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The Arab Spring and Democratization:

The Case of Egypt

By

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The Arab Spring and Democratization Theory: The Case of Egypt

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The Arab Spring and Democratization Theory:  
The Case of Egypt

Abir Kashouh

ABSTRACT

For some time now scholars have debated the resilience of authoritarianism in the Middle East. Arab states used a mix of strategies to retain control, thus appearing to escape the “third wave of democratization” identified by Samuel Huntington. The Arab Spring ended this assumption, however, as new hope for democratization emerged in the region. This thesis tests some of the arguments made by the comparative politics literature on authoritarian regime breakdown against the Egyptian experience with regime transition. It does so by using the independent variables explaining authoritarian regime breakdown identified by Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce. The thesis traces the trajectory of regime consolidation and, subsequently, breakdown in Egypt. In so doing, it underlines the differences and similarities with other comparative cases of authoritarian regime breakdown.

Keywords: Middle East, Authoritarianism, Arab Spring, Egypt, Authoritarian breakdown, Democratization theory.
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<td>Arab Socialist Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>MB</td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>SCAF</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1- Introduction

For some time now scholars have debated the resilience of authoritarianism in the Middle East. Arab States used rent and a mix of other strategies to retain control, and were able to suppress any democratic initiative. Consequently, the region managed to escape the “third wave of democratization” identified by Samuel Huntington, or so it seemed.

The first wave of democratization began with the American Revolution of 1776 followed by the French Revolution of 1789. The Second Wave started with the victory of the Allies in the World War II. The Third Wave became more global, originating with the sudden fall of the military regime in Portugal in 1974. The Third Wave spread to Latin America, Asia, Central Europe and Africa. The countries involved successfully witnessed democratic transitions. However, this wave missed the Middle East.

According to the Economic Intelligence Report (2008) and Freedom House (2010), there was a decline in democracy in recent years. Reports described the Middle East as “the most repressive region in the world” (Pomed, 2010). Rising and leading authoritarian powers such as Russia, Iran, Venezuela and China were also contributing to a decline in democracy. Leading democracies such as the United States and the European Union faced a sense of fatigue especially after the severe impact of the 2008 global economic crisis. According to Freedom House (2010), these last ten years present a huge decline in the number of democracies. The total number of electoral democracies declined to reach 115, the lowest number since 1995.
Yet as democracy was waning in places like Belarus and Venezuela, the Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia brought hope of a new wave of democratization. (Gershman, 2011). The Arab Spring started. Will this extend democracy’s scope into the region that most resisted democratic transitions?

Kifaya movement, cedar revolutions?


The Arab Middle East, which was bypassed by the third wave of democracy, surprised the world in 2011. Ironically, just before the Tunisian uprisings, the Economist magazine (2010) published an article summarizing the various arguments making democracy an impossible phenomenon in the region. Authoritarian regimes are subject to Islamic culture, colonial borders, corruption, Islamists, and the abundance of oil. All of those arguments were suddenly refuted by millions of Arabs, sending a message that they also want and can have democracy.

A change in one country had an impact on what had appeared as stable autocracies in other parts of the Arab World. Something broke up and the Arab
people started to ask for change. The standard cause of this situation was the liberal democratic discontent. Masses demanded liberal democratic reform and yearned for sweeping political change and social justice.

Since 2010, three kinds of uprisings have been witnessed in the Arab World. The first type of movements was found to be ineffective as in Morocco and Bahrain. The second involved incremental regime change as in Egypt and Tunis. Finally, the third kind involved a slide to civil war in Syria, Libya and Yemen (Friedman, 2011).

Numerous ‘days of rage’ spread to different Arab countries; Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Oman, Iran, Iraq, Gaza, and Yemen. Influenced by the Jasmine revolution, people expressed their frustration and political and economic grievances.

However, some regimes managed to retain control over their societies as in the Gulf countries.

Can we thus speak about a process of democratization in the Arab World? It may still be too early to judge this but the curtain of fear was torn apart and a new hope for freedom was established.

1.2- Democratization in Context

Although the literature about authoritarianism in the Middle East is vast, all of it used to examine the absence of democracy in the region. In the early 1950s and 1960s, the prevalence of authoritarianism did not distinguish the region specifically from other third world countries. The Middle East missed the third wave of democratization that spread from Latin America in the 1970s to other Third World countries and to Eastern Europe in 1980s. Every attempt at political liberalization stalled or was reversed. In the Arab Middle East, Turkey and Lebanon were seen differently. In those two countries, the authoritarian or civil war period was followed by contested elections resulting in a strict domination of elites (Posusney, 2005).
The Middle East is not the only region suffering from authoritarianism, but this region is different since it endured such a long form of authoritarianism. It was vacant of any prior attempts of democratization. Policy makers and academic scholars offered pronouncements, papers, studies, and research to explain the cause of this democracy deficit. They shared different perspectives to explain the resilience of many authoritarian regimes and the factors hindering democratization. However, very few seemed to believe that an authoritarian Middle East could undergo a transition to democracy.

The literature changed in 2011. The Jasmine Revolution ended the era where this region was labeled not open to democracy. Arab countries saw hope in the streets of Tunisia. This resulted in mass movements across Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria. Numerous authors began studying the transition and the revolution of the Arab world. The Arab uprisings are indeed movements of huge historical significance. But while many study the transition on the ground, this thesis examines a specific phenomenon: authoritarian regime breakdown in Egypt.

The process of democratization is a topic of great importance. At first, democracies in the world were the exceptions. However, today, after numerous waves of democratization in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, democracy has become a global norm. Valerie Bunce (2000) suggests that the process of authoritarian regime breakdown requires certain variables. She focuses on the quality and sustainability of democracies and the path to authoritarianism regime breakdown. Bunce (2000) argues that all new democracies face problems as they break away from authoritarianism, and as they build subsequent democratic institutions. Barbara Geddes’s (1999) theoretical study also presents a set of variables that are necessary for regime breakdown.
Democratization and regime breakdown are complex dynamics that defy universally agreed upon definitions. Thus, the first part of the study will focus on establishing the definitions and characteristics attendant to this political concept. Then, it will map the variables of democratization and will test them against the case of Egypt. The thesis will explore the conditions that provided the impetus for the uprisings and the transition process in Egypt.

1.3- Research Questions

What are the prerequisites for authoritarian breakdown as identified by Bunce and Geddes? Authors have identified three waves of democratization and yet the Middle East missed all of them. In particular, this thesis tests the arguments made by Geddes and Bunce against the case of authoritarian regime breakdown in Egypt.

Bunce studies the relationship between different variables to understand the dynamics of authoritarian regime breakdown. She bases her arguments on a number of variables; the economic development, elites and origins of democracy, elites and the course of democratization, institutional design, the nation and the state, and finally, formal institutions and informal practices. Studying new democracies also requires looking at the regional transition. New democracies are challenged by three factors: breaking up with authoritarian rule, building the desired democratic establishments, and creating new ways to be able to cooperate with the former authoritarian regime (Bunce, 2000).

Barbara Geddes also studied regime breakdown but highlighted other factors. She studied poverty, poor economic performance, and splits in the system, popular protest, pacts between elites, and exogenous shocks. According to Geddes, those factors are essential for regime breakdown.
What explains the breakdown of authoritarianism, particularly in Egypt? Do the independent variables identified by Geddes and Bunce explain authoritarian regime breakdown in Egypt? This question will be answered by analyzing the reasons behind the uprisings, and then comparing them to the variables identified by Bunce and Geddes.

1.4- Methodology

Egypt’s case is important because it is at the heart of the Arab World, which gives it outstanding influence in the region, especially after the Camp David Accord. The combination of its large population of 80 million and its strategic location and trade routes, Egypt plays an important role. After the 1950s, this country was marked by a significant continuity in the internal scene. After 29 years in power, on the 11th of February, President Hosni Mubarak resigned. Popular uprisings took place in the streets of Suez, Cairo, and Alexandria against the authoritarian regime. In the last couple of years, the public sector was unresponsive to the people’s needs, and the government failed to provide sufficient employment opportunities and economic growth (Sharp, 2011). Egyptian uprisings highlighted the political and economic grievances addressing the problems of corruption and injustice. The success of Mubarak’s removal was the unpredicted result of a coalition of interests, class and ideologies.

This thesis uses the comparative approach to explain authoritarian regime breakdown in the Arab World, but more particularly in Egypt. We will compare the variables identified by theoretical studies of regime breakdown to processes of regime breakdown in Egypt. Moreover, this thesis uses secondary data, such as books, academic journals, etc. to test the Egyptian case against the arguments presented by Geddes and Bunce. To study the causal factors of the Arab Spring and the situation
in Egypt today, one must also use primary sources such as newspapers. Unfortunately, the research will encounter some limitations since the topic is very fresh and the outcome is still gray. In addition, some of the analysis will be based on speculations and forecasting about the future of the uprising.

1.5- Map of The Thesis

The thesis consists of four chapters. The next chapter is a heuristic exercise meant to achieve two things. First, it identifies the arguments made to explain authoritarian regime maintenance in the Arab World. Second, it spells out the independent variables identified in the theoretical literature for authoritarian regime breakdown. These variables are taken from two theoretical studies made by Geddes and Bunce. Chapter three examines the dynamics of the Egyptian history since 1952 and the authoritarian nature. It also highlights the last ten years under Mubarak. Chapter four tests the variables of Geddes and Bunce in light of the Egyptian uprising. Finally, chapter five includes a summary of the main arguments and an analysis of its theoretical contributions.
CHAPTER TWO
AUTHORIZED REGIME BREAKDOWN IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

2.1- Introduction

Since the 1950s, the Middle East was part of the scholarly study of the challenges of political development. Egypt, Syria and Iraq were used as case studies to explain military coups. The Middle East was also included in early studies of nationalism and postcolonial state building when Jamal Abdel Nasser participated in the founding the Non-Aligned Movement. Later on, the region was marginalized in the study of developing countries after escaping the third wave of democratization. Middle Eastern cases were completely absent from the most important works on democratic transitions. The region was rather best known for its ‘stubborn authoritarianism’.

The Arab uprisings pose a grave challenge to core findings in the literature on authoritarianism in the Arab world. The Arab Spring questioned the academic literature on authoritarian persistence and challenged a large number of scholarly ‘clichés’. Scholars failed to predict the recent developments that took place in the Arab world. Miriam Elman (2011) suggests that experts could not anticipate what happened in the Arab Spring for two reasons. The first reason is that no scholar has covered a particular dynamic in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The democratic deficit literature discussed the region as a whole. This interpretation drove researchers to avoid the real elements of change. The other reason is rationalism. The literature also missed strategic interaction and emotive behavior. Elman argues that the field did not use cost benefit analysis to explain
for example why the army sided with the Egyptian opposition in Tahrir Square (Elman, 2011: p.98-99).

This chapter aims to rectify this gap in the literature on authoritarian regime breakdown. Specifically, it studies the events that happened in Egypt in lieu of previous explanations of authoritarian regime breakdown.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part reviews the literature explaining authoritarian endurance in the Arab world. The second part firstly identifies authoritarian regime breakdown and then the variables that explain the phenomenon as identified in the comparative politics literature.

2.2 - Authoritarian Endurance in the Arab World

Authors of the democratization literature tend to explain the endurance of authoritarianism in the Middle East using two main approaches. One approach focuses on prerequisites; whether economic, cultural or institutional. The second approach explains democratization as dependent on the choices of a regime and opposition actors. The literature chosen investigates important past propositions covering the two schools of thought.

2.2.1- Cultural Perspective

Hisham Sharabi (1998) postulates that Arab authoritarianism is due in part to the tribal Arab patriarchal mentality. The latter works as an obstacle for the advance of pluralist ideals. Arab societies are thus inclined to accept the so-called patrimonial leader (Sharabi, 1998). Moreover, and although they do not present strictly cultural arguments, Rustow (1970, p.350-351) and Horowitz (1993) both argue that national unity is a prerequisite for democratization. Marcha Posusney (2005) gives the example of Iraq; the United States failed in its mission because
sectarianism acts an impediment to democratization throughout the Middle East. Michael Herb (1999) also stresses the importance of sectarian divisions. The latter successfully managed to strengthen the deep roots of authoritarianism.

Michael Hudson (1995), Lisa Wedeen (1998), and Amaney Jamal (2007) use anti-orientalist cultural arguments to explain the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East. Hudson highlights the need to be aware of the role of political culture in Arab politics. He proposed that tensions do exist between democratic values and the Islamic religion. Lisa Wedeen (1998) studied obedience, which induces complicity. The Hafiz Al-Assad regime in Syria created a personality cult in order to build an effective state. Wedeen (1998) highlights the enforcement of political dominance and national membership. Syrians are provided with a coherent system of rules, norms, prohibitions, and constraints to regulate their public conduct. The Assad’s regime was capable of creating, through political culture, a sub-system of coercive control that contributes to the regime’s longevity.

Amaney Jamal (2007) focuses on the subject of generalized trust serving democracy in democratic settings. She concludes that generalized trust is not linked to democratic forms of political and social engagement in the Arab World. After studying the level of trust in the Arab world, Jamal witnessed a growing discontent with the existing political and social status quo. Lower levels of trust are seen as also conductive to a democratic political culture.

