Egyptians as fair; several opposition figures won seats in the People's Assembly. In the following year, 1977, two additional parties were given legal permits, the Socialist Labor party (SLP), and the New Wafd party (NWP). All five parties were entitled by law to have their own newspapers, and a healthy seed of democratic life began to grow; indeed open dissent was commendably tolerated by the Sadat regime. While the Muslim Brothers, the Nasserites, and the communists were denied permits to form their own parties, many of them were welcomed to the ranks of the already legalized parties. The Muslim Brothers were able to reissue their weekly *al-Da'wa*.

However, after his historic trip to Israel in November 1977, President Sadat began to show signs of impatience with the opposition parties which deplored his peace initiative. This impatience was to grow steadily during the next four years. He eventually dissolved the People's Assembly, and held a plebiscite amending the constitution so as to make opposition to the new peace arrangement with Israel—

the Camp David accords, and later the treaty—illegal. In the subsequent parliamentary elections, none of the known public figures who had opposed the peace initiative were to win a single seat in the People's Assembly. By September 1981, the margin of open legal dissent had greatly diminished. But Sadat continued to uphold his policy of political pluralism, at least in principle—no newly established political party was dissolved even when he arrested several party leaders on 3–5 September 1981.

Alignment with the West

Sadat's biographers have noted his early admiration of the West—from fascist Europe to dazzling America. Beginning in his adolescence, he was an avid reader of Western history and literature. The modern Egyptian ruler whom he most admired was Khedive Isma'il, who had intended to make Egypt a "part of Europe." But like many in his generation, Sadat was ambivalent toward the West, whose other face was imperialist, exploitative, and humiliating to Egypt and the Arab world.

The young would-be Free Officers had joined many radical political movements, including secret communist organizations. But Sadat's early choices never showed any Marxist or even Socialist inclinations. It was anomalous for Sadat to be part of a regime that felt compelled to ally itself so closely with the Soviet Union and to espouse socialism. Hence it was not surprising that he was predisposed to move away from both whenever he could. When he ascended to the Egyptian presidency, many of his early decisions were underlined by this impulse. Henry Kissinger was puzzled, and confessed that he never understood such moves by Sadat at the time—the purge of pro-Soviets in the ruling élite and the expulsion of fifteen thousand Soviet experts at a time when Egypt still seemed to badly need Soviet support.[9]

Sadat's shifting of Egypt's strategic alignment was gradual and multifaceted. First, he weakened and almost eliminated the pro-Soviet elements in the Egyptian establishment. Second, he discreetly strengthened his ties with pro-Western Arab and Middle Eastern regimes—namely Saudi Arabia and Iran. Third, he established direct, private channels with top decision-makers in key Western capitals, especially in the United States.[10] Meanwhile, he kept his formal links with Egypt's traditional allies—the Soviets, the Chinese, and radical Arab regimes. He had hoped that this elaborate diplomatic footwork would break the stalemate in the Middle East without war. Several of his overtures for dignified compromise, however, fell on deaf Western and Israeli ears between February 1971 and October 1973.[11] When he concluded that he was not taken seriously, Sadat went to war on 6 October 1973.

It is clear from the accounts of all sides during and immediately after the October War that Sadat was eager to move further away from Egypt's traditional alliances with the Eastern Bloc and radical

Arab regimes.[12] As such opportunities were offered, Sadat quickly grabbed them.

Shifting Egypt's global alignment was not an easy matter. Twenty years of strategic linkages with the Soviets and pervasive radicalism had created an Egyptian political culture which was antithetical to what Sadat envisioned for Egypt and possibly the rest of the Arab world. An analysis of his public speeches indicates his elaborate, gradual, but steady, attempt to alter the political culture which had grown so anti-Western in the Nasser years.

Sadat's political discourse introduced new concepts such as "social peace," "legitimate wealth," "prosperity," "the need to catch up with the advanced world," and to "acquire modern science and technology" and the legitimate dream for "every Egyptian to have his own villa and car." After the October War, he began to explicitly poke fun at the "socialism of poverty," "class conflict," and "exploiting the suffering of the masses."[13] In other words, as he discreetly pursued his geopolitical shift, Sadat was also preparing the Egyptian public for accepting an alternative domestic vision to coincide with it. For the vision he was perpetuating could materialize only in an atmosphere of internal social peace, regional peace, and normal relations with the West, especially the United States. The latter, as Egyptians were repeatedly told after 1973, "holds 99 percent of the cards for a Middle East peace."[14]

It was only in 1973–74 that the United States finally began to appreciate Sadat's moves for what they were, shifts in strategy and not merely in tactics. To the extent that he felt such reciprocity, Sadat spared no time or effort in moving Egypt into the Western camp. He was still to pay lip service to the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), of which Egypt was a founder, as well as to Egypt's traditional allies. But with every year of Sadat's rule, the pro-Western shift was becoming more irreversible. Even though there was a tremendous component of personal conviction in his pro-Western leanings, Sadat also recognized the pragmatic dimensions of this strategic shift toward the West. In private conversations he intimated his belief that the Soviet Union was doomed to collapse.

Reconciliation with Israel

The fourth pillar of Sadat's vision was to settle the Arab–Israeli conflict through what he called "a historical compromise." He believed that the conflict would never be settled by war, no matter how many times either side won or lost.[15] Meanwhile, he saw the continuation of the armed conflict as blocking the development of the entire region, but especially that of Egypt, on whose shoulders rested the leadership of the Arab side. Furthermore, Sadat saw the continuation of the conflict as a stumbling block in his quest for aligning Egypt with the West.

Rightly or wrongly, such articles of faith underlined much of Sadat's effort and approach in search of a Middle East peace. The problem

with this part of Sadat's vision is that for the first three years of his rule, he could not find serious takers on the other side. It took the October War in 1973 to impress the West of his seriousness. It took another dramatic journey to Jerusalem in 1977 to have the same effect on the Israelis, and an additional two years before a peace treaty was finally concluded between Egypt and Israel in 1979.

For the West, and then Israel, to appreciate Sadat's intentions was only half of the monumental task he undertook. The other, more difficult part was to persuade the Egyptian people and the other Arabs. Since the 1940s, Egypt had led the Arab world in the struggle against Zionism and bore the brunt of the protracted conflict. Its powerful media as well as the tens of thousands of its teachers throughout the Arab world had conditioned the masses to believe that the struggle for the liberation of Palestine was sacred; that the fight was not only against Israel and Zionism, but against the Western imperialists who wanted to keep the Arab nation weak, divided, backward, and exploited.

Sadat saw it the other way around: as long as the conflict festered, the Arabs would remain weak, divided, and backward. Hence he was keen on reversing the process. Sadat recognized that at a minimum he had to win over or at least neutralize Egyptian public opinion. Taking advantage of the tremendous stress and strain felt by Egyptians since 1967, and relatively free of the psychic stigma of defeat after the October victory, Sadat's media powerfully invoked their deep yearning for peace and stability. At times the same media did not hesitate to stir up Egyptian chauvinism vis-à-vis other Arabs. Slogans such as "Egypt First" and "Civilized Egypt" were flaunted in Sadat's media campaign.[16]

It was hard in the beginning to assess the impact of Sadat's media blitz for peace on Egypt's public opinion. But some six months after Sadat's visit to Israel and before the signing of the Camp David accords, a public opinion survey was conducted by the Beirut-based Center for Arab Unity Studies in ten Arab countries including Egypt. While those who clearly opted for a peaceful settlement of the conflict with Israel in the entire Arab sample did not exceed 33 percent, the Egyptian figure was nearly 54 percent.[17] (Whether it was Sadat's persuasiveness or the fact that those Egyptians were already disposed to feel this way is hard to tell in the absence of any previous attitudinal studies of this kind.) It is safe to say that when Sadat went to Camp David in September 1978, his initiative enjoyed the support of most Egyptians. The organized opposition parties, however, were no less articulate or voiced vis-à-vis Sadat's campaign. In fact, it was so much the case that this opposition may have given the outside world the impression that most Egyptians were against Sadat's peace initiative.[18]

The story in the rest of the Arab world was markedly different. All Arab regimes formally repudiated Sadat's initiative and voted for a boycott and suspension of Egypt's membership in the Arab League.[19]

And as mentioned above, some 67 percent of other Arabs surveyed at the time were not yet ready for or disposed to a peaceful settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

The slow pace of progress in achieving an "honorable, equitable, and comprehensive" settlement cost Sadat some of the earlier support he had from two Egyptian political parties—the Socialist Labor party (SLP) and the Liberal party (LP). Israel's raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981 also led to a sharp erosion of his support.[20]

Like the other pillars of his vision, Sadat's campaign for a comprehensive Middle East peace fell far short of his original quest. But despite the repeated frustrations and disappointments caused as much by fellow Arab leaders as by the Israelis, and despite the costly price he personally as well as Egypt were paying in the Arab political arena, he remained unwavering in his quest until the end of his life.[21]

Sadat's Egypt and the Arab World

A significant dimension of the de-Nasserization of Egypt was its changing relationship with the rest of the Arab world. Despite the fact that Sadat had made an issue of his rivals' opposition to a proposed unification agreement with Libya early in 1971, he never seriously entertained any grand pan-Arab vision.

Nasser's vision rested on the idea that the Arabs were one nation, divided by colonialism, and subjected to the rule of reactionary regimes, imposed or supported by Western imperialism. In this vision Israel was an outpost of imperialism. Hence Nasser's declared agenda was to fight off Western imperialism, its clients and allies in the Arab world, and to struggle for the unification of the Arab homeland.

Sadat's approach to the rest of the Arab world was markedly different. While paying lip service to a "common Arab identity, destiny, and interests," he took only the "interests" part of the slogan seriously. In this respect, Sadat was utterly pragmatic, not ideological or romantic as Nasser had been. He would cooperate with all Arab countries and regimes to the extent that they were willing, so long as there were benefits for Egypt. He shunned the Nasserite distinctions or classification of regimes as "progressive" and "reactionary." He abstained from meddling in their internal affairs and was outraged if they tried to interfere in his.[22]

With this pragmatic outlook, Sadat was able to fully cooperate with "radical" Syria, Libya, and Algeria, as well as with "reactionary" Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Morocco, between 1970 and 1973. These across-the-board dealings enabled him to reap maximum benefits for Egypt at the time. He obtained substantial financial aid from the "reactionary" and enlisted their backing in his overtures toward the West. His close cooperation with the militant Arab regimes was meant to provide Egypt with additional potential military capabilities should he have found it necessary to go to war, and to soften any possible adverse Soviet reaction to his unfriendly measures. Thus the stage of maximum cooperation, which lasted from 1970 to 1977,

coincided with his own need to consolidate his position domestically, his drive to enhance his options regionally, vis-à-vis Israel, and internationally—his quest to befriend the West.

As soon as that stage accomplished its limited objectives, Sadat restructured Egypt's Arab policy to suit the full-fledged vision of the four pillars discussed earlier. Thus his need for more Arab capital to enhance the Open-Door Economic Policy (ODEP), alignment with the West, and reconciliation with Israel made him clearly tilt in favor of pro-Western Arab regimes—no longer called "reactionary" or "conservative," but merely "brothers." While maintaining reasonable links with Syria in the second stage (1974–77), his relations with other radical regimes were cooled off or even strained, as in the cases of Libya and Iraq. Again, it is fair to say that this second phase of Sadat's Arab policy did accomplish its objectives.

The third stage (1977–81) was one of total strain with virtually the entire Arab world. It coincided with Sadat's quest for the fourth pillar of his vision—reconciliation with Israel. Things did not go the way Sadat had hoped. His calculation was that at worst the Arab world would be politically divided over his peace initiative. He was keen on keeping good relations at least with Syria and Saudi Arabia—the only two Arab countries he visited on the eve of his historic journey to Israel to plead understanding or neutrality, if not outright support. Though Sadat could understand Syria's militant stand, which was a result of inter-Arab rivalry, to the end of his life Sadat never understood Saudi Arabia's hard line; hence his outrage at the Saudis.[23]

The total Arab boycott of Sadat after Camp David would have hurt even more had it included a ban on Egyptians working in Arab countries—by then about 1.5 million Egyptians were working abroad and sending back $2 billion in remittances annually—and had Egypt not been compensated by increased foreign aid from the West to make up for the termination of official Arab aid (about $1 billion annually).[24] Partial vindication of Sadat toward the end of his life was provided by the peace plan proposed by Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, which bore a striking resemblance to Sadat's original initiative, and by the fact that his radical foes (Syria, Libya, Iraq, and the PLO) were in total disarray. Sadat's fuller vindication would have to wait some ten more years, long after his passing from the scene.

THE FALL OF SADAT

By 1980–81, President Sadat's popularity in Egypt and the Arab world was at an all-time low. On the divisive issue of his peace initiative, even those Arabs who had given him the benefit of the doubt were utterly disappointed for at least two reasons. First, the deadline for the implementation of the second Camp David accord regarding autonomy for the Palestinians in the occupied territories had come and gone without any progress.[25] It looked as if that accord would be shelved indefinitely, leaving the Palestinians in limbo, and thus lend-

ing credence to the charge that Sadat was in fact aiming for a separate, not a comprehensive, peace with Israel.

Second, a series of Israeli actions in 1981 seemed to the Arab world as grossly provocative and unjustifiably aggressive. The most dramatic of these were the stunning Israeli air raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor near Baghdad in June, and another air raid on the Fakhani civilian district of Beirut.[26] These sorts of actions cast grave doubt on Israel's disposition for peaceful coexistence with its Arab neighbors. Moreover, coming shortly after a meeting in Sharm al-Sheikh between Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, these Israeli actions reflected most negatively on Sadat himself. At best, the Israeli actions made Sadat look like a fool, who had been easily deceived by his Israeli counterpart. At worst, it made him look like an accomplice with Israel against fellow Arabs. By mid-1981, Sadat became more isolated and discredited in the Arab world than ever.

At home, Sadat's performance looked sluggish, confused, or heavy-handed. The prosperity he had promised Egyptians by 1980 was nowhere in sight. Most of his fellow compatriots continued to suffer from the same hardships they had known in previous years. Their feeling of despair was deepened by glaring income differentials, the ebullient lifestyle of the few at the top, and rumors of massive corruption in high circles.[27] Discontent became widespread. Opposition parties echoed much of it loudly, but still peacefully and within legal bounds. Islamic activists, however, appropriated the social discontent, especially that of restless Egyptian youth, and escalated their expression of it in violent behavior.[28] In the spring and summer of 1981, the latter was equally directed against the government and Egypt's Coptic Christian minority.[29] By early September 1981, Sadat had become more isolated and discredited in Egypt than ever before.

True to his favored style of 'shock-treatment' and his flair for the dramatic, Sadat reacted to his growing isolation and diminishing capability by striking back at all secular and religious opposition. Some 1,600 public opponents were arrested and jailed within a twenty-four hour period starting on the night of 3 September 1981. This mass arrest included key figures along the entire political spectrum—from the extreme right to the extreme left; Muslims and Copts; men and women; all age groups from twenty to eighty years old; students, professors, journalists, writers, and other professionals. In a sense, and in one sensational strike, Sadat put Egypt's 'political class' under arrest. He went on television on 5 September to announce that he had done it to spare Egypt a political and religious "sedition," and that soon all those placed under arrest would be charged and tried.[30]

Contrary to his calculations, this time Sadat's isolation and discrediting took a quantum leap. While physically arresting the country's political class, Sadat was being morally arrested. Many observers contended that on 5 September 1981, Sadat had in fact issued his own political "death certificate." His final fall, physical death, would occur a month later, on 6 October 1981.

THE REHABILITATION

It took ten years before Sadat was to be rehabilitated in the eyes of most Egyptians and Arabs. The process entailed at least four identifiable phases: the first, lasting through 1983, was one of deepening rage and continuous incrimination—posthumous 'character assassination.' The second, in the mid-1980s, was one of dissipating anger. The third phase, in the late 1980s, was one of 'forgiving and forgetting.' The last phase, during the early 1990s, is one of redemption and appreciation.

Character Assassination

The first three years following the murder of Sadat witnessed not only a continuous criticism of his policies, but also a character assassination of him, members of his immediate family, and his friends. All kinds of accusations were leveled at them—ranging from personal decadence to nepotism and outright corruption. Compounding such accusations was the notorious silence of many of Sadat's former aides, spokespersons, and propagandists. Worse still was that some of them became instant 'turncoats' even before the man's blood had dried.

