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Egypt: Resurrecting the Deep Nasserite State in the
Post-Muslim Brotherhood Era

By

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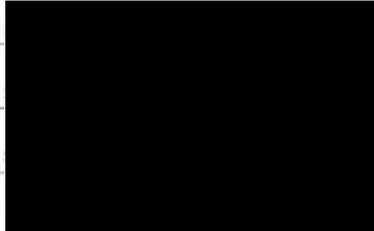
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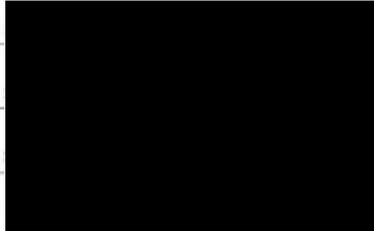
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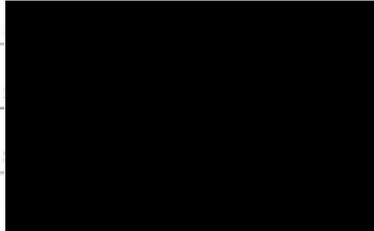
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DEDICATION

To my father's inspiring soul...May your memory live in our hearts forever.

To my heroic mother and supportive family...With all the love and appreciation...

God Bless you abundantly.

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Egypt: Resurrecting the Deep Nasserite State in the Post-Muslim Brotherhood Era

Hala Nouhad Nasreddine

ABSTRACT

After deposing the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated president, Mohamad Morsi, the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces ensured the retrieval of power to the hands of the military. Consequently, ever since his inauguration in 2014 – and following the period of political turmoil and instability that stormed Egypt between 2011 and 2014 – the current president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, has been trying to resurrect the deep Nasserite state. This form of state – which is based on fear and suppression – is the only guarantee of the regime’s survival in the post-Arab Spring era. The thesis investigates the current manifestation of the deep state in some of the major constituents of the country: the armed forces and security personnel, the economy, the judiciary and the media. It further demonstrates the overlap between el-Sisi’s approach and that of Nasser, revealing a recurrent pattern – that involves both concrete provisions and rhetoric – associated with the deep state.

Keywords: Deep state, Armed Forces, Security, El-Sisi, Nasser, Nasserite State, SCAF, Judiciary, Media, Economy.

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List of Abbreviations

ABM: Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis
AJO: Arab Journalism Observatory
CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
CPI: Corruption Perceptions Index
CPJ: Committee to Protect Journalists
CSF: Central Security Forces
EGP: Egyptian Pound
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GID: General Investigations Directorate
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
MID: Military Intelligence Department
NEA: National Elections Authority
NGO: Non-governmental Organization
RSF: Reporters Without Borders
SCAF: Supreme Council of Armed Forces
SCP: Supreme Council of Police
SSIS: State Security Investigative Services
SSR: Security Sector Reform
UAR: United Arab Republic

Chapter One:

Introduction

This is a study on the resurrection of the deep state in Egypt following the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated President, Mohammad Morsi, in the military coup of 2011. This introductory chapter is organized as follows: it first provides an overview of the burgeoning literature on the Egyptian state with particular focus on the origins of the deep state and the mechanisms of its perpetuation through successive regimes. The literature mostly takes into account two main eras: the Nasserite era that stemmed from the 1952 revolution till the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 and the current era under President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (2014 –) that arose partly in response to the uprising in 2011 and mainly following the overthrow of Mohamad Morsi in July 2013. The chapter further presents the research questions and outlines the methodology to be followed throughout the thesis. The thesis aims to uncover the manifestations and the roots of the deep state in Egypt through examining secondary sources on two levels: institutions and rhetoric. In the section on rhetoric (Chapter 5), the study investigates the discourse deployed by the deep state to preserve its legitimacy through analyzing speeches by both Nasser and el-Sisi to unveil a shared pattern.

Arguably, the state in Egypt was historically the first ‘modern’ state to emerge in the Arab world as Cairo was the center of the military and economic activity in the Arab region. While this is not the place to review the history of monarchic Egypt,¹ nevertheless, one must note that the project of state-building in Egypt did start with the reign of Mohammad Ali (1805-1848) and continued under his successors, at least until

Egypt became a British protectorate in 1882. The special status that Egypt had as a protectorate rather than a British colony meant that Egyptian institutions, not only survived British rule but also developed under such rule. The Egyptian bureaucracy continued to function albeit under British supervision and grew in numbers and extractive power. In a nutshell, the basic foundations of the Egyptian state – a strong executive power, a weak parliament, a judiciary system and a functioning bureaucracy – were built under the British rule and assumed independence from the authority of religious leaders *'Ulama*.

Undoubtedly, the 1952 revolution changed the face of Egypt, but also reinforced, rather than weakened, the foundations of a deep state. While the roots of the Egyptian state go back to at least the mid-19th century, state institutions underwent a major overhaul following the revolution under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser (1953-1970).

Although the Nasserite state was characterized by socialism and equality, yet the authoritarian structures – that restricted media freedom, suppressed political opposition and maintained strong interdependence and integration between the government, the military, the intelligent services and all other sectors of society – had enormous power. Nasser also maintained a strong grip on the major Islamic Sunni authority: Al Azhar, transforming it into a pro-governmental institution and reserving the president's exclusive right to appoint its head.²

Due to the resonance of the aforementioned elements of the Nasserite state with that of the deep state – defined as a police state controlled by a military government which exploits the elements of the state to enforce stringent security and constrict dissent³ – the thesis will first address the origins of the deep state in Egypt and try to

establish a relation between the Nasserite regime and the deep state in order to investigate whether Nasser was its pioneer or heir.

With the arrival of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) – the deep state’s internal foe – to power following the uprising in 2011, the deep state quivered. The MB challenged its foundation through trying to avenge their long repression instead of reforming the deep state or offering better alternatives.⁴ Their hostility towards the state and its security and judiciary institutions was obvious when the MB drafted a law that lowered the judiciary age of retirement from 70 to 60 years old, hence forcing around 3,500 judges into retirement which in turn caused rage among the members of the judicial authority, and hence the deep state.⁵ Yet the situation reached its zenith following the MB attempt to marginalize the armed forces on major projects like the Suez Canal development plan and a land proclamation project (Toshka) (Marshall, 2015).⁶ Consequently, the deep state revolted in its own way. It retaliated against the MB, who were rapidly ousted from power after one year of attempted (albeit not highly successful) rule.

The thesis contends that the deep state was embodied by the current President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi (June 2014 - Present) who, partly, established his credibility through exploiting the Nasserite rhetoric and Nasser’s security, judiciary and media strategies to resurrect the deep state and entrench it within the Egyptian society, despite the disparities in the contexts. Hence, the study’s main argument focuses on the ability of the deep state to survive the security and political turmoil that accompanied the Egyptian uprisings as well as the MB’s short reign and make a robust come back.

Thus, the study’s primary argument is as follows: *After deposing the MB’s president, Mohamad Morsi, the current, military-descendent president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has*

been trying to replicate the deep Nasserite military state through both: institutions and rhetoric. This form of state – which is based on fear and suppression – is the only guarantee of the regime’s survival in the post-Arab Spring era.

1.1. Significance and Contribution to the Field:

With the deterioration of the human rights situation in Egypt, and with the increasing imprisonment and death penalties, this research attempts to uncover the strategies utilized by el-Sisi in repressing any form of dissent. It compares el-Sisi’s reign to that of Nasser and associates the Nasserite state with the deep state. Nasser succeeded in silencing the opposition and empowering the army. After his reign, Mubarak maintained the deep state that preserved his presidency until the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The Egyptian Spring shook the foundations of this state and provided an opportunity for the MB to reach power for the first time in their history.

Hence this research focuses on unveiling the historical context of the deep state characterized by a robust and resilient military rule as well as tight media boundaries in Egypt. It aims at revealing a pattern of authoritarian rule that has always secured the dominance of the armed forces. Besides, the research will examine the recuperation of the deep state and the suppression elements involved in its entrenchment mainly the economy, judiciary and the media.

Consequently, the research will tackle the role of the media in constructing this national identity and in emphasizing the deep state. Therefore, the study will deconstruct the deep state’s rhetoric manifested in el-Sisi’s speeches, as compared to selected speeches by Nasser.

1.2. Literature Review:

This section examines the basic features of the deep state and the extent to which they have revealed themselves in the Egyptian state especially since the 1952 revolution.

Despite his socialist ideology, Nasser was keen on preserving the religious attachment. On that, Gilles Kepel notes that “Egypt is still, up to a certain point, a reference model for Islamist movements of the Sunni persuasion: it was in this country that they originated and worked out their opposition against a postcolonial independent state that was not applying Islamic principles...”⁷ (Kepel, 1995). El-Sisi has maintained this religious identity while asserting the equality among all Egyptians regardless of their religious affiliation.⁸ Although he constantly insists on inclusion, yet this insistence “has negative implications,” as he refuses to acknowledge the discrimination against the different communities, including the recurrent atrocities targeting the different minority groups, mainly the Copts, the Shias, the Sufis, among others; in the absence of constructive arrangements by the regime to counter this.⁹

However, despite the emphasis on national identity, both Nasser and el-Sisi have used religious (mainly Islamic) rhetoric to legitimize their regimes and policies.¹⁰ This has partly been a strategy to counter the rise of political Islam strongly manifested in the phenomenon of the MB. The deep state thus championed an official version of Islam – that based the bulk of personal laws on the Sharia, supported the building and expansion of mosques and religious educational institutions, and provided ample radio and television time for religious broadcasts – while combating Islamist groups that sought to deploy religion to undermine, or subvert, the authority of the state. Painting with broad strokes, the deep state under Nasser sought a monopoly over religion; although its

success in achieving this ambitious goal was at best a limited and transient one.

Under el-Sisi, the military and the security apparatus have relentlessly pursued radical Islamist groups in the Sinai Peninsula – primarily Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) – while cracking down on the far less violent, albeit equally menacing, MB. As Jean-Pierre Filiu notes: “Such a nailed fist policy towards the local population, coupled with mass arrests and forced deportations, fueled Bedouin hostility against the security forces. This is how, for instance, the Sawarka tribe, south of Rafah, became even more supportive of ABM”¹¹ (Filiu, 2015).

Filiu argues that the growing perception of the Egyptian armed forces as an occupying rather than a protecting force has “only enhanced the profile of jihadi groups as the armed protectors of the local tribes” (Filiu, 2015). The enhanced feelings of relative deprivation and social exclusion and marginalization provided a great opportunity for extremist groups to gain appeal among the people.

1.2.1. Nasserite State:

The influence of the Nasserite state did not end with the death of Nasser in 1970, authors like Sarah Mousa asserts that Nasser’s impact had deeply shaped the latest Arab Spring because the institutions that people revolted against – mainly in what was formerly known as the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) – “are rooted in institutions that the Nasser regime either directly or indirectly created.” Mousa notes that ever since he became president, Nasser managed to silence opposing media views through abuse and imprisonment until the media were nationalized in 1960 and hence became the regime’s voice¹² (Mousa, 2012). Furthermore, Nasser prohibited political adversaries for he regarded opposition as a threat to the credibility and legitimacy of his nationalist/socialist goals. Consequently, the strongest political party under the British-

dominated Egyptian monarchy, the Wafd Party, was strategically demolished by Nasser. Additionally, a major player in Egyptian politics, the MB, was deemed illegal and those suspected to be members or supporters were arrested (Mousa, 2012).

The appeal of the Nasserite state rested on a complex blend of rhetoric and concrete policies. At the rhetorical level, the state emphasized Arab nationalism, championing the Palestinian cause, Arab socialism, anti-Western imperialism and steadfast opposition to Zionism. In terms of concrete policies, Nasser stressed significant agrarian reform, state-led industrialization, the expansion of education, healthcare and social services; while insulating the state from societal pressure and suppressing freedom of expression and opposition.¹³ Yet, Nasser “acquired a heroic image” for major achievements and positions, namely: ending the British occupation, nationalizing the Suez Canal, opposing the Baghdad Pact and adopting socialist policies and plans in 1961¹⁴ (Sahin, 2014).

The thesis’ choice of comparison between Nasser and el-Sisi is not random; while there are significant differences between the two presidents and the regional and international context in which each operated, one cannot but help notice the striking similarities between them. Thus, this necessitates a compare-contrast analysis to uncover and identify the disparities and parallels, which will be tackled at a later stage in the literature review. This will elucidate the study’s association of the current president with Nasser rather than with his successors, namely Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. As for now, the main concern revolves around the concept of the deep state, its existence and its origins in Egypt.

1.2.2. Deep State:

Any research on the deep state should start by identifying the origins of this concept.

The deep state has been initially coined by the Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in 1974. The term, known in Turkish as *derin devlet*, was a depiction of the scandals that stormed Turkey in the 1990s due to the murky cooperation between state intelligence, corrupt justice and organized crime which seemed to ‘run’ the system behind the scenes”¹⁵ (Filiu, 2015).

According to Mehtap Soyler, the deep state is concomitant with authoritarian and corrupt sectors of the state that keeps on replicating itself. Yet this kind of state ensures its credibility and legitimacy through “exerting a coup threat, instigating military interventions, and committing organized crime and extrajudicial killings within the boundaries of the formal security apparatus.”

A 2017 ‘Judicial Watch’ report defines the deep state as “legions of political appointees, career civil servants and powerful private contractors who run the government no matter who sits in the Oval Office.”¹⁶ Mike Lofgren, author of “The Deep State: The Fall of the Constitution and the Rise of a Shadow Government” argues that the deep state has taken over the United States of America, yet it does not comprise of the whole government but rather “It is a hybrid of national security and law enforcement agencies” that is heavily entrenched and highly protected by surveillance, military power, money and its capacity to co-opt and contain resistance.¹⁷ Researchers differ on the origins of the deep state in the Arab World. Filiu describes those who dominate the deep state as “modern Mamluks” hence postulating that the deep state has been established in the postcolonial period by Arab leaders, one the other hand, researchers like Charles Tripp dates their establishment back to the colonial era contending that in Iraq, for example, the British colonialists intended to create a “dual-state – one official and the other a shadow state.”¹⁸ This thesis mainly adopts Filiu’s

construct of the deep state.

Ahmed Aboulenein and Saleh and Daragahi summarize the elements of the deep state as a combination of networks led by the armed forces and incorporating the security personnel, the judiciary, the senior bureaucrats and the main business enterprises which has always governed Egypt.¹⁹ Aboulenein asserts that the deep state, characterized by a military government anchored in strong security institutions with heavy engagement in the running of the economy, “has further consolidated its grip on Egypt”²⁰ (Aboulenein, 2014).

Although the ‘ruling elite’ changed when the regime of Hosni Mubarak finally succumbed in the face of the 2011 popular uprising, the security apparatus that was the bulwark of that regime (and of the Egyptian deep state) witnessed no major alterations. Thus, in the aftermath of the unsuccessful suppression of the protesters “not a single police officer, high or low ranking, has received any form of punishment. Meanwhile hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members have been sentenced to death for various crimes and dozens of secular activists and journalists have been imprisoned”²¹ (Aboulenein, 2014). After all, as articulated by Ruth Michaelson, el-Sisi (presiding over a military-backed regime) is “regarded as the autocrat’s political heir.”²²

As the thesis will argue, President el-Sisi has been preoccupied with resurrecting and consolidating this deep state after it came under assault during the turmoil of the Egyptian Spring. E. Woertz explains that “with the 98 per cent approval of the new constitution by only 39 per cent of voters the deep state is back in Egypt” (Aboulenein, 2015). The new constitution formulated by el-Sisi, has solidified the deep state as it offers countless privileges to the military including economic interests, since the military’s consortium, under el-Sisi, is, inter alia, in charge of the new Suez

development project. The project would be solely implemented by national companies and funded by national banks, as stressed in one of the president's speeches.²³

Besides, Woertz contends that the military constitutes a state within the Egyptian state and has its own economy within the national economy that is characterized by biased and discriminated privileges. The author further adds that the military's "shadowy networks" – as he describes them – dominates 8 to 30 percent of Egypt's GDP²⁴ (Woertz, 2014).

According to Aboulenein, in the year 2015, the Egyptian state spent EGP 30.9 billion i.e. around \$4.5 billion on defense. In addition to this sum, Egypt receives \$1.3 billion U.S. military aid annually. This portrays that the ultimate aim of the deep state is to strengthen the military on all levels and to integrate it in all the diverse sectors in order to tighten the army's grip on power. After all, the three main branches in the state: legislative, executive and judiciary all serve one power (Saleh & Daragahi, 2012). Additionally, in line with the deep state's strategy to silence dissent, the state issued a new "Protest Law" in October 17, 2013 that enforces stringent boundaries on the right to assembly to the extent that an article bans the protestors' right to continue their demonstration overnight.²⁵

In comparison to Nasser, it is important to note that the conditions and the context under which Nasser ingrained the deep state differ than those present today. The external challenges that Nasser faced during his mandate were much more critical than today as Nasser ruled during the cold war era and widespread political turmoil. This provided him with more authority and control over the domestic level and provided a rationale for the establishment of the deep state. However, today, with the receding of external threats, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain this deep state since "a

state that presides over a torn civil society without shared pluralistic traditions will be ill equipped to deal with the repercussions and will likely lose cohesion” (Woertz, 2014).

Yet, there is no doubt that el-Sisi has been investing his utmost effort in resurrecting elements of the Nasserite version of the deep state including the oppression of freedom of expression whereby one of his relatively recent methods was the decree that penalizes reporting on the military by a prison sentence up to five years and a fine up to \$7000 (Aboulenein, 2015).

Moreover, Ann Lesch proclaims that the military and security systems are hostile towards non-governmental organizations “not only on the grounds that they disrupt unity and cause chaos, but also on the grounds that they enable foreign powers to interfere in Egypt’s domestic politics. They even claim that NGOs deliberately implement the agendas of hostile powers that seek to weaken – and ultimately destroy – Egypt”²⁶ (Lesch, 2016).

Scholars have agreed that the influence and the involvement of the military in the Egyptian economy has been on the rise ever since el-Sisi came into office. This tight relation between the military and the economy will make it highly tough to separate the two. In her research on “Militarizing the Nation”, Zeinab Abul-Magd writes:

“The Egyptian military ...owns business enterprises that invest in almost everything and produce almost anything...By tapping into domestic consumer markets and managing every urban vicinity, the military keeps constant surveillance over and penetrates into the everyday life of docile or discontented individuals in the nation. Meanwhile, it perpetuates a nationalistic discourse about saving the nation from and securing it against internal and external threats alike. This situation is far from being a new phenomenon that emerged with the recent ascent of a new military president, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi; its deep roots are entrenched in the past sixty years of the country’s history.”²⁷

1.2.3. Origins of the deep state in Egypt:

Perspectives diverge on the origins of the deep state in Egypt. While some scholars argue that the deep state dates back to the days of the Pharaoh (Abdul Hafeez, 2012) or the early days of the establishment of the Egyptian modern state (Filiu, 2015), others, like Abul-Magd and Aboulenein, believe that the origins of the deep state reside within the Nasserite interim.