**2.2.2- Economic Perspective**

Some academic scholars, such as Eva Bellin (2004), Marsha Posusney (2005), Seymour Lipset (1960) and Arang Keshavarzian (2004) explain authoritarianism in the Middle East as a result of economic factors. The Gulf
States derive the most significant part of their income from hydrocarbon exports: oil and gas. However, the poorer neighbors are also affected by the Arab oil economy. Those countries rely on labor migration and foreign aid. Thus the whole composite situation makes the Arab countries rentier or semi-rentier states. Other than patronage, the Middle Eastern regimes lack the main engine of democratization: a tax burden. Posusney (2005) argues that the lack of a tax burden deprives citizens from their right to participate in the government. Seymour Lipset (2006) also supports the argument behind “no representation without taxation”.

Arang Keshavarzian (2004) uses the rentier state theory to explain the resilience of the Iranian regime, which lacks an institutionalized and deep-rooted political organization. Although prices fluctuated during the last years, the Iranian regime was utterly dependent on rents. The latter helped give the elite more access to patronage. Rents primarily financed the regime’s coercive agencies and led to major elite fragmentation and factionalism. Keshavarzian also stresses the opposition parties’ inability to mobilize supporters among the citizenry.

In addition, Eva Bellin (2004) argues that in the Arab World rentier income is the major contributor to the robustness of authoritarianism. The highest proportion of expenditures is devoted to security forces.

Explanations for the robustness of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa have so far focused on the absent prerequisites of democratization in the region, including a weak civil society, state-dominated economies, poor socioeconomic performance, and a nondemocratic culture. In contrast, the region's enduring authoritarianism can be directly linked to the
robustness of the coercive apparatus in the region and to this apparatus' exceptional will and capacity to crush democratic initiatives. Cross-regional comparison by Bellin highlights external and internal factors that account for this exceptional strength.

2.2.3- Institutional and Political Economic Perspective

Mehram Kamrava (2007), Steven Heydemann (2007), Ellen Lust (2009) and Larry Diamond (2010) link the robustness of authoritarianism in the Arab World to institutional and political economic explanations. Steven Heydemann (2007) studied the resilience of Arab regimes. He argues that authoritarian rule provides the regime with a healthy access to opportunities and strategies in order to secure its interests. The unique national populist social pacts of authoritarian regimes help them protect themselves from democratization.

Larry Diamond (2010) sees the Middle East as an exception. In his article “Why is there no Arab democracy?” , he rejects the religious, economic, and cultural reasons as valid explanations of persistent authoritarianism. According to Diamond, political economy and geopolitics are the reasons behind the democratic deficit in the region. He suggests that oil plays an important role in authoritarian regimes’ maintenance. After all, none of the twenty-three countries exporting oil are democracies today.

Mehram Kamrava (2007) looks at institutional viability and rule. He argues that civil society plays an important role in democratization. In the Arab region, this condition is absent. He suggested that democratic transitions are not possible unless a pact occurs between the incumbents and the elites (Kamrava, 2007). But what will happen if civil society is active but tends to be extremist and undemocratic?
On the other hand, Daniel Brumberg (2003) suggests that Arabs can reach a transition to a “liberalized autocracy” but not to democracy. The author looks at the level of political pluralism leading to a liberalized form of autocracy. In the latter, partial legitimacy exists with national reconciliation. Some changes touch the industrial and organizational sector. Partial inclusion of Islamists and secularists takes place in absolute liberalized autocracies such as Jordan, Kuwait and Morocco. In the future, those liberalized autocracies will give birth to a fragmented civil society, a trap in economic and political reform, an enforcement of the Islamist power, and a weak legitimacy. All of that explains the impossibility of democratic change according to Brumberg (2003).

2.2.4- Social Perspective

Vickie Langohr (2004) also stresses the role of civil society in the public sphere. She studies the advocacy of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at a time when the political opposition was too weak. However, their actions failed to lead democratization simply because of their incapability of sustaining successful campaigns against determined authoritarian regimes. Langohr examines the conditions that promote the expressions of the opposition through nongovernmental organizations rather than opposition parties.

Fawaz Traboulsi studies the importance of the public sphere as a factor in the transition to democracy, especially in countries with authoritarian rule. Using Turgeon Habermas’ notion of the public sphere, Traboulsi points out the importance of popular action in the democratization process. After studying the case of Iraq, he highlights the need to use violence to achieve authoritarian regime breakdown.

Rabab El Mahdi (2009) argues that increased political opportunities, successful cultural framing and mobilization structures were tools enabling the 2004-
2005 prodemocracy movement in Egypt to achieve some success. She studies the importance of social movement theory. Nevertheless, she argues that the Egyptian experience was limited by the ‘clientalist’ system, the spirit of high dependency on the regime for jobs, and fragmented opposition.

**2.2.5- International Perspective**

Robert Blecher (2003), Michele Dunne (2009), and Steven Heydemann (2010) stressed the importance of external actors and trans-regional actors to explain the robustness of authoritarianism. Blecher (2003) examined US role in promoting democracy in the Arab region, suggesting that democracy promotion in this region is a very long and difficult process. Michele Dunne (2009) studied the Obama freedom agenda in the Middle East with the current challenges especially in Palestine and Iraq. She suggests that democracy appears to hurt US strategic interests and will result in Islamist groups rising to power.

Heydemann (2010) was also critical of promoting democracy in the Middle East. Democracy promotion did not cause any significant change in this region especially regarding political power distribution. Heydemann (2010) acknowledges the failure of democracy promotion when examining the ranking and the indices in terms of freedom and corruption of the MENA region. The figure below portrays the level of political rights and civil liberties from 2000 to 2009. We notice in year 2009 an increasing trend regarding civil liberties and a decreasing trend concerning political rights.
Graham Fuller and Timo Behr discuss the minimum amount of democratic change that can occur. They argue that Arabs can improve their regime while preserving their authoritarian rule (Fuller, 2004). But this new style of authoritarianism is expected to be the reason for the regime’s collapse in Tunis and Egypt, because a dictator cannot rule with democratic changes and tools being implemented. Graham Fuller discusses the compatibility of Islam and Democracy. The author explores oil production, income levels, the nature of Arab states, Arab Israeli tensions, geography, longtime western support for friendly tyrants in the Middle East, and Islamism. Fuller (2004) discusses how each factor alone is compatible with democratic hopes.

Section two in this chapter clearly states that no author has expected regime breakdown. They explained the robustness of authoritarianism using different approaches and perspectives. However, Section three will introduce and describe the authoritarian breakdown phenomenon.
2.3 - Authoritarian Regime Breakdown

After reviewing different views explaining the robustness of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, one must define what constitutes an authoritarian regime breakdown. The breakdown phase is important because it illustrates the possible path of democratization. The concept of democratization is assumed similar in all nondemocratic countries. But recent studies have shown that no such continuity exists. Democratic transitions vary from one autocracy to another. Various institutional attributes have been added to the democracy preconditions’ lists of different countries.

2.3.1- Types of Authoritarian Regimes

“Getting to democracy is easier from a regime in which competition is encouraged and the main challenge is to broaden participation; getting to democracy is much more difficult from a regime that has no tradition of political competition, however inclusive and participatory it might be” (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997, p.273)

Classical theories used to distinguish between totalitarianism and authoritarianism. “Totalitarianism” was ultimately omitted from discussion since scarcely any regime fits this description (Brooker, 2000). In 1996, Linz and Stephan worked on adding “post-totalitarianism” and “sultanism” to the old typology. In 2002, Larry Diamond explored the field of “hybrid” regimes. According to his study, regimes are situated between “democracy and politically closed authoritarianism” (Diamond, 2002, 25-31). The latter include competitive authoritarianism, hegemonic electoral authoritarianism, and ambiguous regimes in 1999 and 2003 (Diamond, 2002, p. 25-31).

However, Barbara Geddes used more qualitative distinctions to explain her typology. Based on Huntington’s study, Barbara Geddes classifies authoritarian regimes according to three categories: military, personalist and single party regimes.
Some regime types face harder conditions for change than others. Every type of a regime carries with it “the seeds of their own disintegration” (Huntington, 1991, p.110-113). The most fragile are military regimes. Personalistic ones last longer but not as long as one-party states.

Military regime breakdown starts with a clear division within the military’s rule. Geddes tackles the issue of military regime by focusing on the interests of military officers. There is a corporate interest that relies on maintaining order, discipline, strong military cohesion, and territorial integrity. Officers care as much about military unity as they do of control of the government itself and care about safeguarding their resources and independence (Geddes, 1999). That tends to threaten the regime especially when faced with external pressure. This type of regime does not have strong roots in society, which also makes it harder to control. (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006)

Single-party regimes often collapse after exogenous shocks. However, party cadres have simpler preferences than military officers. They simply want to stay in office, control government policy, and maintain ultimate power. Geddes (1999) discusses the effects of rivalries and competition in single-party regimes. After studying succession crises and internal struggles, Geddes concludes that a power struggle within single-party regime is not enough for a democratic transition. Observers and analysts suggest the importance of other factors to activate the transition process. Haggard and Kaufman (1995) focus on the issue of economic crisis. Huntington (1991) explains the necessity of external pressure, while Bratton and Van de Walle (1992) look for the need of popular protest in order to bring down “long-standing dictatorships”.

Additionally, Geddes recognizes other endogenous causes of instability. Single-party regimes usually control the allocation of jobs, education, opportunities, and positions in government institutions. This type of regime survives transitions because it works through institutional structures. They legalize opposition and hold free and fair elections. Because of the latter, external shocks are deemed necessary to destabilize the regime.

As for personalist regimes, they can be vulnerable to breakdown as a result of a leader’s death or a coercive coup. They attract the loyalty of their citizens by providing material rewards. They are rooted in the society through developed networks, which work on a clientelistic basis (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006). Therefore the sense of loyalty grows and people tend to feel dependent on the position of the ruling leader. Thus, this type of regime is weakest when facing an economic crisis. In addition, violent overthrows, coups, assassinations, other unexpected uprising and sometimes invasion can lead to the breakdown of personalist regimes.

Basing their research on Barbara Geddes’ study, Alex Hadenius and Jan Teorell (2006) explore authoritarian regime types. They start their analysis by distinguishing three types of “political power maintenance”: hereditary succession, use of military force, and popular election. To add, they classify authoritarian regimes as: monarchy, such as the regime in Saudi Arabia, military regime, such as in Chile and electoral regimes. The latter are divided into three types. The first is called the “no-party regime”, where elections take place but no political party is allowed. The second, the “one party regimes”, forbids one and allow all or vice versa. And the third is “the limited multiparty regime. Here, a very limited degree of competition is allowed. (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006)
2.3.2- Distribution of Authoritarian Regimes and the Breakdown

Figure 2 below shows the regime types from 1972 till 2003. The graph shows the change and the path of every regime type. The only kind of government that did not vary much is the governing monarchy, which prevails primarily in the Arab World. In fact, according to Hadenius and Teorell, military dictatorships do not last as long as one-party regime. Monarchies, however, not only last longer, around 25 years, but also enjoy greater stability than other regime types (Hadenius and Teorell, 2006 p.17).

Benjamin Smith (2005) also studied authoritarian breakdown basing his approach on the one used by Geddes. He focuses on single party rule regimes, and on their long-term durability. He unpacks the antecedent conditions that allow for an uprising that can topple a regime. In the figure below, he lists all authoritarian regimes that are still in power.
Figure three is important for the triple threat. A triple threat is a regime that combines single party, military and personalist characteristics. The triple threat regime such as Egypt and Syria has enough power to survive and escape breakdown. Smith argues that the conditions that topple this kind of regime should be exceptional (Smith, 2005). Moreover, when an authoritarian breakdown does occur, democracy is not always the end result. Recent examples, especially after WWII, have shown that authoritarian regimes are often replaced by other authoritarian regimes. A study made by Hadenius and Teorell (2006) has shown that only 23 percent of authoritarian regime breakdowns have resulted in a move towards a democratic path.

Transitions among monarchies are very difficult since they are so resistant to change. Traditionally, a one-party state’s transition is complex. When the breakdown happens, authoritarian rule takes two forms. One form is a “leading multiparty system. The other is a change to a traditional military regime” (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006, p.18) When military regimes change, they usually end up shifting to a limited multiparty system. Democratic transition is more likely to occur under

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**Regimes Still in Power as of 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Regime Type</th>
<th>Age in 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1979–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>1976–</td>
<td>1-Party Hybrid</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>1975–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>1975–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1965–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1963–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1963–</td>
<td>Triple Threat(^a)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>1960–</td>
<td>1-Party Hybrid</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>1959–</td>
<td>1-Party Hybrid</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1957–</td>
<td>Single Party</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1952–</td>
<td>Triple Threat(^b)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 1-Party Hybrid: regime combining a ruling party and either personalist or military rule.

\(^b\) Geddes codes the Philippines as personalist; based on her coding schema, I code it a single-party hybrid.

\(^c\) Triple threat: regime combining single-party, military, and personalist characteristics.

**Figure 2.3 Regimes still in power as of 2000 (Smith, 2005: 423)**
military/multiparty systems (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006). The figure below illustrates the most prevalent routes toward democracy. Each line shows the likelihood of regime change. The main path is the one that involves limited multiparty system. The latter is the most likely to be transformed into a democracy.