Despite bold attempts by his successor, Hosni Mubarak, to cool the political scene, expressions of outrage against Sadat continued. The fact that most of those arrested by Sadat were released and invited to the presidential palace by Mubarak shortly after the assassination was meant to be a gesture of good will and national reconciliation. The opposition, however, used the occasion to dramatize Sadat's "arbitrariness" and "despotism." Mubarak's attempt to level with the Egyptian people about the country's economic difficulties in the hope of lowering the expectations fanned by his predecessor was another occasion for the opposition to demand retroactive accountability from Sadat's regime. Critics wondered how with nearly $20 billion in Arab and foreign aid and an assumed state of peace during Sadat's tenure Egypt could have been so economically troubled. The insinuation was clear—these public funds must have been pillaged by people at the top.

So much did the charges of corruption crowd the Egyptian public discourse in late 1981 and all of 1982 that President Mubarak ordered an official investigation. Several cases, did in fact, warrant trials. The most dramatic of these involved the family of the late president's brother, Ismat Sadat, whose wealth had reached several millions from unknown or illegitimate sources, as the court discovered; most of it was confiscated by the court or put under sequestration.[31] Despite similar charges against immediate members of the late president's family, none warranted legal action.

Spearheading the attacks on Sadat, his family, and close associates were the leftists, Nasserites, Islamists, and Wafdists. Aside from editorials and lengthy reports in the opposition newspapers, several books appeared during this phase lambasting the late president. Most notable among these was Mohamed H. Heikal's *Autumn of Fury*, whose

Arabic edition was reprinted five times and sold millions of copies. Having been a close and influential figure under Nasser for all his years in power as well as under Sadat until 1974, Heikal's critique was taken by most Arabs to be authoritative. Aside from his controversial psychoanalyzing of Sadat, one of Heikal's most damning conclusions is that the late president had engaged in a sale of Egyptian independence and of the Arab cause in general.

The charge of "selling out" to the West would resonate time and again in the early 1980s, especially with every new Arab setback. Thus with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, and the subsequent siege of Beirut and the expulsion of the PLO forces from the Lebanese capital, Egyptian and Arab critics would remind their respective publics that such "calamities" could not have happened had Sadat not signed a peace agreement with the "treacherous Zionist enemy." For many Arabs in those years, Camp David became a code word for capitulation, if not outright treason. Mubarak himself would avoid invoking Camp David or the peace treaty in his public speeches. If he wanted to refer to them at all, it was simply as "Egypt's regional and international obligations." Two of Egypt's prominent writers, Tawfiq al-Hakim and Anis Mansur, who had supported Sadat's peace drive, declared that they were wrong in their belief of a possible peaceful coexistence with Israel after its invasion of Lebanon. Many voices rose, at the time, to demand that the Mubarak regime revoke the peace treaty.

While denouncing Israeli actions at the time, to its credit, the Mubarak regime and the state-controlled media never hinted at even entertaining such ideas. The most that the government did in response to the opposition demands and popular anger vis-à-vis Israel was to withdraw the Egyptian ambassador in Tel Aviv. But diplomatic relations were not severed; nor was the Israeli ambassador in Cairo asked to leave. The height of anti-Israel expression was a series of clandestine violent attacks against Israeli diplomats in Cairo (1985–86). The clandestine elements involved, as it turned out, were self-proclaimed Nasserites, who also attempted similar attacks on American diplomats. Significantly enough, such attempts occurred at a time when the anger against Sadat was cooling off, at least on the popular level. It is possible to entertain the proposition that the more politicized underground opposition had sensed the change in the popular mood. Carrying out those attacks against Israeli and American targets in Cairo may have been a deliberate tactic to reheat the anti-Sadat passions.

The Cooling-Off Phase

The mid-1980s represent a cooling-off phase vis-à-vis the legacy of President Sadat. While sheer passage of time was a factor, a combination of President Mubarak's own postures and other regional developments also played an important part in this cooling off.

President Mubarak did not retreat from any of his predecessors' major policies. Instead, he simply redressed some of their excesses

or negative fallouts. In his public discourse, Mubarak followed an even keel approach vis-à-vis both late Presidents Nasser and Sadat. He would equally honor their memories, visit their graves, and only mention their good deeds for Egypt and the Arab world. Mubarak always made a point of emphasizing that both predecessors had strived to do their best for their country and nation, in a changing regional and global environment. He avoided taking sides between proponents and exponents of either Nasser or Sadat.

The state-controlled media followed Mubarak's suit. Many former anti-Nasserites had been restored in the media; and many Nasserites had been dismissed. Mubarak restored the latter without dismissing the former; hence there began a more pluralistic state media. One would encounter in the same newspaper, editorials or columns tilting in favor of Nasser or Sadat, but with rare excesses either way. When such excesses occurred, Mubarak would personally alert or criticize their perpetuators.[32] Equally, the march of domestic, regional, and international events competed with the debate over Sadat. Attention was increasingly going elsewhere.

Ironically, the moment of the height of anti-Sadat and anti-Israeli feeling during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 also contained the seeds of the discrediting of some of his major detractors in the Arab world. The leaderships of the so-called 'rejection and steadfastness front'—namely Syria, Iraq, and Libya—did little or nothing to rescue Lebanon or the besieged PLO. Their belligerent verbal proclamations during the Baghdad Summit of 1979, in which Egypt had been boycotted, were shown to be empty rhetoric. Many of those who had taken such proclamations seriously were utterly disillusioned. A year after the invasions, the PLO attempted to set up a new headquarters in the Lebanese northern port of Tripoli, only to be faced this time by pro-Syrian military opposition, forcing Yasser Arafat to take refuge elsewhere. Arafat chose to make his first stop this time in Egypt, and to meet with none other than Mubarak, thus breaking the Arab boycott. This was the first time the PLO leader was on Egyptian territory since 1977, but now with an Israeli embassy and flag in Cairo. The entire episode bespoke a quiet symbolism.

Arafat was received warmly on the popular and official levels. The Egyptian public recognized that there was no contradiction between their country's commitment to the Palestinian cause and the peace with Israel. The organized opposition parties felt a great deal of dissonance. In many ways they seemed to lag politically behind both the government and Egyptian public opinion. Furthermore, the organized opposition to Sadat and "his Camp David" had been vocal supporters of the 'Arab steadfastness front,' and with Arafat being forced out of Tripoli by a principal member of the front, another source of dissonance was created, as they had to take sides.

We observe in this second phase a number of subtle changes in the discourse of the anti-Sadat forces. They stopped hailing the 'steadfastness front'; the term would nearly disappear from their political

vocabulary by the mid-1980s. They lowered the tone of their criticism of Camp David, but not of Israel. They limited their support to the PLO, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the creation of a Palestinian state. Such proclamations were not different from those made by the Mubarak regime, or for that matter by President Sadat himself. Whatever leftover criticism of Sadat that remained was not of his peace initiative but of his "unilateral peace" or the terms of that peace.

Other regional developments contributed to the dissipation of anger vis-à-vis Sadat during this phase. Significant among these was the continuation of the Lebanese civil war, even after the Western and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in late 1984–85. Equally significant was the continued war between Iraq and Iran. The regimes in both countries had been vocal in their anti-Sadat and anti-Israel postures. Egyptian and Arab public opinion took note of the obvious contradictions between words and deeds. Neither regime had fired a shot against Israel, while launching massive destructive rockets at each other's civilian and military targets.

Some still argued, but not as convincingly, that Sadat was indirectly to blame, as his peace agreement caused Egyptian absence from the political arena of the Arab world and the Middle East, and hence had led to regional disorder. Some drew comparisons with the 1958 civil strife in Lebanon and the 1970 confrontation between Jordan and the Palestinian resistance, both of which were quickly contained by an activist Nasserite Egypt.[33] But with the PLO no longer publicly critical of Egypt's foreign or regional policies, and with Iraq's Saddam Hussein seeking and getting substantial military aid from Egypt in his war—by this time a defensive one—against Khomeini's Iran, most pan-Arabists inside and outside of Egypt were cooling their criticism of Sadat.

By 1985, two additional factors added to the muting of anti-Sadat voices. First, there was the adoption of the Saudi peace plan in an Arab summit at Fez. While falling short of an outright peace and recognition of Israel in return for occupied Arab territories, the Fez Plan was remarkably similar in spirit and content to the Camp David accords. The similarities were not lost on many analysts in the Arab media. The second factor was Jordan's breaking with the 1979 Baghdad Summit's resolution of boycotting Egypt, by restoring diplomatic relations between the two countries. De facto relations with Egypt were never totally severed with any Arab country in the first place; and the formal ones were maintained, in defiance of the Baghdad Summit, by both Sudan and Oman. But what appeared to be a daring step by King Hussein in the mid-1980s was quite significant—given Jordan's substantial and volatile Palestinian population and its vulnerability to bigger Arab neighbors who were still officially on "non-speaking" terms with Egypt.

King Hussein predicated his decision to restore diplomatic relations with Egypt on the basis of "Arab brotherhood," and the need for

the "bigger sister" back in the Arab fold to meet mounting challenges facing the Arab world. The Jordanian decision was neither hailed nor condemned by its powerful Arab neighbors. However, it appeared that this official silence was both a tacit approval and a prelude to similar decisions by other Arab countries shortly thereafter.

Forgiving and Forgetting

As King Hussein restored formal diplomatic relations with Egypt, no mention was made of President Sadat, whose peace initiative with Israel had been the reason for severing those relations in the first place. It was as if the reason and the person behind it were to be forgotten or intentionally 'blacked out.' In Arab political culture this is a standard practice that serves as a face-saving device for both sides of a dispute when one or both of them are eager to get the matter over with—no recounting before settling.

The Jordanian monarch is known for his shrewdness and foresight. He must have sensed the Arab public's changing mood before taking his daring decision. He recognized that de facto relations between Egypt, Iraq, and the rest of the Gulf countries were not only continuing but also growing. The Iraq–Iran War had been raging for several years with no end in sight, and Iraq was not doing well. After its initial success in the first two years, 1980–82, the Iranians managed not only to drive the Iraqis back but also to maintain the pressure and to make some inroads into Iraqi territory. With four times the size of Iraq's population and greater strategic depth, Iran did not mind the disproportionate ratio of its human losses, and seemed determined to carry its fight against Saddam Hussein to the bitter end.

The smaller Arab Gulf states were, understandably, nervous, as they found themselves caught in cross-pressures by their two large, warring neighbors. Iraq made financial demands on them to continue its war effort, claiming that it was defending the "eastern gate" of the Arab homeland. Iran, for its part, had been using its Shia supporters in those countries for acts of sabotage, and its own citizens, during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, to incite riots and troubles for the Saudis. Between 1984 and 1987, confrontations between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi authorities were steadily escalating and claiming many lives. The situation took a turn for the worse when Iranian troops managed to capture a big chunk of Iraqi territory around the city of Fao in southern Iraq, which put them within a few hours march from the Kuwaiti border.

By mid-1987, the Saudis and the rest of the Gulf Arabs shared King Hussein's view of the dire need for a forceful show of Arab solidarity with Iraq. An emergency Arab summit was held in the Jordanian capital, with two main items on its agenda—material and moral support for Iraq and the restoration of Egypt to the Arab fold. The two items were seen as interrelated, since, without Egypt, Arab solidarity with Iraq would remain of little practical consequence. The Arab heads of state went about the second item through a halfway measure.

Rather than fully restore Egypt's membership to the Arab League, they simply passed a face-saving resolution permitting individual Arab states to restore diplomatic relations with Egypt as "each of them sees fit." Most Arab states instantly acted on the resolution. The rest would do so shortly after the Amman Summit.[34]

While slightly less than expected, the resolution was considered a significant political gain for Mubarak's Egypt. But it was as much a strident step in vindicating Sadat's Egypt. Immediately after the boycott resolutions of 1979 in the Baghdad Summit, Sadat had defiantly predicted that the "Arabs ... would come back to Egypt."[35] The pro-Sadat voices in Egypt, after a long silence, were quick to reemerge and remind public opinion of Sadat's prediction, noting that Egypt's full position in the Arab world would be restored without having to give up any of its commitment to peace with Israel.

It took two more years after the Amman Summit before Egypt's suspension from the Arab League was completely revoked. In the interim, several positive developments were under way on the Arab Middle Eastern scene. One month after the Amman Summit, in November 1987, the Palestinian uprising, or Intifada, broke out against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Arab solidarity with Iraq, including growing Egyptian assistance, contributed to or at least coincided with better performance on the battlefield. Iraq scored a series of victories in the early months of 1988, culminating in the recapture of Fao and the liberation of other occupied areas, moving the fighting to Iranian territory. These successive and quick reverses for Iran forced the Khomeini regime to grudgingly accept a ceasefire and a truce. This accession to a long-standing Iraqi demand was hailed as an Iraqi victory. A few months later Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen were to approach Egypt for the establishment of an economic regional cooperation scheme, which came to be called the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC). It was the second such Arab regional grouping to be formed, following the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981.

In the following Arab summit in Morocco, the other Arab partners in the ACC would push not only to reinstitute Egypt's membership in the Arab League, but also to approve the return of its headquarters from Tunis to Cairo. President Mubarak was invited to attend the summit in progress, and upon his arrival to the meeting hall received a standing ovation by his fellow Arab heads of state. The summit resolutions and the speeches welcoming Mubarak did not refer to Sadat, Camp David, or the Egyptian–Israeli peace treaty. In his speech to the summit, however, Mubarak reiterated Egypt's commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict, and invited fellow Arabs to join Egypt in its quest.

It was a glorious moment for Mubarak's Egypt, and a tacit signal of forgiving and forgetting the actions of his predecessor.

The Appreciation Phase

The formal reinstitution of Egypt in the Arab fold was a gradual process that took place between 1987 and early 1990. During the same

period, an air of relative optimism and amicability prevailed in inter-Arab relations. There were objective reasons for such feelings. The Palestinian Intifada was still going strong, bringing back this Arab cause to the focus of world attention. Another Arab regional cooperation council among the five North African countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) was established shortly after the ACC, giving shape to a more realistic regional Arab grouping. The two Yemens engaged in serious negotiations, which culminated in their long-sought unification in 1990. During the same period, four Arab summits were held—an unprecedented record since the establishment of the Arab League in 1945.

All this coincided with similar optimism on the global level—the quickening pace of liberalization in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries, triggered by Gorbachev's perestroika and culminating in the fall of the Berlin Wall; the end of the Cold War and the stirrings of a 'new world order.' In this climate of growing regional and international optimism, little did the Arabs or the world expect one of the gravest crises of recent decades. Only two months after the last Arab summit in Baghdad in May 1990, the world was stunned by Iraq's blitzkrieg invasion of its small Arab neighbor, Kuwait, on 2 August 1990. The region and the world would become embroiled in what came to be called the Gulf crisis, which would culminate in the second Gulf war in less than a decade.

The significance of the Gulf crisis for the rehabilitation of Sadat in the Arab world is tremendous. Having just been fully restored to the Arab fold, Egypt would play a crucial role in the crisis. But equally significant is that several of the late President Sadat's assertions about fellow Arab leaders, their regimes, the changing nature of inter-Arab relations, and indeed his vision of the Middle East would find a new resonance in the region.

To start with, Egypt stood fast against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Calling for an emergency Arab summit meeting in Cairo, it demanded, and was supported by a majority for, an Iraqi withdrawal.[36] As the crisis unfolded, the Arab world would become deeply divided, the Iraqi regime would refuse to leave Kuwait, and an international coalition led by the United States would be formed, with the inclusion of Egypt. Armed with a series of UN Security Council resolutions, that coalition would wage war—Operation Desert Storm—against Iraq starting 16 January 1991. Iraq was defeated, and within six weeks not only was Kuwait liberated but much of Iraq's infrastructure and military capabilities were destroyed.

Egypt played a major role in the Western-led coalition against an Arab country, Iraq. Thus, some fifteen years after Sadat effected the shift in his country's global alignment, we witnessed its concrete application—not against another superpower rival of the United States, but against a 'fellow Arab state.' That would have been unthinkable in Nasser's Egypt.

Kuwait and the five other Arab Gulf countries which comprise the

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were direct beneficiaries of the fifteen-year-old shift in Egypt's global alignment. Hence, one of the immediate fallouts of the Gulf crisis was a new appreciation of Sadat's policies, at least in those six Arab GCC countries. Even anti-Western radicals in these countries, leftists and Islamists alike, shared this appreciation, though grudgingly. For them, the question during the crisis was not an ideological one, but an existential one.