Since the establishment of the state is beyond the scope of this research, this section will solely focus on the Nasserite mandate starting from the underpinning of the Free Officers Movement till the death of Nasser.

Abul-Magd states that the militarization of Egypt started as off July 1952, directly following the officers' declaration of independence from the colonial power. Soon afterwards, the former officers occupied the most important positions in Egypt from the presidency to managers of business enterprises and heads of public companies.²⁸

This offers a strong argument for those who debate that Nasser was the founder of the deep state in Egypt. It is with strong basis, that one can assert that the Free Officers Movement led by Nasser and his military associates represented the “invisible hand” that established and ruled the deep state in Egypt (Abdul-Azim, 2013).²⁹ Similarly, P.J. Vatikiotis asserted that “by the end of 1953, the military regime had managed to overthrow the monarchy and, in great measure, to neutralize if not altogether destroy, *ancien regime* political leaders and groups, accordingly, remnants of the monarchy were destroyed.”³⁰

Moreover, although Ewan Stein does not explicitly delve into the concept of the deep state, yet he also notes that the “hegemonic” Egypt-first identity which is based on

strong nationalism and loyalty to the army has been constantly indoctrinated and proselytized by the military regime in Egypt since the 1950s, which demonstrates that the Egyptian identity underwent a change in the 1950s i.e. after the army took over, portraying the emergence of a new era in Egypt – that of a deep state.³¹

A quick throwback to Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak's reigns portrays how the first aimed to de-Nasserize the state by trying to mitigate the damages and improve the relations with the Islamist counterparts in the country as well as with external powers and the 'Israeli' occupants. Sadat was more open towards the Islamists, he released many of them from prisons and allowed them to be politically active in the state. Although Sadat is perceived to have "de-Nasserized" the state, yet this does not contradict with the fact that he left intact the elements of the deep state especially regarding the military and the media. In fact, it was through the state-owned media and the education system that Sadat attempted to denounce the Nasserist era. On that, Marcene Marcoux, in his chapter of the book "Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul" writes:

*"President Sadat explicitly defined his political vision of peace and prosperity for the seventies as an alternative to the "nightmares" of Nasserist adventurism abroad and repressive socialism at home; ...By exposing the alleged failures of the Nasser regime, Sadat hoped to justify his own radical policy departures of economic and political liberalization, realignment with the West, and accommodation with Israel. The official rhetoric of the de-Nasserization campaign dismissed Nasserism as a spent political force that had lost the support of the people."*³²

Even after the assassination of Sadat by radical Islamists, the military was still capable of containing the situation and preventing any further escalation while replacing the assassinated military president with another military figure, Hosni Mubarak, who

served as the vice president under Sadat, hence upholding the army's clutch on power. In fact, the assassination was in the deep state's favor as it publicly legitimized the need and the rationale for this state in the face of the rising Islamic threat (Marcoux, 1990).

Mubarak, on the other hand, aimed to maintain and strengthen the deep state by benefitting from the mistakes committed by his predecessors. After Sadat's assassination in 1981, his successor, Mubarak, took over and further enhanced the president's authority as he "mercilessly pursued a campaign of repression against various Islamist movements" under which the Egyptian prisons comprised of around 18,000 political prisoners being subjected to abuse and torture during Mubarak's 30-years reign³³ (Delvoie, 2013).

Being a senior military figure himself, Mubarak knew how to appease the army, not through allowing them to manage entire projects, but rather through bestowing them with governmental and foreign contracts (Linn, 2016). "The powerful Mubarak-era cronies continued to dominate key Egyptian institutions," and "the real power-brokers were Mubarak-era business elites, the military, security and intelligence forces"³⁴ (Momani, 2013).

This deep state was preserved in Egypt during the mandates of Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak as it provided a guarantee for their regimes. Since both had a military background, it was simple for them to identify the focal points of this deep state and act accordingly.

However, the January 25th revolution temporarily changed the rules of the game as it deposited the military president and insisted on implementing a democratic election that resulted in the triumph of the MB's candidate. The MB was aware of the deep state and so most of the "political maneuvering done by Muhammad Morsi while in power

was to remove the means by which the deep state-controlled Egypt, something that officials within the Freedom and Justice party were open about”³⁵ (Abdul Azim, 2013).

However, the research focuses on Nasser and el-Sisi under the pretext that Nasser was the founder and the pioneer of the Egyptian deep state and el-Sisi is now the resurrector of this state after the attempt to diffuse it throughout the revolution and the MB mandate.

Sacrificing breadth for depth, the research will not concentrate on Sadat and Mubarak as the two presidents tried to maintain the deep state and did little to change the internal balance of power within the state.

1.2.4. Nasser vs. El-Sisi:

As aforementioned, this section will compare and contrast the two presidents and elucidate the research’s association between the two. One of the major differences is the economic policy, while Nasser aimed to implement a socialist system that privileges the farmers and the poor strata, el-Sisi has been adopting an economic liberalism approach at the expense of the middle and lower classes of the society. Although Abul-Magd argues that the military during Nasser’s time was basically ruled by middle to lower class generals, while the military now is dominated by neo-liberals, yet she also describes Nasser’s system as “socialism without socialists”, because although Nasser himself might have been genuine in his ideology and his socialist stance, yet few to none of the bureaucrats around him or the institutions he established, like the “labor unions, agricultural cooperatives and professional syndicates...were true or even good adherents to Nasser’s socialism.”³⁶

Although Nasser represented and still represents the symbol of Arab nationalism and pride for some, for others he “symbolizes crushing oppression and the establishment

of militantly authoritarian state that still haunts Egypt today. Either way, the prestige – or infamy – that Nasser enjoys in Egyptian national memory has made it necessary for his successors to define their visions, and themselves, in relation to him. Nasser is usually cited to legitimize others’ agendas, whether as a model to aspire to or as a failure to avoid”³⁷ (El Benni, 2017).

El Benni further advances this comparative analysis between the two presidents by underscoring the key similarities and differences. Among the major features that differentiated the two presidents are:

- i- Perception of Egyptian nationalism: Nasser perceived Egypt as the spearhead of an inclusive pan-Arab union, whereas el-Sisi views nationalism in an “Egypt first” lens at the expense of Arab nationalism;
- ii- View of the West: While generally maintaining good ties with the communist camp, Nasser subscribed to and popularized an anti-imperialist and anti-Western vision, whereas el-Sisi has been cultivating relations with Western countries mainly the United States as well as maintaining the good ties with Russia;
- iii- Economic policies: the two presidents diverge on this realm, while Nasser favored and adopted a socialist policy that advantaged the poor and vulnerable, mainly the lower strata, el-Sisi has adopted economic liberalism and lifted governmental subsidies on water while encouraging government and military-funded large-scale projects (Adly, 2017);
- iv- Palestinian cause: This issue can be considered as constituting the most salient difference between the two presidents. Thus, while Nasser presented himself as the champion of the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist occupation, el-Sisi strengthened and reinforced the Egyptian-Israeli peace openly and explicitly while criticizing the Palestinian resistance (Goller et al, 2017);
- v- Relations with other Arab countries: While Nasser aimed to be the pioneer of Arab nationalism and influence the Arab public irrespective of territorial

boundaries and national sovereignty (Barnett, 1998), el-Sisi does not seem to pay much attention to regional developments. El-Sisi has sought good relations with almost all Arab and neighboring states except for the MB-affiliated Qatar (and Sudan). For el-Sisi stabilizing the fragile domestic situation is an absolute priority; and foreign policy is deemed as an instrument to serve domestic priorities (Trager, 2017).

Accordingly, the association between the two presidents (and their regimes) stems from el-Sisi's attempts to "bolster his legitimacy by reincarnating and cultivating the nationalistic nostalgia of the era and persona of... Nasser."³⁸ This is indeed why this research provides a comparative analysis of the eras of Nasser and el-Sisi in order to shed light on how the latter attempted to play on the Nasserite nostalgia and sentiment to influence mass publics. Yet, this comparative analysis does not ignore or overlook the huge disparities between the two but rather aims at demonstrating how el-Sisi has been trying to replicate the Nasserite experience on the domestic level.

1.2.6. Constructivism:

Being one of the latest schools of thought in international relations, constructivism has been capable of tackling issues that haven't been deeply inspected within the former schools. This includes the construction of national identities. According to the constructivist perspective, national identities are not primordial, but are rather intently established by rulers or regimes to sustain their grip on power.

Egypt has always been characterized with a deeply-rooted national identity based on Arab nationalism under Nasser which was enhanced with the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR). Besides, the Egyptian identity has always been associated with its position as the center of the Arab world and the pioneer of the Arab Nationalism and

the Palestinian cause. This identity has been heavily reliant on a strong military presence to safeguard these popular causes.³⁹

One of the most prominent names in the constructivist school is Alexander Wendt. Wendt argues that identity whether religious, ethnic, tribal or others is socially constructed and molded rather than primordial and that the structures of human association are “primarily cultural rather than material phenomena”⁴⁰ (Behraves, 2011). He states that not only does structure inform agency, but also agency will transform structure. “In this sense, neither agency nor structure ‘cause’ the other, rather they are ‘mutually constitutive’”⁴¹ (Wendt 1987). Using the same logic, Wendt posited that “the process of internalization of societal norms might occur on a decentralized, rule-by-rule basis, in which an actor accepts the legitimacy of a single decision of an international organization. Or it might have a more holistic quality, in which an actor constructs for itself an identity as a ‘rule-following agent,’ making unnecessary the questioning of any particular rule except in unusual circumstances.”⁴² This demonstrates that legitimacy, specifically the national one that is attributed to the local population, is constructed or derived through the institutionalization of societal norms.

Furthermore, any discussion of identity poses two different and/or opposing dimensions/ perceptions: perception of the self as opposed to the other, which is described as ‘We’ and the ‘Other’ as Campbell explains. Hence, according to Valentinas Berziunas, it is essential to deconstruct the constructed images of ‘Us’ and the ‘Other’ simultaneously.⁴³ She postulates that state identity is being produced and reproduced constantly; this process relies heavily on security policies which takes us back to Egypt and the increasing military power constantly working on strengthening the identity of ‘Egypt National Security and Army First’. In this regard, Paul Kowert adds that “to say

that a group of people has a particular identity is to suggest both that they share certain qualities and also that these qualities somehow set them apart from others”⁴⁴ (Kowert 1999).

In his essay, Michael Barnett demonstrates that “contested notions of Arab national identity help to define security threats and shape the dynamics of alliance formation,”⁴⁵ and at the same time, these security threats helped the Arab regimes, specifically in Egypt, to enhance their credibility and advance their agendas. Barnett sees Arab politics as representational politics. He contends that there were three shared concerns that formulated the normative structure of Arabism or that Arab leaders confined to; these were: 1) desire to protect the Arab nation from the West; 2) confront Zionism and 3) strengthen the political community.⁴⁶

Egypt’s national identity has always been a major concern not only locally but also regionally and internationally. While Nasser tried to construct a militarily, socialist and Arab nationalist identity, Sadat tried to establish a liberal, Egypt-first identity, Mubarak maintained the previous identity, Morsi pushed for the Islamic identity and el-Sisi has been trying to resurrect the militarily identity and the primacy of the army.

One of Nasser’s main achievements back then was the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR). Nevertheless, while El Benni believes in Nasser’s genuine intention for unification, Barnett argues that this development “certainly” did not stem from “Nasser’s principled commitment to unification” by noting that Nasser’s pre-1958 speeches did not depict any sentiment for unification, additionally there wasn’t any “strategic imperative” which supported this decision. He attributes this change to a symbolic entrapment (Barnett, 1998).

1.2.7. Media:

Media as a component in of itself is very crucial as a tool that was deployed to establish, preserve and entrench the deep state in Egypt. It is no doubt that during Nasser's mandate, controlling the media was a much easier job since the media outlets were already owned by the state; however, currently under el-Sisi, media have massively changed. Although dominating the traditional media outlets in Egypt has not been a very difficult job for the new regime, however social media have indeed been a headache. While media analysis requires a research on its own, the current study will examine the media as a tool for the entrenchment of the deep state.

To serve this purpose, two main media theories will be utilized to explain the significance of the media in this regard. Those are: Agenda- Setting Theory and Stereotyping theory. Under the first, McCombs and Shaw argue that the media set and frame the public agenda. The media structure the opinion of the mass public and assign specific significance to certain issues over the others. "In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position"⁴⁷ (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Andrea Teti contextualizes the media aspect in a constructivist manner, affirming that "constructivism is, in principle, capable of highlighting the political dimensions and consequences of the process of producing and validating (what counts as) that 'knowledge' which informs public debates, is propagated by the media, and is deployed both consciously and subconsciously by policy-makers and decision-makers."⁴⁸

Furthermore, Eeva Hurmalainen iterates the significance of political

communication in this “mediatized public opinion” “as the single most important public interface of competing discourses concerning national security and subsequently, national identity.” For her, any discussion on national politics will inevitably involve an identification of the self as opposed to the other. This self-identification occurs through the media by the construction of national identity within news discourses.⁴⁹

(Hurmalaianen, 2009). This reinforced discourse, through the media, has a huge impact on the audience’s perception of their national identity which in turn consolidates and shapes this identity (Schneeberger, 2009).

The second theory on stereotyping, which was coined by Walter Lippman, postulates that messengers, mainly the media, manipulate the public opinion who believe in the honesty and authenticity of the media; completely overlooking the fact that the media is owned by the most powerful and the elitist in the society⁵⁰ (Lippman, 1922). Egypt’s Islamic groups like MB have been subjected to stereotypical images, ever since Nasser’s mandate. This same strategy has been used by el-Sisi to portray them as an extremist threat especially after designating them as a terrorist group. The media propaganda and injustice against them is a pull factor towards extremism⁵¹ (MRN, 2013).

The status of freedom of speech and expression in Egypt has been on the decline in the post-revolution era. Many journalists have been detained, expelled or threatened.⁵² “Dozens of journalists were physically assaulted during the year [2015] by both security agents and civilians.”⁵³ Consequently, in February 2016, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) have written to el-Sisi requesting the release of the arbitrarily detained journalists.⁵⁴

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), “Egypt was the world’s second-worst jailer of journalists in 2015... with 23 reporters behind bars as of December.” Additionally, information that contradicts the Ministry of Defense’s reports was strictly banned by a new counterterrorism law thus limiting the journalists’ freedom on this matter.⁵⁵

Broadly speaking, various incidents in the post-MB era indicated the deterioration of the media status in Egypt. This erosion in the media freedom demonstrated itself, inter alia, in the abrupt halting of Bassem Youssef’s popular show “*El Bernameg*” (The Program) right after el-Sisi’s inauguration as a president. Clearly, this was not an isolated incident, for Egypt witnessed numerous violations against journalists and their freedom of speech. Examples include: the deportation of the Lebanese-Egyptian journalist Lilian Daoud, the imprisonment of three Jazeera journalists and the informal ‘expulsion’ of several prominent journalists such as Yosri Fouda.

In works they published, Youssef and Fouda documented their “journalistic” experience under el-Sisi. While both were able to freely operate (that is without harassment) during the Egyptian uprising and under the short tenure of Morsi, they came under major pressure under el-Sisi’s regime. This drove both to terminate their programs and leave the country. (Mada Masr, 2016 & Kingsley, 2014).

In his book “Media, Revolution and Politics in Egypt”, Abdallah Hassan discusses the two aforementioned journalists and delves into the relationship between the military rule and the downfall of the freedom of expression and freedom of the press.⁵⁶ Additionally, Hassan quotes the ‘liberal’ journalist, Alaa Al Aswani, who wrote an ironic column on “How to End the Revolution in Six Steps” in *al-Masry al-Yawm*

(Egypt Today) on August 2, 2011. His third and fifth points, respectively, emphasize the role of the media in countering the revolution:

“...your [regime] agents in the media must lead an organized campaign to terrorize the people. They should exaggerate the effects of the crisis and attribute all the problems to the revolution until the notion is rooted in people’s minds that the country is closer to famine and chaos because of the revolution – the revolution alone.

...Fifth, besiege the revolutionaries and tarnish their image. You must begin an extensive and organized campaign to discredit the revolutionaries. It is quite simple. You have your followers in the media, police, and the judiciary. It is easy to fabricate records, photographs, and documents confirming that these revolutionaries are traitors and agents of foreign powers, which led them to support the revolution.”⁵⁷

On another note, it is important to shed light on the “media war” that was taking place in the post-Muslim brotherhood era in Egypt which eventually led to the banning of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Al Jazeera in Egypt.

1.2.8. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):

To study the interrelation between the media rhetoric and the identity-building, we need to pay attention to the deployed discourse. While media professionals have debated the concrete meaning of the concept, discourses have been primarily defined by Michel Foucault as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.”⁵⁸

For this reason, several techniques and theories have been formulated to study and analyze discourse. One of the key methods is the Critical Discourse analysis.

Teun Van Dijk defines CDA as an analysis of discourse that interrogates how the abuse of power is reproduced, legitimized and preserved through social and political talk and text.⁵⁹

The CDA will hence be used in this research to deconstruct the speeches of Nasser and el-Sisi and trace the mutual discourse across the two military presidents in an attempt “to identify through analysis the particular linguistic, semiotic and ‘interdiscursive’ ... features of ‘texts’ ... which are a part of processes of social change”⁶⁰ (Fairclough, 2012).

1.2.9. Islamism and Root Causes of Extremism in the Post-Egyptian Spring:

To begin with, the research includes this section as an attempt to bridge between the deep state and the root causes of extremism in Egypt. In the recent decades, there has been a rising interest in extremism; however, the deep state has rarely been investigated as one of the causes of this escalating phenomenon. Egypt ranked fifth among the Arab countries with the highest level of terrorism in the Global Terrorism Index of 2017 following the war-torn Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya. This high rank raises the question of the deep state’s capacities to counter extremism and in fact, provides an example of how the deep state might in fact be one of the root causes of extremism. Egyptian extremism is a result of years of suppression due to the deeply-rooted military state. Although the Islamists played a major role in ousting the monarchy – along with the Free Officers Movement led by Nasser – however, once it reached power in 1952, the movement invested quite some effort in oppressing them. Despite preserving close attachment with religious principles, Nasser used a firm policy to suppress Islamists (Breyfogle, 1993).