Figure 2.4: Democratic Pathway (Hadenius and Teorell, 2006:20)
2.4 – Explaining Authoritarian regime breakdown

Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce explored the independent variables explaining authoritarian regime transitions to democracy. They list a number of variables that explain the process of democratic transition. These variables will be compared to the breakdown of authoritarianism in Egypt.

Barbara Geddes’ study (1999) was chosen because it synthesizes the results of many comparative studies undertaken in the last 20 years. It is a theoretical analysis used to explain democratization experience of authoritarian regimes. In her approach, she surveys all previous studies and identifies all former arguments about democratization. Her data includes 163 authoritarian regimes in 94 countries.

Although differences in breakdown patterns exist, Geddes (1999) lists the general causes of regime breakdown taken from different studies. These are: poverty, poor country economic performance, splits within military government, popular protest, pacts between elites, and exogenous shocks.

Most importantly, Geddes offers a theoretical model in which she displays the six variables for transition from authoritarian regimes towards democracy.

First, poverty is the most important predictor for transitions. But in order for democracy to survive, a certain level of economic development is required. Based on an analysis made by Przeworski and Limongi in 1997, Geddes points out the likelihood of a relapse to an authoritarian regime when the level of economic development falls below international standard (Geddes, 1999). Thus, a positive relationship between democracy and economic development is observed. According to Londregan and Poole’s statistical studies, poverty has been seen as a “stronger predictor of transitions to authoritarianism” (Geddes, 2004, 3).
Poor economic performance is another stimulator of authoritarian breakdown. Another positive relationship exists between low economic growth and transitions. Additionally, economic crises have an impact on regime changes, which was observed, especially in the third wave of democratization (Geddes, 1999).

Barbara Geddes introduces a third variable to her theory: splits within the system. As O’Donnel and Schmitter (1986) observed, “There is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence- direct or indirect- of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself” (p.16).

Given that the process of democratization varies from one region to another, the nature of these splits is also different. Splits within military occurred in Greece and in Latin America. In Spain and Portugal, splits occurred within the old regimes. In Africa and the Soviet Union, splits happened throughout society. In these latter cases, transition rose from below, as the opposition grew stronger (Geddes, 1999).

Popular protests and mobilization, Geddes’s fourth variable, takes place in the democratization process, but usually happen late in the process. This variable can sometimes push the transition faster but cannot be the main cause behind liberalization and the implementation of democratic principles. In Europe and in Africa, popular mobilizations allowed for negotiations between opposing parties (Geddes, 1999).

Pacts between elites are considered to be the fifth variable. Agreements among opposing elites have proven to be very useful in democratic transition. They are necessary to establish formulas for power sharing and policy choice. Geddes noted that sometimes this variable maybe absent as was in the case in some African countries (Geddes, 1999).
Lastly, Geddes studied the effects of exogenous shocks capable of undermining authoritarian regimes. These shocks can hinder economic performance and the equal distribution of benefits. Geddes highlights the existence of two types of shocks; geopolitical and economic. The second oil crisis in the late 1970s was one of the most important causes for the breakdown of 14 military regimes. Geddes suggests that crises are not the direct cause of authoritarian breakdown, but can exacerbate the situation. In this case, the authoritarian regime struggles aggressively to stay in power. When it feels so close to the end, the regime usually starts distributing benefits, talks about reforms, and establishes a coalition. Exogenous shocks surprise the leader and increase the possibility of authoritarian breakdown. Personalist regimes tend to be the most affected by these crises (Geddes, 1999). As Bratton and Von de Walle (1997) conclude, “The economic crisis undercut the material foundations of patrimonial rule: With ever fewer resources to distribute, political elites faced a growing problem of how to maintain control of clientelist networks”.

Geddes revisited these themes again in another study in 2004. Her study tests theoretical implications that were concluded after World War II concerning regime breakdown. Focusing on the Middle East, Geddes made a surprising conclusion at that time. Although many arguments propose similarities between Islam and authoritarianism, she suggests that the Middle East’s dictatorships are not durable. This lack of durability does not directly indicate a near occurrence of democratization but once democratization occurs, the dictatorships will follow one after another (Geddes, 2004). Geddes argued that authoritarianism tends to be present in Islamic countries as seen in the Middle East. But unexpectedly, Geddes’s
study suggests that countries with large Islamic populations are more prone to authoritarian regime breakdown (Geddes, 2004).

In contrast, Valerie Bunce bases her study on examples from the post-communist experience. She uses a comparative approach in producing her generalizations. Her study involves recent debates in the democratization field. Bunce tries to balance comparative theory and real knowledge. Moreover, her study involves the whole process of democratization. She focuses on relationships between transition and regime path, and between consolidation and sustainability. Bunce complements Geddes’s work by focusing on other variables and by providing a whole package for the democratization process.

As mentioned above, Bunce (2003) analyses the whole democratization phenomenon: regime breakdown, transition phase, democratization, and the consolidation of democracy. Each particular phase has its set of variables. This chapter focuses on the topic of regime breakdown. After studying different scenarios in Latin America and Eastern Europe, Bunce identifies five variables involved in the process of authoritarian regime breakdown; economic development, elites, immediate influences, mass mobilization and nationalism.

To start, Bunce stresses the importance of the relationship between economic development and democracy. A correlation exists between income per capita and democratization. Thus, to predict a regime breakdown, one should study the level of economic development and reform. Bunce (2003) bases her argument on the Freedom House report that underscores the relationship between economic development, political liberties and civil rights. In general, sustained growth weakens the power of the authoritarian regime since it helps the expansion of civil society, which is capable of checking the ‘monopolistic government’. It has also the
power to delay its fall taking the examples of Singapore, and Malaysia. Additionally, economic development is necessary to expand the educational force. The latter will help create a mature capitalist economy and will start demanding inclusion, accountability and a balance of power.

Bunce then identifies the second relationship between the elites and the transition to democracy. Political elites play an important role in the process of regime breakdown and democratization. This relationship was seen in the last three waves of democratization. Moreover, elites in power and in opposition are highly influenced by mass mobilization. Elites tend to be the best catalyst in long-term developments because they are pointed as the good members of the society. In addition, they manage through their actions to be the founders of democracy by design political institutions. The quality and sustainability of the new democracy will be defined once the elites decide whether to be more or less constrained by the democratic game. Bunce notes the difficult phase of transition when elites will try to gradually destroy the institutional and cultural legacies of authoritarianism. Elites can help in starting the transition, but will have a difficult time consolidating democracy. (Bunce, 2000)

Third, the important variable is the immediate influence of the regime. This variable has shaped the fate of many countries. It acts as a stimulus for the entire country. Immediate influence of a regime is considered much more significant than historical context in the regime breakdown scenario. According to Bunce, those influences make the transition more uncertain. In order to reduce uncertainty, Bunce refers to Dankwart Rustow who emphasized the need to prior resolve all national and state dilemmas (Bunce, 2003).
Mass protests and the role of civil society is the fourth dynamic in the process of regime breakdown. After analyzing successful transitions, Bunce notes that transitions always begin with mass protests, with the exception of Hungary. Mass mobilization by itself facilitates the transition towards democracy. Protests signal authoritarian regime breakdown. Leaders are forced to join the bargaining table and different factions of the opposition unite in order to reject the old regime. Bunce describes mass mobilization as “a mandate for radical change” (Bunce, 2003, p.172).

The fifth variable is nationalism, which plays an important role in the regime breakdown process. In Bunce’s analysis, national homogeneity is a necessary condition for a successful transition. Heterogeneity can induce, change or affect certain aspects but undermines the democratization process. Once established, new democracies are prone to breakdown if they exhibit a large degree of heterogeneity. Thus Bunce identifies two conditions required for the process of democratization. The first condition is prior statehood. The second condition is public success in creating strong agreement on the new structure of the nation, the boundaries and the balance of power. Although many have argued that “nationalism is an undemocratic project”, Bunce argues that a sense of nationalism is required for successful democratic transitions. Nationalism is a tool for challenging authoritarian rule, constructing social responsibility, and making the government responsive and accountable to its community (Bunce, 2003, p.176).

Bunce also argues that two relationships are very important. Democratization occurs through a series of waves. One relationship is between transitional politics
and subsequent regime trajectories. The other relationship exists between the consolidation and the sustainability of democracy. She argues that the degree of uncertainty varies according to each situation and that mass mobilization is important for democratic consolidation.

| Table 2.1 Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce’s Variables |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barbara Geddes</th>
<th>Valerie Bunce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Poverty</td>
<td>1. Economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Poor economic performance (low economic growth)</td>
<td>2. Elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Splits in the system (within Military Government)</td>
<td>3. Immediate influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pacts between Elites (power sharing)</td>
<td>5. Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exogenous shocks (geopolitical and economical)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5- Conclusion

This chapter examined authoritarian breakdown in comparative perspective. It specifically studied two authors, Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce, who analyzed regime breakdown. The figure 2.1 above summarizes the variables, whether common or different, used by those two authors. The next chapter will treat Egypt in particular and will analyze the events on the eve of the uprising.
CHAPTER THREE

EGYPT ON THE DAWN OF THE UPRISING

3.1- Introduction

This chapter examines the Egyptian state on the eve of regime change. It first defines Egypt’s authoritarian system then describes Egypt under Nasser and Sadat. The chapter then considers Sadat’s different approach, with particular reference to the consequences of his Infitah policies. It closes exploring Egypt under Hosni Mubarak’s rule, highlighting the phases of liberalization then de-liberalization.

3.2- Defining Egypt and its Authoritarian Regime

Egypt has a mixed legal system. It combines English common law, Islamic rule and Napoleonic policies (Platan & Teal, 2001). Islam is the official religion since article 2 of the constitution decrees that Islamic law, or the Sharia, is the official and main source of legislation (Stacher, 2011). The country is divided into 26 administrative regions. The government controlled all power and interfered heavily in the economic frame, political parties, opposition, elections, and judiciary, but most importantly, in military issues. The Sadat constitution of 1971 gives the president control and power to establish patron-client relationships and choose who should be in power. The People’s Assembly\(^1\) nominates the president to a period of six years. This nomination is later on endorsed in a popular referendum.

The system and the political opposition show that Egypt is an authoritarian state (Stacher, 2004). By definition, authoritarianism is defined as “a situation where

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\(^1\) The People’s Assembly is the elected lower house. In theory, this house can check the president’s power. Actually, today this house has no role at all since it is forbidden to interfere in the foreign and defense affairs. (Platan, Teal, 2001: 4)
(a) freedom is restricted in favor of obedience to authority and (b) this authority is itself exercised with restrictions” (Brooker, 2000, p.22).

Authoritarian regimes are divided between total and partial autocracies. Total autocracies such as Saudi Arabia and Syria have full control over everything. Partial autocracies, such as Algeria, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar and most importantly Egypt, have a certain degree of openness although the latter is still under the direct control of the regime. A small division between the state and society exists, with a special attention given to religious institutions. Moreover, in partial autocracies, the state focuses on economic development and growth.

3.2- Republican Egypt under Nasser and Sadat

Egypt’s authoritarian regime may be traced to the coup against the monarchy. In July 1952, the Free Officers’ Movement, under the command of Colonel Jamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew King Farouq. They succeed in abolishing the monarchy and declaring a new independent republic (Marsot, 1985). Under Nasser, Egypt rose in power and influence within the Arab world. Armed with the ideology of pan-Arabism2, he elevated Egypt to the position of leadership in the Arab Middle East.

3.2.1- Nasser’s Egypt

Nasser established an authoritarian state. He united the country under his leadership and exploited Egypt’s resources to “mobilize the potential power of the country” (Kerr, 1961, p. 18-22). In the 1960s, Nasser created the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). The latter was the only ruling party representing the regime in power. The ASU later became the National Democratic Party or NDP, which was the governing party under Sadat and Mubarak. Nasser outlawed all political parties and

2 See Pan Arabism: Arab Nationalism and Arabism (Dawisha, 2003; 4)
radical social groups, but especially the Muslim Brotherhood, thus uniting the domestic society (Sharp, 2007).

Nasser also succeeded in consolidating the authority of the state, especially over the political and economic domains. He introduced a number of economic reforms. First, in order to reduce and later abolish all British and French influence within the country, he nationalized Egypt’s privately owned banks, commercial businesses, insurance and industrial companies. Later, he implemented the Agrarian Reform Law of 1952. The latter limited the amount of lands any individual can hold and enabled everyone to own land. By this strategy, Nasser allowed the state to collect more tax revenue and allowed the population to increase its income (Kerr, 2007). Additionally, Nasser built the Aswan High Dam and nationalized the Suez Canal. He also implemented the Five-Year Development Plan that resulted in the expansion of the industrial sector. Between 1952 and 1959, the amount of industrial production rose by 47 percent (Kerr, 2007).

During Nasser’s time, Egypt received financial assistance from the United States and the Soviet Union. The regime benefited from government revenues and aids to increase military spending and to make arms deals that gave Egypt an entrée to new military technology that other neighboring countries did not have. With all the above, Egypt’s military system became the most advanced and powerful in the Arab Middle East and thus allowing Egypt to emerge as regional power.