As often happens, one attitudinal change begot others. Thus, the new appreciation of Egypt's alignment with the West gradually extended to its peace with Israel. Even in the middle of the crisis, we read in the Arab media for the first time articles by Saudis and other Gulf writers calling for peace with Israel.[37] Their argument was fairly simple and direct: their countries were never threatened or attacked by Israel, they had stood against Israel all those years for the sake of the other Arabs, mainly the Palestinians, some of whom were now occupying one of their countries and victimizing its people.[38] Beyond what appeared in print, there was widespread soul-searching among Gulf Arabs to find the meaning of their 'Arabness.' They were attacked by a fellow Arab neighbor. They were rescued by a coalition of mostly non-Arab foreigners. The very issue of identity, taken for granted before the crisis, had now begun to be questioned.

The same soul-searching would spill over to many in the Arab world outside the Gulf, especially during and after Operation Desert Storm, and would turn into open and heated debates among Arab intellectuals.[39] The axioms of modern Arab culture, politics, and history which had previously been taken for granted were subjected to deep reconsideration. Likewise, the meanings and images of the enemy were first subconsciously, and later consciously, revised. The existential and empirical reality of Saudi Arabs and Israeli Jews simultaneously being at the receiving end of Iraqi scud missiles during the war was mind-boggling to many in the Arab world. The ultimate destruction, by the end of the war, of two Arab countries, one the aggressor, and the other the victim, was equally shocking and confusing.

In the aftermath, the Arabs have had more questions about themselves and the world around them than answers. One certainty, however, is that several of their articles of faith have collapsed or have been seriously undermined. The era of romantic nationalist pan-Arabism is gone. Arabs of various nations are now openly and unapologetically willing to talk about differences of temperaments and of interests. While these differences were always present, it was almost a 'taboo' for an Arab nationalist to discuss them overtly, and if mentioned at all by others, such differences were attributed to residues of various colonial legacies.

Many Arabs remembered that President Sadat had dared to break such a taboo, both in words and deeds. While recognizing Egypt's Arabness, he also asserted its uniqueness and its own interests. Gulf Arabs were no longer afraid to follow Sadat's course. Even the deep

division in the rest of the Arab world over the Gulf crisis was a dramatic testimony to such differences. Arabs in poor and peripheral countries lined up behind Saddam Hussein, and Arabs in the well-to-do and central countries lined up against him. Countries with older and more established state traditions, such as Egypt and Morocco, came out against Iraq's aggression, while newer, less established polities, such as Sudan and Yemen, were willing to look the other way.

More Arabs have now come to appreciate President Sadat' s realism, with country and regime interests at its core. If there is to be a revival of pan-Arabism at all, it will certainly be unabashedly based as much on interest as on culture and sentiments. It may be that this growing sense of one's interest, as a specific people in a specific country within the Arab world, explains much of the current Arab political behavior. Syria and several of the Gulf states are closer to non-Arab Iran than to several other Arab countries. In fact, each Arab country is now closer and better connected to at least one non-Arab country than it is to any other Arab counterpart.

The growing sense of sociopolitical realism in the Arab world is unfolding in at least two areas—the quest for democracy and peace, two pillars which were heralded by Sadat's vision some twenty years earlier.

The quest for democracy is not all that new in the Arab world. There have been Arab liberals since at least the turn of the century, and there were limited liberal experiments in a score of Arab countries between the 1920s and 1950s. But the last four decades have been dominated by one form or another of authoritarianism. This was initially welcomed by many Arabs in the hope of fulfilling popular aspirations for true independence, social justice, development, Arab unity, and the liberation of Palestine. In order to achieve these goals, most Arabs were willing to forgo, at least temporarily, democracy or participatory politics. The trade-off did seem promising for a decade or two. But as early as the 1967 defeat, a growing number of Arabs began to question the trade-off formula. Subsequent setbacks further sowed doubt as to its wisdom. But it is probably the Gulf crisis, more than any other event, that led to the quantum leap in the volume and intensity of those demanding participation and accountability in their countries' political systems today. Arab opinion-makers are in consensus that the calamity in the Gulf was triggered and perpetuated by Arab despots. Thus, for its practical uses, if not for its intrinsic value, democratization has become a major battle cry in the Arab world. Since Operation Desert Storm, several Arab countries (Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia) have already initiated processes of democratization, and several have resumed or expedited them (Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Lebanon). Despite some reversals, such as in Algeria, and a slowdown in Tunisia after some initial progress, the process of democratization is well under way .

The quest for peace is even more dramatic. The Arab countries directly involved in the Arab–Israeli conflict since 1948, as well as those which have been far removed (at least geographically), responded enthusiastically to the call for the Middle East peace conference which opened in Madrid in November 1991. It was a response delayed by exactly fourteen years to a similar invitation by Sadat to meet in Cairo's Mena House in November 1977. The agenda and terms of reference are almost the same, and the outcome of the present effort is likely to be similar to that concluded at Camp David. In fact, the man who was shunned and condemned by fellow Arabs for initiating the process fifteen years ago is now warmly praised by his former detractors for his vision and strategy for a Middle East peace. Camp David and its words are no longer taboo words in the Arab world. Rather, they have become the standard by which progress in the current peace efforts is measured.

The two current Arab quests for democracy and peace are as interlocked today as Sadat saw them some twenty years ago. Even though some of his own practices, especially toward the end of his life, betrayed his commitment to democracy, Sadat intuitively discerned the linkage.[40] Social scientists have empirically asserted the validity of Sadat's intuition that democratic countries do not go to war against each other and that their pacific nature is intrinsically related to their political openness and accountability.

With the new wave of democratization and peacemaking unfolding in the Middle East, Sadat is gaining in stature. The reassessment goes beyond vindication by his fellow Arabs. He is appreciated as never before.

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4. Galal Amin, "Transformation to Infitah: External Factors," in *The Infitah: The Roots, the Results, and the Future* (in Arabic) (Cairo: al-Markiz al-'Arabi li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1982).
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32. *al-Gumhuriya,* 7 October 1982.
33. *al-Sha'b,* 22 June 1981.
34. *al-Majalla,* 26 April 1988.
35. *al-Ahram al-iqtisadi,* 21 February 1983.
36. *al-Ahram,* 10 August 1990.
37. *al-Siyasa al-dawliya,* January 1991.
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39. *al-Mussawar,* "The Arabs in a Changing World," August 1992.
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11

PVOs and Grassroots Development in Egypt

1993

INTRODUCTION

The widespread disappointment in the outcome of Third World development in the three decades from 1960 to 1990 has caused a soul-searching among theoreticians and practitioners alike. Similarly, ideological paradigms of socioeconomic engineering have been deeply questioned. While both the soul-searching and questioning continue, some provisional conclusions have emerged.

Among these conclusions is the futility of 'short cuts' to development. Traditional cultures have displayed unexpected resilience. State-sponsored grand schemes of rapid societal change have produced modest results in the best of cases. In other cases, the results have been outright negative. For example, import-substitution strategies of industrialization, after initial success, ground to a halt, and those countries that did not revise them in time ended up with heavy external debt, serious socioeconomic problems, and marked political instability.

The imperative of starting with the development of human potentials is being rediscovered. But this truism is easier stated and substantiated than operationalized and programmed. There is a near consensus that grassroots participation (GRP) is not only a logical first step in this direction, but is also necessary throughout the entire developmental process. Such a proposition is predicated on the fact that people generally and intuitively know what is good for them, and if given the opportunities and the means they can do things better than big formal organizations.

Another conclusion emerging from both the current debate and the transformations that are taking place in the world system, is that grassroots participation cannot be compartmentalized—that is, you cannot allow economic participation without sociopolitical participation. Hence, total participation has become synonymous with 'empowerment.' Enlightened self-interest cuts across all societal spheres, to the extent that decision-makers who recognize this organic linkage are able to preside over a smoother trajectory of societal development.

In the literature on development, the concept of 'grassroots participation' has come to mean "activating, mobilizing, and organizing previously disenfranchised and marginalized individuals and groups in society, to initiate, advocate, and/or demand for themselves what they believe to be their rights as citizens and human beings." This is not too far from the original usage in the American context, where it meant "many small people at the lowest level, like short grass at the roots barely above ground," organizing to impact decision-making. The expression was associated with populist movements, especially among small farmers and workers, in the American Midwest around the turn of the century.

More recently, 'grassroots participation' has been associated with movements of small peasants, farm laborers, rural women, and slum-dwellers in Latin America, and later in other parts of the Third World. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is often cited as a prime example of grassroots participation. With modest technical help and the tremendous enthusiasm of an enlightened reformer, several thousands of rural poor bought small shares in a development bank, which soon they began to run themselves. At present, the shareholders in the Grameen Bank are in the millions. The bank lends without collateral (but with commercial interest rates) to start or expand micro enterprises, build new and better houses, or obtain training to upgrade or diversify skills. Similar examples of effective grassroots participation are now world-famous in Morocco, Costa Rica, India, and Indonesia.

What seem to be common features in all cases are their spill-over effects. Though most of them start as an economic initiative to alleviate misery or increase the family income of the poor and the destitute, they soon give the participants self-confidence and broaden their quest for further sociopolitical action—for example, running in elections for local councils, forming new associations, or lobbying to enhance community interests on the provincial and national levels.

Thus, it is now possible to operationalize the concept of grassroots participation in a multidimensional way—that is, on the conscious, attitudinal, behavioral, and organizational levels. The following are the salient dimensions of such participation:

a. A consciousness dimension, which simply means awareness of the possibilities of participation in collective action, and that it can pay off.

b. An attitudinal dimension, which means a positive disposition to initiate or join in group action for self-enhancement.

c. A behavioral dimension, which implies the concrete action or actions of initiating or joining one or more collective efforts.

d. An organizational dimension, which implies sustaining the aforementioned dimensions over a relatively long period of time, till they become institutionalized—that is, result in formal, semiformal, or informal organizations.

The case of Egypt is a prime example for testing the above assertions and drawing concrete and meaningful lessons for the future.

For here we have a country which in one century has gone through a gamut of competing developmental strategies. What is now labeled as grassroots participation has varied in intensity under each one of these strategies.

Romanticists of grassroots participation are bound to be somewhat baffled by the Egyptian experience in modern times. The following observations may illustrate this and serve as working hypotheses:

a. At moments, Egyptians seem to be very active participants in nongovernmental private voluntary organizations (PVOs). For example, the first modern university and medical complexes established in the earlier decades of this century were among the many fruits of such PVOs. At other times, Egyptians have displayed widespread apathy toward private voluntary activity.

b. Observers have noted that participation in PVOs in Egypt is not always along the same lines operating, say, in South Asia or Latin America—that is, in defiance of or challenging existing formal and informal power structures. In most cases, Egyptian PVOs have been an arena for the middle and upper classes. Even when the ultimate or declared objective is to serve the less privileged, the initiation and leadership of most PVOs remain in the hands of well-intentioned middle and upper class members. They may have varying degrees of success in mobilizing the poor, but one hardly encounters a grassroots-initiated PVO.

c. A third cited observation about Egyptian PVOs is their 'cyclicality.' They often start with marked enthusiasm, then they level off, and finally they decline but rarely die. Thus many of Egypt's PVOs become empty shells by the end of the cycle.

Using a combined strategy of survey research, in-depth case studies, and analysis of historical and secondary quantitative data, we set out to examine the above working hypotheses. The empirical field work covered some forty PVOs and fifty community-based informal initiatives in twelve out of Egypt's twenty-six governorates.[1]

IMAGES OF GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION

AN ELDER'S QUEST FOR MODERNITY IN A DESERT OASIS

The New Valley Governorate (NVG) is the largest of Egypt's twenty-six governorates in terms of territory (51,000 square kilometers approximately) but is the smallest in terms of population (130,000). It is a vast desert expanse in the southwestern corner of Egypt, dotted with several oases separated from each other by hundreds of kilometers. One such oasis is South Maks, located some 104 kilometers from Kharga, the capital of NVG.

Historically an important camel caravan station on the famous Arbain route from al-Fasher in Sudan to Asyut in Egypt, South Maks was a thriving desert community well into the early decades of the

twentieth century. But the steady decline of long-distance camel caravan trade after the First World War meant a similar decline in the fortunes of South Maks. This was compounded by governmental neglect that lasted well into the 1960s. The people of South Maks continued to survive on date production, other subsistence agriculture, and grazing their small flocks of animals. Some of its youngsters migrated to Cairo, where they specialized in garbage collection *(zabbalin)*. Despite some recent state efforts to develop the oasis, South Maks—whose population is no more than 1,000—did not qualify for receiving many of the basic services that went to the capital Kharga and the larger communities of the NVG.

An elderly figure by the name of Sheikh Khalil Ahmed Ali still had memories of better times in the yesteryears of the oasis. He was illiterate but highly respected for his traditional wisdom. Sheikh Khalil correctly surmised that the dwindling fortunes of his community were due to the lack of education, which was necessary to enable his people to cope with the changing times. He spread the word to other elders, and together they campaigned hard with the authorities of Kharga until an elementary school was built in South Maks in the 1960s. Being isolated, with much spare time on their hands, adults as well as children benefited from the school. By 1990, some 97 percent of the community's population between the ages of 10 and 50 have become literate. Even Sheikh Khalil at the age of 80 learned how to read, but could only sign his name. Now that South Maks' appetite had been whetted for education, many of its children wanted to go on with their schooling. They would walk or ride donkeys the 14 kilometers to the nearest community (Baris) to attend preparatory school. Sheikh Khalil again mobilized the elders of the community to build a preparatory school of their own. This time, they did not wait for the government to act on their request. They collected money and donated building materials. The youngsters volunteered their labor. In one month, they had ten classrooms built of mud bricks and roofed with palm reeds. Sheikh Khalil requested donations from South Maks exiles in Cairo to install doors and windows. With the school nearly ready, Sheikh Khalil pressed his case for teachers and official incorporation with the education director in Kharga. The South Maks preparatory school opened in 1987. One of Sheikh Khalil's great-grandchildren enrolled and graduated from it shortly before the old man's death in 1992.

Sheikh Khalil is still an inspiring legend in South Maks. Toward the end of his life, he initiated five other projects to upgrade life in the community: extending water pipes to obtain purified water from the main station in Baris (14 kilometers away), establishing a village bank, electrification of the village, installing a telephone exchange, and construction of a modern flour mill. The same modality was followed in all five projects: initiating the idea, mobilizing the community around it, generating necessary resources from within, and supplementing the resources from outside (exiles, government, and lately foreign donors). The entire community participated in implementing the

projects and in benefiting from them. Every success led to another success. New economic activities have been introduced, including new crops like rice and *birseem*, date-processing, and manufacturing of simple furniture from palm reeds. In the course of the past three decades, South Maks has been transformed from a marginalized and isolated desert community into a flourishing main-streamer.

YOUNG FARMERS' QUEST FOR BASIC SERVICES

Kafr al-Sheikh is one of Egypt's poorest governorates. Located in the north-central part of the Nile Delta, it edges the Mediterranean. Substantial areas in the north of the governorate are salty marshland and hence of low agricultural productivity. While much better agricultural land, the southern part of Kafr al-Sheikh was controlled until 1952 by a few big landowners. Nature and exploitation conspired to produce material misery for most of the rural population of Kafr al-Sheikh. There were few, if any, basic services available. Several peasant rebellions protesting these harsh conditions broke out in 1950 and 1951, but were mercilessly crushed by the police and the army.

The situation was to change dramatically with the July 1952 Revolution. A land reform law was enacted in September of the same year, limiting land ownership to a maximum of two hundred feddans and overhauling tenure relationships in favor of the tenants. Surplus land confiscated from the large landowners was distributed to landless peasants at an average of five acres per family. Kafr al-Sheikh was the first governorate to benefit from the new law: it was the site of the first ceremony of handing over land deeds to the new small owners by the leaders of the Revolution. The act, among other measures, unleashed peasant expectations. Primary schools were requested; and nearly every village achieved one by the late 1950s.

Like several other villages, Tawila prospered in the fifteen years following the 1952 Revolution. But Egypt's 1967 defeat in its war with Israel put a halt to the fast progress of Tawila. Much of the energy and resources of the state were earmarked for war efforts. The repeated requests of Tawila to the government for a preparatory school and a health unit were to wait. Some of the youngsters who had completed primary school and wanted to go on to further education had to give up such an aspiration. Very soon they were to be drafted for military service for as long as six years (1967–73).