Several theories have been deployed to explain this, among them were ‘Relative Deprivation Theory’ and the ‘Social Cohesion and Social Exclusion’, to name a few. Both theories have validated the relationship between poverty and exclusion, on the one hand, and the tendency to join extremist groups, on the other. The Egyptian case

provides a strong ground for these two theories.

The relative deprivation theory provides a socioeconomic argument, which shows that unemployment and the increasing population size are highly correlated with increased incidents of terrorism.⁶¹ (Richardson, 2011). Moreover, economic despair, according to Daniel Egiegba Agbibo, creates a conducive environment that legitimizes the violent actions (Agbibo, 2014).

This socioeconomic subjugation along with social exclusion and marginalization make extremist groups with their financial support, appealing to the disenfranchised.

The social exclusion theory studies the effects of social exclusion on the individual. Riyad Hosain Rahimullah, Stephen Larmar and Mohamad Abdalla note that the poor integration in the society, as well as the lack of engagement in the political affairs, are factors of radicalization. Furthermore, they refer to a psychological state called anomie, which means “social instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values,”⁶² mainly through “a sense of purposelessness” as another factor that makes the individual a potential radical (Rahimullah et al, 2013).

Egyptian Islamists comprise a wide array of ideologies and programs ranging from the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafis (presently, best represented by *Al-Nour* party), the extremists and the Sufis. Today, the major Islamist opposition to the current regime lies within: the MB and the extremists (mainly Ansar Bayt-Maqdis or later known as Wilayat Sinai). The deep state tends to resort to the Islamist threat as a rationale for its presence.

The MB has a long and turbulent history in Egypt. It was founded under the monarchy in 1928 by then school teacher Hassan Al Banna. It quickly emerged as the strongest Islamist group and opposition party in the country. The MB is characterized by

its transnational, pan-Islamic (Sunni) approach and its various educational, charitable and outreach efforts. In one of his few recordings, Al Banna specified that the organization is neither a political party, nor a charity organization, but rather it is a curriculum and a way of life, based on the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna.⁶³ The Brotherhood has affiliate groups all over the Arab region. Hamas in Gaza, al-Jama'a Islamiyya in Lebanon, Ennahda movement in Tunisia, among others, all have formal or informal ties to the MB; and they all subscribe to the same "loose" ideology.

In the Egyptian context, the MB estimates their members to be over a million in 2013 with most of them belonging to the lower-middle strata, yet their leaders are often intellectual businessmen and doctors. The MB states that each of their members pays a share of their income to fund the organization.⁶⁴

However, the most dangerous group today is Ansar Bayt-Maqdis (ABM) or what has been lately known as Wilayat-Sinai (Sinai Province). ABM is a violent organization from Sinai that was created in 2011, in line with the Egyptian revolution. It was active from 2011 to 2013 as a separate entity concentrating its activities on Israel and the gas pipeline to Jordan.⁶⁵ Later, it has declared allegiance to the Islamic state in 2014 and initiated attacks against the Egyptian security forces.

The Global terrorism index of 2016 specified that "the Sinai Province of the Islamic State was responsible for 78 per cent of deaths from terrorism in 2015. However, it is likely that this group is responsible for even more deaths as the perpetrators of 19 per cent of deaths are unknown."⁶⁶

1.3. Research Questions:

Based on a thorough reading of the fairly substantial literature on the Egyptian state since Nasser, this study addresses two principal questions. The first question can be broken into two sub-questions: 1) What are the persistent/lingering elements of the deep Nasserite state under el-Sisi's mandate? 2) How is el-Sisi utilizing the governmental institutions to resurrect the deep state?

The second question explores how el-Sisi, in his public discourse, draws on themes that permeated Nasser's discourse in order to legitimate the deep state he sought to resurrect.

1.4. Methodology:

The methodology that will be used to investigate the research questions is a qualitative analysis relying primarily on sources in Arabic and English, through the synthesis of several research findings and the utilization of a strong theoretical background in addition to concrete and recent incidents that help in responding to the aforementioned research questions.

Moreover, a comparative analysis will be used to scrutinize the similarities between Nasser and el-Sisi. For that, the study will rely on discourse analysis and/or speech analysis of the two presidents. The discourse analysis (primarily in Chapter 5) will mostly be qualitative but with a small quantitative twist mainly to pinpoint the frequency of the usage of certain terms in the official discourse of the two leaders.

The independent variables, namely el-Sisi's policies, institutions and rhetoric, will be utilized to explain and demonstrate the resurrection of the deep Nasserite state in the post-MB era, the dependent variable. Hence, the methodology will include a discourse analysis/ speech analysis, a comparative analysis of Nasser and el-Sisi's

approaches and online research of secondary sources. Whereas, the theories or perspectives that will be mostly utilized are constructivism and agenda-setting theory. Although the mainstream perspective is that Islamism is the ultimate issue in the post-Arab Spring, yet Stein argues that “those citing an unreconstructed Islamism as the greatest threat to democracy in the Middle East may have been looking in the wrong place,” positing that in Egypt, the threat is rooted in “the obstinate ideological power of a military regime established over decades and bolstered by material structures.”⁶⁷

The forthcoming four chapters will address the aforementioned research questions through investigating and exploring the major fundamentals that sustain the deep state. The second chapter – which is the bulk of the research – will focus on the core of the deep state and its ‘invisible’ hand: the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). This chapter will discuss and differentiate between the different ‘military and security wings’ of the deep state which are mainly divided between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior.

A discussion on the armed forces inevitably requires a complimentary discussion on the economy since the Egyptian economy is highly dominated and controlled by the Egyptian army. Hence the economic aspect will be investigated in the third chapter. Equally important, the fourth chapter will tackle the judiciary system especially the military courts which are being resorted to for persecuting civilians instead of civilian courts.

Whereas, the fifth chapter will examine the manifestation of the deep state in the media and its exploitation of the press to entrench and engrain its dogma. This chapter also encompasses an analysis of the deep state’s rhetoric mainly through comparing selected speeches from Nasser and el-Sisi. Afterwards, the thesis concludes with chapter six that

re-asserts the whole argument, highlights the research's limitations and proposes potential future research on the topic.

Sacrificing breadth for depth, the scope of this study is the restructuring of Egypt in the post-MB epoch and the successful attempts of resurrecting and reinforcing the deep state through the support of deeply-entrenched institutions – mainly that of the armed forces – that demonstrated vast capacities in legitimizing the current mandate.

Chapter Two:

The Security Arm of the Egyptian Deep State

This chapter will be divided into two main parts. The first part will provide a brief overview of the anatomy of the Ministry of Defense and the institutions that fall under its mandate; it will start by differentiating between these different components, mainly the Egyptian Armed Forces, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the National Defense Council and the National Security Council; this part will mainly delve into the foundation, the organizational structure and the legal and constitutional status of the SCAF pre and post the 2011 uprising as well as post the MB reign. Whereas the second part of the chapter will focus on the Ministry of Interior and its associate armed institutions (Police forces) and will briefly distinguish between them and differentiate their roles from that of the military under the Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, the chapter will conclude with a short review of the cracks within the military.

2.1. The Ministry of Defense, The Egyptian Armed Forces and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF):

2.1.1. Background:

The Ministry of Defense is in control of all the Egyptian military establishment which includes the army, the air force, the navy and the air defense. The size of the Egyptian Armed Forces is estimated at around 450,000 with the army including up to 320,000 troops hence representing more than 65% of the total figure, based on an estimate by the Federation of American Scientists.⁶⁸ The mandate of the Ministry of Defense goes beyond the traditional duties of defending the country. According to its official

website,⁶⁹ the Ministry is currently responsible of a number of national projects; among these are: housing, healthcare, roads, seaports, water supplies and educational constructions. Hence the Ministry of Defense is not restricted to military projects but rather expands its work to involve civilian projects and services. Thus, the Ministry of Defense engages in some of the functions performed by specialized ministries such as: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Water Resource and Irrigation.

First and foremost, it is important to point out the different distinctions between: the Egyptian Armed Forces, the SCAF, the National Defense Council and the National Security Council. The Egyptian Armed Forces is the whole military body including all the troops, the Navy and the air force, whereas the SCAF is a group of 20 – 25 senior and very influential generals and officers which acts as the governing body of the armed forces. The SCAF comprises the leading generals and marshals and the heads of the different compartments within the military (*figure 1*).

The SCAF was originally established by Nasser after Egypt's defeat against the Israeli army in the 1967 war under law no.4 of 1968. The main aim behind the establishment was to develop a national military strategy for the state at times of war.⁷⁰ However, the SCAF was not officially recognized in the previous Egyptian constitution of 1971, unlike the National Defense Council which was explicitly mentioned by the constitution of 1956 under Chapter 4, Section 4, A which specifies:

“A body called the National Defense Council shall be formed to assume the responsibility for the security of the state. The President of the Republic shall pre- side over its meetings.”⁷¹

The National Defense Council was also mentioned in the Egyptian Constitution of 1971 in its Chapter 7, Article 182 that stipulates:

“A Council named "The National Defense Council" shall be established and presided over by the president of the Republic. It shall undertake the examination of matters pertaining to the methods ensuring the safety and security of the country. The law shall establish its other competences.”⁷²

Hence the National Defense Council is a constitutional entity which is supposed to act as the president’s security advisory board. The council preserved its constitutional legitimacy under the 2014 constitution in article 152 of section 2 and article 203 of section 8, inserted below.

1- Article 152:

“The President of the Republic is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The President cannot declare war or send the armed forces to combat outside state territory, except after consultation with the National Defense Council and the approval of the House of Representatives with a two-thirds majority of its members.

If the House of Representatives is dissolved, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) must be consulted and the approval of the Cabinet and National Defense Council must be obtained.”

2- Article 203:

“A National Defense Council is established, presided over by the President of the Republic and including in its membership the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Interior, the Chief of the General Intelligence Service, the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, the Commanders of the Navy, the Air Forces and Air Defense, the Chief of Operations for the armed forces and the Head of Military Intelligence.

The Council is responsible for looking into matters pertaining to the methods of ensuring the safety and security of the country, for discussing the armed forces’ budget, which is incorporated as a single figure in the state budget. Its opinion must be sought in relation to draft laws on the armed forces.

Its other competencies are defined by law.

When discussing the budget, the head of the financial affairs department of the armed forces and the heads of the Planning and Budgeting Committee and the National Security Committee at the House of Representatives shall be included. The President of the Republic may invite whoever is seen as having relevant expertise to attend the Council’s meetings without having their votes counted.”

Under Nasser, the military was overtly engaged and involved in the political life as officers occupied senior governmental positions and the management of large-scale

public enterprises including state-owned media corporations.⁷³ While, under Mubarak, the Egyptian Armed Forces became less engaged in the political life, the officers' caste became overtly involved in the state apparatus specifically in its political economy "to an unprecedented extent."⁷⁴

The role of the SCAF prior to the 2011 uprising was mainly a military advisory body, providing advises on military affairs. However, after 2011 uprising that ousted Mubarak, the SCAF's role changed remarkably to become more engaged in the political life and affairs of the state and its domestic politics as Mubarak, in his latter days, delegated and transferred power to the council as he stepped down from his position. Two days later, i.e. on February 13, 2011, the SCAF issued its first constitutional declaration where it took control of the state for six months. The SCAF did not stop here, but rather, it abandoned the 1971 constitution and called for amending the constitution and conducting new elections. The council also established that any member of the SCAF since 2011, should obtain permission from the military, even if he was no longer in service, to be involved in any public activity like running for presidency.⁷⁵ The council also established a constitutional amendment committee. And on June 18, 2012, couple of days before giving in power to the newly-elected Mohamad Morsi, the council issued another constitutional declaration which granted it legislative authority, autonomy from the government and the power of veto over the new constitution.⁷⁶

The council, which was previously nonexistent in the constitution and has been functioning via a constitutional declaration post-2011, has been mentioned three times in the 2014 constitution in the following articles:

1- Article 152:

"... If the House of Representatives is dissolved, the Supreme Council of the

Armed Forces (SCAF) must be consulted and the approval of the Cabinet and National Defense Council must be obtained.”

2- Article 200:

“The armed forces belong to the people. Their duty is to protect the country and preserve its security and territories. The state is exclusively mandated to establish armed forces. No individual, entity, organization or group is allowed to create military or para-military structures, groups or organizations. The armed forces have a Supreme Council as regulated by law.”

3- Article 234:

“The Minister of Defense is appointed upon the approval of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The provisions of this article shall remain in force for two full presidential terms starting from the date on which this Constitution comes into effect.”⁷⁷

Based on the articles mentioned above, the SCAF constitutionally codified its role. Now, it has the legal power to approve, object and even veto certain security-related decisions. Furthermore, the law number 20 of the year 2014 indicated the profiles of the members of the SCAF (*figure 1*) and specified the functions of the council. The law established that the council encompasses of 25 high-leading generals within the military in addition to the president of the republic who is not officially a member of the council; but has the capacity to call for a meeting when he deems it necessary and, in that case, he acts as the chair of the meeting as per Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the law. Figure 1 displays the profiles of the members of the SCAF, under Article 1, Paragraph 1 of the law which most importantly encompasses of: the Minister of Defense who is the Chairman of the SCAF, the Chief of Staff who is the Deputy Chairman of the SCAF, the commanders of the Navy, the Air Force and the Air Defense Force. Under this law, Article 2, Paragraph 1, the SCAF should convene every three months and whenever needed, and the meeting cannot be held without the presence of the majority of its members; and decisions are ought to be made through the majority vote within the council.⁷⁸

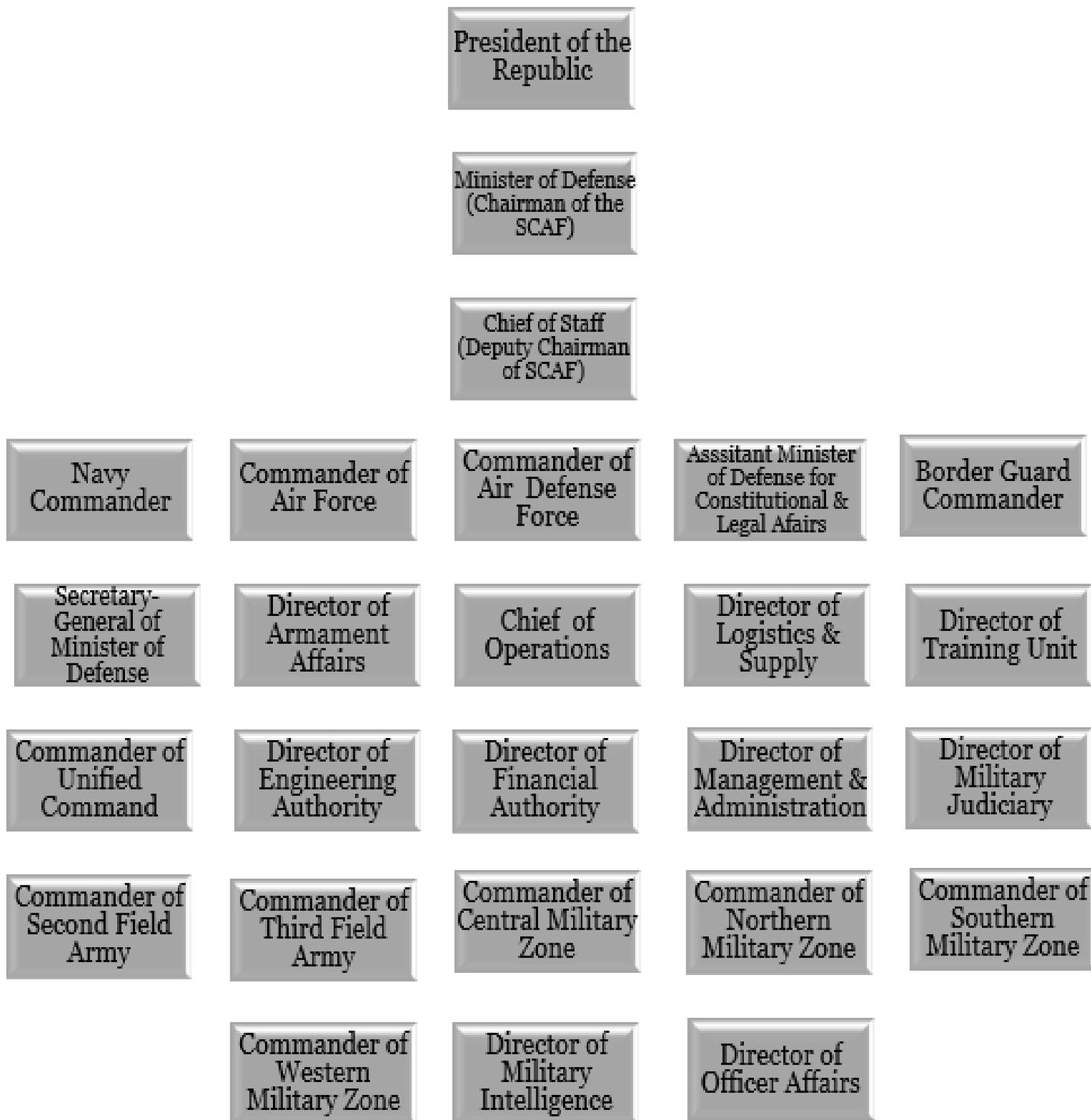


Figure 1. Profiles of the member of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces under Law 20/2014.

According to the law 20/2014, the role of the SCAF can be summarized as such:

- 1- defining strategic tasks directed towards achieving the political and military aims as specified by the political leadership of the state;
- 2- determining the size, the organizational structure and the future prospects of the military;
- 3- sustaining the combat readiness and capacities of the armed forces;
- 4- preparing the policy of recruitment of the armed forces and the bases of mobilizing them;
- 5- approving the policy of installing stadiums for military operations;
- 6- preparing draft laws and rules governing the service of individuals in the armed forces and suggestions for the recruitment system;
- 7- reviewing “the reports of the commanders of the main branches, heads of bodies and commanders of field armies and military zones and department managers to determine the state of combat readiness of the armed forces,” studying the potential of any declaration of the state of war or sending military forces beyond the state’s boundaries, preparing an assessment of the military political situation, issuing the document on threats and military challenges facing the state, preparing the military policy document, preparing the state for war or defense in cooperation with the National Defense Council and the National Security Council, cooperating and coordinating with the National Security Council on the determination of the internal hostilities and the role of the armed forces in maintaining security, approving the appointment of the minister of defense as per article 234 of the 2014 constitution which is valid for two full presidential terms and discussing any other issues that the minister of defense minister deems essential for the council, “such as the economic situation in the country, the security situation and plans to confront protests.”⁷⁹

As made clear in the constitution, the SCAF approves the appointment of the minister of defense, hence the minister and the ministry itself fall under an unofficial authority of the SCAF as the minister of defense needs to ensure the SCAF’s satisfaction to approve

his position. One of the roles of the SCAF is to determine, along with the National Security Council, the potential of existing internal hostilities thus focusing on the internal level and identifying ‘domestic’ threats. This role gives the SCAF the authority to classify any opposition or dissidence as an internal threat and hence intervene accordingly. Additionally, this concentration on the internal level overlaps with the role of the Ministry of Interior and its security arm which is in fact in charge of the domestic security sector. This demonstrates the evolution of the SCAF’s role from developing national military strategy at times of war under Nasser to identifying internal/domestic hostilities under el-Sisi. The SCAF is also requested to prepare an assessment of the military political situation, hence it is no longer confined to assess the military situation within the armed forces and any possible external threat but is rather now also responsible of assessing the political situation as well.