Nasser was responsible for redirecting Egypt towards socialism. He was also aware that foreign policy was important. He became the hero of Arab nationalism after defeating the Tripartite Aggression in 1956. However, the loss of the 1967 war ended his domestic and regional leadership. Nasser died in 1970 but managed
through his rule to establish an authoritarian regime that lasted for many years to come (Marsot, 1985).

### 3.2.2- Sadat’s Egypt

Vice President Anwar Al Sadat assumed power after Nasser’s death. At the time, the internal situation was in shambles with a collapsed economy after the war, massive public disorder and a demoralized divided country. He swiftly distanced himself from Nasser policies. People loyal to Nasser opposed him. They believed in heavy industrialization, state socialism and government control over society (Hinnebush, 1985). Thus, Sadat went through a “Corrective Revolution” that revised Nasser’s failed policies and freed the government from the old ideology (Lippman, 1989). This revolution consolidated Sadat’s position. He reorganized the ASU, called for new parliamentary elections, and started implementing domestic changes.

Sadat created a new constitution. The latter mainly focused on consolidating power in the hands of the president and on weakening all aspects of democratic power. Sadat endorsed a certain degree of domestic political expression. Since 1975, new political groups that voiced the opinions of the left, right and center were formed (Federal Research Division, 2007). Moreover, he started tolerating the Muslim Brotherhood by allowing the organization to freely operate in the country. Although not legally recognized, the Muslim Brotherhood was grateful to Sadat.

Sadat’s main policy change focused on the Egyptian economy. He inherited a heavy debt due to the 1967 war and a high number of unemployed but educated people (Vatikiotis, 1985). As a result, he decided to base Egypt’s economy on a free market model (Ates, 2005).

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3 The National Progressive Unionist Organization, the Socialist Liberal Organization, the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization, the National Democratic Party and Socialist Labor Party.
In 1974, Sadat issued the “October Working Paper” that allowed the acceptance of unconditional foreign aids and loans to boost the development. Most importantly, that paper introduced an innovative economic policy, referred to as the *Infitah*, or “Open Door Policy”. The latter liberated Egypt’s economy and reversed Nasser’s socialist policies. The government was forced to accept tax breaks, tariff incentives and less control and restrictions over the industrial sector. Hinnebush, (1985) *Infitah* enacted Law 43 of 1974, which accepted the creation of private companies. It encouraged foreign investment and eliminated all kinds of government monopoly over financial institutions. It also encouraged joint ventures between the private and the public sectors (Lippman, 1989).

The “Open Door Policy” succeeded in putting the Egyptian economy on track, increasing the GDP and boosting foreign investment. However, it created some problems. Egypt went further in debt and the United States was encouraged to send more aid in the form of loans to stabilize the economy. Sadat also resorted to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Nevertheless, the loans and aid forced Sadat to reduce the funding of public education and health care services and to remove subsidies. This resulted in deep social discontent (Hinnebusch, 1985). The population moved away from Sadat and turned to the Muslim Brotherhood, especially that the latter started providing services not provided by the state. They created a parallel economy offering health care, education and charities (Ates, 2005). Egyptians saw Islam as an alternative to pan-Arabism.

*Infitah* also made Sadat change some foreign policies that shook Egypt’s role as a regional leader. After initiating a war against Israel in October 1973, the United States worked tirelessly to engage the two countries in diplomatic negotiations. And unlike Nasser, Sadat was not concerned with regional leadership, but rather with
achieving peace with its neighbors and moving Egypt to the US orbit. After Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in 1977, and the Camp David accords in 1978, a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt was signed in 1979. Sadat’s signature on the accord made Egypt the exception in the Arab world and led to its expulsion from the Arab League. Radical Islamists later assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981, and his Vice President Mohammad Hosni Mubarak took power (Marsot, 1985).

3.3- Mubarak’s Egypt

Under Nasser and Sadat’s rule, the great majority of Egyptians were still “contained” witnesses to the dramatic “political and economic overhauls of their society” (Ryan, 2001, p.6). Hosni Mubarak established his legitimacy and ensured his power survival by first shifting from political containment to liberalization. He successfully used the authoritarian state structure to exercise his unchallenged power. He excelled in building a coercive state with a legal basis to suppress the opposition and engineered a democratic facade to cover his monopoly over power.

Other than being a partial autocracy, Egypt under Mubarak was also a model of “electoral authoritarianism” (Tlemcani, 2007, p.7). This regime is characterized by a passive participatory nature. This is because Egyptian participated in rigged and fake elections. The government working on controlling all governmental power lost its credibility towards its citizens (Tlemcani, 2007). In this system, the president limited the ability of the elected officials to truly represent their population while ensuring their faithfulness towards the regime. The latter accepted some political movements under a fake allowance of pluralism. The judiciary was partially independent but suffers from presidential political pressures. The media was surrounded by boundaries. Opposition in Egypt can obtain a limited number of seats
in the parliament but the majority always sides in favor of the president (Elagati, 2011).

**3.3.1- The Authoritarian Structure**

The Egyptian system, like other Arab ones, was created in order to maintain regime stability when facing severe legitimacy problems. James Quinlivan (1999, p. 3) argues that these regimes strengthen regime stability as they become “coup-proof”. He claims that:

“The essential systems necessary for coup-proofing are: (1) The exploitation of family, ethnic, and religious loyalties; (2) the creation of parallel militaries that counterbalance the regular military forces; (3) the establishment of security agencies that watch everyone, including other security agencies; (4) the encouragement of expertness in the regular military; and (5) funding.”

Since 1952, the Egyptian regime has built a system geared towards regime survival. Kassem (2004) also studied Egypt’s political system and found out that four main aspects characterize it system: exclusionary laws, patronage, cooptation and a coercive apparatus (Kassem, 2004).

First of all, the constitution was designed with an unequal balance of power. It created an exclusionary system since the executive branch holds remarkable powers compared to the judicial and legislative ones. Sadat’s 1971 constitution granted the president immense powers making the latter capable of bypassing parliament’s complaints, calling a referendum and dissolving the People’s Assembly (Kassem, 2004). Moreover, the president had the power to oversee and manage judiciary affairs. He was the one who can launch state security courts, appoint and dismiss the cabinet and choose judges. The Egyptian president also had the ultimate power to cancel laws, rule by decree and announce “a state of emergency”.

In 1981, Mohammad Hosni Mubarak declared a state of emergency after Sadat was assassinated. In general, a state of emergency is usually declared in order
to preserve and safeguard political control. However, in the Egyptian case, the state of emergency lasted throughout Mubarak’s reign. The constitutional framework gave Mubarak the privilege to preserve a desired status quo. This state helped the president uphold more power for political control (Kassem, 2004). Since political activity could be censored, people could be easily charged of crimes, directly arrested and sometimes taken to military courts. Opposition and other political parties were bound by restrictions and were not able to meet and function due to the difficulties they faced. Patronage was another tool used for regime survival as Kassem suggests:

“In the absence of democratic institutions, accountable representation and a compelling and mobilizing ideology, authoritarian regimes depend on the distribution of patronage to establish a clientelistic system that secures some form of stability” (2004, p. 4)

After gaining full independence from the British, the presidents created a system of patronage. Resources were distributed to those supporting the regime as well as to members of the governing party. Egyptians became completely co-opted into the system and started supporting the status quo in order to preserve their interests. A patron-client relationship was consequently created. The president provides services when the citizen supports him. Mubarak reinforced this concept and became the ultimate patron in the Egyptian society. He created a patron-client hierarchy (Henrisken, 2009).

The coercive system is based on the military and the internal security. Usually, in democratic countries, this apparatus works for the protection and for the defense of the government. Nevertheless, authoritarianism demands much more than that. These institutions are deeply extended into the political system. In this case, the military and the police work and aggressively intervene to support the regime (Kassem, 2004).
In Egypt, like other authoritarian systems, the president acts as the supreme commander of the armed forces and the police. As noted before, the president is capable of nominating the leaders of these institutions and establishing clear and close ties with these forces. President Mubarak used these institutions on a regular basis to control the political activists, the opposition and ‘chaos’. Moreover, as seen in most Egyptian elections, the police has the ultimate right to supervise the elections, control the actual voting and count the ballots (Kassem, 2004, p.7).

3.3.2- Liberalization then De-Liberalization

Once in power, Hosni Mubarak pursued political liberalization during the parliamentary elections of 1984 ad 1987. When, in 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the largest opposition bloc, Mubarak reversed political liberalization and reverted to a pure authoritarian structure. Although the 1990s witnessed some shy gestures of political liberalization, Mubarak never discarded the use of coercive measures.

Sadat and Mubarak are similar in this respect. They both reversed their political liberalization policies when they are challenged by opposition powers. Mubarak introduced de-liberalization policies. Some of the indicators were emergency law, antiterrorist law, legislation governing professional syndicates and trade unions, Journalist Syndicate Law, and Press Law (Aknur, 2007). Emergency law, forced in 1981, was extended for many years. That law was the cause of many huge human right violations (Cassandra, 1995). Mubarak also introduced the “antiterrorist law”, amended in 1992. This policy was harsh and involved any action “disrupting public order, harming individuals, damaging the environment and financial assets, and obstructing the application of law” (Kienle, 1998, p. 222).
Moreover, in 1993, Mubarak ratified the “Law to Guarantee Democracy within the Professional Syndicates.” This latter law required a minimum voter turnout and if that was not met, the results would be voided and judges appointed by the regime would supervise syndicates. That law gave Mubarak more power to overturn elections (Cassandra, 1995). Furthermore, in 1995, a “Press Law” was imposed on publication crimes. The crimes are defined as “printing of misleading information”, “false rumors”, and “defamations” (Kienle, 1998, p.223).

Political liberalization started in the 1970s and lasted until the 1990s when the regime reversed course. The political liberalization strategy fluctuated between political opening and some severe setbacks. According to Noah Feldman (2003), the rise of political Islam accelerated the de-liberalization process in Egypt. Civil society, controlled by the state, did not play an important role in that strategy. However, when Islamists interfered, the government automatically introduced de-liberalization policies, which challenged the notion of a blocked transition to democracy.

Political liberalization was intertwined with economic reforms introduced during Sadat’s era. Mubarak took power after Sadat, assuring his country that he would resist any domestic or foreign investments, which would hinder Egypt’s productive capacity (Weinbaum, 1996). When in power, the economy was rusting. Abnormal external debt had reached $21 billion. Egyptians suffered high inflation, foreign exchange shortage, balance of payment problems and decline of oil prices and workers’ remittances (Baynard, 1995). At first, and in order to stabilize the situation, Hosni Mubarak continued with Sadat’s policy in the path of economic liberalization. Thus, in accordance to the Infitah policies, Mubarak expanded the process of political liberalization by extending civil liberties and implementing a
series of economic reforms. He also maintained negotiations with the IMF, the World Bank and the Paris Club to attract foreign assistance (Momani, 2003). In 1991, tight fiscal and monetary measures were introduced with the agreement of the IMF. Liberalization of prices and of foreign trade pushed the economy forward. In addition to that, and in order to consolidate the economy in the longer run, reforms took place in the public sector followed by the privatization of a huge number of companies.

3.4 - Mubarak’s Egypt on the Eve of the Uprising

Mubarak ruled as a king in Egypt. Since 1981, his reelection was virtually guaranteed and he was ‘circuitously’ named president for life. Mubarak and the National Democratic Party, succeed in dominating and controlling Egypt’s government, economy, military and civil society for many years.

3.4.1 - The Government

Starting in 1981, Mubarak undertook a process of political liberalization. He started by releasing political prisoners, calling for national reconciliation and greater freedoms. Mubarak succeeded in winning the Egyptians’ trust and goodwill. However, the parliamentary elections of 1984 revealed the real Mubarak (Hilal, 1986). He mobilized the country’s bureaucracy so that his ruling party, the National Democratic Party, would win. The NDP won 87% of the parliamentary seats (Hassan, 2010).

In 1987, another parliamentary election took place. For many scholars, this period witnessed a vital step towards liberalization, especially since the ruling party received only 77.78% of the parliamentary seats. The Muslim Brotherhood was regarded as the opposition. Nonetheless, the opposition was complaining about the
unfairness of the election law. The elections were again rigged and government pressures were immense. Mubarak responded to the opposition’s complaints by dissolving the People’s Assembly and calling for new elections in 1990 (Abdel Majid & Mossad, 1992). Assuring more control over the government, Mubarak started by tightening his control over citizens and by limiting their involvement in the political life. Another election took place in year 2000. That election took place under full judicial supervision especially since the previous elections were called unlawful. But as usual Mubarak’s ruling party won 87.8 % (Hassan, 2010). Finally, the 2005 elections, the NDP won again but did not obtain the same share of seats. The Muslim Brotherhood, for the first time, won 88 seats (Al Shobky, 2005).

Throughout his long tenure, Mubarak painted the Egyptian system with corruption. Although Egypt is a part of the UN Convention against corruption, the latter became an essential part of the state system. Officials and politicians were involved in this corrupt system. It enabled social groups to exercise their power over state institutions. Corruption was stretched to the parties, syndicates, NGOs and others (Amin, 2009). The bad economic conditions and the lack of respect to laws nurtured the corruption concept. Nevertheless, corruption benefited the elites, state officials and the wealthy Egyptians. They were able to make fortunes in a very short period of time leaving the poor Egyptians behind.