Once back from the front, many of Tawila's young men (now in their twenties) would get married and have children of their own, who in turn would attend and complete primary education. Four of the young farmers who had hoped for a preparatory education for themselves were now determined to make it available for their children. Kamal, Mustafa, Zain, and Nasr each inherited less than one acre of land from the five acres their parents had received twenty years earlier through the 1952 Land Reform Law. They knew that the only hope of a better life for their children lay in education. Tawila's population grew from two thousand to five thousand between 1950

and 1980, but the area of its cultivated land remained unchanged at 1,100 feddans. True, agriculture in Tawila has been mechanized and intensified, and new small-scale cottage projects have been established, but these have not been enough to cope with a fast-growing population.

The four young peasants formed an ad hoc committee and started propagating the idea of building a preparatory school. They succeeded in enlisting the support of a village notable, who donated half a feddan for the project.

They proposed a voluntary donation of LE10 for each owned acre of land; and nearly all obliged. With the land and LE10,000 in hand, the committee began the building. Labor was all donated, and an eight-room structure was built. They still needed more money to finish the building. The committee proposed a LE100 voluntary donation from every villager working in the oil-rich countries. At the time (1980), there were sixty such labor immigrants, all of whom made their assigned donations, and some contributed more. The school was ready to receive Tawila students in October 1981.

Two other Tawila young men, Gamal and Radwan, led a similar effort to build a health clinic. Following the success of the preparatory school project, it was easier to collect donations, and the health unit was built in two months. In January 1982, it was in operation with two doctors from a nearby town, who commuted daily to Tawila. At the time of collecting data for this study (October 1992), Tawila had three young native doctors who had graduated from the village preparatory school. One of them was the daughter of Zain, one of the initiators of the school project back in 1980. Tawila no longer needed doctors from outside.

A NAVY OFFICER TURNS INTO A PREACHER–DEVELOPER

Young navy colonel Yasin Rushdi was a markedly religious man, and he was suspected of having Moslem Brotherhood sympathies. In the late 1960s, he was interrogated by the authorities and though no charges were proven against him, he was retired from the navy while still in his thirties. With plenty of time and no job to be found in other state agencies or the public sector, Rushdi became a door-to-door preacher. His eloquence and good manners made him, by the early 1970s, a popular figure in Alexandria. This coincided with the change of political regimes in Egypt from Nasser to Sadat, and a widening margin of freedom of expression and movement. Now called Sheikh Rushdi, he was able to preach publicly wherever he was invited. Alexandria, however, has remained his base. In the late 1970s, members of a defunct philanthropic association, al-Muwasah, invited him to become its president, in the hope of revitalizing it. Sheikh Rushdi accepted and quickly mobilized a few Alexandrians of good standing to serve with him on the board of the association. In the collective memory of middle-aged and older Alexandrians, al-Muwasah had been (well into the 1960s) one of Alexandria's prides for several decades. It had

built one of Egypt's largest and best run hospitals, as well as a small mosque. With Law 32 of 1964, however, much of al-Muwasah's activities were curbed. For one thing, the hospital was taken over by the Ministry of Health and turned into a public hospital. The association itself was to be re-registered under the new law, and several bureaucrats of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) were seconded to serve on the Muwasah board. The twenty years preceding Sheikh Rushdi's takeover had witnessed a steady decline and its due-paying members had dropped from over seven hundred in 1960 to less than one hundred in 1975. With dwindling resources and membership, al-Muwasah had become all but a fading memory in the minds of Alexandrians.

Sheikh Rushdi became the imam of the small Muwasah mosque. With his reputation spreading, he attracted more and more worshipers to the mosque for the Friday prayer, and very soon their overflow filled the large empty area around the mosque. In one of his Friday sermons he suggested expanding the mosque building. The same day, several thousand pounds were collected, and in one month, enough money was donated to expand the mosque. As soon as the new constructions started, building contractors eagerly volunteered to donate their share in kind, and were soon followed by the furniture contractors and the carpet suppliers. The expansion of the mosque was completed in less than a year with the initially donated money hardly touched. Soon after, Sheikh Rushdi came up with a new proposal, suggesting to the board that an annex be built for use as a clinic. Once the proposal was endorsed, professors from the nearby Faculty of Medicine of Alexandria University and other young doctors promptly offered to donate their services. The volunteers far exceeded the needs of the small clinic. One of the professors serving on the board proposed to rent a wing from the Muwasah public hospital to be run by the association. After some initial resistance from the Ministry of Health, the proposal was accepted, and a wing comprising one-third of the Muwasah hospital is now being run by the association. It charges patients a small fee, while keeping a voluntary donation box placed in the reception for those who wish to give an additional contribution. We visited the hospital and were struck by the glaring difference between the Association's wing and the rest of the hospital—one is sparkling clean and efficiently run, the other the exact opposite.

The membership of al-Muwasah Association skyrocketed from one hundred to over thirteen thousand in the first ten years. It doubled again in the following five years (1985–90). The membership fee was kept nominal (LE6 annually), but there is no ceiling for donations. In fact, what is donated weekly during the Friday prayer alone exceeds the total annual membership fees (LE150,000). Typically, several donation boxes are carried by volunteers, roving among the Friday worshipers. Each box has a big label indicating the project for which donations are being collected. We observed children and poor worshipers donating as little as a few piasters and others as much as

several LE20 notes. Some made a single donation to the project of their choice; others made multiple donations. After the prayer, worshipers are asked to join some of the Association members to count and record the amount of donations to each project. They are told that volunteering this service (of counting and recording) is as needed and as valuable as the monetary donation itself. Tens, especially youngsters, volunteer for the task.

Among projects already completed recently by al-Muwasah are: a kidney dialysis center, a center for tutoring school students who need additional assistance, an audio-visual studio, and a computer training center. Nearly all the people running these centers are volunteers. The needy among them are remunerated for their work. Nearly all the Association's members have some task they volunteer for or are assigned to perform. The mosque has been expanded for the second time in ten years to house the multiplying activities of the Association. The mosque with its several annexes is now like a bee-hive from dawn to midnight, except for the time of the five daily prayers. The activities of al-Muwasah have spilled over to other poor districts of Alexandria (for example, Kom al-Dikka). Nearly all the activities are managed by the Association members, who may call on others, if needed, for professional technical assistance. One of the leading volunteers graduated steadily from a young boy counting and recording donated money after the Friday prayers some fifteen years ago to being a director of the computer center.

Both the financial and human resources of al-Muwasah have been doubling every three years. Not a single piaster is received from the Egyptian government or from any foreign donor, even when the latter offered contributions. The total effort is grassroots financed and operated. In its 1991 report, al-Muwasah had a budget of well over LE5 million. The number of beneficiaries from its developmental and welfare programs were over thirty thousand. The *zakat* (prayer donations) and the sales of Sheikh Rushdi's sermons on cassette and video tapes represent about half of the annual monetary resources of the Association. Our estimate is that the volume of activities performed by al-Muwasah is at least three times what the financial report indicates, since many donations are in-kind and do not appear in the general accounts. Thus, for example, the formidable complex that houses the mosque and other activities is now worth LE20 million, while on the books its cost was under LE4 million.

Sheikh Rushdi and his co-workers have intentionally built into their work two important developmental features. The first is to involve women in all activities. The second is to gradually bring in young volunteers to take charge and develop leadership skills.

FROM FIGHTING WARS TO FIGHTING GERMS

Mr. Mustafa Haridi is a retired army general who fought in Egypt's four wars between 1956 and 1973. Being a long-time resident of the Cairo district of Zaytun he was content to remain there. However, he

saw this formerly middle-class neighborhood becoming more and more crowded over the last three decades. The newcomers to Zaytun were a mix of lower-middle and working class. A substantial percentage were of rural background, with little if any civic spirit or memories of how well-groomed the neighborhood used to be. Nor did most of them feel a particular sense of belonging to or pride in Zaytun. General Haridi and his like among the old residents were getting to be a smaller and smaller minority—not only because they were dwarfed by newcomers, but also because the younger generations of older residents opted to move away to better residential areas of Cairo such as Heliopolis or Mohandisin.

General Haridi, Hagg Madani (an old grocer), and Professor Gamal Ghazi (a historian) noted an empty lot near their own residence that had turned into a garbage dump, infested with flies and germs. It belonged to a family that had long since moved away. Inheritance complications among some thirty of the family's descendents made its sale a nightmare to any potential buyer or even to resourceful land speculators. Along with a few other old-timers, General Haridi and his friends began cleaning the lot of the accumulated garbage. The sight of these elder men sweating on a Friday morning prompted a score of youngsters to give a helping hand. By midday, half of the lot was cleared. It was time for the Friday prayer. Hagg Madani suggested that instead of going to a mosque they should pray there; and with a loud voice he called for prayer. About two hundred people gathered instantly, partly moved by curiosity. After the prayer, General Haridi explained what had been going on, and suggested that those who were able should come back after lunch to complete the job of clearing the rest of the lot. An owner of a nearby modest restaurant offered to bring sandwiches to those who would stay on. Most people, especially young folk, were carried away and opted to stay on. Before sunset, the garbage dump had become a clean, empty lot. General Haridi proposed that to avoid a new accumulation of garbage there or anywhere else in the neighborhood, they should place large garbage containers on each street intersection. Within a week, there were more than fifty such containers distributed on street corners, supplied by the neighborhood merchants.

The following Friday, General Haridi and the other elders brought mats; and the midday prayer was performed on the clean site of the old garbage dump. Some five hundred people gathered that day. After the prayer, General Haridi conducted a discussion on what to do next, and many ideas were expressed. At the end of the day it was decided to build a small mosque on part of the lot and a soccer playground on the rest of it. The participants agreed that should the original owners of the lot object, the residents would collect money and compensate them on the basis of the market value of the land. As it turned out, the owners (living outside the district) welcomed the initiative and donated not only the land but also an additional sum of money.

Ten years later, the site of the garbage dump had become a six-floor multi-purpose complex with a mosque on the ground floor, an outpatient clinic on the first floor, and a full-fledged hospital on the next five floors. Interestingly enough, this popular effort was fully financed by donations from the neighborhood, and all construction was done without official permits.

It was only in late 1992 that the original initiators thought of formally establishing an association, and having it registered with MoSA under Law 32 of 1964. A seventh floor was built to accommodate the association's offices and to provide a neighborhood meeting room and a ceremonial hall. In 1991, some eleven thousand people used the outpatient clinic and some four thousand the hospital. The financial volume of transactions in 1992 was estimated at about LE4 million.

A PRIEST BECOMES A COMMUNITY DEVELOPER

Some thirty year ago a young priest, Father Girgis Matta, was assigned to a poor neighborhood church in Shubra. For the first few years, he was frustrated at the poor attendance and indifference in his parish. He managed to persuade ten young people in the community to join with him in forming a voluntary association for welfare and development. It was registered in 1966 under the name of Fruits of Love Coptic Orthodox Society. The total dues collected from the founders did not exceed LE30.

With perseverance, this modest start was to grow steadily over the years. Several hundreds joined in the first decade, and by 1990, the membership reached seven thousand. The present leaders—all professionals—are the children who had joined the project at its start three decades earlier. The assets of the association are now estimated at several million pounds. They consist of: a women's hostel, for those unable to live with families or relatives in Cairo; the Virgin Mary Medical Complex, which includes a general hospital, medical laboratories, and a pharmacy; evening classes for students in need of special tutoring for general public exams; and a social care center, providing emergency or sustained financial help to needy families in the neighborhood. Currently three additional projects are underway: a specialized hospital, a home for the elderly, and a language school.

The Fruits of Love Society has remained totally self-reliant. It receives no money from the government or any other outside donors. All its revenues are from the modest dues of its own members and the generous donations of the community. Most of the doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers, and accountants working for the Society donate their services free of charge.

While most beneficiaries (about fifteen thousand annually) are Christian Copts, the society extends its services to Muslims in the neighborhood who request them. During the October 1992 earthquake, Muslims and Copts alike found refuge in the sprouting premises of the Fruits of Love. Those who needed temporary shelter were hosted for as long as seven weeks.

AN ACTIVIST UPPER EGYPTIAN WIDOW

Hagga Naima was born in the village of Beni Suliman in the governorate of Beni Suef in Upper Egypt. She was the only village girl in the early 1950s to receive a college education. Married to an accountant, Hagga Naima spent several years working as a school teacher in Saudi Arabia following the oil boom of the 1970s, until her husband passed away. Without children, Hagga Naima, still in her early fifties, returned to live with her extended family in Beni Suliman.

With no husband, children, or job, and with only some modest savings, Hagga Naima could have led a quite secluded life in the conservative village. Instead, she opted to take care of the village preschool children. She opened a class in 1986 in a single room annexed to the family house. In the first year, many of Beni Suliman's parents wanted their children to attend Hagga Naima's class. With no more rooms in her home to accommodate the growing waiting list, she suggested the building of a separate premise. In one month, Beni Suliman had three rooms built, together with an attached playground. Some 150 children, age 4 to 6 years were attending Hagga Naima's school. The successful venture with the children encouraged Hagga Naima to suggest that the children's mothers attend evening literacy classes. During the first year only thirty of the mothers responded. But by the fourth year, Hagga Naima had over one hundred mothers in the literacy classes. Unable to cope with so many children and their mothers alone, Hagga Naima looked around for help. Two new female college graduates from the same village obliged.

The course of evening literacy classes was one year, but as it turned out, they were as much fun as they were educational, and the village women who had completed the course wanted to continue meeting. The two young assistants of Hagga Naima suggested the establishment of a village women's club. The men of Beni Suliman were not as encouraging of this additional venture as they had been with the preschooling and literacy projects. However, Hagga Naima, her assistants, and several village women persisted until the club was founded. The members were not quite sure what to do in the club other than congregate there to socialize and chat. Hagga Naima had heard of a village nearby, Bayyad al-Arab, where a foreign development organization called the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) had been active for several years. The three women and a young man, Gumaa Abu Uwis, paid a visit to the ICA to ask for ideas and help. They were told to first establish a formal structure and register it as a community development association (CDA). Gumaa took it upon himself to complete the paperwork for registering a Beni Suliman CDA with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in the capital of Beni Suef governorate. It took about a year to complete the formal registration. Meanwhile, Gumaa managed to get several men involved in the process. With Hagga Naima and her two female assistants, Gumaa and three male elders formed the board of Beni Suliman CDA. Gumaa was selected as chairman. The already exist-

ing activities (the preschool, literacy classes, and women's club) were subsumed under the newly-created CDA.

With the help of the ICA in Bayyad al-Arab, Beni Suliman CDA initiated three new projects:

1. Small loans: Initially an income-generating scheme for women members of the club, this project would grant loans of LE100–200. If th eloans were repaid on time, the borrower would be granted another, bigger loan of LE200–400. In the first year some one hundred village families benefited from the small loans project. With so much demand during the following years, Beni Suliman's CDA decided to charge a small interest (of 7 percent) as an administrative charge for each six-months round of borrowing. By 1992, the beneficiaries tripled to three hundred families, comprising about half the total population of Beni Suliman.

2. Health care: The women's club initiated health classes, where Beni Suliman's women were to receive instructions in first aid, maternity care, preventive health measures (especially against dehydration), and family planning. Four village women were trained as health workers, and nearly all of the village families (about six hundred) have benefited from the health-care project.

3. Water and sanitation loans: The spill-over effects of the women's literacy classes and the health-care project led the CDA to institute another small-loan scheme. This time it was not for income-generating but for upgrading sanitation and water facilities in the village houses. The loan was to be used for getting clean water piped to the house from the nearest water main and to install a simple modern toilet and sink, with an outlet piped to a central septic tank. Like the income-generating loans, this new scheme charged a modest interest (10 percent) on loans to be paid back within a year. Some four hundred families benefited from the new scheme in its first two years.

All in all, what Hagga Naima modestly started in 1986 with the preschool class has bloomed into an array of activities involving nearly all the families of Beni Suliman. According to the monitoring records of the ICA, during the last six years per-family income has nearly doubled, women's illiteracy has been cut down by more than one-third (from 85 to 55 percent), and the under-5s mortality rate has dropped by one-third (120 to 85 per thousand).

It is worth noting that nearly one-third of Beni Suliman's population are Christian Copts. They have been as much involved in Hagga Naima's early projects—as well as the CDA's later projects—as their Muslim neighbors. One of Hagga Naima's two young female assistants and one of the four health workers are Copts. Unlike some Upper Egyptian villages, Beni Suliman has been spared the sectarian tension of recent years.

CORRELATES OF GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION

Some ninety cases of grassroots participation were investigated in twelve of Egypt's twenty-six governorates. The twelve included one desert governorate (New Valley), three Delta governorates (Kafr al-

Sheikh, Gharbiya, and Sharqiya), five Upper Egyptian governorates (Beni Suef, Minya, Asyut, Qena, and Aswan), and three urban governorates (Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said).