Moreover, as per the law, the SCAF also discusses different topics as per the request of the Minister of Defense – who is in fact the chairman of the SCAF and ‘informally’ falls under its authority – that pertains to the economy, the security and how to deal with protestors. The phrase on dealing with protestors is in itself dangerous, after all, the SCAF is the governing body of the armed forces, and the only way the armed forces can deal with issues is through deploying arms. Thus, under this law, it is legal for the SCAF to discuss strategies to confront the protestors in any means they deem necessary and urgent. So, once again, one can notice that the SCAF today is very much involved in the political game and highly engaged on the domestic security level. According to its tasks, the SCAF has a say in almost every political decision as the law permits and authorizes the SCAF to decide on the ‘strategic objectives and tasks’ to achieve the political and not only the military aims. It is remarkable that the word

'political' has been mentioned three times under the role of the SCAF; in two of them, the council is directly involved to: 1) define strategic objectives and 2) provide an assessment of the situation.

This law is considered a legal patronage for the SCAF's involvement in the political life as it is well-known that during the drafting of the 2014 constitution in late 2013, the SCAF had its own representative, Mohamed Magd El Din Barakat, and the two assistants of the Minister of Defense who are simultaneously members of the SCAF were also present and participating in the debates. In fact, el-Sisi himself interfered at some points to help achieve a compromise after reaching a stalemate over the articles pertaining to the military's role in the constitution. This sheds light on the growing capacities of the SCAF to increasingly meddle in the legal affairs and impose its will and privileges. In that regard, the Carnegie researcher, Sawsan Gad, states that "The Egyptian military is exploiting legal loopholes and bureaucratic mechanisms to control which military personnel can exercise their constitutional right to political participation."⁸⁰

Akin to the SCAF, the National Defense Council discusses matters pertaining to the assurance of national security and safety and discusses the armed forces' budget. The president needs the consultation and approval of this council, along with the others, for any official decisions related to the security of the state, declaration of war or deployment of armed forces in a combat against another state i.e. sending armed forces outside the Egyptian territories.

One additional council that is mentioned in the constitution is the National Security Council that is enshrined in article 205 of Section 4 of the 2014 constitution which states that:

“The National Security Council is established. It is presided over by the President of the Republic and includes in its membership the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health, the Chief of the General Intelligence Services, and the Heads of the Committees of Defense and National Security in the House of Representatives.

The Council adopts strategies for establishing security in the country and facing disasters and crises of all kinds, takes necessary measures to contain them, identifies sources of threat to Egyptian national security, whether at home or abroad, and undertakes necessary actions to address them on the official and popular levels...”

And as blurry the distinction between the roles of the different councils might seem,⁸¹ as clear it is that the overlap, extensiveness and, to a certain extent, unreasonableness of these councils and institutions reflect the ingrained security or deep state in Egypt which treasures the security institutions as means to exert and preserve control, and possibly as a major cause of corruption. While there is no specific data on what are the costs and the burdens that these different institutions exert on the fiscal budget of the state, one can assess that each supposedly has its own share of the budget while all of them actually share overlapping tasks.

According to Emily Crane Linn, the only institution with strength and legacy that can secure el-Sisi’s public support and position is the Egyptian Armed Forces; it is his “only source of political legitimacy,” hence it is crucial that el-Sisi guarantees and preserves their support. This ought to be done through ensuring their dominance on the Egyptian economy.⁸²

As aforementioned, Morsi and the MB in general challenged the authority of the Egyptian armed forces through sidelining them on mega national projects, like the Suez Canal project. Furthermore, Morsi forced two prominent generals to retirements:

Mohammad Hussein Tantawi and Sami Anan; both considered as a backbone of the military regime in Egypt.⁸³ Tantawi, on the first hand, served as the Minister of Defense for 21 years (1991-2012), which is the longest period to be served in this position since the establishment of the modern Egyptian republic.⁸⁴ He also served as the Chairman of the SCAF from February 2011 till August 2012. In fact, Tantawi was the acting head of the state after the toppling of Mubarak. Anan, on the second hand, held several key positions within the army and rose in the ranks of the military.⁸⁵

The complexity of the military's establishment makes it difficult to distinguish the SCAF from the two other councils in relation to the Ministry of Defense. Everything is intertwined. However a simplification of this relation between the different military institutions is: the SCAF is the commanding body of the armed forces and it usually encompasses the defense minister and his assistants as well as the head of the intelligence and the chiefs and head commanders across the different branches of the armed forces, in addition to the commanders of the five military regions in Egypt: Central, Northern, Southern and Western along with the unified command for Suez Canal (east) that was added in February 2015.

While the National Defense Council is established under the constitution to serve as the president's chief advisory board when on issues pertaining to the national security, however, the constitution keeps the council unrestricted by membership rules and does not stipulate that the president is the council's chairman. "In practice, however, the National Defense Council was rarely mentioned; the president and the minister of defense usually dealt informally with national security matters."⁸⁶ According to the constitution, the council assembles only in emergency or under national threat, however, on June 14, 2012, the SCAF established a National Defense Council without revealing

any specific duty. This move was described as an act to reduce and diminish the authority of the president.⁸⁷ This was one of the methods that the deep state has used to maintain control and weaken the rule of the MB-affiliated president.

2.1.2. SCAF in the post-Morsi Period:

The SCAF claiming to be “responding to the call by the Egyptian people” – as stated by the former minister of defense and the current president, el-Sisi – conducted the coup and retrieved power from the Muslim Brotherhood, appointing the civilian Adly Mansour as an interim president till the next elections that resulted in the inauguration of el-Sisi to presidency.

The major changes of the SCAF in the post-MB era were legal, as manifested in the council’s enshrinement in the constitution and the issuing of law number 20/2014 that formalized the mission and organizational structure of the SCAF, as mentioned earlier in the chapter. In addition to law number 20/2014, the interim president Mansour issued another law on the same day, February 24, 2014. The law number 18 stipulated that the minister of defense should hold the rank of major general for more than five years and must have played a major role within the armed forces. According to Gilad Wenig, this law has been issued “nearly a month after Sisi was promoted to the rank of field marshal and received SCAF approval to run for president, and mere weeks before he resigned. In retrospect, the government was seemingly anticipating Sisi's resignation and laying the legal groundwork for the SCAF to function under [Sedki] Sobhi, his nominated successor.”⁸⁸

Meanwhile, post-Morsi SCAF has been more focused on entrenching the grip of the army on power. The current president has helped a lot in that regard. On March 17,

2014, el-Sisi changed three SCAF seats by pushing Ibrahim Nasouhi and Mustafa al-Sharif into retirement and replacing them with former commander of the Southern Military Zone, Mohamed Arafat and former commander of the Second Field Army, Ahmed Wasfi, as head of the Inspection Authority and the director of Training Unit respectively. The empty seats of the second field army and the southern military were filled with two former chiefs of staff. Additionally, the former director of the Military Records Authority has been appointed as the director of officers' affairs.

Moreover, after el-Sisi reached power, there were several major restructurings of the council; among these were: the reassignment of two well-known generals in July 31, 2014: Taher Abdullah and Saeed Abbas, the director of the Engineering Authority and the commander of the Northern Military Zone respectively and their replacement by their deputies: Emad al-Alfi and Mohamed al-Zamalout,⁸⁹ who were again replaced by Major Generals Kamel al-Wazir and Ali Ashmawi respectively. These are few of many changes that occurred after el-Sisi's inauguration.

Yet, the major reshuffling that the new president implemented is the promotion of Mohamed Farid Hegazy to the rank of Chief of Staff and Deputy Chairman of the SCAF noting that Hegazy has been previously removed by Morsi from the position of the Commander of Second Field Army to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defense.⁹⁰ El-Sisi managed to remove and replace more than half of the members of the SCAF to ensure the members' loyalty.⁹¹

Figure 2 shows the former members of the SCAF after the numerous changes that took place especially in the last couple of years during and post the uprising, the MB rule and the coup. Recently in June 2018, el-Sisi reshuffled the cabinet changing the Ministers of Defense and Interior, among others; Mohammad Zaki replaced Sedki Sobhi

as Minister of Defense, while Mahmoud Tawfiq replaced Majdi Abdel Ghaffar as Minister of Interior; it's worth noting that all four individuals are from the military. These changes are not random though but are rather strategic, they aim at promoting el-Sisi's loyal circle and giving them fundamental roles.⁹²

Nevertheless, not only did the SCAF strengthen legally and politically but also economically. At several occasions, the SCAF made it clear that they are not willing to discuss giving up their economic privileges. They signaled their attachment and persistence on maintaining their firm grip on the economy. As one SCAF member publicly stated, "We will fight for our projects and this is a battle we will not abandon. We will not let anyone destroy the effort in which we have invested for thirty years, or let anyone, whoever it is, touch the projects of the armed forces." Additionally, the SCAF rejected a civilian scrutiny of its budget.¹⁵

The SCAF's capacity to escape accountability-checks for its actions is at the heart of Egyptian crisis today. The vagueness that surrounds the military revenues, expenditures, budget, and businesses and boundaries have been a major problem without any near solution in sight. In his article "Blame the SCAF for Egypt", Joshua Stacher notes that the SCAF is mostly the body to blame for the deterioration of the situation post-uprising, through introducing new laws against the protestors, extending the state of emergency, prosecuting civilians in the military court, censoring and restricting media, exploiting the sectarian discourse and amplifying fragmentation; in Stacher's words, "Egypt under the SCAF represents an attempt to continue the practices of the Mubarak era despite the social changes unleashed by the revolution's popular mobilization."⁹³

Although one might argue that the SCAF allowed the 'free' elections for both the parliament and the presidency, however it dissolved the lower house of the parliament in

2012 under the pretext that the elections of one third of the seats within this parliament was unconstitutional.⁹⁴ This action in itself is a clear sign that the SCAF is in fact charge of the political affairs of the state capable of permitting, prohibiting and toppling any institution despite being ‘democratically’ elected. It is certain that the SCAF wanted to reap the moment and their presence as the rulers in the interim period post-MB reign; they aimed at legalizing their presence and legitimizing their position through codifying their role in the constitution, resorting to military courts against civilian protestors, disregarding their promise to leave power within six months and “seeking to keep their budget exempt from parliamentary scrutiny, and more.”⁹⁵

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) posed a challenge to the influence and authority of the SCAF as the reform attempted to enhance and empower the official security organizations under “the oversight of elected civilian institutions.”⁹⁶ This has led to the ‘confrontation’ between the SCAF on the one hand, and different ministries on the other, like the Ministry of Interior.

The SCAF has been mostly taking the lead under the pretext that the country is facing severe extremist threat, especially in Northern Sinai. Consequently, in February 2018, el-Sisi launched a new military campaign to counter extremist groups in Sinai however, he prohibited any other external forces or NGOs from accessing the area, making it an ‘off-limits’ area. This so-called extremist threat has been a blessing in disguise for the SCAF and the armed forces in general as it allowed them to tighten their grip on society and on the political and economic affairs and enhance the security apparatus by exploiting the current circumstances; in Sherif Mohy Eldeen’s words, “Egypt’s reinstated state of emergency is ineffective in fighting terrorism and gives security forces yet another excuse to tighten crack down on the opposition.”⁹⁷

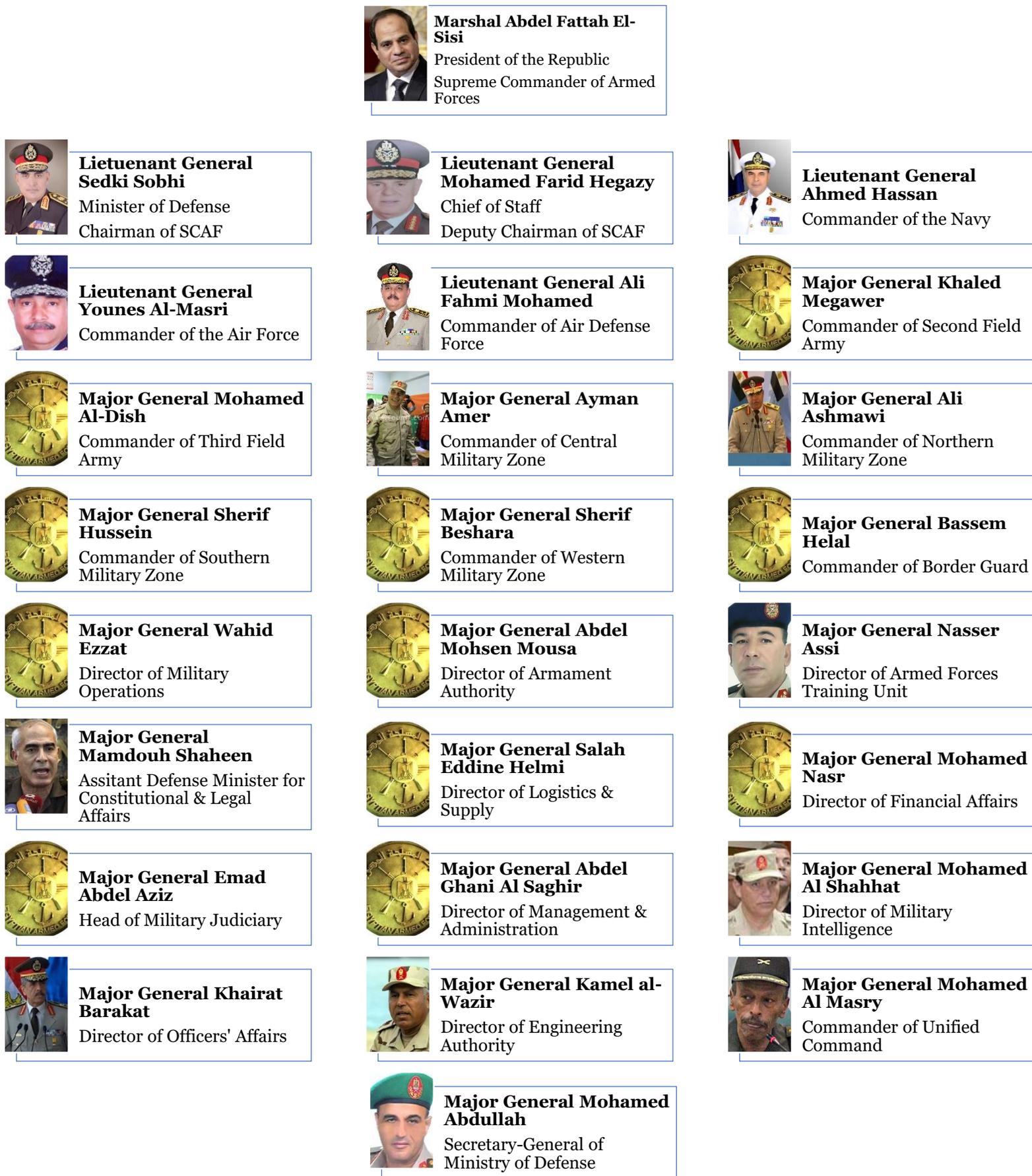


Figure 2. The President and the members of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (2018) prior to the replacement of Sedki Sobhi.

2.1.3. Cracks within the Military Establishment:

However, the military and the SCAF do not always function as one unit. There are different ambitions and propensities within the council and within the establishment itself that do not always coincide with that of the president of the republic or the ‘mainstream’ perception.

For instance, if el-Sisi and the MB agreed on one thing, it is the dire need to distant Sami Anan from the political life and keep him out of the way. By pushing him to resign and retire, Morsi privileged and benefitted el-Sisi as he spared him the fierce competition with Anan, a high-ranking military figure deemed trustworthy by the USA; yet, Anan was persistent on running for presidency. In the first elections in May 2014, Anan was “prohibited” from participating in the elections; he was fiercely attacked by the media to the extent that he was even threatened by one of the famous Egyptian journalists, Ahmad Moussa. Yet, Anan’s case demonstrates how el-Sisi and the regime’s institutions including the judiciary cooperated in getting Anan out of the way to ensure el-Sisi’s arrival to power.⁹⁸

Similarly, Ahmad Shafiq, former minister of Civil Aviation (2002 – 2011) and former short-term Prime Minister (2011), was also forbidden from running in the March 2018 presidential elections. Earlier in 2012, he ran for presidency, yet he lost the elections for Morsi as he was viewed as an element of Mubarak’s circle. After his loss, Shafiq fled the country due to corruption allegations against him and resided in the United Arab Emirates.

Yet, akin to Anan, Shafiq also tended to run for presidency in 2018, but within days of his announcement in November 2017 from the UAE, he was detained and afterwards deported back to Egypt, where he was kept in custody in a hotel until he announced via

Twitter that he found himself not the right person to serve as the president of the republic and decided to withdraw from the presidential race.⁹⁹ Likewise, Ahmed Konsowa, an army colonel, was sentenced for six years in prison following his presidential bid over allegations for not resigning from the military prior to his announcement.¹⁰⁰

All three cases of Konsowa, Anan and Shafiq will be further inspected in chapter 2 on the judiciary, mainly the military judiciary as the institution took an upfront stance and issued decrees against them to ‘outlaw’ them from running against the current president, el-Sisi.

Furthermore, both Anan and Shafiq’s cases will also be scrutinized at a later stage, specifically in chapter 5 under the relation between the media and the deep state, to uncover how the media have been an integral component of the deep state.

2.2. The Ministry of Interior, the Egyptian National Police, the Central Security Forces (CSF) and the Supreme Council of Police (SCP):

Just as the Ministry of Defense has its affiliated security institutions, the Ministry of Interior has its own. The Ministry of Interior is mostly in charge of preserving domestic security. It is basically responsible for enforcing the laws at the national (local) level.

Hence, the Egyptian National Police, with its governing body, the Supreme Council of Police (SCP), and the Central Security Forces (CSP) fall under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. The constitution of 1971 appointed the president of the republic as the chief commander of the police and the head of the Supreme Council of Police.

According to 2009 figures, the Ministry of Interior has around 1.7 million employees distributed between police personnel and administrative staff (850,000), Central Security Forces (450,000) and State Security Investigations Services (400,000).