Corruption widened the economic and social gap, and destroyed the notion of legitimacy and respect to the regime in power (Hassan, 2010). In 2009, the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies[^4] conducted a survey about the consequences of regular corruption. Egyptians identified corruption as the cause of high commodity prices and low wages (Ahram Center, 2009).

[^4]: A government think-tank
In its final years, Mubarak’s regime violated repeatedly the Egyptians’ civil and political rights. Torture and random imprisonments were widely used by the regime. The latter controlled the freedom of assembly and association (Stacher, 2011). More obstacles were introduced to the legitimate right of a voter and of a candidate to participate freely in elections. Moreover, media laws were introduced to weaken the opposition. The opposition’s demands were not even considered. The judiciary was also subject to Mubarak’s intimidation.

The government did not respect religious diversity and exercised discrimination against different sects. In particular, discrimination against the Copts was very relevant in recent years. It pushed Coptic Christians to withdraw from politics and heightened religious tensions (Stacher, 2011).

Mubarak created his own coalition of NDP hierarchy, security services and powerful businessmen. This patronage network preserved the president’s power especially when faced and opposed by protests, strikes, political activists, media, and most importantly the Muslim Brotherhood (Stacher, 2011). In particular, the security services preserved Mubarak’s façade of political stability (Stacher, 2011). Due to that stability, the president invested in this specific sector more than housing or health.

### 3.4.2 - The Economy

Egypt’s economy started to open up when Sadat came to power and later under Mubarak. In the 1990s, Mubarak initiated economic reforms to strengthen Egypt’s power and to ensure a long-term stability. The regime introduced some structural reforms. At a gradual pace and following Sadat’s steps, Mubarak started by privatization and trade liberalization, as discussed earlier in this chapter (Paciello,
2007). Unfortunately, the reforms benefited the multinational corporations, who seized Egyptian assets. At some point, the state failed to manage the privatization process and to assure the required transparency (Hassan, 2011).

In 2004, Mubarak pursued a remarkable economic program and some reforms. Under Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, he accelerated the path of liberalization and privatization (Wurzel, 2009). The latter cases were capable of attracting the needed foreign investment that led to an increase in GDP growth. The reforms were applied without harming the interest of the ruling elites, regime supporters or the military institutions (Heydemann, 2007). Reforms were used to distribute privileges to important segments of Egyptian society, politicians and well-connected businessman (Wurzel, 2009). Despite the reforms that took place, the Egyptians’ living condition remained significantly bad. Economic growth benefited Mubarak and his elites. The promised and needed wealth distribution did not occur. Mubarak’s policies and reforms enriched very corrupt elite, at the expense of a weak class and poor workers.

Historically, from 1992 until 2010, Egypt’s average annual GDP growth$^5$ reached its peak level period 2008-2009. In March 2008, it reached an all time high of 7.30 percent growth. But since then, it started fluctuating at a low level of 3.8 at the beginning of 2011. The figure below shows economic growth trend of the last 10 years taking into account the period following the revolution. The 2011-2012 will be discussed later in chapter 4.

$^5$Unlike the commonly used quarterly GDP growth rate the annual GDP growth rate takes into account a full year of economic activity, thus avoiding the need to make any type of seasonal adjustment.
Moreover, the inflation rate rose in the last two of years. The figure below addresses the inflation rate from 2001 until the beginning of 2011. (Data has been taken from CIA Factbook and the International Monetary Fund).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
<td>3.21%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Inflation rates

The inflation rate in Egypt since 2001 took an increasing trend with several double-digit episodes. According to the IMF, the high inflation rates of 2007 onwards were partly due to the rigidities and distortions in price and wage settings (Moriyama, 2011). The unemployment rates in Egypt have also remained inflexibly high. The figure 3 below shows how the rate ranged from 8 to 11%. Since 1990, Egypt has been facing major economical structural changes, a number of external shocks and some governmental reforms. Reforms induced by Mubarak raised economic growth in Egypt, yet the unemployment rate remained high. A shift took place in 2004-2005 when another economic program was implemented. According to
CAPMAS\textsuperscript{6}, more than two million new jobs were created between 2004 and 2007. Thus, the unemployment rate declined during that period to reach 9 percent. Yet, problems remained with another two million still out of work (Hasan & Sansapour, 2011).

\textbf{Figure 3.2} Egypt Unemployment rates (Trading economics, 2012)

According to the UNDP Annual report 2008 on Egypt, around 20 percent of citizens lived below the poverty line. Moreover, at least 14.7 percent of Egyptians children skip school and start working at a very young age (UNDP, 2008).

But while the government proved inefficient in responding to people’s needs, the Muslim brotherhood and other silent parties filled the gap by helping citizens (Hassan, 2011),

\textbf{3.4.3- The Military}

During the Mubarak era, the military sector was very important in controlling the regime and ensuring its stability. It was one of the main institutions of the Egyptian regime. Throughout the years, the army responded to the president’s needs. The army was considered as Mubarak’s main institutional support especially when

\textsuperscript{6}CAPMAS: Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics
facing extremists (Cook, 2007). Officers became “a vital part of the state elites”. 
(Goodson & Radwan, 1997)

The military was also privileged in controlling large assets of the national economy. Upon assuming power, Mubarak portrayed the military as a main engine for economic growth. Under Mubarak’s rule, the military owned industrial and agricultural factories. Robert Springbord (1989) has noted that:

“There is a horizontal expansion in the role of the military into the national economy. The military's role in Egypt's economy is represented in four primary sectors: military industries, civilian industries, agriculture, and national infrastructure”

As a result, throughout the years, the military economic power succeeded in strengthening Mubarak’s patronage system (Droz-vincent, 2011). Moreover, the military role was important in severe crises. That role dates back to 1986 when the army interfered to stop a rebellion of the Central Security Forces. It stood up to any militant Islamic threat.

However Cook (2007) notes “The army was ruling but not governing in recent years”. Hosni Mubarak considerably reduced the role of the military in governance. In fact, a 2001 study showed that the Mubarak ministerial appointees accounted for only 8 percent of the military (Ouda, Al Borai & Saada, 2001). This number is surprising especially that under the rule of former presidents Nasser and Sadat the percentage of military officers in cabinet was much higher.

3.4.4 - Civil Society

The concept of civil society emerged in 1821. It was a group of students under the leadership of Mohammad Ali calling for the rights of the new middle class that flourished at that time. From 1882 until 1922, the Egyptian civil society worked for the confrontation of the colonial rule. The civil society developed trade unions,
parties, chambers of commerce, feminist lobby and enterprises. The phase after 1922 until 1952 was marked by a flourishing civil society. The latter was capable of flourishing to produce 80 daily newspapers. They all had the same discourse; transparency, accountability, free elections and basic rights (ICLN, 2011).

When Nasser came to power, almost all power and authority was vested in the hands of a small elite. Civil society was constrained by the emergence of a “corporatist populist regime” (Hassan, 2009, p.68). The state dominated all civil society when it formulated the law of 1964 (ICLN, 2011). The latter gives the state the ability to “refuse the creation, dissolution, or amalgamation of any civil association without response to the judiciary” (Hassan, 2011, p.7).

In recent years, under Mubarak’s rule, civil society in Egypt consisted of around 30,000 organizations. Most of them were religious associations, trade and industry chambers, youth and social clubs, professional syndicates and only 24 legally registered political parties (Hassan, 2011). Although new parties did exist, a true multiparty democratic system remained alusive in Egypt. The Political Party Affairs Committee accepted only two parties, Al-Umma party and the Al-Wifak party. The other parties used courts to get their license. The judiciary thus played an important role in creating the system of political parties (Abdul Rahman, 2002).

Moreover, opposition parties were doomed very weak. They were circled by boundaries and limits. Moreover, some of those parties relied on government subsidies or public sector advertisements to make their revenues (Hassan, 2011). The Mubarak regime succeeded in creating a financial dependence leaving political parties always independent. In 2002, law number 84 was introduced in order to control the funds and finances of the NGOs. The latter could not accept or receive any sort of fund without Mubarak’s government authorization (Hassan, 2011).
Relation between syndicates, trade unions and interest groups took a patron-client dynamic. The right to strike was forbidden. The government also allowed a very limited number of businessman associations. Although they had some independence from the state, they were coopted by the government and linked to the Mubarak regime. They strongly believed in the government’s liberalization policies (Hassan, 2011).

By 2004, anti-regime protests started in Egypt with the creation of the Egyptian Movement for Change (Kefaya) and its slogan “No to extension or to inheritance or corruption”. It was the first time that the protests criticized the ruling family and the regime (Hassan, 2011). Later, another protest took place in factories calling for the improvement of the working and living conditions. And the third one started in 2008. It was a youth protest group of 70,000 members who debated on Facebook about numerous topics: free speech, nepotism, and stagnant economy (Hassan, 2011).

For many years, Mubarak retained dependent on the security apparatus and on manipulating the political process. By setting economic and legal obstacles, Mubarak was able to control and contain civil society, but not forever. The various political trends were left weakened and could not achieve their goal (Hassan, 2011). They suffered from a lack of internal democracy and organization (Holger, 2005). Political opposition remained weak especially after being repressed, harassed, electorally manipulated and threatened. The emergency law that was implemented in 1981 helped Mubarak’s regime to prohibit strikes and apply censorship on newspapers and media in the name of state security. However, this did not protect the regime from a popular uprising.
3.4.5- External influences

F. Gregory Gause (1992) has suggested “Outside powers have consistently supported, at times with military force, the regional status quo, the sovereignty, statecraft and stability in the Middle East” (p.455).

External actors helped authoritarian Arab regimes remain stable. In particular, the connection that bounds Egypt and the international system could easily determine its behavior in the development process. Since 1990, Egypt accepted the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for the implementation of reform economic program. The latter was based on privatizations and other policies that weakened the society, both economically and politically (Korayem, 1997).

As for the West, the US and the EU supported the survival of Mubarak regime. They did not demand reforms in order to destabilize the regime and the region (Durac, 2009). The EU action plan did not force Egypt to change any regressive law. They just called for the need of vital political participation and fair elections. The US and the EU acted passively towards the repression of Islamic actors (Balfour & Cugusi, 2010). They sided with the regime in the name of fighting Islamic extremism.

Egypt under Mubarak was also among the biggest recipients of US aid. The relations between the United States and Egypt were considered to be special since they combined the usage of the carrot and the stick (Ibrahim, 2000). Due to the importance of Egypt’s location, the United States ought to give Cairo a regional role.
3.5 – Conclusion

This chapter described the veil of regime stability that was covering Egypt under Mubarak. Since 1981, Mubarak succeeded in disposing his ultimate authority to maintain complete control politically, socially and economically. As a result, the opposition remained weak for many decades. It was quite impossible to predict the 2011 uprising or the actual defeat of Mubarak’s extensive security apparatus. The sudden collapse of Mubarak and his ruling NDP, utterly shocked Egyptians and the international scene. The next chapter treats the uprising of 2011 in relation to the theories of authoritarian regime breakdown.
CHAPTER 4

REGIME BREAKDOWN IN EGYPT AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS

4.1- Introduction

This chapter opens with a description of the Arab Spring highlighting the important events regarding Egypt. Second, the chapter explains the concept of revolution and compares it to Egypt. Third, It explores the variables of Valerie Bunce and Barbara Geddes and fits them to the Egyptian case. An analysis is conducted to test whether the variables occurred in Egypt. If the latter variables actually took place, then the first process in the democratization phase was successful.

4.2- The Arab Spring

November 7, 2010 marked a shift in the Arab World history. It all started in Tunis when a desperate street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi immolated himself. This specific event alerted Tunisians and took them into the streets. The latters were filled with demonstrations, protests, national upheavals and later a full-fledged revolution. Tunisians were able to topple the longstanding authoritarian regime. That was just “the greatest Arab transformation in memory” (Bishara, 2012, p.5).

Bouazizi and the Tunisian success indirectly pushed Arab nations to go to streets. It broke a very long Arab silence. Through decades, the region was filled with fear and injustice. The Arabs woke up with a new spirit of collective vigor and need for change. The Tunisian revolution stirred the region for possible change that
could happen; it was an old dream not applicable in the Middle East. The revolution was the needed incentive and most importantly the spark for the Arabs in demanding democracy.

After Tunis, the story continued with some young Egyptians who met on Facebook and twitter to bring the people into the streets. The role of technology in boosting the youth was compared to the same role of Dutch conglomerate Philips the inventor portables cassettes in the Iranian Islamic revolution (Bishara, 2012). Tunis and Egypt are similar in a way that both rulers had been in place for so long. In addition, they both ensured the containment of the opposition and were dependent on the West for stability (El Amrani, 2011).

Egypt witnessed mass protests that forced the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, to step down. The historian Jared Diamond explained why great societies and powerful leaders fall in remarkably short periods of time as a consequence of the arrogance and recklessness of its leader (Senge, 2006). Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, and Mubarak were not an exception. They followed the same pattern.