Of the ninety cases investigated, more than half (fifty cases) began as informal initiatives. While many of them have remained so, others were later formally institutionalized as community development associations (CDAs) and registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) under Law 32 of 1964. The six images sketched above are not unique. In fact, they were selected for narration because they are typical not only of the fifty cases investigated empirically but also of tens of thousands of informal initiatives of grassroots participation all over Egypt. Thus while at present there are about 20,000 formally registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (14,000 with MoSA), our research team estimates that five times as many informal initiatives exist alongside them.

A word on most of these NGOs is in order. Egypt has known all forms of charitable voluntary work since ancient times, including those sanctioned by religion, both Christianity and Islam. But it was in 1821 that the first modern secular private voluntary organization (PVO) was founded by the Greek–Egyptian community of Alexandria. This secular format appealed to modern educated Egyptians, some of whom had just returned from studying in Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century some sixty-five such PVOs had been established. During the first four decades of British occupation (1882–1922), these PVOs made up for the loss of an independent national government. They were particularly active in the field of education, and one of them was the initiator of Egypt's first fully modern secular university in the early years of the twentieth century, which has become Cairo University.

During what has been labeled Egypt's 'Liberal Age' (1922–52), the number of PVOs grew rapidly and steadily—from fewer than three hundred to nearly three thousand. Despite the 1952 Revolution's disposition to step into all spheres of public life, Egypt's PVOs have continued to grow (see Table 1) and to spread geographically (Tables 2 and 3) and branch into various activities.

The 14,000 PVOs registered under MoSA are tightly controlled via Law 32 of 1964, which gives MoSA sweeping executive powers to license, regulate, liquidate, and confiscate their assets. The law also provides for additional controls via the General Federation, Regional Federations, and Specialized Federations of PVOs. Thus despite their quantitative increase, spread, and diverse activities, Egypt's PVOs have their hands tied by MoSA, and are operating substantially below capacity. Many well-meaning Egyptians have stayed away from the MoSA-controlled PVOs, and instead found other alternatives for volunteer work, such as grassroots informal or formal initiatives. In communities where our research team was able to compare informal initiatives with formal NGOs, the former seem to command more enthusiasm and dynamism than the latter. Success and expansion of the informal initiatives have invariably led to their formalization.

Table 1
Expansion of PVOs from 1900 to 1995

Year	No. of PVOs	Population (millions)	Population/PVO (thousands)
1900	65	9.7	149.2
1925	300	14.2	47.3
1960	3,195	26.0	8.1
1964	4,000	28.7	7.2
1976	7,593	38.2	5.3
1979	9,021	39.8	4.4
1985	11,471	45.9	4.0
1986	11,776	48.2	4.1
1987	12,013	49.5	4.2
1988	12,532	53.3	4.3
1990	12,832	54.7	4.3
1995	13,894	60.0	4.3

Source: MOSA, "Statistical Indices for Welfare and Social Development," (various years).

Table 2
Regional distribution of CDAs and welfare PVOs

	Urban	Rural	Desert (frontier regions)	Total %
Welfare PVOs	78,871	401,268	9,556	74.5
Local CDAs	8,802	171,225	3,276	25.5
Total	87,673	572,493	12,832	100.00

Source: MOSA. "Statistical Indices," 1991.

Formal or informal, successful grassroots participation in community development seems to be contingent on several factors, important among which are: leadership; relevance of response to felt needs; potential availability of resources; optimal management; and routinization of success.

LEADERSHIP

In all the investigated cases, informal and formal, leadership proved to be the most decisive factor in the success of any grassroots initiative. The potential leader in this regard must project at least three necessary qualities: integrity, mobilizing rhetorical skills, and organizational skills. Since any grassroots initiative involves the collection of money, a reputation for unimpeachable integrity is an imperative for inducing people to donate, whether in money or in kind. Religious figures, well-to-do professionals, and elderly community notables seem to be most likely to project this quality of integrity. This may be readily understood in the case of religious figures. As for well-to-do professionals, they seem to give the impression that they are involved in voluntary work out of selfless rather than selfish in-

Table 3
Distribution of PVOs by governorate

	Welfare PVOs	CDAs	Total
Urban governorates			
Central Cairo	3,204	249	3,453
Alexandria	797	110	907
Port Said	185	24	209
Ismailiya	109	37	146
Suez	115	78	193
Lower Egypt			
Dumyat	86	61	147
Daqahliya	231	237	468
Sharqiya	471	277	748
Qalyubiya	409	173	582
Kafr al-Shei...	135	135	270
Gharbiya	328	132	460
Manufiya	388	270	658
Bahayra	302	160	462
Upper Egypt			
Giza	754	217	971
Fayyum	161	125	286
Beni Suef	170	176	346
Minya	545	149	694
Asyut	273	94	367
Suhag	212	151	363
Qena	201	121	322
Aswan	244	154	398
Desert (frontier) governorates			
Red Sea	58	16	74
New Valley	54	29	83
Matruh	50	43	93
North Sinai	50	46	96
South Sinai	24	12	36
Total	9,556	3,276	12,832

Source: MOSA, *Statistical Indices*, 1991.

tentions. As for the elderly notables, it is their long-standing status in the community that makes them trustworthy.

Of the fifty informally initiated grassroots projects investigated in this study, twenty of the prime leaders were religious figures (seventeen graduates of al-Azhar religious faculties, and three Coptic priests). Most of them were active practitioners of their religious vocations in the community (mosque imams or parish priests) or residents of the neighborhood in which the grassroots initiative took place.

Twenty other grassroots initiatives were led by well-to-do professionals—six medical doctors, seven engineers, three college-educated businessmen, two university professors, two retired officers, and one secondary school teacher. Several of them had made their fame and fortune elsewhere outside the community, especially in the oil-rich Arab countries but were somehow connected to the community in which the initiative took place. They would typically start a grassroots effort by donating money, land, or a free service.

Finally, there were ten initiatives led by elderly notables deeply rooted in the community. They were not necessarily well-to-do in their own right or possessors of professional skills. In fact, some of them were illiterate or with very modest education. But all ten commanded immense respect in their communities. Because of their age, piety, compassion, or wisdom they could easily mobilize the community and induce others (including those well-to-do natives working or living elsewhere) to donate money, land, and services (including governmental connections) in support of their efforts.

These three leadership categories often overlapped. Thus, a religious figure would typically enlist some professional and community notables to be involved with him in the leadership.

NEED-RESPONSE RELEVANCE

In all successful grassroots efforts, there were felt needs expressed by the community or articulated by a potential leader and readily consented to by the community.

One such need which appeared in more than one-third of the cases investigated (seventeen out of fifty) was religious worship. But often the building of a mosque was a starter or pretext for responding to other needs. Invariably, it would entail a clinic, a hospital, a nursery, a school, and/or a social welfare center. In rural areas, whatever the start for meeting a basic need, invariably other needs were expressed in the areas of education, health, and income-generating schemes. In urban areas, many of the grassroots initiatives were sparked by a dire need to combat a serious problem—such as getting rid of garbage or open sewers, paving streets, or providing recreation and sporting facilities for youngsters.

Once some of the very basic needs were successfully met through initial grassroots efforts, a second tier of needs would often be articulated—in urban communities, for example, these were typically tutorials and computer training for youngsters, homes for the elderly, more specialized hospitals, and ceremonial halls for weddings and funerals. In rural communities, the second echelon of needs typically included electrification, a higher level of schooling (preparatory and secondary), or paving roads to connect with a nearby town.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

One of the striking features common to all fifty cases of informal grassroots initiatives surveyed in our study was the generation of resources in seemingly poor communities. So greatly impressed was our research team by this fact that it concluded that money is not the primary obstacle in Egypt's community development. In nearly all cases the start of generating resources was through a "demonstration effect"—that is, the advocate or leader would give some of their own money, land, or professional service. Soon a few others would follow suit, then many would come forth with small monetary or in-kind donations. Even the very poor in the community may simply volunteer their labor.

Trust is a key variable in generating money for community development schemes. As soon as this is demonstrated, community members begin to give regularly, and to give more with each successful undertaking. This was especially apparent in poorer urban neighborhoods and in rural communities. In several cases, members of such communities routinized their donation on an equitable basis on the financial means of the participants. Thus in urban neighborhoods a set of minimum donations is estimated on the monthly electricity bill, and in rural areas on the basis of each feddan of land tenured.

Three additional resources were found to often feed into these grassroots efforts. The first is donations from current or former community members living or working elsewhere (especially abroad). Second are the nominal fees on services rendered by community schemes such as clinics, nurseries, or loans. Third are contributors from governmental and nongovernmental organizations on matching or partnership bases. Thus MoSA may provide social workers and teachers for preschool nurseries built by the community. The Ministry of Education typically incorporates the schools into the educational system and provides the teachers, and the Ministry of Communications provides equipment and operators for community-built post offices and telephone exchanges. In several cases other formal NGOs were tapped for help—for example businessmen's associations or chambers of commerce.

OPTIMAL MANAGEMENT OF EARLY PROJECTS

In nearly all of the studies of grassroots initiatives, it was clear that successful management of early projects set the pace of further projects. The optimal management of human and material resources available has entailed doing so much with so little. This in itself was an indirect proof of the scrupulous integrity of the initiators who shouldered the early effort. But more directly, those initiators have made a point of complete transparency. They maintained detailed records of money spent. There were few or no overhead expenses.

These confidence-building measures have proven to be essential in sustaining grassroots participation. With more projects, more members of the respective communities would get involved in managing and/or benefiting from them. The early traditions of optimal and transparent management were found to be well maintained with a second generation of leaders and workers. In the New Valley, Kafr al-Sheikh, and Beni Suef governorates, our team noted that sons and daughters of earlier grassroots initiators have carried on the legacy of their parents, often at higher and more sophisticated levels.

In several cases, the second generation of grassroots efforts sought and obtained professional training in project management or in mastering skills needed for their operations.

ROUTINIZATION OF SUCCESS

The phrase "nothing succeeds like success" applies to grassroots participation as much as it applies to any other human endeavor.

Because most of the people called upon for the first time (the grassroots) to participate in development are of humble backgrounds and with no record of public assertiveness, initial success is essential for continuity. No matter how modest, that initial success gives them the necessary self-confidence to go the next step. The initial success in many of the cases reviewed for this study could simply be obtaining a piece of land or a licence for the envisaged project, seeing a building begin to rise, opening a new school, hearing the first call on a village telephone exchange, or watching grass and trees sprouting on the site of a former garbage dump.

This is not to suggest that the initial success, even when small, comes about easily. Actually, most Egyptians encountered in the course of this study had modest expectations and considerable patience. What matters in this regard is to sense progress or marked results along the way. The six cases reported above were selected not because they were unique or the most striking examples, but because they have entailed incremental successes, each leading to another. After three or four such successes, the community's self-confidence becomes consolidated, and our research team judged them as sustainable grassroots efforts. Marks of this sustainability include:

1. Proliferation of leadership cadres. Though each case may have been inspired by one person, ths person would allow enough space for others to share in decision-making and in shouldering specific tasks. Intentionally or not, this would enhance the emergence of new community leaders. We documented the unfolding of this process in all the six cases reported above. A five-year period is a minimum to assess the viability of the process. When the pioneering leader begins to sit back, allowing others to take charge, and accepts the role of an elder statesperson, it is often a sign that sustainability is under way.

2. Growing repertoire of organizational skills. In all six cases, we noted that later projects displayed more sophistication in conceptualization and implementation. This was taken as a sign that the community's organizational skills have become accumulative—in other words, there is no rediscovery of the wheel with every new project. The community quickly learns what does and what does not work. The leaders master the proper sequencing—from advocacy to implementation, to operation.

3. Innovation. With new leadership cadres proliferating and community experience accumulating, we noted innovative elements with every additional project. Many of the innovations are typically in fundraising from within and from without, in tapping indigenous human resources, and in ways and means of increasing efficiency.

4. Formalization. As the community's grassroots effort expands, it is often formalized through registration under one of the laws that regulate PVOs in Egypt, especially Law 32 of 1964. Some may actually formalize (register under the law) before initiating any activities, but the ones that opted to start and carry on informally for some time have done so either because they do not recognize a need to

register, or, more often, because they do not want to be hampered by the complicated formalities of the law and governmental bureaucracy.

NOTES

1 For details on the methodology and research design of this study, see Saad Eddin Ibrahim *et al. Grassroots Participation in Egypt's Development*, Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies (ICDS), submitted to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), 1993.

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12

Civil Society and Prospects of Democratization in the Arab World

1995

Much of the literature circulating in recent years on the prerequisites, requisites, and modalities of transition from nondemocratic to democratic rule[1] finds a fertile ground for testing in the Arab world. While belonging to one general political-cultural area, the twenty-one Arab countries display a wide variety of cases in terms of variables associated with such transition—such as nature and evolution of the state,2 political regimes, class structure, political culture, levels of socioeconomic development, and civil society.[3] Yet, despite its particularities, the Arab world is evolving along the same broad trends and processes that have been at work elsewhere in newly democratizing societies. Four sets of variables have been interplaying to produce a mini-wave of democratization in the Arab world. They are socioeconomic formations, the articulation of civil society, the state, and external factors. The configuration of these variable sets may vary from one Arab country to another; and it is such variance that accounts for the degree of democratization empirically observed in each Arab country at present.

A THEORETICAL OVERTURE

The concept of civil society has emerged in the last decade as an overarching category linking democracy, development, and peaceful management of conflict domestically and regionally. While there are a variety of ways of defining the concept, they all revolve around maximizing volitional organized collective participation in the public space between individuals and the state. In its institutional form, civil society is composed of non-state actors or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—for example, political parties, trade unions, professional associations, community development associations, and other interest groups.[4] Normatively, civil society implies values and behavioral codes of tolerating, if not accepting, the different 'others' and a tacit or explicit commitment to the peaceful management of differences among individuals and collectivities sharing the same public space—that is, the polity.[5]

Civil society, as defined above, emerged organically out of modern socioeconomic formations such as classes, occupational categories, and other interest groups. In the West, this process unfolded simultaneously with the processes of capitalization, industrialization, urbanization, citizenship, and the nation-state. While the ultimate loyalty of citizens was supposedly held to the nation-state as the natu-

ral sovereign embodiment of all society, sub-loyalties were to follow interests—that is, focused in class, occupation, and residential community. Volitional associations emerged and expanded around the saliency of the many interests of the citizens—for example, political parties, trade unions, professional associations, clubs, and community organizations. Loyalty to the supreme sovereignty of the state was emotive, abstract, and only occasionally invoked; conversely, solidarities of volitional associations were interest-based, concrete, and more frequently invoked. While loyalty to the state was supposedly universal and consensual among all citizens, solidarity to a volitional association was particularistic and variable in intensity and duration. That is to say while citizens hardly change their belonging to a nation–state, they may frequently do so with regard to volitional associations, class, occupation, status, and residence, due to vertical and horizontal mobility. With competing, or even conflicting interests of various socioeconomic formations in the same nation–state, governance would gradually evolve along participatory politics—for example, democracy. Some socioeconomic formations were more conscious of their interests and quicker than others in organizing their ranks to retain, seize, or share political power within the state. The less conscious and less organized formations would, over time, learn by emulation the art of associational life. Thus, the organs of civil society in the West have multiplied in numbers and organizational sophistication.

The state apparatus is supposedly a neutral arena for all units of civil society. The competition among the latter is often over 'government'—that is, the decision-making nerve center of the state. The neutrality of the state may be debatable, and the boundaries between state, government, and regime are often blurred in theory and practice, as well as in the mind of ordinary citizens. But because civil society has evolved simultaneously with the nation–state, both have been more concordant than discordant. Neither has been completely autonomous from the other, only relatively so. Hence, the positing of the relationship between state and society in 'zero–sum' terms may be a misleading dichotomy. A strong state may not imply necessarily a weak civil society or vice versa. In fact, most stable Western democracies represent cases of a strong civil society and a strong state. Similarly, as we will observe in the Arab world, a more common case is that of weak civil societies and weak states.

The linkage between civil society and democratization should be obvious. Democracy after all is a set of rules and institutions of governance through a peaceful management of competing groups and/or conflicting interests. Thus the normative component of 'civil society' is essentially the same as that of 'democracy.' Aside from the 'Athenian' or 'town hall' model of direct democracy, organs of civil society are believed to be the optimum channels of popular participation in governance. Couched in a different terminology, this is the essence of how the concept of civil society has been used by theoreti-

cians of the 'Social Contract,' ranging from Hegel, Marx, de Tocqueville, and Gramsci.[6] The modern day users of the concept have merely refined or elaborated its manifestation in contemporary complex societies.