In general, the Ministry of Interior oversees issues such as criminal investigations, immigration, counter terrorism, drug trafficking, prisons, elections' supervision and public transportation, among other matters.¹⁰¹

It's worth noting that the Central Security Forces and the Police apparatus under the Ministry of Interior are supposedly civilian entities, unlike those under the Ministry of Defense. It was these forces, the CSF, specifically, that assassinated the photographer Khaled Said whose page on Facebook (We are All Khaled Said) was the flame of what turned to be a national widespread revolution against the regime and the brutality of the security forces.¹⁰²

Akin to the military and its SCAF, the police and their supreme council are also explicitly stated in the 2014 constitution in articles 206 and 207 of subsection 5 on the Police forces:

1- Article 206:

“The police force is a statutory civil body that is in the service of the people. Its loyalty is to the people. It ensures safety and security to citizens, preserves public order and morality. It is committed to undertake the duties imposed on it by the Constitution and the law, and to respect human rights and basic rights. The state guarantees that members of the police force perform their duties. Guarantees for that are organized by law.”

2- Article 207:

The Supreme Police Council is composed from among the most senior officers of the police force and the head of the Legal Opinion Department at the State Council. The Council assists the Minister of Interior in organizing the police force and managing the affairs of its members. Its other competences are identified by law. It must be consulted in any laws pertaining to it.

Yet, in order to maintain domestic order and stability, the Ministry of Interior manages several local administrations. These administrations are enshrined in the 2014 constitution through a subsection by itself (subsection three of section two on the

executive authority under Chapter 5: The Ruling System) in articles: 175 through 183 in addition to article 242.¹⁰³ There are 27 governorates in Egypt with a security directorate (*modereyat al-amn*) attached to each. These directorates report directly to the Minister of Interior. The local governance system permits the ministry to be involved on the grassroots' level hence keep an open eye on civilian affairs, which was very helpful in the post-Arab Spring era as it allowed the ministry to identify any potential dissenters and insurgents and suppress their capacity of initiating a step or organizing demonstrations against the regime.¹⁰⁴

Many of the retirees of the police forces and the military are appointed to positions within these institutions hence forming what is known as “the officers’ republic” whereby “certain civilian ministries and departments have clearly emerged as military fiefdoms in which former officers always occupy senior positions.” These and several other causes have formulated this “self-reinforcing loop of military-bureaucratic appointments and networks” that keeps on recycling the same people and the same ‘security system’.¹⁰⁵

2.3. The Intelligence Services:

There are at least three intelligence units within the Egyptian state. As per figure 3 below, each of the Presidency, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior has its own intelligence unit. The President has his own intelligence body: the General Intelligence and Security Services. Whereas the Ministry of Defense manages the military intelligence services. As for the Ministry of Interior, it controls the State Security Investigative Services (SSIS).

The diversity and complexity of these intelligence units demonstrate their importance for

the survival of the regime. However, as in the security councils, the tasks of the different intelligence bodies overlap especially lately in the post-uprising era where the concentration is now diverted internally mainly against extremist threat, civil society and the long-standing adversary, the MB. Daniel Brumberg and Hesham Sallam contend that the Ministry of Interior, through the data provided by the SSIS, was involved in repressive acts which included the silence and intimidation of political dissidents, arbitrary arrests, surveillance of activists and electoral fraud. They further describe the ministry's institutions as "a highly sophisticated coercive apparatus." Thus, according to the authors, the security sector reform (SSR) should focus on "transforming the police establishment from a coercive apparatus into an accountable, politically neutral organization that upholds the rule of law and protects human rights," if it's intended to protect, not suppress, the people.¹⁰⁶

In his research on the "History of the Egyptian Intelligence Services", Owen Sirrs notes that the fundamentals of the modern Egyptian intelligence services were arranged "in the years immediately following the July 1952 Free Officers coup. The first step in that process was the creation of the General Investigations Directorate (GID)...The second step was to reorganize and centralize military intelligence by giving the Military Intelligence Department (MID) greater responsibilities." The author further argues that "The intelligence community that was created by Nasser ...remains largely unchanged today."¹⁰⁷ In the same line of argument, one cannot help but acknowledge that the SCAF is after all, an extension of the Free Officers Movement with its institutions – mainly the intelligence services – approaches and organizational structure but a more modern format that allowed Nasser to inject new blood into the regime back

then, however this is beyond the scope of this research.

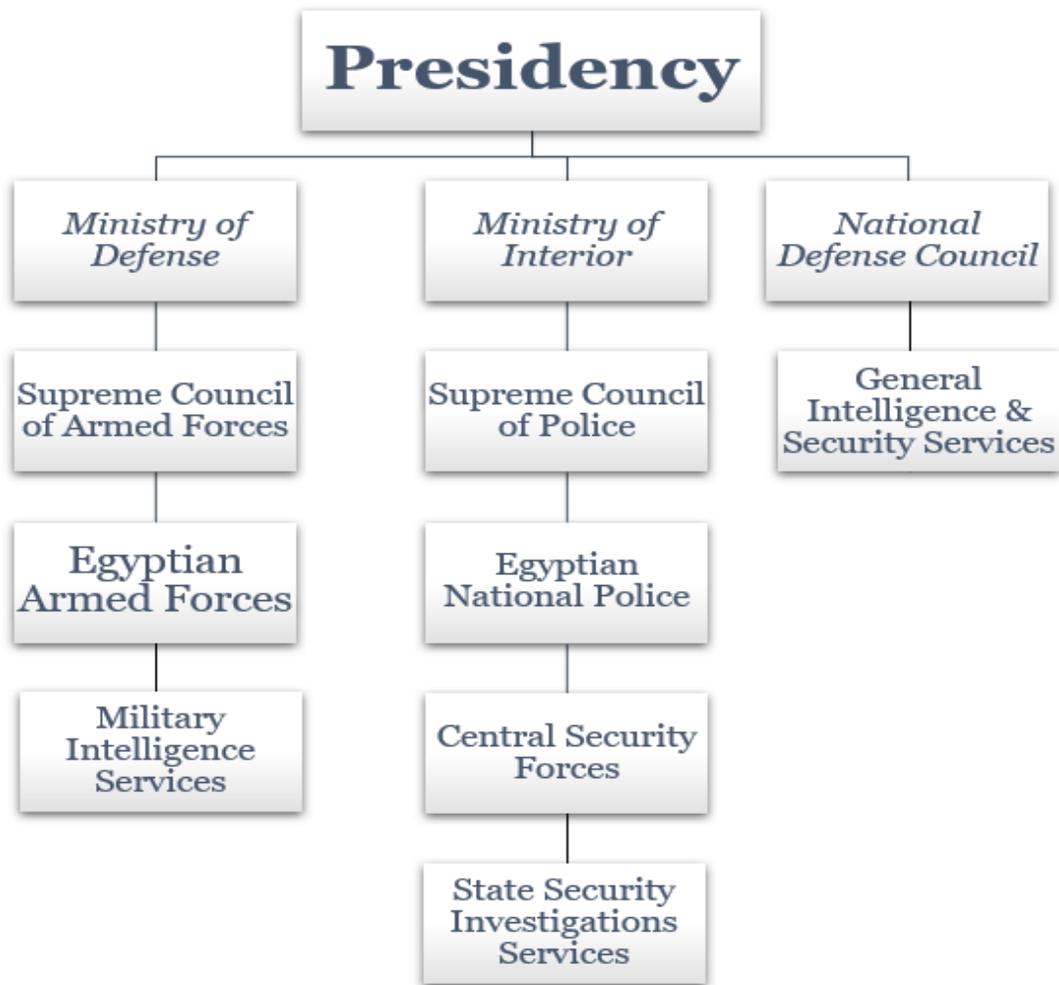


Figure 3. The distribution of the different security institutions across the ministries in the Egyptian state.

In the same line, the following chapter will demonstrate the extent of the SCAF's supremacy that is not limited to military strength but rather exceeds that to dominate the economic affairs of the state. Thus, the following chapter will dissect the humongous involvement of the SCAF in the economy specifically in the post-MB era. In addition to that, the chapter will also investigate the validity of the regime's claims on the economic progress achieved throughout this period.

Chapter Three:

The Egyptian Armed Forces' Upper Hand in the Economy

“By protecting the strategic assets of its major investment partners during periods of unrest and taking control of the bidding process for major government procurement, the EAF has become the primary gatekeeper for the Egyptian economy.”

Shana Marshal, Carnegie Middle East Center

This chapter will underscore the hegemonic role of the Egyptian Armed Forces over the economic sector. Despite the scarcity of the information on this topic, what is available demonstrates that the military is a major player in the Egyptian economy. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first longer part will demonstrate the dominance of the armed forces over the Egyptian economy. The second part will scrutinize el-Sisi and his administration's claims of accomplishing major economic 'successes' since the overthrow of Morsi.

3.1. Egyptian Armed Forces Domination over the Economy:

There have been many speculations and controversies over the relation between the armed forces and the economy. This relationship involves military expenditures (including the salaries of military personnel), the major national projects and the army's contribution to the economy, among other matters. While this has been a major concern in the post-2011 uprising era and mainly post-July 2013 military coup, there are limited data on the economic aspect of the Egyptian military as its budget is not subjected to oversight from any civilian elected body and has rarely been leaked or uncovered.

If researchers on Egypt agree on one thing, it is the vagueness of the military

budget and economic affairs. This is why estimates of the military's budget and its share of the GDP vary widely, yet it is estimated that the defense budget fluctuated around \$4.5 billion in 2016, with some experts reckoning the military's share of the economy "as high as 40 percent." Yet el-Sisi refuted this and claimed that the commercial activities of the military do not exceed 1.5 percent of the GDP.¹⁰⁸

The 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) conducted by Transparency International ranked Egypt in the 117th place among 180 countries, as compared to rank 108 in the year 2016. This demonstrates the increased level of corruption in Egypt. A recent report by the same organization under the title: "The Officers' Republic: The Egyptian Military and Abuse of Power" released in March 2018, states that "the military runs its businesses through agencies such as the National Service Products Organization (NSPO), established in 1979 under a Presidential decree in order to achieve the relative self-sufficiency of the Armed Forces requirements as well as locally and internationally marketing the surplus." The budget of the NSPO is independent from the Military of Defense, and akin to other economic agencies under the military, the budget of the NSPO is unknown. However, the NSPO is not the only organization, the army manages other multiple agencies which administer civilian and military projects. According to the above report, "it is abundantly clear that the military's economic portfolio has been expanded and diversified since 2014"; a strategy that will help revive the economy, as el-Sisi claims.¹⁰⁹

In addition to the military's commercial activities, the salaries of the Egyptian Armed Forces have also been augmented. They have increased more than once since the 2011 revolution, and mostly after the July military coup. Several pan-Arab news websites – Arabi 21, Middle East Monitor and Middle East Observer – estimated that the

monthly salary of a member of the SCAF ranges between 100,000 and 500,000 Egyptian pounds (EGP) per month (November 2016) which is equivalent to around \$6,430 and \$32,155 according to the exchange rate back then.¹¹⁰ Whereas the salaries of different military ranks vary accordingly, as per table 1 below.

Table 1. Salaries of Military Personnel in November 2016.

Position	Salary in EGP per month	Equivalent Salary in USD per month	Salary in USD per year
SCAF members	500,000/member	32,155/member	4,244,460/member
Major General	10,600/personnel	681.685/personnel	8,180.22/personnel
Brigadier	9400/personnel	604.513/personnel	7,254.156/personnel
Colonel	8250/personnel	530.557/personnel	6,366.684/personnel
Lieutenant Colonel	7100/personnel	456.600/personnel	5,479.2/personnel
Major	6500/personnel	418.014/personnel	5,016.168/personnel
Captain	5900/personnel	379.428/personnel	4553.136/personnel
First lieutenant	5200/personnel	334.411/personnel	4,012.932/personnel
Sergeant	3500/personnel	225.085/personnel	2,701.02/personnel

The above numbers, which have not been officially adopted or disclosed by the state, provide a rough idea of the military salaries, and although the salaries per personnel seem very low especially in the lower military ranks, yet once they're placed in the context of the huge number of the Egyptian military personnel, one can gauge the

enormous amounts paid by the state to cover their salaries. “As one former Egyptian general told Reuters in 2012: “[The wealth is] concentrated in about 15 per cent of the army’s officer corps, upper ranks, who remain loyal through a system of patronage.” Once again, these numbers are not official, and some analysts estimate them to be much higher than this.

Furthermore, according to a study by Yezid Sayigh, a researcher at Carnegie Middle East Center, there are around 150 state-owned commercial enterprises that are directed by military retirees; “Salaries of EGP100,000 to EGP500,000 a month (\$16,666–\$83,333) are reportedly common according to whistle-blowing officers, with hidden partnerships believed to raise the annual incomes of the highest paid to between EGP12 million and EGP100 million (\$2 million–\$16.67 million),”¹¹¹ noting that the EGP as compared to the USD dropped dramatically after el-Sisi allowed the currency to float freely in the market. In addition to the above, the army receives \$1.3 billion in annual military aid from the United States.¹¹²

Following Mubarak’s ouster, the military maintained its firm grip on the economy as it “doubled down on its efforts to secure joint production agreements with foreign defense firms, which meant not only a better chance at future exports, but also access to new technologies and potential positions for officers in prestigious new ventures.”¹¹³ Following that, in 2015, el-Sisi, benefitting from the absence of an elected parliament, removed the directors of supervisory and regulatory bodies and utilized law number 89 to dismiss the chief national auditor, Hisham Genieina, who was outspokenly critical of the scope of corruption and was consequently sentenced for one year in prison. After all, “national audit is one of the most effective forms of countering

corruption; removing auditors who try to do their job is a manifestation of, and significantly increases the risk of, the abuse of power exercised by the military.”¹¹⁴

In fact, one of the chief reasons for the military coup that toppled Morsi was his attempt to sideline the military when it came to large projects such as the Toshka (land reclamation) project and the expansion of the Suez Canal project, which comprises of the extension of six ports, the construction of several tunnels and the digging of a parallel canal that will allow for a two-way traffic.¹¹⁵ “The Suez Canal illustrates powerfully the interdependence of the Egyptian military’s political and economic power...without basic transparency and oversight over decision-making, it’s unclear to the public whose interests big projects like these may be serving.”¹¹⁶

In this regard, one should note that the overthrow of the MB’s president did not only emanate from internal sources (deep state specifically) but was also supported by external players. For instance, the rentier Gulf countries – mainly Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait – cut their traditional financial aid to Egypt during the MB reign, just to resume it by jointly providing \$12 billion of aid after the success of the coup and el-Sisi’s public promise that the MB “was finished”.¹¹⁷

Additionally, two months after the July coup, Egypt and the U.S. Department of Defense signed \$300 million contracts aiming at the delivery and joint production of military equipment. Afterwards, in June 2014, two weeks following el-Sisi’s inauguration, the U.S. released former frozen military aid worth \$575 million followed by additional \$1.3 billion in December of the same year.¹¹⁸ This sheds light on the size of military aid that Egypt received from foreign states immediately after the coup that toppled Morsi which reflects how external international and regional powers have

played a major role in resurrecting the deep security state through financing the military, not all the sectors and institutions of the state, which were in dire need of financial aid as well following the political unrest that Egypt witnessed.

This leads to the question of the effectiveness of the private sector. The private sector is usually sidelined by the military commercial enterprises due to the exemptions granted to the latter. The military businesses are exempt from any taxes whether on their licenses, profits or on the imports of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of State for Military Production. Additionally, 574 military facilities, comprising of 52 clubs, 29 hotels, 18 summer resorts and several other buildings, were exempted from real estate taxes, as dictated by a decree by the Minister of Defense in June 2015. In fact, the legal facet is the main obstacle in front of the private enterprises as it openly privileges the military; for instance:

- A 1981 law granted the Minister of Defense full authority over desert lands, which constitutes around 94 percent of the Egyptian territory; this authority offers him the autonomy to decide whether to allocate the land for private or military sector;
- A 1982 presidential decree allowed the Armed Forces Land Projects Organization (AFLPO) to administer the sale of lands owned by the military;
- “A December 2015 presidential decree allocated the revenue from any land vacated by the military directly towards the construction of ‘new military zones’.”¹¹⁹

The above decrees authorize the military to utilize the desert lands in the state as an investment for its work, hence benefitting and favoring it over the private sector. “Since the military takeover in July 2013, large private enterprises have been progressively excluded from rent seeking and patronage networks, in favor of new enterprises closer to the military.”¹²⁰

Although these military privileges are not recent, yet undoubtedly, the role of the military in the economy has been expanding considerably especially in the post-MB era. The 2018 Transparency International report identified four sectors in which the military economy has been expanding: education, roads, fish and energy. One additional sector is the medical sector whereby in 2014, the army, specifically the Egyptian Military Engineering Authority, announced the release of a device that will cure people of HIV and Hepatitis C; this device proved to be a failure,¹²¹ however, back then, any ironic and medical commentary against this so-called ‘military achievement’ was considered an underestimation and lack of trust in the armed forces. Additionally, in January 2017, the National Agency for Military Production partook in the establishment of the Egyptian National Company for Pharmaceuticals, after a drug shortage, hence further involving the military in the medical sector.¹²²

Moreover, additional legislations have been an opportunity for this expansion of the military’s economic activities to ensure the military is awarded major public contracts. For instance, in addition to the aforementioned laws and decrees, the interim president Mansour issued law number 32 in 2014 – which was reinforced by the parliament in 2016 – that prohibits third parties from challenging the circumstances and settings of public contracts. Accordingly, and based on the report, the new law helps the military on two levels: 1) it neutralizes the administrative court and 2) it bypasses the private sector and civil society. Furthermore, the interim president Mansour also amended the 1998 Tenders Law by legally permitting the ministers to “sign contracts without competitive tendering, raising significantly the price ceiling requiring tender processes and completely excluding public bodies that are “subject to special laws or regulations” – that would include the armed forces – from its scope.” An Egyptian

economist stated that in two months following Mansour's decree, 7 billion EGP were awarded to military firms which is equivalent to \$1 billion as public contracts in infrastructure.¹²³

Just as almost everything else, the roots of the deep state that el-Sisi has been trying to replicate and entrench dates back to Nasser's mandate. Marshall argues that under Nasser, the resources of the state were diverted towards the military whereby its contractors and engineers administered the major projects including the infrastructure and the manufacturing of basic commodities and consumer appliances as well as agricultural products and elsewhere. Additionally, Nasser tended to replace civilian managers and administrations with high ranking members of the military in state-owned enterprises to ensure the active and heavy involvement of the Egyptian Armed Forces in the state economy.¹²⁴

Based on Transparency International, the last year and a half alone witnessed huge deals to buy the following:

- i- Four German military submarines (the estimated cost of two of them is \$1.13 billion);
- ii- 46 Russian combat helicopters;
- iii- Two French Mistral aircraft carriers (estimated cost \$1.17 billion);
- iv- One French military satellite (\$739 million);
- v- French Rafale warplanes as per a \$5.5 billion 2015 contract between the two states;
- vi- One of four French Gowind 2500 corvette ships as part of a \$1.23 billion contract between the two states;

Furthermore, there have been information that the prominent telecom company, Vodafone, has been transferring its state-owned shares to the military; thus, expanding their jurisdiction in the telecom sector with the consequent expansion, not only of the

military's economy, but also of its intelligence capacities.¹²⁵

3.2. The New Epoch: Economic Achievements or Drawbacks:

According to a short documentary displayed by Yosri Fouda's "Al Solta Al-Khamesa" (The Fifth Estate) program on DW (Arabia) (and based on credible sources like the Egyptian Central Bank and the World Bank) the following table compares the achievements articulated by el-Sisi in his first presidential term, vs. the facts and statistics as presented by official sources.¹²⁶

Table 2. Comparative table between the announced achievements and the available facts.