The Arab Spring wave, that crossed Egypt, revealed the in-sustainability of the Egyptian strong political and economic system. The 11th of February- the fall of Mubarak- marked an important date in the Egyptian history. But is it a step toward democratization or just a short-lived dream? This chapter thus will highlight the events of the Egyptian uprisings, will clarify the concept of revolution and will study the factors that signal authoritarian regime breakdown. If the factors do apply, then Egypt is on the right track towards democratization.
4.3- The Egyptian Uprising

It started on the 25\textsuperscript{th} of January, the Police Day, when tens of thousands of Egyptians protested in Cairo, more specifically in Tahrir Square, calling for the resignation of the long time ruler Hosni Mubarak. The Police Day was a national holiday and it was celebrated by marches all along Egypt. Protesters specifically launched their movement on this day. The latter marked a day of protest against the brutal measures employed by the policy and security forces against demonstrators in recent years (El Amrani, 2011).

Using different social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, protesters coordinated to meet every day. Tens of thousands and later hundreds of thousands gathered at the central of Cairo. They were armed with courage, a feature present all along the upheavals. At first, Mubarak proposed some concessions and promised not to run again for presidency. But the protesters were stubborn and strongly believed in their cause. On the 11\textsuperscript{th} of February, and after being faced by an undefeatable domestic pressure, Mubarak stepped down. Vice President Omar Suleiman declared the president resignation. Hosni Mubarak transferred power to the Military Council. Although it was not constitutionally legal, the council was seen as the best option to control the situation.

The protesters were faced by a very harsh and cruel confrontation from the police and the pro-Mubarak forces. Tahrir Square was surrounded by chaotic and tumultuous demonstrations and protests, never seen since 1981 and ultimately; the unexpected Egyptian military joined the Arab Spring wave (UCDP, 2011).

Hosni Mubarak and his ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) collapsed suddenly after 30 years of power and control. As mentioned in previous chapters, no
one predicted the defeat of Mubarak’s strong extensive security apparatus. No one could imagine that the military could stand with the protesters calling for change.

The Mubarak regime remained in power for the 30 years and collapsed in just 18 days. The internal structure of this powerful regime was not able to slow down the heated mass protests and few reforms in action were not enough to reduce the pressure. In the last few years, Hosni Mubarak was busy falsifying elections, fighting protesters and activists, preparing his son Gamal for next presidency, and gaining more power though corruption. Those events distracted the regime from political agitations that was slowly able to overthrown the regime. Hosni Mubarak could not resist the mass mobilization in January 2011 and collapsed.

Before studying the variables of the transition, one ought to understand whether the Egyptian uprising can be called a revolution.

### 4.4- Is The Egyptian Uprising a Democratic Revolution?

#### 4.4.1- Defining Egypt’s Revolution

Scholars assess revolutions using two methods. One tends to measure a revolution by its successes and achievements and the other look at the process, not the final outcome. Since the Egyptian revolution is still in process, we will be only studying the events and the processes that took place.

Theda Skocpol (1994) defines revolutions as “rapid basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures, accompanied and in part accomplished through popular revolts from below”. She then elaborates that usually, activists seek to break down the old structure, but protests are not only the tools to do so. Most importantly, there ought to be certain institutions or philosophies to politically mobilize the masses. The role of institutions and ideology significantly take part in the
revolutionary analysis. Skocpol also notes that the idea of a revolution is subject to change from one period to another.

In studying the Egyptian case, one ought to consider the following. To begin, Egypt was enduring an ongoing crisis. Top-down political reforms failed to subject any desired change. Last elections were rigged and corrupted. Other elements can be referred to as: repression, networking sites, the introduction of neoliberal policies, high prices of food namely bread, unemployment and traditional obligations (Sallam, 2011). At first, Egypt’s revolution demanded basic social and economic needs, any other society can legally address. The situation in Tunis influenced Egypt and awakened the people to stand up against the oppression they had endured since 1952. Thus mass protests and sits-ins took place in Tahrir Square asking for the breakdown of Mubarak’s regime. But are those enough for a revolution to be achieved?

Well, rather than gathering for their common demands for bread, freedom and justice, they gathered in January 2011 because of their common hatred towards Hosni Mubarak and his government (Tadros, 2012). Also, structural institutions and a “main character” were absent in the Egyptian revolutionary platform. Even though some refer to Khaled Said similar to Bou Azizi in Tunis, the Arab Spring lacked the teachings or political ideas or speeches of a leader, who promises change and sets a plan for the many years to come (West, 2011). According to Cannistraro (2011), what happened in Egypt is considered to be a partial awakening. There was no philosophical basis and a successful revolution requires more than just debates in Tahrir Square (Cannistraro, 2011).
4.4.2- A Revolution’s Three Phases

According to Michael Kimmel (1990), a revolution is “an attempt by subordinate groups to transform the social foundations of political power” (p.1). Thus, a revolution is different from coups, or rebellions. The revolution is also formed of sequences of events over a certain period of time and can include hawkish and dovish system of change (Richard, 1966). This definition implies the classification of the events that happened in Tunis and Egypt as revolutions.

The Arab Spring portrays the first uprisings in the region. Through the fifties and sixties, some Arab regimes were overthrown by military coups “inquilab”. Although those coups were labeled as revolutions or “thawra”, the change only took place in the governing elite.

However, the Arab Spring touched the underprivileged classes and positively changed the Arab image. As Rashid Khalidi (2011) argued, “Suddenly, to be an Arab has become a good thing. People all over the Arab world feel a sense of pride in shaking off decades of cowed passivity under dictatorships that ruled with no deference to popular wishes” (p.1).

Michael Kimmel (1990) explains revolution as sequences of three phases. The first phase is called the ‘preconditions’. It symbolizes the “longer-run, structural shifts in the social foundations of the society” (p.1). The ‘precipitants’, which identifies the shorter-run historical events, is the second phase. Those events set down strong structural forces capable of getting stronger and of mobilizing existing discontents. The final phase is known as ‘the triggers’. The latter describes instant historical events, which ‘set the revolutionary process in motion’. (Kimmel, 1990, p.10)
Thus, according to Kimmel, Egypt’s recent events can be glorified and classified as a revolution. Well, this country first witnessed the first phase; the preconditions. In 1950s, authoritarian rule began and lasted throughout Mubarak’s long rule. The last thirty years enabled the consolidation of military-elites reign through guarantees from the Constitution, emergency laws and balance of power. Since 1950s, Egypt witnessed a dramatic increase in its population. It shifted from 21.4 to 83 million people today. This caused high level of unemployment and bad health and educational services. These preconditions created the right atmosphere for a revolutionary situation (Winckler, 2008).

We identify few precipitants while studying the situation in Egypt. In 2005, Hosni Mubarak amended the constitution and called for democratic elections. He also prepared and trained his son Gamal for future ‘enthronement’. But during that time, Egyptian Movement for Change “Enough” or, “Kifaya,” were eager for new developments and change. With time, the popularity of Mubarak’s regime started to decrease. Second, 2010 elections eliminated the presence of the opposition. As opposed to the 2005 elections with 88 members, the Muslim Brotherhood did not get any members elected in year 2010 (MEMRI, 2010). Elections became more corrupted and signaled public distrust. Third, since 2004, more than 1900 strikes took place throughout Egypt. According to John Beinin study (2009), since 1998, around two million workers took part in more than 2500 strikes. Workers all around Egypt feared the privatization process and were eager to improve their living condition. They were facing a very high cost of living and low salary. Food costs rose by twenty-five percent between 1997 and 2007 with no increase in the low Egyptian monthly wage. Last but not least, in 2008, the “6 April” movement and the National Movement for Change led by Muhammad El-Baradei emerged. These new
movements were created at the time when a large strike in a textile plant in Mahala al-Kubra took place. Interestingly enough, this movement was designed through social media networks since the government heavily controlled the press.

As for the revolutionary trigger, it was the mass demonstrations of Tunisia, which started on the 14th of January 2011. No one predicted the fall of the Mubarak’s regime. The outcome was facilitated by the fact that Mubarak was very slow to react and did not take firm decision to crush the riots. The media’s coverage of events further inflamed the masses.

Although, the definitions of revolution do not strictly apply to Egypt’s case, the fact that Egypt passed throughout the three phases means that the uprisings can be defined as revolutions.

4.4.3- A Democratic Revolution?

“In a revolution, as in a novel, the most difficult part to invent is the end” (De Tocqueville, 1896).

When a revolution occurs, does it mean that democracy should occur? Well, in general those two phenomena are unrelated. In history, many revolutions happened with a shy connection to democratic motives. Those usually are referred to coup d’états that replace one elite with another. Some are created in the service of a democratic desire.

As for Egypt, since independence, they failed to develop an ideology or a school of thought. And today, they are facing this challenge. In the context of the Arab Spring, numerous questions have emerged regarding the aspect of the revolution in Egypt. Egyptians awaited revolution and it finally did happen. The change of 2011 was not the events in Tunisia. They change was with the Egyptians’
ability to finally coordinate their efforts, link the socioeconomic problems with political demands and protest all together.

But will they be able to successfully develop a democratic project? The Arab Revolutions did not occur through coups, but rather by oppressed, burdened and scared masses that broke finally the barrier of silence.

They are eager for democracy promotion. But will this experience succeed? Egypt is standing before a transitional period where what is happening is critical. After Mubarak’s resignation and the election of a new president, will the revolting masses succeed in improving the systems and in forming democratic pillars?

4.6- Studying Regime Breakdown in Egypt

“There are no miraculous events here, but many years of concerted action” (Kenney, 2006, p.16)

Taking the fact that to study a revolution, we should analyze its effects after a decade, this chapter studies the first phase of a democratic revolution. Although the events in Egypt can be described as a revolution, this does not mean that democracy emerged. As discussed in chapter two, democratization requires three important steps; regime breakdown, democratization and democracy consolidation. And since the Egyptian revolution is still fresh, our focus will be on the regime breakdown phase. The latter highlights the beginning of the transition from dictatorship to democracy that starts by a weakening of the authoritarian rule and ends with the first competitive elections (Bunce, 2006).

For a regime breakdown to occur, some variables need to exist. Those variables as mentioned in chapter 2, will be deduced from Valerie Bunce and Barbara Geddes. Some of them are intertwined and thus in this part all the variables will be studied; poverty, economic development, splits in the system, pacts between elites, popular protest, exogenous shocks, immediate influences and nationalism.
The figure below summarizes some useful indicators describing Egypt’s general condition and ranking. Those indicators will be highlighted by the variables later in that section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>5.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>9.7 %</td>
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<td>Population under 25 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate</td>
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<td>Corruption (ranking)</td>
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<td>Press freedom (rating)</td>
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4.6.1- Poverty

According to Barbara Geddes, poverty is classified as an important predictor for transitions. Based on many academic studies, poverty predicts a regime breakdown and a transition to democracy. The causes of the French revolution can be given as an example to explain how poverty can motivate the masses towards revolution.

Moreover, many academic scholars such as Jackman (1973), Bollen (1979), Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994), Londregan and Poole (1990) and Przeworski (1997) strongly argue that the best predictor of transition is poverty.

Well, as witnessed by many, one of the causes of the Egyptian revolution was acrimonious poverty. Around 20 percent live below 2 $ a day, which is considered below the poverty line (UNDP, 2010). Compared to other Third World countries,
Egypt belongs to the most successful of these nations (UNDP, 2010); However, through his rule, Mubarak managed to eradicate extreme poverty\(^7\) in Egypt.

According to the Gini\(^8\) coefficient scale, Egypt is the 92\(^{nd}\) country that is considered unequal and suffers from inadequate access to the basic needs (World Data Bank, 2011). The UNDP report on Egypt (2010) studied the issue of the young poor in rural and urban Egypt. They reported that 44 percent of youth in rural Upper Egypt are considered to be very poor, 22.7 percent in upper urban, 19.3 percent in lower rural and 8.8 percent in lower urban region (UNDP, 2010). The report notes that poverty is the highest among teenagers between 15 to 17 years reaching 29 percent (UNDP, 2010).

The UNICEF report on child poverty in Egypt (2010) examined severe deprivation in health, education, shelter, nutrition, water, and sanitation sectors (UNDP, 2010). 47 percent of children are considered poor. The poverty of youth at the backyard of urban Cairo accumulated economic and even social grievances leading to the active figures in January 2011.

According to Bayat (2009), poor slums surrounding the urban districts in Cairo represent the main bulk of the population. They passively interact and once faced with a common threat, they actively start networking. In January 2011, they became a convincing, overpowering, prevalent and hardly controllable force of change. And poverty played an effective role in sizing up a massive nation-wide revolution.

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\(^7\) Extreme poverty: less than 1.25 $ a day income
\(^8\) Gini Coefficient - measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution
4.6.2- Economic Development

Poor economic performance highlights hope for authoritarian breakdown. That reveals the importance of low economic development to trigger a revolution. Both Geddes and Bunce stress on economic growth indicators to predict an authoritarian regime breakdown. On the short term, the weak economic performance accelerates transition.

During Mubarak’s reign, the Egyptian economy took a developing path. Egypt witnesses a growth of 4.5 percent during the last thirty years. That was considered one of best results among the Third World Countries (Korotayev, 2009). Growth was accelerated especially after 2004 when Mubarak introduced economic reforms. The success of reforms was reflected in the improvement of investor’s perception of the business environment (Nasr, 2007).