Of course, the relationship between civil society and democratization is neither simple, linear, nor operates in a vacuum. The relationship is often mediated by the specific legacy of the state, the collective memory and current norms and practices of individuals and groups—that is, 'political culture.' Equally, regional and international factors could stunt or expedite the unfolding of the relationship between civil society and democratization.[7]

Some Middle East area observers contend that the lagging democratization of the Arab world is due to the absence or stunting of its 'civil society' and its corresponding 'political culture.' Some orientalists and mongers of ethnocentrism may go as far as to totally dismiss even the potential for the evolution of an Arab civil society, and hence any prospect of genuine democratization. Propagators of this point of view often forget the long, arduous, and occasionally bloody, march of civil society and democratization in their own Western societies. More than seven centuries passed between the issuance of the Magna Carta (1215) and granting suffrage to women (1920) in Great Britain. What Huntington calls waves of democratization in the West during the last two centuries were followed by counter waves of authoritarianism in several European countries.[8] At any rate, the assertions made about the inhospitality of Arab society and culture to democratization will be examined in both premodern and contemporary Arab realities to argue a counter proposition—that despite noted distortion and time lags, the Arab world is currently going through civil society-building and democratization. The relationship between the two processes is essentially the same: as modern socioeconomic formations sprout and take shape, they create civil society organizations, which in turn strive for participatory governance.

RESILIENT TRADITIONAL ARAB CIVIL FORMATIONS

Premodern society in what is called the Arab world was fairly ordered around a political authority[9] whose legitimacy was derived from a combination of conquest and/or religious sources. But the public space was shared by the *'ulama'*, merchants, guilds, Sufi orders, and sects (millets).[10] Outside this first concentric zone, the public space was populated by peasants and tribes. Political authority asserted itself most clearly in the first concentric zone of that public space. Outside the first zone, its assertion varied markedly. In most cases it was hardly felt. Other collectivities, especially the tribes, were quite autonomous from, if not outright defiant of, the central authority.[11]

Even in the first concentric zone, often within city walls, various groups coexisted and interacted with a great deal of autonomy. Guilds, religious sects, and ethnic groups ran most of their own internal

affairs through elected or appointed leaders. The latter were accountable to both the political authority and their own communities. Tension, no doubt, existed within each category but was of low intensity. Tension may have existed between or among two or more of these communities, but was often resolved intercommunally; or occasionally warranted the direct intervention of the political authority.[12]

Leaders, elders, and notables of these traditional formations performed several functions in the overall governance of premodern Arab society. Besides running intracommunal affairs and managing intercommunal conflicts, they acted as councilors and advisors to rulers. They were called those who 'loosen and bind,' *ahlu l-hall wa-l-'aqd,* and the important among them were the *'ulama'*, learned men of religion. In this capacity, 'solvers and binders' reduced the absolutist nature of the premodern Arab–Islamic state. They spoke for the people in general and for their respective constituencies in particular. Solvers and binders mediated and legitimated the ruler's decisions to their constituencies.

This traditional equilibrium of governance was maintained by a multitude of mechanisms—clear hierarchies, occupational and residential segregation, and autonomous resources (mostly from *awqaf* or *hubus*—religious endowments). Social solidarities existed along occupational, religious, and ethnic lines. Central authority collected taxes, administered justice through the *Shari'a*, maintained public order and defense, and occasionally patronized arts and sciences. Social services and direct economic functions were not expected obligations of the state, but mostly left to local communities. In this sense, traditional Arab society not only knew the equivalent of civil formations but also survived through them. Individuals relied on these formations for their identity and much of their basic needs. They insulated them from direct dealing with political authority.[13] In the traditional equilibrium, the public space in which civil formations interacted coincided with the physical space in which they lived and worked.

This traditional equilibrium of governance was occasionally disrupted by seditions *(fitnat)* or calamities *(nakba)*. The Arabic political vocabulary referred to *fitna* as sharp internal strife, usually accompanied by armed conflict. A *nakb* referred to an invasion by an alien (non-Muslim) power, often accompanied by mass looting, destruction, and population uprooting.[14] Both *fitnat* and *nakba* would lead to a disintegration of this traditional equilibrium for a shorter or longer time. Often, however, the equilibrium would be pieced together and reassert itself. At least this was the case for much of the first twelve centuries of Arab–Islamic history.

The last two centuries witnessed what seemed to be an irreversible disintegration of the traditional equilibrium of governance and of its accompanying socioeconomic symbiosis. This was a direct function of Western penetration of Arab–Muslim societies, and their coercive integration in the budding world system. Most of the traditional

civil formations were believed to be withering away, and new ones were being born through the hardest of labor. Among the latter was the new Arab state. But nearly half a century after the birth of such a state, we are discovering that some of the traditional formations are quite resilient, and several Arab ruling élites are willing or being forced to accommodate them. In five of the Arab Gulf countries, a modern version of solvers and binders has been formally reinstituted under the label of the Shura ('consultative') Council. Even in some of the countries which have their own elected parliaments, a similar consultative council has been added under the same name, *shura* (such as in Egypt) or something close to it such as 'Notables Council' (for example, Jordan). Despite their nonlegislative and only advisory function, such councils are a definite accommodation of mainly traditional formations (of ethnicity, sect, and tribe).

THE NEW ARAB STATE: EXPANSION AND RETREAT

The birth of the new Arab states was midwifed by Western colonial powers.[15] They bore numerous deformities—ranging from the artificialities of their borders to the internal weakness of their institutions. Right from the start, they faced severe problems and challenges from within and from without. Initially, the new states neither tapped the reservoir of traditional wisdom of premodern civil formations, nor adequately allowed enough public space for new ones to sprout and flourish autonomously. As a result, the new Arab state found itself embattled on many fronts during the first four decades of independence.

The Arab world shared some, but not all, of the processes which had accompanied the emergence of the modern state and civil society in the West—for example, the erosion of traditional equilibria, rapid population growth, and urbanization. But the processes of capitalization and industrialization lagged far behind. Hence the new socioeconomic formations which are the backbone of the modern state and civil society have not grown progressively or evenly.

ERRATIC STATE-BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Arab world witnessed phenomenal socioeconomic growth in the three decades following the Second World War—the birth period of most independent Arab states. But the growth was erratic or sluggish, resulting in, among other things, a distorted stratification. The bearing of this distortion on the development of Arab civil society will be obvious from the account sketched below.

In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, many of the newly independent Arab states embarked on ambitious educational and industrial expansions. As a result, two sprouting classes grew steadily: the new middle class and the modern working class. Central planning and command socioeconomic policies were the order of the day in most Arab countries.

But the two subsequent decades witnessed a mix of inconsistent, or outright confused, socioeconomic policies. The initial oil boom of the 1970s tempted many of the poorer and sizable countries to introduce what came to be known as liberal 'open-door' policies, without successfully phasing out the command socioeconomic policies of the previous decades. Three formal sectors have been operating, or rather misoperating, simultaneously—a public, private, and mixed economy. In addition, a growing informal or 'underground' sector has appeared. Multiple levels of efficiency, skill appropriation, and salary scales now prevail in the same national economy, polity, and society. Distorting effects were inevitable. Inflationary pressures, worsening of equity, and mounting external debt became rampant in most Arab countries.[16] From a stratification point of view, two social formations grew rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s—a 'nouveau riche' class and a 'lumpenproletariat class.' The first appropriated an increasing share of the national GNP without adding much to the national wealth, and engaged in conspicuous consumption and the flight of capital. The second, the lumpenproletariat, has grown tremendously in size, has added to open and hidden unemployment, and has experienced anguishing relative deprivation. The poverty belts around major cities represent ominous time bombs. Meanwhile, the new middle class and the modern working class, on fixed salaries and wages, have been hard pressed by rampant inflation. These two classes would be steadily alienated from the ruling regimes in their respective countries. The urban 'lumpenproletariat,' on the other hand, would be easily manipulated by masters of street politics.[17]

THE STATE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The predicaments of the state in the Arab world are further compounded by old unresolved regional and internal conflicts, as well as by new ones. One must conclude the dismal failure of postindependence ruling élites in managing conflicts. Among the old persistent problems are those of protracted conflicts—for example, the Arab–Israeli, the Iraqi–Iranian, the Libyan–Chadian, the Lebanese, the Sudanese, the Somali, and the Saharan conflicts. Some of these are over forty years old (the Arab–Israeli); and the relatively shorter ones are already several years old (the Iraqi–Iranian). Some of these have flared up into armed conflicts on and off for four decades (the Arab–Israeli and the Sudanese). All of them are quite costly in material and human terms. The Middle East region is the first buyer and consumer of lethal arms in the Third World, spending an average of $100 billion annually over the last two decades. Overall spending on defense is twice as high. Thus, some $4,000 billion have been spent, or rather wasted, on defense purposes without settling most of the above-mentioned conflicts. The number of those killed, wounded, disabled, and displaced in the region is estimated at 13 million during the same period. With the rapid introduction and spread of arms of mass-destruction (for example, nuclear and chemical), the

human and material costs of these protracted conflicts, if unsettled, is bound to be astronomical in the 1990s.[18]

Equally relevant, intrastate armed conflicts outweigh interstate ones in terms of human losses and population uprooting. Entire local communities have been destroyed in part or in full by internal conflicts. Many of these are ethnic and minority groups. The heavy losses, measured in economic terms alone as 'opportunity cost,' indicate what could have been achieved with these tremendous resources. Development has clearly been a major victim of such protracted conflicts. But more detrimental to the development of civil society have been the deep psycho-sociopolitical cleavages created by intrastate protracted armed conflicts. They have forced individuals and groups to reentrench themselves behind primordial walls of solidarity. Traditional loyalties to ethnic, religious, sectarian, and tribal groups have come to take primacy over modern formations of civil society or to the state itself.[19]

The dismal failure of the new Arab states in managing internal and external conflict has been a cause and an effect of the questioned legitimacy of many of them at birth by substantial sectors of their own new 'citizens' (for example, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, South Yemen).[20] More often, however, the failure has been due to the questioned legitimacy of the authoritarian ruling regimes in the new Arab states. While some thought the question of the state's legitimacy would be resolved by the passage of time, it has in fact worsened; hence the mounting pressure for more participatory politics, especially in the last decade. Much of the latter has taken either the form of random outbursts of the lumpenproletariat through street politics, or the form of less sensational but more sustained pressure from civil society.[21]

NEW CIVIL SOCIETY: THE DIFFICULT BIRTH

Despite the authoritarian nature of governance in many Arab states for much of their history since independence, nuclei of modern civil society have sprouted in nearly all of them. Some of the new civil organizations, especially in the northern tier of the Arab world, date back to the second half of the nineteenth century, but they increased in number and thrived in the interwar period (1918–39). The embryonic new middle class was the backbone of these civil organizations. Under colonial rule, many of them took on an explicit political role of liberating their respective countries. And from the ranks of these organizations emerged the leaders of independence. The modern civil organizations, however, were stunted under the populist Arab regimes in the 1950–70 period. They have regained their vitality gradually since the mid-1970s, as populist regimes have began to run out of steam.

STUNTING OF AN EMBRYONIC CIVIL SOCIETY (1950s–60s)

A few years after independence, however, several Arab states witnessed a wave of radical politics, mostly through populist military coups d'état—Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, Algeria, Libya,

Mauritania, and Somalia. These 'radical' regimes ended the brief liberal experiments which some of their societies had engaged in briefly before and immediately after independence. One-party rule or that of a junta became the dominant pattern of governance. The new populist regimes gave the state an expansionist socioeconomic role. An explicit or implicit 'social contract' was forged, by which the state was to effect development, ensure social justice, satisfy basic needs of its citizens, consolidate political independence, and achieve other national aspirations (for example, Arab unity, the liberation of Palestine). In return, their peoples were to forgo, at least for a while, their quest for liberal participatory politics. Pan-Arab nationalist and socialist ideologies were used to popularize this social contract, and for political mobilization in support of the ruling regimes. The majority accepted or acquiesced. So attractive did this populist tradeoff seem at the beginning that even traditional Arab monarchies adopted it partially from the 1960s, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Morocco.[22]

The populist social contract had, among other things, a detrimental impact, not only on existing political parties, but also on other organizations of civil society. The latter was either prohibited or severely restricted by an arsenal of laws and decrees, or were outright annexed to the single party in power.[23] In other words, under populist rule, organizations of civil society lost all or much of their autonomy. As a result, many of these organizations withered away due to aging membership and the disinterest of younger generations. Some became merely paper organizations and only very few adapted to the new populist formula and struggled to remain active through political discretion.

The defeat of populist regimes at the hands of Israel in 1967 and successive reversals, culminating in the 1990–91 Gulf crisis, led to the discrediting of the populist social contract and the steady erosion of most Arab regimes. Clinging to power, many populist regimes escalated their oppression, others engaged in external adventures, and some did both. Others engaged in token or serious revision of their systems of governance.

MISMANAGEMENT AND RETREAT OF THE STATE

The expansionist role of the Arab state seemed to have reached its upper ceiling in the 1970s in both rich and poor countries. Since then, the march of sociopolitical events internally, regionally, and internationally, has forced the state to retreat from several socioeconomic functions. Most of that retreat has been disorderly, leaving in its aftermath structural and situational misery, which could have been avoided or reduced had their respective civil societies been in better shape. Instead, some of the public space vacated by the state has been filled either by extremist Islamic tendencies (as has been the case in Egypt and Algeria), or by separatist primordial tendencies (for example, Sudan, Somalia, and Iraq).

Using a typology that pairs and crosses the variables bearing on the strength of state and civil society, most Arab countries have oscillated between a weak state–strong civil society, to a strong state–weak civil society, to a weak state–weak civil society. No state has yet experienced strong state and strong civil society. Countries like Somalia, Sudan, and Iraq are currently firmly located in conditions described as a weak state–weak civil society.

This typology helps in systemizing comparative empirical data, and in monitoring the relative changes in respective Arab countries over time. Thus, while it was viewed as being a strong state–weak civil society until 1990, Iraq has quickly drifted to a weak state–weak civil society since and because of the Gulf crisis (1990–91). Long believed to be strong states, Egypt and Algeria are sliding from a strong state–strong civil society to either a weak state–strong civil society (Egypt) or a weak state–weak civil society (Algeria).

REVITALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB WORLD

In the retreating years of the Arab state (the 1970s and 1980s), some of the pre-populist civil formations revitalized themselves, and new ones were created. Hundreds of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and community development associations (CDAs) have mushroomed over the last two decades. The number of Arab NGOs is estimated to have grown from less than twenty thousand in the mid-1960s to about seventy thousand in the late 1980s.[24] A case in point is human rights organizations. In the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (1982), one of the severest setbacks for the Arab world since the 1967 defeat, many national and pan-Arab organizations sprang up.[25]

Enhancing this phenomenal quantitative growth of Arab civil organizations in the last two decades are several factors. First of all, Arab states have been unable to meet the growing needs of individuals and local communities. For the lower and lower-middle classes these needs are mainly socioeconomic services that the state is no longer able or willing to provide—for example, housing, health, higher incomes, better quality education, and greater supplies of food. For the middle and upper classes the growing needs are of an expressive, cultural, professional, and political variety. Thousands of cooperatives, and cultural and professional associations have been created in response to such needs.

The expansion of free mass education under populist regimes, although sometimes lacking in quality, has nevertheless created higher levels of consciousness, expectations, and rudimentary organizational skills. Such attributes have been instrumental in building formal associations.

Certain individuals enjoyed an increase in financial resources in the 1970s and early 1980s. This was due to skyrocketing oil revenues, labor migration across state borders on an unprecedented scale, and the beginnings of economic liberalization policies in previously state-command economies. Thus while governments misman-

aged or wasted financial resources, many individuals earmarked some of their new fortunes to creat new associations. The Arab world witnessed for the first time the creation of American-style foundations, such as the H. Sabagh, A. H. Shuman, and R. al-Hariri foundations.

By defacto or default, margins of freedoms have stretched gradually in many Arab countries. This is due partly to state fatigue or incompetence in controlling society, but also due to people's resourcefulness in negotiating state powers . Extensive traveling, Arab media abroad, and individual bank accounts in foreign countries are expressions of such growing margins. In fact, many Arab civil organizations have been conceived or established abroad before transferring their activities to their home countries.