Achievements articulated in el-Sisi's speech	Facts and Statistics
Cash reserve increased to \$37 billion in 2017 after being \$16 billion in 2014	Cash reserve increased after an increase in the size of foreign debt from \$46.1 billion in 2014 to \$100 billion in 2017
Budget deficit declined compared to the GDP from % 16.7 in 2013 to % 10.9 in 2017	Budget deficit in 2014 was % 10 and it increased to % 10.9 in 2017
200 billion Egyptian pounds were allocated as loans for the youth with low interest rate that doesn't exceed 5 percent	The Central Bank did not inject for this more than 49 billion Egyptian pounds
—	In 2014, 1 dollar was equivalent to 7.76 EGP, while in 2017, 1 dollar became equivalent to 17.6 EGP.
—	%27.8 of Egyptian population fell under the poverty line in 2015 only.

The above table demonstrates how el-Sisi tends to celebrate 'fake' victories in order to sustain his credibility and preserve what is left of people's trust in the Egyptian regime; noting that the real triumphs that his regime achieved are not national but rather military, since the latter was capable of expanding its economic activities remarkably in an unprecedented way. For this reason, Marshall resembles the Egyptian Armed Forces

(EAF) to the “black box” whereby “most of the military-controlled economy is off the books, and many of the EAF’s sources of influence are obscured.”¹²⁷ This ambiguity of the military’s vast economic activities is one of the root causes of the country’s stagnation, or better said, deterioration.¹²⁸ And until this critical information is disclosed to the public through the media, the country will continue to suffer from high levels of corruption.

Writing in 2016, Sahar Aziz argues that “as the military expands its economic activities, more public property and institutions fall under the potential jurisdiction of military courts”;¹²⁹ therefore, associating the expansion of the military’s economic activities to the intensifying jurisdiction of military courts, it is thus crucial to inspect the judiciary sector and the courts’ system within the state mainly the military courts which will be the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter Four:

The Role of the Judicial Authority in the Resurrection of the Deep State

This chapter examines the role of the judicial system in Egypt with a particular focus on its contribution to the overthrow of the Morsi presidency and the legitimization of el-Sisi's grab of power. It will first provide an overview of the judicial system in Egypt and its different constitutional courts; it will also lay down the constitutional foundation of the judiciary.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses why it is important to inspect the judiciary when discussing the deep state, and its evolution in Egypt. Most significantly, it interrogates critical cases of judicial decrees that demonstrate how the deep state deploys the judiciary to justify its repressive measures. Accordingly, the last part of this chapter will deal with the latest presidential elections of March 2018 in which el-Sisi was 'elected' for a second presidential term.

4.1. Overview and Constitutional Foundations:

The judiciary in Egypt constitutes of divergent and hierarchical courts. It is divided into two main forms: the civil and the military, as illustrated in figure 4 below.

Both forms are stipulated in the 2014 constitution. On the first hand, the civil is mainly enshrined in the constitution under Chapter 5, sections 3 to 7, articles 184 through 199.

The civil judicial authority comprises of different judicial bodies with each body administering its own affairs and managing its own budget after being approved by the House of Representatives as per article 185 of the constitution.¹³⁰ The judicial bodies

encompass 4 bodies: The State Council, the State Cases Authority, the Administrative Prosecution and the Supreme Constitutional Court. All these bodies are independent bodies according to the constitution.

As per article 190 of the 2014 constitution, the State Council is exclusively responsible of issuing judgements in administrative clashes and disciplinary cases. Whereas the State Cases Authority, stipulated in article 196, is the representative of the state in disputes where the state is a party to conflict. While the Administrative Prosecution is the court in charge of investigating administrative and financial anomalies and loopholes and has the authority to impose disciplinary penalties, as per article 197 of the 2014 constitution.

Lastly, the Supreme Constitutional Court, which “is the highest judicial body in Egypt, with exclusive jurisdiction over questions of the constitutionality of laws, rules, and regulations. The Supreme Judicial Council (*Majlis al-Qadai al-A'La*) deals with the appointment, promotion, and transfer of judges,”¹³¹ has a section it and of itself in the constitution (section 4, articles 191 through 195).

On the second hand, the judicial authority, also encompasses of the military judiciary which falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Defense and have its judges as serving military officers.¹³² Law number 25 of 1966, which established the military courts under Nasser’s reign, originally arranged the military courts into three judicial bodies: 1) Central Military Court, 2) Central Military Court with Supreme Authority and 3) Supreme Military Court. This has been amended afterwards, precisely in February 2014 under interim president Mansour, to include four instead of three judicial bodies; these are: 1) the Supreme Military Court of Appeals, 2) the Military Offenses Tribunal, 3) the Military Court of Appeals and 4) the Military Misdemeanor Court.¹³³ Moreover,

the military judiciary is treasured in subsection 3 of section 8 on the armed forces and the Police force of the 2014 constitution. Article 204 provides that:

“The Military Judiciary is an independent judiciary that adjudicates exclusively in all crimes related to the armed forces, its officers, personnel, and their equals, and in the crimes committed by general intelligence personnel during and because of the service.

Civilians cannot stand trial before military courts except for crimes that represent a direct assault against military facilities, military barracks, or whatever falls under their authority; stipulated military or border zones; its equipment, vehicles, weapons, ammunition, documents, military secrets, public funds or military factories; crimes related to conscription; or crimes that represent a direct assault against its officers or personnel because of the performance of their duties.

The law defines such crimes and determines the other competencies of the Military Judiciary.

Members of the Military Judiciary are autonomous and cannot be dismissed. They share the securities, rights and duties stipulated for members of other judiciaries.”

One of the most important phrases in the above constitutional article is that “civilians cannot stand trial before military courts”, however, this has not been granted without a series of exceptions, including a direct assault against military facilities, documents, vehicles etc... The wideness and oblivion of these exceptions is in fact a major problem today as it allows for the trying of civilians in military courts without clearly identified basis, hence is used as a tool of oppression. In its survey of around 50 media reports since October 2014, the Human Rights Watch reported that “most of those charged in military courts were transferred there because the broad provisions of al-Sisi’s law essentially put all public property under military jurisdiction, not because they committed crimes involving the armed forces.”¹³⁴

Additionally, as per the constitutional article, the members of the military judiciary are obscure and cannot be dismissed which demonstrates the rigidity of the

judicial system and its anonymity that in turn diminishes its credibility.

4.2. A Closer Look at the Judiciary:

Undoubtedly, one of the pillars of the deep state is the judiciary and its capacity to maintain the laws and manage allegations and charges. Therefore, it is significant to inspect the judicial authority in Egypt post-2011 uprising and the MB rule as it has been a chief tool deployed to silence dissent and spread fear among protestors in the first place.

In her research at Carnegie, Sahar Aziz argues that there has been “an unprecedented expansion of military trials of civilians to serve the interests of the military generals governing the country.” All previous military presidents, Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak had extensively relied on military courts to prosecute opponents. According to Aziz, under Mubarak, over 12000 civilians were persecuted by military courts based on article 6 of the Military Judiciary Law which states that “upon declaration of a state of emergency, the President of the Republic may refer any crimes punishable under the Penal Code or any other law to the military judiciary.” However, this did not end with the ouster of Mubarak but rather the situation further deteriorated, because in 2011 only, the SCAF ordered the trial of an additional 12000 civilians in military courts “for crimes ranging from “thuggery” to insulting the military.”¹³⁵

El-Sisi further expanded the authority of the military judiciary by issuing a new law on October 27, 2014, following a violent extremist attack in Northern Sinai that killed 22 soldiers. The new law number 136 provided the military with the jurisdiction over crimes against state and public facilities for two years. Throughout these two years, more than 7000 civilians were indicted by the military courts for allegations of

belonging to the MB or partaking in university protests. Furthermore, in August 2016, the new parliament of late 2015 approved law 136's extension until 2021 i.e. for an additional five years which makes them a total of seven years. However, it is very plausible then that this law, similar to the state of emergency, could be extended over and over again hence ensuring civilian indictment by the military courts, which is unconstitutional as a matter of fact.¹³⁶ In this line of argument, Aziz further contrasts article 204 of the 2014 constitution inserted earlier, with article 1 of the Military Judiciary Law which puts the military courts under the Ministry of Defense, hence denying the judiciary its constitutional independence.¹³⁷ Remarkably, in April 2017, el-Sisi ratified legal amendments that permit the president to appoint judges in the major courts¹³⁸; a move which will also certainly jeopardize the independence of the judges set forth by article 186 of the 2014 constitution which stipulates that judges "are subject to no other authority but the law."¹³⁹ This act was also considered by the club of judges as a violation of the constitution and of the independence of the judiciary system from the regime; however the parliament insisted that these amendments fall under its constitutional right to legislate and enact laws.¹⁴⁰ This demonstrates that to tighten its grip on the judiciary system and on all the legal authorities of the state, the deep state managed to constitutionally and legally dissolve the independence of the judicial body from the regime.

According to Human Rights Watch, "The use of military courts to try civilians violates international law, including the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which Egypt ratified in 1984. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has stated that civilians should never face military trial."¹⁴¹

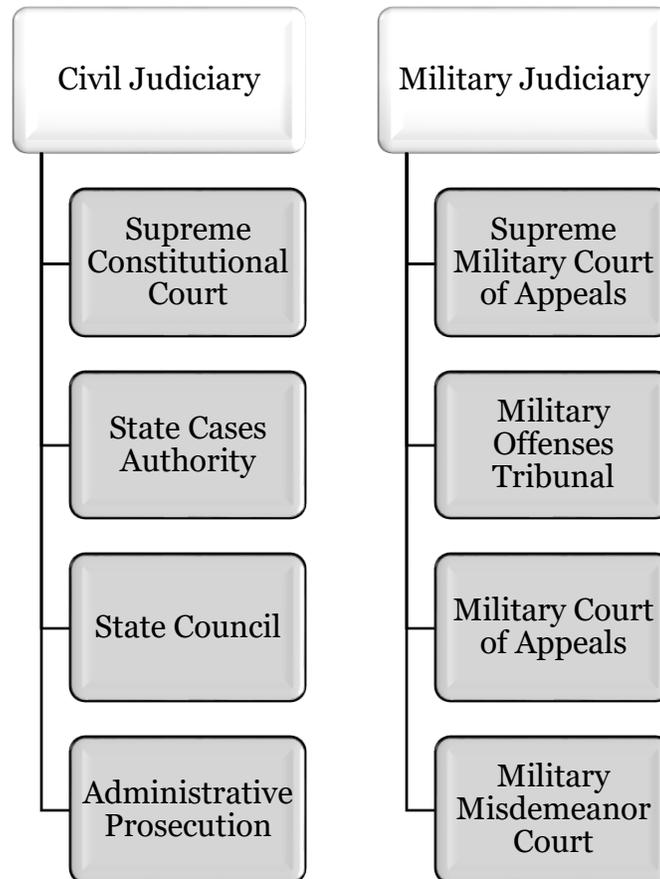


Figure 4. Anatomy of the Egyptian Judicial Authority.

4.3. Critical Judicial Cases:

As mentioned in the previous chapter (Chapter 2), there were three critical cases that deserve further scrutiny when it comes to military courts; these are: Sami Anan, Ahmad Shafiq and Ahmed Konsowa.

Before digging deeper into the details of the cases, there are few legal points that need to be addressed. As aforementioned in chapter 1 of the thesis, the Muslim Brotherhood, during their short mandate, challenged the authority of the judicial system by issuing a new decree that lowered the age of retirement from 70 to 60 which would remove about 3000 – 3500 judges from office; a move that was described as an attempt by the MB to remove the longest-serving judges who might be loyal to Mubarak’s

regime. Additionally, the amendments also encompassed restraining the judges' political speech and the right to strike¹⁴²; These amendments caused rage among judges who took the streets in late May 2013 knowing that in early November, Morsi removed the prosecutor-general Abdel-Maguid Mahmoud and appointed Judge Talaat Abdullah which was considered an infringement on the judicial independence.¹⁴³

The Islamist-dominated Shura council, under Morsi, drafted a law that prohibits military and police personnel from voting; yet in May 2013, this draft law was rejected by the Supreme Constitutional Court which preserved the right of military and police personnel in participating in the political life.¹⁴⁴ However, despite rejecting the MB's proposed law, the 2014 constitution in its article 87 denounced their right to vote in the elections, hence violating the decree of the Supreme Constitutional Court, which demonstrates that similar to the MB, the current regime wants to condemn the participation of the armed forces in the political life in the state, yet while the Muslim Brotherhood's attempt was rejected and prohibited by the court, the current regime's attempt was legalized and codified in the constitution and allowed for the interim president, Mansour's decree 45/2014 which disqualified active military and police personnel from participating in the political affairs, ignoring the court's verdict hence "further violating the Supreme Constitutional Court's 2013 decision."¹⁴⁵ However, under Mansour, the SCAF was the actual ruler of the state, hence this decree was "a multi-layered scheme by the SCAF" as described by Aziz in order to ensure the election of its preferred candidate to office and the exclusion of candidates who are deemed disloyal.

Additionally, the SCAF has a say at two main levels that affect the elections and the political affairs of the state: the National Elections Commission and the Judicial

Committee for Officers and Personnel of the Armed Forces; the latter being a military judicial body. Through the first, the SCAF can meddle with the regulations and procedures of the elections as this fall under the responsibility of the committee as per articles 208 and 209 of the 2014 constitution. However, what is suspicious about this committee is that its members are appointed by the judges and approved by the president who himself appoints the judges, hence this committee falls entirely under the president who in fact appoints its members indirectly. It is through this committee, that the presidential election of 2014 was extended for one additional day after the low turnout in the two consecutive election days which diminished the credibility of SCAF's supported candidate, el-Sisi. As for the latter body, which is the Judicial Committee for Officers and Personnel of the Armed Forces, it was exploited by the SCAF in order to exert pressure on potential candidates from the military institution; according to the article 202 of the 2014 constitution, this committee, instead of the State Council, is in charge of the administrative clashes between the military staff. And based on this article, Mansour issued a decree 11/2014 which established a Supreme Judicial Committee for Officers and Personnel of the Armed Forces headed by the Minister of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Through these committees, SCAF members and their deputies issue definitive administrative decrees disguised as judicial rulings. The committees' final decisions add an additional filter against any potential contenders in elections."¹⁴⁶

To start with the cracks within the military, Anan intended to run for presidency in 2014, but then withdrew his presidential bid under the pretext of "national interest requirements" emphasizing the importance of the military unity. However, Anan was assertive in his political opinions especially regarding issues such as that of Tiran and Sanafir, the two Egyptian islands that were sold to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia based

on the latter's historical claim of the land.¹⁴⁷ In January 2018, Anan announced his presidential candidacy due to the deteriorating conditions of the state, as he contended; However, in the following 72 hours, he was arrested by the Egyptian Security Forces in "a calculated move to push him out of the race."¹⁴⁸

Commenting on the arrest, the National Elections Authority (NEA) committee in its legal justification statement relied on paragraph 2 of article 1 of decree law 45/2014, articles 6, 103 and 147 of law 232/1959 (promulgated under Nasser) and decree law 133/2011 which all revolve around the prohibition of the participation of active military figures in the political life unless they are exempted from military service. The statement concluded:

"In view of the above-mentioned and taking into consideration that lieutenant general Hafez Anan is still in military service and is banned from exercising his political rights and that he was unrightfully registered in the voters' database in grave violation of the law and that this decision is not immune and can be withdrawn at any time without abiding by the fixed dates of withdrawing such illegitimate administrative decisions, it was incumbent to exclude his name from the voters' database.

The NEA stresses that Article 16 of the law regulating the exercise of political rights stated that it is impermissible to make any modification to the voters' database after inviting the voters to election. It has become crystal clear that Anan was not entitled to be registered in the voters' database. Consequently, deleting his name from the voters' database is a rectification of a mistake made by the administrative body to register his name in the voters' database. This is not considered a prohibited modification according to the aforementioned article."¹⁴⁹

Shafiq, on the other hand, announced his bid for presidency for the first time in 2011, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Consequently, "on June 14 the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court repelled a legal challenge to Shafiq's candidacy by striking down a law prohibiting former members of the Mubarak administration from holding government office."¹⁵⁰

Later in November 2017, Shafiq declared his intention to run for presidency; afterwards he stated that “I was surprised that I was prevented from leaving the UAE for reasons I do not understand.” Later he was deported from the UAE and the moment he arrived at Cairo’s airport, he was put under house arrest in one of Cairo’s hotels with his family reporting that they were unable to contact him. “He was also threatened to face charges of corruption and other personal files.” Consequently, after few hours, he announced that he’s reconsidering his decision to run for presidency.¹⁵¹

Likewise, Konsowa announced his presidential bid in November 2017 after several failed and rejected attempts to resign from the military, first with a non-response, and second by an official notification ratified by the Minister of Defense which rejected his resignation in October 2014. In response to that, Konsowa issued three lawsuits to the Judicial Committee for Officers and Personnel of the Armed Forces which in turn rejected his request; a decision that was supported by the Supreme Judicial Committee. He then filed another seven law suits, but all failed to reach a substantial resolution.¹⁵² Accordingly, and rapidly after his announcement, the Military Prosecution ordered his arrest whereby he was held in custody for 15 days on “alleged behavior that harms the requirements of the military.” Konsowa was sentenced by the military court for a six-year imprisonment; a sentence that was also upheld by the Military Appeal Court.¹⁵³

One additional critical case is that of former presidential candidate, Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, who was also arrested in February 2018. Aboul Fotouh ran for presidency in 2012, he’s the head of the party “Strong Egypt”. Few days prior to his arrest, Aboul Fotouh appeared in an interview with the banned in Egypt-Al Jazeera channel in which he criticized el-Sisi and the current regime. Yet, the 15-days detention was not explicitly linked to the interview but rather based on alleged charges for leading

a terrorist organization that is affiliated with the MB.¹⁵⁴

The above cases and many more demonstrate how the judiciary, mainly the military court, has been used in order to pass on sentences against any potential contenders who might be considered a threat to the current regime. Judges in Egypt have been working at the service of the deep state ever since Nasser's rule. Nasser, for example, was capable of putting the first president of the republic, Mohamed Naguib, under house arrest for 16 years that only ended after Nasser's death. Despite the charges that may have been on Naguib, yet the fact that Nasser was capable to imprison him, while Sadat, as he assumed power, had the capacity to directly release him illustrates the judiciary's incorporation into the deep state manifested in its president.