Mubarak’s reign has succeeded in achieving substantial development. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank praised the regime for achieving a GDP growth of 7 percent (Naguib, 2011). But after 2008, a setback was noticed in the reform programs. For decades, Mubarak’s regime attracted foreign investments and engaged in a privatization policy. But the crisis of 2008 made it impossible for ordinary Egyptians to feel any benefit from the country’s economic growth and reforms. Despite the latter, before the 25th of January, “the economy in Egypt as a whole was performing better than ever” (Bakr, 2011, p.58).

Despite the facts that the graph shows good economic development, the gap between the rich and poor was enormous. Although economic development was significantly high, the government failed to translate growth into poverty reduction. Numbers and graphs are shown in chapter 3. In addition, one of the major weaknesses of the growth was the small amount of respective growth of labor
productivity. Unemployment reached 9.7 percent (Bakr, 2011) and Mubarak succeeded in marginalizing large sectors of the society.

Quantitative data shows significant growth in GDP. But “neoliberal growth rates hide the unequal distribution of growth” (Naguib, 2011, p. 3). A tiny minority mainly formed of elites benefited from the produced wealth, and the majority suffered growing unemployment and poverty. Egypt, which was highly dependent on wheat import, suffered from a sharp rise in the costs of basic foods, mainly bread. The annual food price inflation shifted from 17.2 percent in December 2010 to 18.9 percent prior to the revolution (Naguib, 2011). The events in Egypt were similar to the ones in Morocco and Oman in 1848 and to the ones of the Soviet Union in 1989. Those previous political tremors also witnessed a high unemployment and rising food prices. (Goldstone, 2011)

The economic performance of Mubarak’s regime was so fragile, capable of creating the 25th of January 2011. Thus it weakened the regime to the point that J-Curve9 hit Egypt (Bremmer, 2011). This concept was at the bulk of Alexis de Tocqueville analysis on the French Revolution and is later emphasized by James Davies (1969) and his J-curve theory of Revolution (Fukuyama, 2011). He argued that “A prolonged period of rising expectations and gratifications is followed by a short period of sharp reversal during which the gap between expectations and gratifications quickly widens and become intolerable, resulting in revolution” (p.690).

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9“The J-curve effect is a phenomenon in which a period of negative or unfavorable returns is followed by a gradual recovery that stabilizes at a higher level than before the decline. The progression of this phenomenon appears as a “J” shape on a time-series graph. Economic analysts and policymakers may factor the J-curve effect into their analyses and decisions as a way to gauge both short- and long-term effects of a variable change (for example, a decline in exchange rates) or new policy.” (Investing Answers, 2012)
4.6.3- Splits in The System

First, we should clarify the splits in the system and pacts between elites are intertwined variables used by Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce. Both authors study those variables in light of O’Donnell and Schmitter literature for transition.

The optimal scenario for a successful transition implies a combination of two phases. The first requires a split between elites inside the old system and the second entails pacts between the regime liberals and “popular credible opposition” (O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986).

This section describes the splits in the Egyptian system. The latter is highlighted when elites are divided and break the old structure. According to Huntington (1991), divided elites move the authoritarian regimes into a change, whether desirable or not. It increases the probability of democratic outcomes. Bunce illustrates the example of Spain and Poland, where the behavior of leaders was critical in the transition phase. The one in power and the other seeking power forge a certain situation influenced by the mass publics (Bunce, 2006). In this particular frame, elites are pictured as the long-term “summarizers” of development. (Bunce, 2000, p. 707)

This variable was applicable to all three waves of democratization. When elites are divided, the probability to achieve democratization is high. With this scenario, it is a good indicator of authoritarian breakdown. Large social forces and elites in action are the causes of successful regime breakdown and at the same time, the hope for the new awaited democracy.

Hosni Mubarak was professional military man and became president with key backing from the armed forces. He is similar to some of Latin American dictators;
Juan Peron of Argentina, Manuel Odria of Peru, Gustavo Rojas Pinilla of Colombia, Marcos Perez Jimenez of Venezuela, Fulgencio Batista of Cuba and Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic (Dix, 1982).

The weakening of the regime by the civilian opposition isolated the armed forces as they were called to suppress the rising of mass mobilization. And in Egypt, elites were divided. A split occurred. Along the years, Mubarak, like many dictators, went through “continuismo” (Dix, 1982, p.565), which means a self-perpetuation in office. This phenomenon makes the regime a vehicle of one person. Mubarak was capable of building a circle of personal power but could not rely on elites to stay in power. Some key military elites such as the defense minister Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi remained more or less loyal to him to the very end. They were afraid that the new order threatens their power.

Their decision not to order an attack against protesters in Tahrir Square during the revolution was not seen as a sign of support to the movement. They just sacrificed Hosni Mubarak in a way to save the system (Naguib, 2011).

4.6.4- Pacts between Elites

Pacts between elites accommodate various interests and promise the opposition power, influence and control (Hinnebusch, 2006).

Some have suggested that elites pacts are difficult to reach in the Middle East. Pacts are easier to occur “under relative social equality or rapid economic growth” (Hinnebusch, 2006, p.388). Since the Middle East lacks the required levels of growth and equality, it is much more difficult to negotiate pacts.

In Egypt, since the revolution started, and through a series of deceptions and conspiracies, the military council prevented any legitimate representation of the people. The post- Mubarak era witnessed divisions between the Supreme Council of
the Armed Forces (SCAF) and the Muslim Brotherhood. No pacts seemed to have occurred in Egypt.

The SCAF became the ruling power after the fall of Mubarak. It wanted to guarantee power in its hands to sustain the old regime that they were and continue to be part of. At first, they were seen as the defenders of the Egyptian revolution, but the military’s role was double-edged (Saikal, 2011). They were also loyal to the old regime that they served for thirty years. The military’s role after the revolution was questioned. They were deeply criticized for their reluctance and tardiness in prosecuting Mubarak, and for their unwillingness to address economic problems. They were also accused of many human rights violations.

At first, the SCAF and the MB agreed on removing Mubarak and on introducing constitutional amendments (Ahram, 2012). When the MB won a sweeping majority in the parliament, the SCAF attempted to control their power.

Thus, on the eve of the presidential elections, and in order to maintain power and control, the SCAF issued five decrees. They started by dissolving the newly elected parliament, which had a Muslim Brotherhood majority. They transferred legislative power to the military council. They also enforced a law that allows members of the armed forces to arrest civilians. They formed a secretariat restraining all president power and created a higher council for defense formed by military personnel. However, the SCAF ultimately handed power recently to Morsy. It is not clear whether this took place after a pact between them was negotiated.
4.6.5- Popular Protest

Wael Ghonim (2012) has noted that: “The power of the people is greater than the people in power”. According to Freedom House, the most successful transitions to democracies start with mass protests and strikes. That was illustrated in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia (Bunce, 2006). Mass protests, demonstrations and sit-ins usually signal the beginning of an authoritarian regime breakdown. They create a large opposition united to overthrow the incumbent regime. They are the tools for the “founding and consolidation of democracy” (Bunce, 2003, p. 170).

The events that shocked Tunisia in early 2011 were not new developments. Over the past years, the Arab Middle East was subject to a wave of protests, strikes and demonstrations. Since the various organizations involved had different constituencies, and demands, the absence of large cohesive movements helped authoritarian leaders to stay in power.

From 1998 until 2004, the Egyptian government faced more than 1000 strikes (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2011). A sudden increase took place in 2004 and 2005 when an accelerated economic liberalization program was introduced. The Kefaya movement which was formed by intellectuals seeking political reforms, failed to mobilize protesters and reach workers. In 2006, the number of strikes and protests was 222, whereas it more than doubled in 2007 to reach 580 (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2011). In recent years, strikes were called for industrial and agricultural workers’ rights rather than political gains.

After 2005, political movements and groups acknowledged their failure to produce change. Consequently, socioeconomic protests increased. A massive strike
took place on 6 April 2008. Young activists, workers, public servants, and formal and informal opposition groups led the huge strike. Demonstrations and strikes expanded from Cairo and Alexandria to Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra. Protesters called for economic reforms and political change. However, this exceptional strike did not last for more than one day and failed to be reproduced (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2011) The Muslim Brotherhood, the Kifaya Movement and the Tagammu Party were not allowed to be involved. Various groups had different demands but without a single purpose.

In 2009, around one thousand strikes covered the urban centers in Egypt. In the first half of 2010, 300 strikes were organized. All called for higher wages, better public services, improved transportation and again, asked for the elimination of corruption, torture, and arbitrary detainment and for the establishment of a just judicial system. The government responded to some of the protesters needs and indirectly shut down political protests. Thus political parties coordination was limited.

On June 2010, two members of the secret police officers tortured to death a twenty-eight years old Egyptian from Alexandria named Khalid Mohammad Said. The way he was murdered exposed regime atrocities. Khalid Said’s death and this injustice gathered Egyptians on Facebook who were eager to extract justice for him. (Ghonim, 2012)

The blog “Kullena Khalid Said” gathered people online in 2010 and later onto the streets in 2011. Tunis events triggered the 25th of January 2011. Wael Ghonim noted on his Facebook page the following:

“I never saw this on Facebook before… the Jan25 invitation reached 500,000 Facebook users … 27,000 have RSVPed… the important thing now is to spread out to streets, factories, mosques and churches...” (Ghonim, 2012,p.60)
The ultimate day of the 25th of January 2011 gathered tens of thousands (Ottaway, Hamzawy, 2011) It was just the beginning of a desired revolution. That day was not completely a new development, but a dramatic example of a culminating unrest of the past few years. In Egypt, political protest flourished on three occasions; one around 2005 parliamentary elections, April 6th 2008 and during the 2010 elections. And the 25th of January 2011 was seen as a significant shift in Egypt. Protesters went through 18 days of unrest in order to topple the regime on the 11th of February 2011. A rising middle class yearning for economic and political change leads the protests.

Mass protests did take place in Egypt. This various political groups with nothing in common, gathered together to overthrow the pharaoh. Since then, Egyptians are split and do not have a common leader, nor philosophy or a common future. Egypt is enduring difficult social and economic conditions coupled with a weak society. The challenge is for protesters to coordinate their efforts and link their socioeconomic needs with their political demands when they are facing no dream in common.

4.6.6 - Exogenous Shocks

Exogenous shocks are described by Barbara Geddes as geopolitical or economically based. They force regimes to negotiate transitions away from power. Shocks have the power to prevent good economic performance, distribution of benefits. They also destroy the regime’s coercive machine. Geddes highlights the power of external shocks in the breakdown of authoritarian regime (Geddes, 1999).
At the time of the uprising, Egypt was not faced with geopolitical or economic shocks. Geopolitically, Egypt has been known for its essential vital position in the Middle East. Its location facilitates its control over the Sinai Peninsula, which is the only land bridge joining the African and Eastern landmasses. Egypt is also known for its Nile waters. It has historical ties with Sudan, Uganda and Zaire. Israel, on its side, used to pose a threat to Egyptian security but the Camp David accords eased the situation. There were only sudden economic shocks such as the second oil crisis of 1970s that hit 14 countries of Latin America (Geddes, 1999; 138).

4.6.7- Immediate Influence

Immediate influences are events that have direct effect in nurturing the sense of revolution. In revolution, it often takes the form of diffusion. Diffusion is “a process where new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behavior spread from their point to new sites”. That principle suggests a “coincidence of time and geography”. Taking the example of post-communist countries, mass protests started in one country and then moved to others (Bunce, 2006, p. 283).

In the case of Egypt, diffusion was implied. The events in Tunisia triggered the Egyptians uprising as, youth moved to the streets and demanded for the resignation of Mubarak. The Jasmine revolution of Tunis inspired Egyptians to call for the 25th of January 2011. It signaled a new “permeability in Arab politics.

The Tunisians victory sent a strong message to Egyptians eager to change their regime (Ghonim, 2012). This message broke the wall of fear and challenged their pride, since Egypt was always considered to be a leader in the region. The
Tunisian uprising was similar to the one of Egypt. Both mass movements were organized by urban lower middle-class youth using social media tools to coordinate.

The media was as an instrument of regional diffusion. Numerous scholars such as Langman (2005), Wasserman (2007) and O’Lear (1999) argued that social media became a new resource for the successful organization of mass mobilization, protests, and social movements. In Egypt, new social media, like short messaging services (SMS), social-networking sites and blogs, played a vital role in creating successful anti-governments protests capable of overthrowing a solid regime. Facebook was a trigger for the uprisings.

Egyptians had significant access to social media since Mubarak expanded the nation’s communication technology abilities as an instrument for socioeconomic progress. In 1999, the government initiated free Internet access and promoted low-cost computers (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). In 2010, around 21 percent of Egyptians had Internet access and more than 4.5 million used Facebook (Internet World Stats, 2011). The diffusion of media introduced speed, interactivity, precise organization, which were missing in traditional mobilization techniques. Social media made Egyptians ‘citizen’s journalists’, especially after banning reporters from Tahrir Square (Fisher, 2011). This revolution was definitely nurtured online.