SOME SPECIFICITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Political parties in civil society

Political parties have been part of the rapid multiplying of Arab civil organizations in the last two decades. While some well-established parties, predating independence, have continued despite autocratic governance (for example, the Istiqlal in Morocco, and the Umma and Ittihadi in Sudan), most other parties did not survive the populist phase in Arab politics. But with widening margins of freedom some old political parties have resurfaced since the late 1970s (for example, the Wafd and Young Egypt Socialist parties in Egypt). More importantly, however, has been the mushrooming of new parties, as soon as the political scene liberalized—for example, there are now forty-six parties in Algeria, forty-three in Yemen, twenty-three in Jordan, nineteen in Morocco, thirteen in Egypt, eleven in Tunisia, and six in Mauritania.[26]

The quantum leap in the number of Arab civil organizations, however, should not imply that they are all effective. In fact the majority, including many of the new political parties, are too small to be significant in the public life of their countries. Egypt is a typical case in point. Claiming about one-third of the estimated seventy thousand Arab civil associations, most of Egypt's twenty thousand NGOs are not active or only moderately so. According to a recent field study only about 40 percent of Egypt's NGOs were judged as active and effective.[27]

The same applies to Arab political parties. Recent parliamentary elections in Yemen (April 1993) and Morocco (June 1993) revealed the political insignificance of most parties in building or attracting constituencies of any size. Only seven of Yemen's forty-three political parties won seats; and only three captured more than 80 percent of those seats. In Morocco, out of the nineteen parties in existence only nine scored any success; with four of them capturing 75 percent of the contested seats.[28]

Professional associations

Professional associations are probably the most active civil organizations in the Arab world at present. Partly because they provide union-like benefits to their membership, partly because of the higher level

of education and political consciousness of their members, and partly because of their relatively independent financial resources, Arab professional associations or syndicates (*niqabat*, as they are termed in Arabic) have spearheaded the movement of civil society in their respective countries. In a country like Sudan, they managed twice (in 1964 and 1985) to oust the ruling military regime from power. In Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia they were potent pressure groups during the 1970s and 1980s.

Furthermore, professional associations are organized on the pan-Arab level as federations and are well-linked to their international counterparts. This has strengthened them by giving them outside protection against their governments. Second, Arab professional syndicates are organically and strategically located at the heart of production and service institutions, including those run by the state. They can not easily be dissolved or dismissed by the ruling élites. Hence, when they all decide to go on strike—as actually happened in the Sudan in 1985—the entire society and state may be paralyzed. Among the most influential of the syndicates are the doctors, engineers, and teachers. More recently, associations of business have joined the ranks of the influential.[29]

Politics by proxy

In Arab countries where political parties are still prohibited or severely restricted, some civil associations have served many of their functions by proxy, for example, by articulating and debating public issues, formulating public policy alternatives, and exerting pressure on decision-makers. Kuwait's University Graduates Society, Qatar's Jassra Cultural Club, and the UAE's Association of Social Professions have been performing such functions in recent years.

Possibly for these reasons, some Arab civil associations (other than political parties per se), have recently become arenas of intensive political activities. Their elections, generally fair and honest, are very competitive, and are widely followed by the general public. This has been observed in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia, and Morocco during the 1980s and early 1990s. More recently in Egypt, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood, who are not allowed a political party of their own, have systematically taken over, through elections, the boards of the most important professional syndicates—the doctors, engineers, and lawyers.[30]

Traditional formations in modern garb

Here we use the terms 'modern' and 'traditional' in a strictly descriptive, analytical sense. A sizable number of Arab civil organizations still contain remnants of their society's traditional formations. The typical case would be the establishment of an seemingly modern civil association in an urban center, but whose membership mostly or all belong to the same tribe, village, or religious sect. The trappings of modernity may be there—for example, formal registration, licensing, a statute, elections, boards, committees, and so forth, but in effect,

the association is run in nearly the same traditional manner briefly sketched above.

This observation should not detract from the importance of this type of civil association. The fact that its initiators have founded it along modern lines to enhance 'traditional' loyalties and/or serve traditional functions is still a testimony to a shrewd appreciation of the need to reconcile both tradition and modernity during a period of societal transition. When established in big urban centers, this type of association not only enhances traditional leaders but also helps their kin and followers to land softly on their feet in an otherwise strange and impersonal environment.

These associations have a latent protection function for both modern civil society and the state. Without it, newcomers from the hinterland to Arab cities are bound to join the amorphous urban lumpenproletariat (ULP), referred to above. The ULP has been the fastest growing socioeconomic formation in the Arab world during the last two decades. It is the group most liable to engage in street politics and its responses are the most fiery, as demonstrated by urban riots in Egypt (1977, 1986, 1992), Tunisia (1976, 1987), Morocco (1974, 1981, 1987), Jordan (1988), and Algeria (1988).

Civil society and crisis situations

Like many other dimensions of development in the Arab world, the advance of civil society has not been uniform in all Arab countries. Civil formations have emerged in a relatively solid form, wherever rumblings of democratization have been felt. But more importantly, as shown recently, is the fact that in Arab countries subjected to severe crises, the presence or absence of civil formations makes a tremendous difference to the country's ability to withstand the crisis.

Lebanon, Kuwait, and Somalia are cases in point. In all three, the 'state' nearly vanished under catastrophic circumstances—Lebanon and Somalia because of protracted internal strife compounded by regional and international factors; and Kuwait due to foreign invasion. Different as they were in many ways, Lebanon and Kuwait had in common the presence of fairly well-developed civil associations—some six hundred and two hundred, respectively. While many of these organizations were reduced to impotence under the circumstances, scores of them remained active during the crisis. It was these active civil associations which provided material and moral support to many Lebanese and Kuwaiti citizens, both at home and abroad. Even confessional Lebanese NGOs extended help across confessional lines on many occasions. Also, many new neighborhood associations emerged in the height of the sixteen-year civil strife.

In Kuwait, it was, of all things, the consumer cooperatives which became focal points for performing many of the functions previously provided by the state—such as providing food rationing, health care, social welfare, and education, delivering mail, and maintaining informal communication networks. Other civil organizations which could

not operate openly, for fear of the occupation authorities, used the less suspect food cooperatives and mosques to assist people.

In contrast, Somalia had no or very few civil organizations. After years of populist military rule, many Somalis who lived away from their villages or tribes relied almost exclusively on the state for work and services. When the state machinery totally collapsed in 1991, they found themselves without anything. As the ensuing internal conflict expanded, even primordial formations were severely ruptured and quickly disintegrated. The massive famine that struck Somalia in 1992 was not just a result of the fighting, or even lack of food supplies (much was sent by foreign donors), but mainly because of difficulties in distributing food. Had there been civil organizations, similar to those of Lebanon and Kuwait, much of the starvation, disease, and death would have been avoided or markedly ameliorated. Somalia represents a tragic and extreme case, not only of a disorderly retreat but of a total disintegration of the state without the existence of a civil society to provide a 'safety net' to pick up the pieces.

REGIMES, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND DEMOCRATIZATION

No longer able to honor the terms of the old social contract, appease rising socioeconomic demands with the tired language of political discourse, or forge a new participatory social contract (for fear of being toppled from power), the Arab ruling élites have resorted either to coercive repression at home or to riskier adventures abroad. Since 1980, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq has done both. The invasion of Kuwait, 2 August 1990, known as the 'Gulf crisis,' led to predictions of more participatory governance in the Arab world. This was based on the proposition that the crisis was as much an internal Arab political crisis as it was a regional–international crisis. In fact, participatory governance did materialize in several Arab countries. But the trend was already under way—the crisis only expedited it. That some countries are proceeding faster than others is due to internal and external factors. The relative size and degree of maturation of civil society in each country has been a contributing factor to the advances in democratization. In some countries, the march for democracy has suffered setbacks; in others the rumblings of democracy are apparent but have not yet led anywhere. What follows is a sketch of these three modal conditions of current Arab politics.[31] Their presentation suggests the intricate interplay of domestic, regional, and international factors on civil society and democratization in the Arab world.

DEMOCRATIZATION: THE RUMBLINGS

In the few years immediately preceding the Gulf crisis, several Arab regimes were already sensing their mounting internal lack of legitimacy, expressed in increasingly frequent violent confrontations between regimes and one or more of the major socioeconomic forma-

tions. The upper rungs of the new middle class engaged regimes in nonviolent battles over basic freedoms, human rights, and democracy. On the pan-Arab level and within several Arab countries, this quest took the form of establishing human rights organizations and more autonomous professional associations.

There were varying levels of popular demands vis-à-vis Arab regimes. On one level, the demands were for greater 'liberalization,' such as freedom of the press, associations, and the right to travel abroad. Nearly all regimes made some concessions in response to these demands. On a higher level, the demand was for serious and explicit democratization, such as legalized political parties, equal access to the mass media, and free and fair elections. None of the regimes has fully responded to these demands in the 1980s.

The lower rungs of the new middle class adopted Islamic political activism as a way of challenging the ruling élites. The modern working class opted more often for strikes or other forms of work slowdowns and industrial sabotage. The urban lumpenproletariat resorted to 'street politics,' such as demonstrations, rioting, and looting. Whatever the confrontation and however it was expressed, all alienated socioeconomic formations would join in to advance their own demands. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, this phenomena has occurred across the region. The ruling élites in these countries have all responded to growing expressions of discontent with promises of economic and political reforms. In fact, some began to honor such promises before the outbreak of the Gulf crisis. Others took advantage of the crisis to renege on or to delay honoring them.

Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen had embarked on serious democratization processes before the Gulf crisis. All three had held national or municipal elections between 1987 and 1990 with few complaints regarding their integrity. The fact that antiregime Islamist candidates performed well and captured more seats than expected added to the credibility of the process. Ironically, democratically elected people in all three countries loudly supported Saddam Hussein during the Gulf crisis, perplexing Western observers espousing democratization in the Third World. These newly elected members of the opposition were expressing discontent not only with their own rulers, but also with the overall Arab order, and, for that matter, the much talked about 'New World Order.' Although no less despotic than some of the other Arab rulers on both sides of the crisis, Saddam Hussein tapped into and manipulated that discontent outside Iraq. He was able to do this in part because Iraq's oil wealth had not been flaunted in poorer Arab countries by Iraqi citizens as had that of their counterparts in the Gulf. The arguments of the United States and other Western countries about international legitimacy seemed insincere to many Arabs and, in view of the Palestinian question, smacked of a double standard.

In 1987, a few years before the Gulf crisis, Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba peacefully handed over power to Ziadine Ben 'Ali—albeit

in the form of a 'constitutional coup.' The new leadership promised political reforms to secular opposition parties, but continued to deny legitimacy to the Islamist Nahda party. A series of bloody confrontations took place between the regime and followers of the Nahda in late 1989 and early 1990. The Gulf crisis provided a point of consensus for all Tunisian parties in cheering Iraq's defiance of the West. Internal confrontations were frozen for nearly a year, but they resumed subsequently.

Limited democratization in Egypt and Morocco several years prior to the Gulf crisis did not progress further in 1990–91. Although the Moroccan government sided with Kuwait and the United States–led coalition during the crisis, the opposition condemned foreign intervention and mobilized Moroccan public opinion. Indeed, the biggest demonstration in support of Iraq was staged in Morocco. The crisis gave the opposition a chance to show its ability to mobilize, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the regime. The immediate response was to scale back Moroccan military involvement. A year after the crisis, King Hassan announced political reforms.

In Egypt, there was less discordance between the ruling élite and the public over the crisis. In fact, the regime managed to call for a parliamentary election in October 1990, as if to show that life in Egypt was quite orderly despite the crisis. While two major opposition parties, the Wafd and the Labor–Islamic Alliance, boycotted the elections, their action was for reasons unrelated to the crisis, namely the government's refusal to guarantee fairness in the political process. The Egyptian regime's self-assuredness was, however, shaken by two events: the October 1990 assassination of Rifa't al-Mahjub, the former speaker of parliament, supposedly by Islamic militants, and the protests of thousands of Egyptian university students against what they perceived as the systematic destruction of Iraq. The students' clashes with the police left at least four dead, scores wounded, and hundreds arrested in the final days of the war.

In Djibouti, Mauritania, and Somalia, mounting ethnic and tribal conflicts were kept under control during the Gulf crisis. In the countries directly involved in or close to the heart of the crisis—Iraq, Syria, and the six states bordering the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman—ruling élites claimed a 'legitimate' excuse to put off steps, if any had been intended at all, toward democratization. It was not until a full year had passed after the crisis before Arab élites showed serious inclinations toward genuine participatory politics, although many promises had been made—such as in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. During 1991, it became obvious that something had to be done.

One positive among the many negative aspects of the Gulf crisis has been the unprecedented political mobilization of the Arab masses. Popular expressions of support for one or the other Arab side in the crisis were not always in accord with the official positions of regimes. This had the effect of breaking the wall of fear of many Arabs vis-à-vis ruling élites. In Iraq itself, the Shia in the south and the Kurds in

the north rose in arms against the regime of Saddam Hussein, emboldened, it could be argued, by Iraq's crushing defeat and the prospect of aid from the victorious allies. Even the Gulf élites on the winning side faced mounting demands from their intelligentsia for more political participation.

DEMOCRATIZATION: THE ADVANCES

In the last decade, at least two-thirds of the twenty-one Arab countries have engaged in varying forms of greater participatory politics. All but Iraq, Syria, and Libya have opened up their political systems to varying degrees. Nine Arab countries reinstituted or instituted a multiparty system—Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen. During the same decade (1983–93), ten Arab countries held at least one parliamentary election. Five out of the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have instituted shura councils.

Still far short of what many Arab democrats aspire for, these developments represent marked advances on the road to democratization. In a sense, the Arab world is joining what Huntington calls the 'third wave' of democratization. Should this claim be accepted, the question is how to account for it.

Huntington has formulated a paradigm to explain the 'third wave.' He advances four causal patterns to explain the current worldwide trend of democratization: single cause, parallel development, snowballing, and prevailing nostrum.[32] At least two of these apply to situation in Arab countries which have expanded participatory politics. The 'single cause' pattern is when an external factor leads to a wave of democratization. Huntington gives the examples of the emergence of a new superpower or some other major change in the international (or regional) distribution of power.[33] The single cause pattern clearly applies to the five GCC countries which have instituted shura councils—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Kuwait has been far ahead—with a full parliamentary tradition, though still without a multiparty system. The single cause in their case was the traumatic Gulf crisis (1990–91).

In at least eight Arab democratizing countries it has been the 'parallel development' cause pattern at work. As expounded by Huntington, this pattern is "caused by similar developments in the same independent variables."[34] In the eight countries—Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Sudan, Jordan, and Yemen—the same structural forces seem to have been at work. These were namely the failure of ruling regimes to deliver the goods, services, and employment opportunities to aspiring social formations (see above). Facing widespread discontent and eroding legitimacy, regimes in these countries have attempted or been forced to initiate 'democratic reforms' since the mid-1980s.

It may also be argued that some 'snowballing' effect has accompanied the two patterns mentioned above. Thus, a country like Saudi

Arabia had toyed with the idea of a shura council since the mid-1960s, but remained reluctant to implement it until the Gulf crisis. Even then, the Saudi regime dragged its feet until all the other GCC countries and its neighbor to the north (Jordan) and to the south (Yemen) instituted councils or parliamentary systems.

These democratic advances are still embryonic. It is clear that they are a product of structural forces, long socioeconomic trends, and external factors. But it is not as yet clear whether the forces which helped spark their initiation are strong enough to sustain them.

DEMOCRATIZATION: THE REVERSALS

Despite marked advances of Arab democratization in the last decade (1983–93), there were also major reversals. The most dramatic among these were in Sudan and Algeria. Tunisia and Egypt have also had some difficult moments in their democratization processes.

In 1985, Sudan's civil society, mainly professional and labor unions, managed to topple the military autocratic regime of President Numeiri. A multiparty system was reinstituted, and parliamentary elections were held in 1986. The country looked ready for a democratic takeoff. However, quibbling among major political parties inside and outside governmental coalitions, together with a continued protracted civil war in the south, caused widespread disappointment. A counter coalition of Islamists and a number of middle-rank officers toppled the democratically elected government of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in mid-1989. Since then, a religious–military regime has been in power. It is a unique experience in the history of the new Arab states.