Similarly, after el-Sisi ousted Morsi and replaced him and in line with the deep state's retaliation against the MB rule, the court accused Morsi along with 18 others of insulting the judiciary and imprisoned him.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, the judiciary in Egypt has been a major factor contributing to the resurrection of the deep state and the maintenance of the current regime and the latest presidential elections is a clear evidence of that as the judiciary sided all el-Sisi competitors, leaving only one candidate, Moussa Mostafa Moussa, head of El-Ghad party, one of el-Sisi's supporters and a last-minute candidate who was necessary to ensure the elections.¹⁵⁶

4.4. The Presidential Elections of March 2018:

As aforementioned, the judiciary played a key role in clearing the stage of any solid challenges to el-Sisi's bid to secure another presidential term. Accordingly, the presidential election was a "farce" as described by Timothy Kaldas¹⁵⁷ with el-Sisi gaining 97.08% of the votes (21,835,387 votes) with a "devastatingly low" 41% turn out

(to quote the guardian) which was significantly lower than the 47.5% turnout of the 2014 presidential elections after adding one additional – back then, illegal – day.¹⁵⁸

Today there is a rising quest to amend the constitution to extend the presidential term.¹⁵⁹ Article 140 of subsection one (the president of the republic) of section two (executive authority) of Chapter five (the ruling system) stipulates that:

“The President of the Republic is elected for a period of four calendar years, commencing on the day the term of his predecessor ends. The President may only be reelected once.”

If this amendment is passed through, and it most probably will, then el-Sisi would have managed to maintain and preserve his rule for an unrestricted and unpredicted time frame.

Furthermore, on April 14, 2018, days following his reelection for a second presidential term, el-Sisi announced the extension of the state of emergency for 3 additional months under the pretext of countering extremism. As per article 154 of the 2014 constitution, “The declaration is for a specified period not exceeding three months, which can only be extended by another similar period upon the approval of two-thirds of House members.” The state of emergency provides the SCAF and the military in general with unprecedented authority and power to charge civilians in military courts, restrict curfews and impose strict surveillance. Hence the state of emergency is one of the best methods to entrench the deep security state and prohibit democracy.

In addition to the judiciary, the media have also been a powerful instrument to legitimize and justify the need for the deep state and encourage people to endorse it. The following chapter will delve into the role of the Egyptian media in further consolidating the deep state and constructing the national identity.

Chapter Five:

“Fake News”, Media Manipulation and Official Discourse at the Deep State’s Service

As noted earlier in the literature review, the media in Egypt have always been suffering from restricted boundaries and serious violations of freedom of speech and expression. Ever since the establishment of the first print newspapers and the prominent radio station, Voice of the Arabs, these media platforms have been serving the interests of the regime and disseminating the president’s image. Yet, under el-Sisi and the military rule, the restrictions amplified. And although the 2014 constitution, “guarantees freedom of expression and of the media in four of its articles. However, these articles are not adhered to, and the atmosphere of media repression has only worsened.”¹⁶⁰

This chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first section examines the relationship between the deep state and the media which includes the approaches deployed by this state to engrain its authority using the media and the dependence of the media outlets on this state. This section also sheds light on the repressive practices that the state imposes on the media dissenters who refuse to follow the mainstream. The second section will dissect two speeches from each of the two military presidents, Nasser and el-Sisi to uncover an existing pattern in the discourse of the deep state.

5.1. Media Manipulation:

To start with, one must first identify the existing media structure in Egypt. Prior to the introduction of the satellite in 2001, the media in Egypt were solely handled by the state via a network called Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) that was first drafted

in 1979 and later amended in 1989 “only to give almost absolute power to the minister of information,” whereby it restricted the exclusivity of the right to broadcast in Egypt for the ERTU. Consequently, to be capable of allowing the private satellite broadcasters, the state had to announce the Media Production City as “a free zone area.”¹⁶¹

The latest 2014 constitution in Egypt stipulated the freedom of the media and their independence in its articles 70 to 72. Article 71 explicitly prohibits censorship, confiscation, suspension or shutting down of Egyptian media outlets in any way while ensuring that exceptions ought to be made in cases of war or general mobilization. However, one can notice that the article refers to “Egyptian” media outlets and does not reflect on regional or international ones. Furthermore, article 72 entrusts the state “to ensure the independence of all press institutions and owned media outlets, in a way that ensures their neutrality and expressing all opinions, political and intellectual trends and social interests; and guarantees equality and equal opportunity in addressing public opinion.”¹⁶² Hence, this article stresses on the significance of providing space for the distinct voices within the state to express and disseminate their opinion through media outlets, which has not been the case in Egypt especially in the post-MB era i.e. in the period of the endorsement of this constitution. Furthermore, the 2014 constitution was not restricted to guarantee the freedom of expression, but rather goes beyond that to provide for the organizational structure of the media in the state. As per article 211, the constitution requires the founding of the Supreme Council for Media Regulation as an “independent entity that has a legal personality, enjoys technical, financial and administrative independence, and has an independent budget.” Lately, in May 2018, this council issued a statement prohibiting the media from using information from anonymous sources thus amplifying restraints on critics and renouncing journalists who

resort to whistleblowers; a decision that Yosri Fouda described on his Facebook account as “bullshit”.¹⁶³

Whereas articles 212 and 213 stipulate the creation of two separate media associations: the first for the press and the printed media outlets and the second for the audiovisual media outlets. Both associations serve as independent entities responsible of managing state-owned media institutions to ensure their “independence, neutrality and their adherence to sensible professional, administrative and economic standards.”¹⁶⁴

Despite all the media freedoms articulated and codified by the 2014 constitution, the application came totally different. The ERTU’s code of ethics of 1989 counters the provisions of the constitution by instigating strict limitations over freedom of speech and media liberty. While this is not the place to delve thoroughly into the media code of ethics and how the media in Egypt concretely function, it is necessary to shed light on some of the cyphers, especially those under the ERTU code of ethics that allow the regime to sideline the laws and articles that secure media’s independence and impartiality. According to Rasha Abdallah from the American University of Cairo, there are 32 vague statements that begin with “it is prohibited,” in the code of ethics. Among these are:

- *“It is prohibited to broadcast any program that criticizes the state national system.*
- *It is prohibited to broadcast any program that criticizes national heroism.*
- *It is prohibited to broadcast any program that criticizes officers of the courts, military officers, or security officers as well as religious leaders.*
- *It is prohibited to broadcast any program that criticizes state officials because of their performance.*
- *It is prohibited to broadcast any program that creates social confusion or criticizes the principles and traditions of Arab society.”¹⁶⁵*

Furthermore, not only does the code of ethics limit the freedom of the media, but also the terrorism law that was issued through a presidential decree in 2015, which threatened “to punish journalists with a fine of 200,000 to 500,000 EGP (\$25,550 to \$64,000) for contradicting official accounts of terrorist attacks...”¹⁶⁶ plays a major role in limiting freedom of expression. Add to that, the state of emergency that the current regime keeps on extending with its consequent boundaries.

Utilizing the agenda-setting theory – which states that media, on behalf of the public, decide on the most significant news¹⁶⁷ – one can identify that the media’s agenda in Egypt revolves around the president. A research on Egyptian media contends that the average weekly time dedicated for the president and the cabinet members in the Egyptian media is more than 15 hours. Another study notes that in May 2010, the broadcasting time provided for Mubarak and his cabinet in the prime-time news bulletin on ERTU was almost 23% which is equivalent to around 14 minutes/ one-hour news bulletin.¹⁶⁸ This demonstrates how the media tend to engrain the image of the president in the eyes of the mass public and how they serve as a tool to disseminate the president’s messages and communiqué.

One of the major struggles facing the media in Egypt is the financial dependence on the regime; for instance, after the revolution, the SCAF has used its investments in the media to influence the coverage. During that period, the Egyptian Armed Forces provided \$58 million for the ERTU.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, it is important to point out that the ERTU, till 2016, was indebted for \$3.2 billion, which entrenches its dependence on the state for funding and in turn prohibits its editorial independence; “in addition to state funds, ERTU’s income consists of proceeds from fees and from commercial activities and from loans, subsidies, and grants approved annually by the government.”¹⁷⁰

Furthermore, the impact of the deep state is not limited to the ERTU, but also exceeded that to exert pressure on the Nilesat company which “proved to be a reliable counterrevolutionary partner for the military in the fall of 2013 when it blocked the Al Jazeera news station from using a Nilesat satellite to broadcast images of the ongoing crisis in Egypt.” Not only was the channel banned, but also three of its journalists were sentenced to prison in June 2014 under the allegation that they have been aiding the MB.¹⁷¹ The list of imprisoned, deported and censored journalists in Egypt keeps expanding, yet there were few prominent and remarkable cases. The most prominent of these was the phenomenon of Bassem Youssef who was first stopped after his first episode on the famous Egyptian channel, CBC, and then was allowed for a short period of time on the Saudi-owned MBC *Misr* to be stopped ‘temporarily’ couple of weeks before the presidential elections to deny him the ability of swaying undecided voters, but then ‘for good’ after el-Sisi’s triumph.

Other examples of important journalists who were subjected to military tribunals and/or put off air are Yosri Fouda, who took his show off twice in 2011 due to pressures to censor certain topics, Reem Maged, Lilian Daoud, the Lebanese/Egyptian journalist who was deported back to Lebanon, Houssam Bahgat, the investigative journalist who was imprisoned and then prohibited from travelling, Alaa Abdel Fattah, Nawara Negm, Bothayna Kamel, Asmaa Mahfouz, Nabil Sharaf Eldin, Ahmed Ramadan, and Islam Abu al-Ezz.¹⁷² In sum, all the journalists who did not conform to the mainstream discourse that was provided by the regime were fiercely fought and censored.

Many of these journalists agree that an additional major problem in Egyptian media today is self-censorship, whereby out of fear, journalists have drawn their own tight margins to avoid military tribunals or dismissal. After the termination of the

Ministry of Information in February 2011, “there is currently no entity responsible for the media in Egypt, but self-censorship has never been more powerful, particularly in light of court cases filed against dissident voices for accusations such as insulting the president or threatening national security.”¹⁷³

In May 25, 2017, Reuters reported on the instances of censorship in Egypt noting that around 21 websites were censored for ‘terrorism’ and ‘fake news’. Among these websites were the Qatari-affiliated Al Jazeera website and the local-based *Mada Masr* (Egypt’s Scope) which were accused of supporting the MB and spreading fake news.¹⁷⁴ Not only was *Mada Masr* banned but also one of its contributors and one of the country’s most significant investigative journalists and human rights advocates, Houssam Bahgat, was detained in early November 2015.¹⁷⁵ Recently, the Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) project was blocked in Egypt hence prohibiting mobile access to international media outlets.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, according to the Arab Journalism Observatory (AJO), around 500 websites were censored in the first three months of 2018 without any judicial jurisdiction including “Human Rights Watch” and “Reporters without Borders”.¹⁷⁷

Although this is not the place to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the Egyptian media outlets, yet a quick overview of these outlets reveals an analogous mainstream perspective across most of them. The discourse that was being utilized across most of the news outlets in Egypt was: conspiracy, Western interference and money, they want to destroy the country, sex scandals in Tahrir square, fifth column, fourth generation. In one of its reports, Time magazine notes that the media’s rhetoric was charged by anti-protesters’ discourse describing them as “thugs” and agents of “foreign” intervention and that demonstrations that were anti-military were portrayed as

“dangerous” and “destabilizing events, driven by foreign agents.”¹⁷⁸ Moreover, in his book, *Revolution for Dummies: Laughing Through the Arab Spring*, Bassem Youssef touched upon the perilousness of discourse by stating that:

*“At that time no one was allowed to show confusion or have second thoughts. There was a set of rules you needed to follow in the media, and if you didn’t you would be crushed...The only accepted narrative was: it [July 30 movement] was a revolution – don’t even think the word coup – and everyone is conspiring against us. Yet I went on to joke about whether what had happened was a coup or a revolution. Questioning that at that time proved later to be very costly. The word coup was considered blasphemous.”*¹⁷⁹

Not only did Youssef emphasize this in his book, but in his weekly show “*Al Bernameg*”, Youssef stressed on the use of this destructive and negative discourse. In one of his episodes, Youssef stated cynically that it is as if the media in Egypt have been receiving the same script.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, Youssef criticized the role of the media during the presidential elections period in 2014 which led to the inauguration of el-Sisi. During the announcement of presidential bids in January and early February of 2014, Ahmad Shafiq and Sami Anan, both potential candidates, faced fierce rejection and denouncement from the media. As aforementioned, Anan, for example, was threatened by journalist Ahmad Moussa, who declared on air that he is going to “blind his eyesight,” if he ran for presidency. Another prominent journalist on CBC, Lamis Hadidi, had a very firm statement against Anan shaming and disgracing his decision of running for presidency “after all what happened” noting that “the people did not partake in the revolution to get those in the end.” Shafiq on the other hand, was accused of being a Muslim Brotherhood sympathizer and had one of the evening shows broadcast leaks of his phone calls in an attempt to discredit him. In fact, both candidates withdrew their bids.

The media's manipulation reached an extent of making up stories entirely from scratch. For example, one of the evening talk shows featured a young woman who was claiming that she accompanied some of the chief activists in the uprising to a fully-covered trip to Serbia where they were trained on the hands of Iranians and Israelis on how to overthrow regimes and received an amount of \$50,000/activist. The woman ended up crying on air and begging the audience for forgiveness and support of Mubarak's regime "against the traitors who were trying to sell their country to foreign agents." Later onwards, the woman was identified as the host's colleague and admitted that the whole episode was staged.¹⁸¹

An additional obstacle facing freedom of speech is the ratification of a new law restricting the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in May 2017 which "threatens to annihilate human rights groups" according to Amnesty International. The new law 70/2017 introduces a lot of restrictions including banning unmonitored and unapproved field research and surveys hence "forcing NGOs to adapt their activities to government priorities and plans or face up to five years in prison"; the law also gives the organizations one year to comply with its provisions or face dissolution; not only does it allow the government to dissolve NGOs, but also empowers them to dismiss the board of administration and subject the NGO and its staff to prosecution using vague charges like "harming national unity and disturbing public order."¹⁸² Nevertheless, in early 2011, the SCAF warned all journalists from publishing any information that pertains to the armed forces without approval from the directorate of military intelligence; a decision that was described by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) as "the single worst setback for press freedom in Egypt since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak."¹⁸³

In the post-MB era, the armed forces closed all the Islamist channels or those claimed to be affiliated with the MB like Al Jazeera, *Misr 25*, *al Hafez*, *al Nas* and papers owned by 'Freedom and Justice'¹⁸⁴ which is the official name for the banned MB.¹⁸⁵

However, the regime's dominance over the media is not recent; Ever since 1952's revolution, the regime acknowledged the power of the media and consequently exploited them to send its messages whereby "the president becomes the main focus of all communication, the main resource of information, and the main target of media service," in what Cañizález refers to as "the President is the message." During Nasser's days, the media were nationalized and utilized to echo Nasser's speeches and his political announcements and undermine his adversaries through capitalizing on Egypt's leadership and prevalence in the region, for example, the Voice of the Arabs radio was utilized to send pan-Arab and socialist messages.¹⁸⁶ Barnett emphasizes how Nasser deployed the media, specifically the radio station, to extend his outreach and influence to the Jordanian public hence forcing King Hussein to adopt decisions he wouldn't have adopted otherwise.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the media under Nasser were used as a tool to disseminate messages beyond the state's borders whereas under el-Sisi the media were diverted internally.

Although Nasser and el-Sisi's media strategies are strikingly similar, yet Nasser's advantage was that his rule did not witness the rise of social media sites and their increasing influence on the political scene. Social media have been a major force of revolution against the deep state. This is something that el-Sisi was highly aware of. The 2011 Egyptian uprising started via Facebook pages such as "We are All Khaled Said" among others. Social media have modified the 'rules of the game'; the deep state can no longer act so freely and secretly. This is why at some point, the regime decided to cut of

the internet in order to retrieve its authority in early 2011. Whereas, in his days, Nasser had an officer-inspector in each media outlet whereby each news piece had to be filtered by the officer-inspector through very strict editorial policies before it was published or broadcasted; a measure that cannot be applied with social media sites.

In the same line of argument and falling under the discourse as well, it is also remarkable and noteworthy to scrutinize the songs that were produced after the July coup. One of the most prominent songs is: *teslam el-ayadi* (Bless Your Hands). The song was broadcasted in the post-Muslim Brotherhood era but prior to el-Sisi's inauguration. The song iterates the strength and sacrifices of the army to stabilize the state. Few of the verses are:

*“Full Greetings for all owners of army cap,
Who with unconquerable will, drew the road map,
Greetings to the bold man who knows no fears,
Blessed and safe is the Egyptian army...
He is he who said he owes Egypt quite a lot,
To pay her back, he fearlessly will risk all his lot,
A man as such should win all our cheers,
Blessed and safe is the Egyptian army.”¹⁸⁸*

Additionally, “one song that was popular on the airwaves for some time was entitled “We Are a People; They Are Another,” categorizing the MB and their sympathizers as a different people.”¹⁸⁹ One very popular song as well was *boshret khayr* (Good News) which encouraged people to vote in the presidential elections and stressed on the necessity of voting as a national duty. Similarly, under Nasser's era similar songs were produced; for instance: *Nasser ya horiyya* (Nasser the freedom) which articulates: Nasser the freedom, Nasser the nationalism, the spirit of Arab *Umma*, Nasser, among other songs which were used as one of the approaches to engrain the Egyptian identity and praise the armed forces, despite the contextual differences.