Fearing his downfall, Mubarak cut off Internet and cellular phones during the uprising. Despite these measures, the flow of communication did not stop. Through this novel resource, Egyptians were linked to Tunisians, to the Egyptians abroad and to the outside world (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). Videos live from Tahrir Square, texts and images were shared online and were available to millions. Those were also reinforced and republished by news channel such as CNN and Al Jazeera.
4.6.8- Nationalism

According to Bunce, there is a direct relationship between nationalism and democracy. A sense of nationalism makes the opposition strong and united. The regime breakdown appears successful when nationalist mobilization goes hand in hand with the weakening of the old regime and the founding of a new state (Bunce, 2006). Since January 2011, there was a strong popular nationalist mobilization in Egypt. Egyptians suddenly reawakened their sense of nationalism and pride.

The target of the uprisings was the dictator who controlled power for decades and worked to have over power to his family. There was a simultaneous outbreak and revival of nationalism. Mubarak injured the national pride and the Arab Spring revitalized and rejuvenated it. The latter was used to be expressed in chauvinistic ways at football events for example. Throughout Mubarak’s years, the Egyptian culture allowed the hallmark of state centralization, subsidies and censorship (Colla, 2012).

The causes that made up the Egyptian uprising defined the outline of a new Egyptian unity, based less on ethnic or racial thoughts than on a generally political stance. This new feeling forged in bloody battles against the regime, was compared to the Latin American sentiment. Egyptians developed through this uprising a strong sense of national identity and started to regain their stolen pride.

On the streets and in Tahrir Square, no particular political party existed, nor a specific civil society group, ideological movement or social class. During the uprisings, many people from all walks of life protested because they had enough (El Amrani, 2011).
Egyptians, from different parties, Muslim and Christians, gathered on Facebook and later on the streets “We are All Khalid Saiid”. This slogan represented the heterogeneous classes and factions of Egypt. The Facebook page was also not influenced by any political party and was not supported by a certain ideology (Ghonim, 2012). Supporters were just Egyptians suffering from depression, poverty, unemployment, corruption, absence of liberty and democracy.

Those who started the uprising were divided along four stands. The youth who launched the revolution through social media were fragmented into a number of coalitions and unions. The traditional political parties such as the Wafd and the Tajammu parties, who were the formal opposition to Mubarak’s regime, joined the anti-regime forces and accepted the leadership of the Muslim Brothers. The latter also constitutes part of the traditional political opposition, and was divided among Salafis, Sufis, liberal Islamism and Radical Islamism (Said Aly, 2011). Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights groups and civil society organizations also joined the crowd.

Despite the different groups that gathered together, the Egyptian uprising was a nationalist uprising. Protests were peaceful, the Egyptian flag was the only one carried and chants were unified. All yelled “Al Sha‘b yurid isqat al-Nizam” (The people want to topple the regime) (Ghonim, 2012, p. 184).

4.7- Conclusion

This chapter assessed the Egyptian’s revolution and analyzed the causes of the uprisings. It studied the variables of Valerie Bunce and Barbara Geddes that initiate a successful authoritarian regime breakdown. Egypt witnessed poverty, poor economic development, mass protests, and splits in the system, immediate influence
and sense of nationalism. Egypt was not subject to exogenous shocks and could not ensure pacts between elites once Mubarak resigned. Thus, can we talk about a successful regime breakdown?

But Geddes noted is that the process of democratization varies from country to country and region to region (Geddes, 1999). The variables, Geddes and Bunce studied, are proposed overviews that failed to accommodate all real-world differences. Evidence has shown that Egypt passed through most of the variables, but one ought to acknowledge that not enough time has passed to be certain. We also need to acknowledge that the Arab Middle East did not witness any of the waves of democratization. Thus, we have a new region, new countries, new decade and maybe new variables. Can we project our views to picture 2011 as a start of a fourth wave of democratization?
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1- General Findings and Conclusion

This thesis examined the breakdown of authoritarianism in Egypt. Since no one predicted the Arab Spring, the whole academic world was surprised by the events that took place in Tunisia and later in Egypt. Scholars did not predict a revolution in the Arab World. They had rather focused on explaining the robustness of authoritarian regimes. Many researchers saw a democratic revolution as a rear impossible phenomenon in the Arab Middle East. The literature on authoritarianism in the Arab world was thus proven wrong. Young Tunisians overthrew their regime and Arabs started to dream and later, the wind of democratic revolution blew over Egypt.

This thesis began with a brief introduction on the debate on stubborn authoritarianism in the Middle East. The endurance of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East was explained from different perspectives; economic, cultural, institutional, social and international. Others explained authoritarianism and democratization as dependent on the choices of the regime and the opposition actors.

After explaining the argument about the robustness of authoritarianism in the Arab world, the thesis focuses on authoritarian regime breakdown. Barbara Geddes and Valerie Bunce highlighted variables that initiate breakdown and transition towards democracy. They both provided a theoretical analysis based on case studies. Although, both noted that each region differs in its breakdown process, their common variables formed the basic ‘platform’ for regime breakdown. Those variables range from poverty, poor economic performance, splits in the system, and
pacts between elites, to popular protest, immediate influence, nationalism and exogenous shocks. The thesis then studied the Egyptian uprising in the light of the variables listed by Bunce and Geddes.

Egypt endured the atrocities of authoritarianism from the late 1950s. To understand the Egyptian uprising, this thesis highlighted the period under authoritarianism since Nasser. Nasser made Egypt powerful domestically and capable of spreading its influence in the Arab World. He established an authoritarian regime, united the country under his leadership, and created a coercive system capable of controlling its civil society. In the 1970s, Sadat assumed power and Egypt was introduced to a new vision. To boost the economy, Sadat implemented economic reforms known as Infitah. He also introduced some new political reforms, endorsing some degree of political expression. In his last years, Egypt lost its status as a regional power after signing a peace treaty with Israel, and his rule grew more authoritarian.

After Sadat’s assassination, Mubarak took power in 1981. He ensured regime’s survival through successfully using the authoritarian structure he inherited. He introduced economic and political reforms and was also capable of promoting the role of Egypt as a main regional power. He later assumed a de-liberalization path when opposition forces challenged regime control. Mubarak ruled like a monarch in Egypt. Mubarak and his ruling party, the NDP, controlled the government, the military, the economy and civil society. He designed a very stable regime that seemed too powerful to break down. And then suddenly, in just 18 days, the pharaoh collapsed.

After focusing on Egypt’s authoritarian rulers, the thesis turned to the uprisings and the variables that led to authoritarian regime breakdown. The Egyptian
scene was ready for this kind of event. For those who knew the reality in Egypt, it was quite obvious that an uprising was the only possible way to end Mubarak’s tyranny. Most of the variables that Bunce and Geddes listed were examination of the Egyptian uprising. This helped examine the process of authoritarian breakdown in Egypt.

Beginning in January 2011, mass protests filled the streets of Cairo. Egyptians wanted to restore their pride and overthrow the regime. Tunisian’s uprising played an important role in the uprising of the youth of Egypt. And with the help of social media, they were capable of organizing on the 25th of January. Moreover, a sense of nationalism was forged and there was a hunger to restore Egyptian pride. These feelings were behind the success of the mass mobilizations against authoritarian rule. This sense of unity gathered all Egyptians together to topple Mubarak’s regime. The people of Egypt were facing poverty, unemployment, high inflation and corruption. In the last years, the prices of basic food products had increased and unemployment hit millions. High GDP rates were not reflected in the improvements of the Egyptians’ life and left a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Poor economic conditions, especially the high degree of poverty, made the authoritarian regime more vulnerable for breakdown. In addition to all of that, among the ruling elites, Egypt witnessed a division of elites. This situation made it more likely for the military to try to save the system rather than the person leading it.

This thesis studied Bunce and Geddes’ variables and applied them to Egypt uprising. Poverty, poor economic performance, immediate influence, nationalism, mass protests and divisions amongst elites were found in the Egyptian context. The thesis also shed light on other variables that were not present. No pacts between the elites took place neither did geopolitical factors play a role nor was there economic
shocks just before the uprising.

Although not all the variables occurred, this thesis concluded that a revolution did happen and an authoritarian breakdown occurred. This conclusion was strengthened by the fact that each region has its own specificities. Egypt did not copy paste the textbook model nor is similar to other authoritarian regimes.

The 2011 events in Egypt are best described as an uprising for democracy. Protesters were driven by a sense of hunger for pride, sovereignty, freedom, rule of law, equality and democracy. They succeeded by bringing down an authoritarian regime, however their movement is unfinished. There is a young, educated segment of society, the driving force of the uprisings, who are still motivated to establish a democratic rule. They just did not start to stop.

5.2- Egypt’s New Course

Egypt has a new president, Mohammed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. A great deal of concern about the future of Egypt has focused on the role the Muslim Brotherhood will have in the future. The youth of Egypt as well as the region, and the international community in general, is concerned about the political consequences for regional stability and international security. There is a feeling of anxiety surrounding the role that political Islam will play in the region, especially when a member of the Muslim Brotherhood became president of Egypt after its long waited revolution.

Many fear that the Muslim Brotherhood may be deeply illiberal. Their commitment to democracy worries Egyptians. In 2007, they drafted a political platform advocating for a religious advisory council similar to the one in Iran in order to review legislation and whether it conforms to Islamic law (Hashemi, 2011).
They frequently oppose Western geopolitical interest in the Middle East. The Muslim Brotherhood did not win by chance in the last presidential election. Their supporters are the most dedicated, fanatical and eager to vote. They proved to be highly organized during the parliamentary elections. There was a surprisingly low turnout for the first free and fair elections (Bradley, 2012).

Morsi was elected under difficult circumstances. More than 12 million voters supported his opponent Mohammad Shafik, Mubarak’s last prime minister. To successfully run a country, Morsi should seek national reconciliation and build bridges with the military, the liberals and the Copts. Thus, the new president has to distance himself from the Muslim Brotherhood and the radical ideology in order to represent all Egyptians. Once he assumed office, he invited liberals, young activists, Christians to join his new government (Coughlin, 2012).

Today, Morsi is not only responsible for democratizing state institutions, organizing elections, and reforming the security system, but he ought to respond to the people’s demand for equality and socio-economic development. With this magnitude of challenges ahead, the future remains uncertain. The new president is also facing problematic relations with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The latter, fearing the threat of the Muslim Brotherhood, limited the president’s powers. After the dissolution of the parliament, the SCAF empowered its institution with legislative powers to ensure full command over army affairs, including the defense budget. It also has the final say regarding the declaration of war. These powers were later reversed by Morsi, as he assumed full executive control.

Morsi also faces international challenges. His recognition of the state of Israel, and his policy towards the US, and the Persian Gulf states are critical to his
rule. Future foreign policies will be deeply divisive and controversial. The political stability of the region will depend on how Islamists behave in power.

5.3- The Future of Egypt

Egypt’s future is still very much in the making. With the new election, and the current situation between the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood, the popular revolution seems to crack two central assumptions. On one hand, international actors became skeptical towards democratization in the region and define Arabs as not yet mature for democracy. On the other hand, many suggest that political Islam is the only alternative to dictatorship.

Will the Egyptian uprising translate into a transition to democracy? Today’s journals assess the Egyptian uprisings as incomplete, uncertain and unpredictable. However, regime change is a long process and the events in Egypt are still unfolding. Transitions to democracy are always difficult processes. This is especially the case when a civil war or a counterrevolution arises, as is happening in Libya. It may also encounter obstacles and disappointment despite the success of the uprising. Thus, it may be a matter of many years before we recognize if a democratization process has occurred and the region has become more democratic and peaceful.

Looking to history, revolutions seldom produce the egalitarian democratic free societies the people hope for. Will the future in Egypt resemble the French Revolution that led to the great terror, the Russian Revolution managed by Stalin or the Iranian Revolution that led to Ayatollah Khomeini? Will it take the path of Latin American and East European countries still managing their post revolutionaries’ traumas? Or will it end up producing the most democratic country in the Middle
East? Only time will tell how the transition in Egypt proceeds.

In Egypt, Islamists, the military, conservatives and reformers are struggling for power. John Goldstone (2011) predicts long abrupt government turnovers and policy reversals similar to what happened in the Philippines. Goldstone points out that all authoritarian regimes- including Haiti, Romania, the Philippines, Zaire, Indonesia, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan- that collapsed in the last 30 years never succeeded by extremists. They are often subject to authoritarian tendencies, but not to an ideologically driven power. And this is reflective of the Egyptian situation.

For many young Egyptians, especially the ones involved in the uprisings that toppled the Mubarak’s regime, the Morsi elections did not satisfy their hopes for a revolutionary president. Millions protested for months yearning for fundamental reforms. Yet Morsi and his radical ideology spread fear and anxiety in the hearts of the Egyptians youth.

Egypt’s youth hold the responsibility to devise institutional mechanisms that allows for accountability. The first exercise of this fundamental power was initiated in the streets through protests, demonstrations and informal gatherings. However, to achieve a democratic transition, formal and institutional processes are of a necessity to achieve reforms and important constitutional transformations. In other words, young Egyptians together with their new president should work on a constitutional mode of democratic governance in order to achieve a successful transition towards democracy.
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