Like Sudan in 1985, Algeria at the end of 1988 seemed to be a promising contender for a transition from a populist autocratic to a pluralist autocratic to a pluralist democratic rule. Constitutional reforms and the institution of a multiparty system were effected for the first time since the country's independence (1962). Some forty-six parties were established by 1990. The municipal elections showed that religious-based parties, namely the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), had become the most potent political force in Algeria. FIS outmaneuvered and outperformed the long ruling National Liberation Front (FLN). In a semifinal showdown in December 1991, FIS swept to victory in Algeria's parliamentary elections,[35] sending shock waves home and abroad. Apprehensions about an Islamic takeover with the possible alteration of the nature of the state and society led the Algerian army to preempt the possibility by a takeover of its own in January 1992. Since then the country has been embroiled in a war of attrition between the security forces and the now outlawed FIS.[36]

Egypt and Tunisia have had to do battle with their respective Islamists since the early 1990s. Their situation has led to a different scenario than that of Sudan and Algeria. It has slowed down or frozen the democratization process which had been well under way in Egypt from 1981 onward and in Tunisia from 1988. Tunisia seems to have overpowered its Islamists through a mix of legal and extralegal

means. The regime has lately indicated its readiness for some formula of 'power-sharing' with secular opposition parties. Egypt has not been able to subdue its Islamic militants. But, equally, the regime has given signals of its willingness for a 'national dialogue,' if not outright power-sharing.[37]

These dramatic reversals of democratization are not unique to the Arab world. Huntington has documented and analyzed similar reversals after 'first' and 'second waves' of democratization elsewhere in the world, including the developed Western countries. Nor does he rule out similar reversals in the countries now involved in the 'third wave' of democratization.[38]

However, the Arab situation indicates the fragility of Arab democratization and the importance of Islamic militancy as a force to be contended with. The latter is clearly one of the factors behind the events in Sudan and Algeria, though in a quite different manner. It has also provided a real or claimed pretext for the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes to slow down or freeze the democratization process.

CONCLUSIONS

Civil society in the Arab world has revitalized itself in the last two decades. Underlying this development is a host of internal, regional, and international factors. Internally, there has been a steady growth of new socioeconomic formations which the autocratic and/or populist regimes have no longer been able to accommodate or completely suppress. Regionally, protracted armed conflicts have weakened the state, exposed its impotence in managing such conflicts, and drained its resources. Meanwhile other regional developments have unwittingly empowered new and old constituencies within each Arab state. Internationally, the patron–client relationship between Arab regimes and the two superpowers has either ended or greatly altered. The global wave of democratization has also had a marked 'demonstrative effect' on a growing number of the Arab new middle classes.

The sprouting organizations of civil society in the Arab world have pressed for greater liberalization across the board—first as compensation for the state's failure to meet their socioeconomic needs, and then, for its reluctance to respond to their political quest for participation. The sluggish response of the state to these demands has led many disenfranchised young people of the lower-middle class to espouse Islamic militancy as a mode of protest.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the overall scene in the Arab world appeared as a three-way race for maintaining or seizing power among autocratic regimes, Islamic activists, and democratically disposed forces of civil society. In some Arab countries one variant of the race has been the squeezing of civil society out of the public arena by autocratic regimes and Islamic activists. In another variant both the autocratic regimes and Islamic activists have attempted to win over or appropriate civil society organizations.

This second variant contains the greatest promise for civil society, and hence for the democratization process. For one thing, it has enabled civil society to make demands on the state for concessions of a sociopolitical–reformative nature. For another, it has had a moderating effect on several Islamic activist groups. In Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, and Lebanon this promise has actually been unfolding. In all four, Islamists have accepted the principle of political pluralism, participated alongside other secular forces in national elections, and are at present all represented in parliament. In Lebanon, Yemen, and Jordan women have been elected for the first time, without the Islamists marching out in protest.

The question of whether religious-based political parties could be part of civil society is as overly academic as the same question with regard to primordially based associations. In both cases, the ultimate answer is an empirical one. So long as such parties and associations accept the principle of pluralism and observe a modicum of civility in behavior toward the 'other,' then they remain integral parts of civil society. In this respect, even the Islamists may evolve into something akin to the 'Christian Democrats' in the West or the religious parties in Israel. There is nothing intrinsically Islamic which is in contradiction with the codes of civil society or the principles of democracy.

The variety of responses on the part of Arab regimes to civil society, and regional and international environments in recent years indicates that there is as much prospect for further democratization as against it. The modernizing monarchies of Jordan and Morocco have displayed impressive skills in engineering a smooth transition toward more democratic governance. Their example may tilt the balance in favor of greater democracy in the remainder of the region. Such a prospect would be enhanced by and, in turn, would enhance the peaceful settlement of some of the region's protracted conflicts.

POST SCRIPT: BEYOND GAZA–JERICHO

With the signing of the historic peace accord 'Gaza–Jericho First' between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (13 September 1993), it has become evident that this agreement transcends its basic purpose of attaining peace and stability in the region. One important element which the agreement will inevitably touch upon is the process of democratization and the building of civil society in the Arab world.

First, the basic nature of the agreement is inherently democratic. The Palestinian entity (whether manifested in autonomous self-rule or a state) will be created on democratic principles. The agreement stipulates that the Palestinian authority that will be designated to rule over this entity must be elected through a representative process. As such, Palestine would be the first Arab state to be born democratically.

Beyond the agreement itself, a close look at Palestinian society reveals that in the absence of a state, the institutions of civil society have matured and are quite prominent. The PLO itself has been a federation of non-state actors. The Fatah group and its subsidiaries, the Islamic Hamas movement and its subdivisions, and numerous voluntary organizations are examples of active organs of civil society. They have filled the public space between individual Palestinians and the alien authorities under which they have lived since 1948.

On a broader scale, the Gaza–Jericho accord would bring the Arab–Israeli armed struggle to a final phase. This would bring an end to the use of the Palestinian question as a justification on the part of Arab regimes for delaying democracy in deference to the 'struggle.' Substantial Arab resources have been consumed in the protracted Arab–Israeli conflict under the banner 'no voice can be louder than that of the struggle.'

Palestine will join the ranks of those Arab countries that have already begun their democratization, who will be strengthened by this addition and together act as catalysts to further democratization in other Arab countries, such as Syria, and possibly even Iraq.

The Gaza–Jericho accord has created a debate throughout Palestinian society and the rest of the Arab world. The Islamist forces, represented in Palestine by Hamas, and some leftist groups argue that the treaty with Israel is "treason" to the cause and a capitulation to the Israeli aggressor. Yet most Palestinians, and the majority of ruling regimes in the Arab world accept the agreement as a landmark on the road toward peace. Even Syria, which might not agree with the accord ideologically, has vowed not to stand in its way. This debate and pluralism of opinion in the region has created an environment akin to that of democracy.

Finally, the Gaza–Jericho accord and the secret negotiations that preceded it, has broken the psychological barrier on both sides, enabling acceptance of past enemies and embracing alternative ideas. The Arab–Israeli political accord, while not perfect, may be used as a model for the implementation of a 'peace accord' throughout the Arab world between ruling regimes and civil society.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds., *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1991); G. Schmitz and David Gillies, *The Challenge of Democratic Development: Sustaining Democratization in Developing Countries* (Ottawa: the North–South Institute, 1992).
2. See Saad Eddin Ibrahim, et al., *Society and State in the Arab World* (Amman: The Arab Thought Forum, 1988), Giamco Luciani, ed., *The Arab State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).
3. Huntington, *The Third Wave.*
4. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, ed., *Civil Society and Democratic Transformation in the Arab World* (Arabic) (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Center, 1992), pp. 12–13.

5. Augustus Richard Norton, guest editor's 'Introduction' to a special issue on civil society in the Middle East, *Middle East Journal* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 205–16.
6. See a review of how the concept of 'civil society' was used in A. M. Orum, *Introduction to Political Sociology* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1978), pp. 24–26; B. Redhead, ed., *Plato to Nato: Studies in Political Thought* (London: BBC Books, 1984).
7. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 31–107.
8. ibid., pp. 17–21.
9. Y. L. Rizq, *Civil Egypt* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Tiba, 1993); Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and the Arab World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).
10. Iliya Harik, "The Origin of the Arab System," in Luciani, ed., *The Arab State*, pp. 1–28; P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Century of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
11. For an elaboration on this traditional mode of governance, see the classic of Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Muqaddima* (Baghdad: al-Muthanna, 1980); al-Baki Hermassi, *Society and State in the Arab Maghreb* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1987).
12. Rizq, *Civil Egypt*, pp. 40–48, pp. 90–91.
13. ibid., pp. 141–42.
14. On the Arab political usage of the two terms *(fitna, nakba)* see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Exiting the Blind Alley of History: The Arabs and the Gulf War* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun, S. al-Sabah, 1992), p. 12.
15. Ibrahim, *Society and State*, pp. 45–78; Harik, "The Origin of the Arab System," pp. 19–24.
16. Hazim Biblawy, "The Rentier State in the Arab world," in Luciani, ed., *The Arab State*, pp. 85–98; Jean Leca, "Social Structure and Political Stability: Comparative Evidence from Algeria, Syria, and Iraq," pp. 150–88.
17. Ibrahim, *Society and State*, pp. 342–69.
18. See Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *The Question of Minorities in the Arab World* (in Arabic) (Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun, al-Sabah, 1992), pp. 17–18; by the same author, *Minorities and State-Building in the Arab World*, a paper presented to the Annual American Sociological Meeting, Pittsburgh, August, 1992.
19. Ibrahim, *The Question of Minorities*, pp. 243–44.
20. Ibrahim, *Society and State.*
21. ibid.
22. See an account of how Arab monarchies responded to radical ideologies, in Michael Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).
23. For an elaborate account, see the proceedings of the Conference on Arab Civil Organizations, (in Arabic), Cairo; 31 October–3 November 1989; the papers of a seminar on Arab civil society, Beirut: 21–24 January 1993 and later published under the same title (in Arabic) (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1993).
24. This estimate was aggregated from the country papers of the Conference on Arab Civil Organizations.
25. On the birth of the Arab Organization for Human Rights and similar civil formations in the 1980s, see Ibrahim, *Civil Society and Democratization*, pp. 9–12.
26. For a detailed account, see ibid.
27. *Grassroots Participation and Development in Egypt*, a study by Ibn Khaldoun Center, commissioned by UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA (Cairo, 1993).
28. See *Civil Society and Democratic Transformation in the Arab World* (CSDTAW), Ibn Khaldoun Center monthly newsletter (in English and Arabic): May, June, July 1993.
29. Ibrahim, *Civil Society.*

30. For facts, figures, and analysis, see *CSDTAW,* May and October 1992.
31. Much of the passages in this section are adapted from an earlier paper, "Crises, Élites, and Democratization in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 292–305.
32. Huntington, *The Third Wave,* pp. 31–33.
33. ibid., p. 32.
34. ibid., p. 32.
35. For facts, figures, and analysis, see *CSDTAW,* January and February 1992.
36. For a monthly account of such violence, consult *CSDTAW* during 1992 and 1993.
37. See *CSDTAW* the November and December 1993 issues.
38. Huntington, *The Third Wave,* pp. 17–26.

Revisiting Egypt, Islam, and Democracy

A NOTE FROM PRISON

2001

When this book first appeared in 1996, it contained twelve essays that had been written over a twenty-year span. Thus it may seem at first glance that these essays are too outdated to warrant a second printing without substantial alteration.

Being in prison at the time of the request of the AUC Press to provide a postscript for a paperback reprint, I was as much flattered as frustrated: I have ample time to think and write but scarce or no sources to update and document. There is a 'library' of sorts in the Tora Farm Prison where I am currently serving a seven-year sentence. It has light novels, religious books, state-information literature, and the annual reports of the Ministry of the Interior under whose jurisdiction the prison belongs. Thus, for the purpose of updating this volume the prison library is less than helpful. In a moment of despair I remembered the advice of one of my professors in graduate school: the less quantitative data a researcher has the more he is compelled to make it up by more rigorous qualitative analysis. So, that is what I have attempted to do here.

Re-reading the original twelve essays and reflecting on the march of Egyptian events in the last decade, it has become abundantly clear to me that the 'Islam' that appears in the title of this volume is not the theology, the belief system, or the rituals of that great monotheistic religion, nor is it the historical march across fourteen centuries and across the world from Indonesia to Morocco and now to the United States and Europe. The 'Islam' referred to here is how groups of individual Muslims in Egypt have understood that religion and acted upon it with political zeal, putting them on a confrontational course with the state for much of the last quarter of the twentieth century. Thus the more accurate label is 'Islamic activism.'

The main actors in the Egyptian drama have remained the same: the state, Islamic activists, and democracy advocates. The state, the strongest of the three actors, has yet to fully emerge from a form of centralized rule that Weitfoggle labeled 'oriental despotism,' in which the entire polity revolves around an omnipotent ruler. Modern cosmetics may have concealed the most blatant features of this state structure, but not its essence.

Islamic activism has been for the last quarter of the twentieth century the second strongest actor in the Egyptian drama (and for

that matter in the region). In some ways, Islamic activism is a mirror-image of state despotism, but with its own brand of religious cosmetics, which makes total submission to God only one step above total obedience to a human 'Commander of the Faithful.' The actual or potential clash between the two absolute systems is bound to be—and indeed has been—bloody and dramatic.

Egypt's democracy advocates are the weakest of the three salient actors at present, although potentially the most promising. Instead of viewing them as an ally against extremism, the state has repeatedly repressed democracy advocates, whether academics, human rights advocates, or others. Thus they have barely made a dent in either the pharaonic-style features of the state or the extremism of the Islamic groups.

All three actors have been operating on a bleak socioeconomic stage. Economic gains made at the start of the 1990s were set back at their end. No fresh political gains whatsoever were made. On the contrary, some of the modest political advances made in the previous two decades were reversed in the 1990s. Egypt is arguably less democratic in 2001 than it was in 1981 or in 1991. Equally, pressing socioeconomic issues grew worse over the same period—income distribution has become more skewed, youth unemployment remains high (at around 15 percent) while absolute numbers of youth continue to increase; and sectarian (Muslim–Coptic) relations have deteriorated to a sadly unprecedented degree in modern Egyptian history (i.e., 1800–2001). However, there were two areas in which solid gains can be noted: improvement in Egypt's basic infrastructure, and bringing its demographic situation under control (for the first time, children 0–4 years of age are fewer than those aged 5–9). But with so many negatives outweighing the positives, Islamic activists remain the salient opposition to the ruling regime of President Mubarak, as they were for his predecessor, Anwar Sadat (1970–81).

The bitter harvest of the last decade of the last century was encapsulated in a horrific episode at a glorious archeological site near the Upper Egyptian town of Luxor on November 17, 1997. Six Islamic militants attacked a large group of tourists, killing sixty of them, mostly Swiss, British, and Japanese, along with a number of Egyptian guides. It was like an earthquake: it was swift and devastating at the epicenter, but its economic and political aftershocks were longer and more pervasive. They exposed the vulnerability of the state, the fragility of the economy, and the soft underbelly of society.

We see or sense the hand of Islamic activism with each new tremor. Islamic activism has haunted the regime both in its violent militant form and in a more peaceful political form (the Muslim Brotherhood party remains formally outlawed even though it has promised to 'play by the rules'). The dilemma of Egypt at the start of the third millennium is that of a regime reluctant to democratize the country and meanwhile unable to stamp out or accommodate Islamic activism.

The Luxor massacre dramatized Egypt's crisis of governance. Four

years later, on Tuesday September 11, 2001, something as horrific, but on a far greater order of magnitude, occurred in New York and Washington D.C. An estimated nineteen persons commandeered four American civilian passenger planes and crashed them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon. The stunning attacks and instant carnage claimed the lives of several thousand persons. The victims were mostly Americans, but also included nationals of some 64 other countries. The psychological, material, and strategic repercussions of this tragic event are impossible to estimate at this time, but it is universally believed that America and the world will never be the same. Available evidence points to strong links between the perpetrators of this attack and locally bred Islamic activism.

Different in scale and intent, the terrorist acts in Luxor and the United States have elements in common: the determined mind-set and the state of utter despair of the perpetrators. They carefully targeted vital nerve centers and innocent victims and daringly and swiftly carried out their meticulous plans in cold blood. The Luxor event dramatized a national crisis of governance, the American event a global one.

Now more than ever is a time for deep and unflinching analysis of the sources of this Islamic-based extremism. More than a decade later I remain convinced of the assessment put forward in these earlier essays: extremism cannot be quelled by prisons and security apparati alone. The way forward lies in democratic opening, genuine respect for individual rights, and the creation of participatory public space for all citizens.

Tora Farm Prison
September, 2001