These are all strategies utilized to ‘construct’ the national identity of the state and entrench the Egyptian patriotism among the masses. This is what the constructivist school of thought emphasizes especially in its discussion on identity politics and how the regimes tend to create an identity for the state and disseminate it across the mass public. If well-created, this identity with its values and visions survives for years as is the case with the identity that Nasser engrained in the Egyptian mindsets based on Arab nationalism (and at points unification), anti-Zionism and socialism.¹⁹⁰

5.2. Speech Analysis:

A comparative overview of the speeches of Nasser and el-Sisi reveals a pattern which represents the discourse of the deep state. Although there are considerable differences that cannot be overlooked especially at the levels of: anti-Zionism, Arab nationalism and socialism, yet one can still notice that el-Sisi has been trying to replicate the image of Nasser and his rhetoric while diverting it to his regime’s own interests and dogma. In his comparison between Nasser and el-Sisi, El Benni for instance, partly utilized discourse analysis to demonstrate how “El-Sisi’s words [in his speech on August 6, 2015] ...echoed the sentiments of a different president from nearly sixty years prior, one who had delivered similarly passionate declaration of Egyptian exceptionalism in connection to the Suez Canal.”¹⁹¹

When the U.S. decided to cut its aid to Egypt in late 1964, Nasser retaliated with one of his strongest speeches stating that:

“Our policy is an independent policy, and when we are dealing with other states, we are dealing with them on the basis that no one interferes in our affairs, but if the Americans believe that through their few aids, they can control us and control our policy, I tell them that we are sorry, we are ready to take down the

tea, we can reduce our tea consumption, and we can reduce our coffee consumption and we reduce the consumption of some needs in order to preserve our independence otherwise we will totally lose our independence and then the 56 conflict would have been useless.... So, if the situation necessitates that we provide the 50 million EGP, then we save it, on our boots, we don't even care, I swear."¹⁹²

Similarly, but in a totally different context, el-Sisi has also addressed his people in the same manner asking them to donate their coins for the sake of introducing new national projects and services; he also addressed the banks to find a mechanism to benefit from these coins.¹⁹³ Additionally, prior to the holy month of Ramadan 2017, el-Sisi advised the people to save a loaf of bread per person each day which will then save a total of 90 million loafs/day in order to enhance Egypt's economy.¹⁹⁴

There are common themes across the two presidents; both, for instance, rely heavily on conspiracy theory namely that outside players are conspiring against Egypt. The conspiracies Nasser emphasized were those planned by Zionists and their allies; however, at several times, Nasser referred to internal agents mainly the traditionalists (a term he constantly used to refer to those who were formerly in power and the religious constituencies who reject socialism and to the MB). In a 1966 speech, Nasser attacked the MB twice by describing them as agents of colonial powers and agents of Saudi Arabia who sell themselves to whoever pays higher.¹⁹⁵

Likewise, in his first speech after being inaugurated as a president in 2014, el-Sisi implicitly condemned the Muslim Brotherhood by firmly lamenting that "there is no negligence or compromise with those who resort to violence" adding that he is "looking forward to a new era of reconciliation and forgiveness, except with those who committed crimes and resorted to violence as means." Furthermore, in one of its articles,

al-hurra website notes that “el-Sisi attacked Mohamad Morsi’s regime without mentioning it, pointing out that “it [former regime] was contributing to the schemes that were planned to undermine the unity of the people and their territorial integrity,” referring, apparently, to regional alliances ...that represent a threat to Egypt’s national security.”¹⁹⁶ Both presidents try to affirm the image of the Muslim Brotherhood as agents to external forces. El-Sisi took this a step further and has been dispersing their image, nationally, regionally and internationally, as a terrorist organization.

On January 31, 2018, in the opening of a field for producing natural gas in Port Said, el-Sisi had an upfront intervention whereby he posited that;

*“no one can think that he can play with Egypt’s security while we’re in place, I’d rather die first than allow someone to messes with its security...I swear to God, before someone plays with your security Egypt, and strays the 100 million, I should be dead first...beware, for the talks that were going on 7 or 8 years ago will not be repeated again in Egypt.
...those who didn’t triumph back then, you’re going to allow them to succeed now, apparently, you don’t know me...your security and stability, Egypt, is worth my life and the army’s life...if the situation continues as is...I will ask you for another authorization as there will be another procedures, against anyone who think he can mess with its security while we’re here.
...we are not scaring people, but they should be careful; the media should be careful, the media should be careful before speaking about the nation-state you need to learn a lot about it.”¹⁹⁷*

Clearly, el-Sisi always addresses and portrays Egypt as a person, mainly a female, to reinforce his fatherly figure. Moreover, in the above intervention, he was continuously trying to discredit the knowledge of the masses and the media claiming that they “still need to learn a lot before they understand the meaning of the state.”

Other themes that both Nasser and el-Sisi stressed on is their adherence and perception of Islam; Nasser spent quite some time during his speeches trying to correlate

Islam with the progressive socialism and arguing that socialism best serves Islam as it aims to achieve justice in the society which is the core essence of Islam; in other words, Nasser tried to give an Islamic bent to the socialist ideology. The latter has always played on religious emotions and identities; for example, during the latest presidential campaigning period (late 2017 - early 2018), el-Sisi stated that he dreamt of the Christ asking him to protect the Christians of Egypt. Furthermore, el-Sisi begins and ends all his speeches with an Islamic phrase or greeting. El-Sisi starts most of his speeches by: 'In the name of God, the most merciful' (*bismillah al-rahman al-raheem*) and ends them with 'Peace, mercy and the blessings of God be upon you' (*assalamu alaikom wa rahmatu Allah wa barakateh*). Nasser also concluded all his speeches with the same Islamic greeting. The two leaders tended to claim the regime's adherence to Islam, with a view of influencing and maintaining the support of the Muslim majority and to provide an alternative to the MB who has been associated to political Islam and/or ruling in the name of Islam. In that context, Mohamad Al Atar from sasapost wrote an article on how a general has been ruling Egypt in the name of religion whereby he analysed the frequency of religious discourse in el-Sisi's speeches.¹⁹⁸

Both presidents rely heavily on reminding the masses of the sacrifices of the Egyptian armed forces and the martyrs who fell to retain independence, sovereignty (Nasser) and fight extremism (el-Sisi) capitalizing on the victories the armed forces attained under their reigns. They both praise the patience of the Egyptian population and reassure them that despite the present difficulties and complications, the future will be better. Additionally, both leaders warn the population of external and internal conspiracies being set against Egypt and its population and delegate the responsibility of fighting agency to the armed forces.

To have a concrete understanding of the deep state's rhetoric manifested in Nasser and el-Sisi's discourse, four speeches are examined: two by each, Nasser and el-Sisi. The two Nasserite speeches that will be scrutinized here are: 1) his speech at the Port Said celebrations of the Victory day on December 23, 1964; and 2) his speech at the Socialist Union conference in Suez on its national day on March 22, 1966. Whereas el-Sisi's inspected speeches are: 1) his speech on the Fourth Memorial of the Glorious June 30 on June 30, 2017; and 2) his speech on the Sinai Liberation Day on April 25, 2018.

The choice of the speeches came randomly so as to demonstrate a concurrent pattern heavily utilized by Nasser and resurrected by el-Sisi. The terms being inspected, were chosen based on the frequency of their repetition throughout the speeches in addition to their impact on the research question which aims to demonstrate the discourse deployed by the deep state to rationalize its necessity and inevitability. The terms were categorized into two main clusters: "us" and "the other". The "us" which signifies the military regime is viewed and articulated using positive connotations and reflecting on values such as justice, independence, freedom, revolution whereby "the other" is described and referred to as the enemy or the terrorist with a strictly negative connotation involving agency, conspiracy, aggression, among others. Table 4 encompasses these terms and explicates their choice.

Whereas, table 3 below identifies the frequency of the chosen terms in Nasser and el-Sisi's speeches. It is very crucial to pinpoint the huge discrepancy in the size of the speeches (number of words/inspected speech) between the two leaders as Nasser's speeches are much longer than that of el-Sisi. So, in order to compare the speeches of the two leaders, the researcher has done the following:

Nasser's speech 1 → 6597 words → 233 terms

Nasser's speech 2 → 10146 words → 354 terms

El-Sisi's speech 1 → 655 words → 26 terms

El-Sisi's speech 2 → 726 words → 33 terms

Accordingly, the researcher calculated the ratio of the total number of terms across the two speeches by the two presidents and divided them over the total of number of words of the two speeches as following:

Total terms/Total number of words per president

Nasser: 587/16743 = 0.035

El-Sisi: 59/1381 = 0.0427

The ratios above are highly comparable and almost equal. They demonstrate that the frequency of the terms relative to the number of words of the speech is around 0.04 for the two presidents. This validates the argument that there is a mutual pattern across the discourse of the deep state.

Table 3. The frequency of the repetition of specific terms in the pertaining four speeches.

Terms	Nasser Speech 1	Nasser Speech 2	El-Sisi Speech 1	El-Sisi Speech 2
<i>Democracy</i>	34	0	0	0
<i>National</i>	12	4	3	3
<i>Victory</i>	29	2	1	1
<i>Revolution</i>	18	110	0	11
<i>Justice</i>	3	12	1	1
<i>Socialism</i>	18	47	0	0
<i>Aggression</i>	21	5	0	0
<i>Independence</i>	25	1	0	1
<i>Traditional/ atavistic</i>	7	79	0	0
<i>Free/freedom /liberation</i>	19	17	5	1
<i>Agent</i>	4	17	0	0
<i>Conspiracy</i>	2	4	0	0
<i>Enemy (ies)</i>	4	6	0	1

<i>Egyptian Forces/ army/ security personnel</i>	3	13	9	4
<i>Build</i>	34	37	2	1
<i>Terrorism/Extremism</i>	0	0	5	9

To better explain the choice of words, it is interesting to notice how the mentioning of the word democracy dropped from 34 times in 1964 – whereby Nasser was emphasizing the importance of achieving social and political democracy and that political democracy needs to be preceded with the social one – till becoming null in 1966. This drop was accompanied with the amplification of the term revolution to demonstrate how Nasser tended to remind the people of the sacrifices of the armed forces and the revolutionaries.

In that regard, it is important to accentuate that the revolution Nasser had stressed on was the 1952 coup that overthrew the monarchy whereas the so-called revolution el-Sisi keeps on emphasizing is the July 30 coup which toppled the Muslim Brotherhood reign. The latter’s augmented assertion of the coup as a revolution is an attempt to bolster his legitimacy and ensure that his arrival to power was supported by the public will.

As for the last term, terrorism/ extremism, it was not very popular during the Nasserite era, hence was not used however, Nasser largely depended on the terms: aggression and aggressors, enemies, agents to describe the adversaries whether external or internal such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the capitalist traditional businessmen. The common approach across the two presidents is the attribution of agency to foreign powers with the constant warning and insinuation of conspiracies being plaited against Egypt. Therefore, this deep state has not only strengthened itself through institutions but

also through rhetoric by drawing on the Nasserite rhetoric mainly on nationalism, military strength and sacrifices and conspiracy theory.

Table 4. The basis for choosing the terms.

Us	The Other
National: the two leaders concentrated on entrenching the essence of nationalism.	Traditional/ atavistic: Nasser denounced his opposition for being atavistic i.e. follower and/or sympathizer with the colonial powers.
Revolution: both Nasser and el-Sisi frame their coups against former regimes as revolutions.	Aggression: the other is always considered an aggressor who is countering or refuting the interests of the state.
Independence: prioritizing independence over basic rights.	Agent: the opposition is associated with agency to external forces.
Free/freedom/liberation giving the perception that the reign will grant the mass public with their right to freedom.	Conspiracy: warning the people of conspiracies being prepared against Egypt hence asking them for their unconditional support.
Egyptian Forces/ army/ security personnel: continuous glorification of the army and maximization of its efforts.	Enemy: the mentality that the adversary is the enemy.
Build: constantly focusing on how the regime is building and implementing new productive projects in the country.	Terrorism/ extremism: exploiting extremism as an excuse to restrict freedom and liberty.
Democracy: Nasser relied heavily on the term democracy to argue that social democracy is a prerequisite to political democracy and what he's trying to do is to achieve the social democracy.	-
Victory: the perception that the regime (or the state) is always winning.	-
Justice: the two leaders tend to reflect that through their reigns, Egypt can witness justice.	-
Socialism: Nasser reinforced the necessity of socialism.	-

The above comparative analysis demonstrates that there is indeed a similar discourse that has survived throughout the successive regimes from Nasser to el-Sisi. Nasser, with his charismatic figure, was highly dependent on discrediting ‘the other’ under the pretext of being ‘atavistic’, ‘aggressor’ or ‘agent’; el-Sisi, similarly, has been disparaging any form of political opposition by accusing them of terrorism/extremism and agency as well. Both presidents insisted on distinguishing between ‘us’ (military rule and its supporters) and the ‘aggressive other’. Likewise, the media in Egypt which stemmed from outlets established or influenced by Nasser, perceived their role as disseminators of the presidential message and hence acted as a powerful tool at the service of the deep state instead of watchdogs to hold the regime accountable.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that in the post-MB rule in Egypt, el-Sisi in addition to the SCAF, has aimed to replicate the Nasserite experience and resurrect and further entrench the deep state; in contrast with the Muslim Brotherhood who tended to weaken and gradually demolish this state once they arrived to power. The Muslim Brotherhood's strategy, akin to that of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, aimed to deconstruct and decompose the deep state and its main elements, however this task turned out to be fatal for the Muslim Brotherhood as they failed to assess the tenacity of this state that did not hesitate to retaliate against their rule and overthrow the regime in less than one year. Under el-Sisi's supervision, the SCAF rapidly regained firm grip over the state not only through toppling the MB-affiliated president but also through ensuring its supremacy over the state institutions and economic activities.

While many argue that the Egyptian state has not regained its stability in the aftermath of the Egyptian Spring, the bulk of the evidence shows that state institutions remain insulated from societal pressure and that the state is still capable of maintaining control over society primarily through repression but also through the provision of basic services and manipulation of the media. The loyalty to the deep state has always been generated through capitalizing on external and internal threats like the Israeli and the Muslim Brotherhood threats respectively.

In that regard, the thesis inspected the major elements of the deep state including the armed and security forces with its different institutions and intelligence units, along

with the domination of the military over the economy, its control of the judiciary system and its governing of the media; all in light of the latest Egyptian constitution that was adopted in 2014. In addition, the SCAF was openly tenacious to preserve its clutch on the economic sector with its huge business enterprises.

Additionally, the thesis has also argued that the deep state – which survived the political and security turmoil that stormed Egypt during the Arab Spring – was originally established by Nasser who maintained the regime’s supremacy over state institutions including the armed forces and the judiciary system in addition to the media. Nasser had substantially strengthened the role of the army and established the media as means for the regime to disseminate its messages.

The thesis expended considerable ink on studying the predominant direction of influence between the deep state and the media; the first exploiting the latter to establish a set of predefined perceptions that serve the interests of the deep state and engrain its elements in the minds of people. While little has been written on the role of the media as a ‘vital’ element of the deep state, this thesis contended that the Egyptian media essentially contributes to the survival of the current state through acting as a puppet in the hand of a ‘deeply-rooted’ puppeteer.

Yet, the research faced few limitations. For instance, there were some difficulties in gathering information on the SCAF and their economic activities and in fact-checking the already-scarce data available. The economic affairs of the armed forces have been an off-limits topic for the media in Egypt hence very little information was provided on that. Similarly, the salaries of the members of the armed forces are not disclosed by the state and hence any data on that emanates from whistleblowers and/or journalists. Furthermore, few of the major difficulties were the differences between Nasser and el-

Sisi's speeches in terms of duration and size, which caused a remarkable disparity in the number of words inspected in the research. Sacrificing breadth for depth, the thesis did not delve into Naguib, Sadat and Mubarak's reigns or even revert to the era of the monarchy prior to the establishment of the republic. The thesis also did not discuss the 1952 revolution and the concrete build-up of the deep state. It mostly concentrated on the era of the post-MB reign in Egypt under the SCAF and el-Sisi as this era witnessed swift and unexpected changes. The research correlated these changes and measures with corresponding flashbacks from the Nasserite period to highlight mutual events and/or proceedings.

While it is beyond the scope of this research, there is major potential of studying the discourse of the deep state and possibly compare it to the rhetoric of the deep state in other countries as well, possibly between a military deep state and a non-military deep state. An example of that would be a comparative analysis between el-Sisi's speech and that of Bashar Al-Assad (who doesn't come from a military background) as well as a comparison of the experiences faced by these regimes to suppress the uprisings. It would also be enriching for further research to conduct a comparative analysis between Sadat and el-Sisi as they also share similar traits especially in appeasing their neighbours, yet they totally diverge on issues such as the MB. Moreover, while it is difficult to discuss reconciliation in Egypt today as it hints on the MB and incorporates them, it might be very inspiring to explore strategies of reconciliation that can be adopted in order to restore a 'normal' life within the state and strengthen tolerance across the different constituencies. Further stimulating topics for research also encompass: the impact of the deep state on the rise of extremism, a comparative analysis between MB of Egypt and MB of Turkey in their reaction to the deep state, and the role of civil society and its

weaknesses in countering the deep state.

To conclude, the deep state in Egypt is a manifest reality that stripped the revolution's dream in inducing a positive change in the state. This state has been resurrecting the same old people or the same old mentality into power, while leaving intact the rudiments of the state. In fact, as argued in the thesis, the deep state's strength has been growing intensely and ambiguously and the status of human rights has been dramatically deteriorating especially with regards to media liberty and freedom of expression. The state of emergency that is being extended over and over represents one of the simplest strategies to suppress dissent. The pertained extremist threat has been utilized by el-Sisi to justify his authoritarian rule. During Nasser's days, extremism was not the 'hot topic' or the 'trend', accordingly Nasser had to resort to another excuse to preserve the deep state, mainly by attacking colonial powers and the Muslim Brotherhood among others. While few of the enemies have changed today, the strategy persisted: instilling fear within the people, praising their patience, promising them with a better future and asking for their assistance and continuous sacrifices, flattering the security and armed forces and reminding the people of their tragedies, losses and victories.

However, with the decline of the extremist threat, el-Sisi would need to re-strategize, during his second presidential term that just begun in late March 2018. Article 140 of the 2014 constitution stipulates that the president may only serve two terms. Accordingly, el-Sisi will have to make the best out of his second, and supposedly last term and deliver, at least partially, on the many promises he made. Unfortunately, there has been speculation about a possible amendment to the two-term limit stipulation. It is too early to tell whether, or not, el-Sisi will seek an amendment of this core clause of the Egyptian constitution. What is crystal clear for now is that with or without el-Sisi, the

deep state seems reluctant to relinquish its power. The most pertinent question today is will the persistence of the deep state, and its repressive measures, drive the MB to join or ally with extremist groups or will the deep state try to co-opt the MB at a later stage without sacrificing its nature or compromising its absolute rule? And if so, who will be the next 'enemy' that will provide the deep state with the rationale for its prolongation and its crackdown on human rights?

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