

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**TRAJECTORIES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE:
CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE
25TH OF JANUARY REVOLUTION IN EGYPT**



Master's Thesis

MOHAMED ELWAKIL

ISTANBUL, 2016

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION
MANAGEMENT**

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Dr. Hande Paker

Member

Member

DEDICATION

To those who sacrificed their lives to teach mankind, to those who swapped their lives to our freedom;

To Mustafa Gaber, Abdel Nasser Agag and Mohamed Mehres,

To Mustafa Hamroush and Osama ElSayed,

To AbdAllah Adel and Mohamed Al-Tohamy,

To Asmaa Beltagy and Hala Abu She'sha,

To Mohamed ElShanawany and Sohail Ammar,

To all alive martyrs;

To those who are languishing behind the cells of the tyrant, to my brothers and my friends;

To the masters Akef and Beltagy,

To ElNemr and Jaafar,

To Shankal and Karim,

To Fakharany and Saif,

To Mohamed Eid and Mohamed Farid,

To forty thousand or more political prisoners;

To the Involuntary exile's fellows;

Ahmed, Fadel, Mustafa, Ahmed, Yahya, Abdullah

To my father,

To my mother,

To my nephews Yusuf& Seif,

To My sisters,

Him... and Her...

**Mohamed El Wakil
Istanbul
07/01/2016**

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Mohamed ElWakil
Istanbul
07/01/2016



ABSTRACT

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Mohamed ElWakil

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT

Thesis Supervisor: PH. D HANDE PAKER

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The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the Egyptian civil society in the revolutionary context during January 25th Revolution. The thesis describes the historical context prior to the breakout of the revolution. It focused on two important aspects i.e. Egyptian social and political context. The concept of civil society in Egypt and its development and critiques were also discussed in detail. The data was collected from primary and secondary source, using descriptive and analytical methodology. In order to clearly understand the role of civil society in January 25th Revolution, fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted. Moreover, the thesis also analyzed the civil society reality prior to and during the revolution. The rules played by civil society in shaping the revolution's trajectories of success and failures were addressed. Furthermore, a conceptual study of civil society was conducted.

The findings of this study revealed that such conceptual study is still important for the development of civil society itself to align with the revolutionary phenomenon and the recently changed Egyptian reality. This research not only attempts to predict and participate in the shaping of the revolution future, but also aims to introduce the English-speaking audience to this under-explored field. The thesis has practical implication for policy makers towards the development of governance policy.

Keywords: Civil Society, Concept, Egypt, Revolution, Participation, Interviews

ÖZET

BAŞARI VE BAŞARISIZLIĞIN GİDİŞATI: SİVİL TOPLUMUN MISIR'DA 25 OCAK DEVRİMİNE KATILIMI

Mohamed ElWakil

GİRİŞİMCİLİK VE İNOVASYON YÖNETİMİ

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hande PAKER

Mart 2016, 93 sayfa.

Bu çalışmanın amacı 25 Ocak Devrimi dönemindeki Mısır sivil toplumunu devrimsel bağlamda tartışmaktır. Çalışma ilk aşamadan patlak vermesine dek devrimin tarihsel bağlamını anlatmaktadır. Mısır sosyal ve politik bağlamı gibi iki önemli hususa odaklanmıştır. Mısır'daki sivil toplum kavramı, bu kavramın gelişimi ve eleştirileri de detaylarıyla tartışılmıştır. Veriler betimsel ve analitik yöntemler kullanılarak birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan elde edilmiştir. 25 Ocak Devrimi'nde sivil toplumun rolünü açıkça anlayabilmek için on dört yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma sivil toplum gerçeğini öncesi ve devrim süreciyle analiz etmiştir. Devrimin başarı ve başarısızlıklarının gidişatını şekillendiren sivil toplum tarafından oynanan kurallar üzerine değinilmiştir. Buna ek olarak sivil topluma dair kavramsal bir çalışma yürütülmüştür.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, sivil toplumun devrimsel olgu ve yakın zamanda değişen Mısır gerçeği ile uyumlu hale gelmek için kendini geliştirmesinde böyle bir kavramsal çalışmanın hala önemli olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu araştırma sadece devrimin geleceğinin şekillenmesini tahmin etmeyi ve şekillenmesinde yer almayı değil, aynı zamanda İngilizce konuşan kitleye bu açığa çıkmamış alanı tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, politikacılar için yönetim politikası geliştirmeye yönelik pratik çıkarımlara sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil Toplum, Kavram, Mısır, Devrim, Katılım, Görüşme.

CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ÖZET	vi
CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH STATEMENT	3
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.3 RESEARCH METHODELGY	3
1.3.1 Interviewing Groups.....	4
1.3.2 Criteria Of Choosing Candidates	5
1.4 POINTS OF SIGNICANCE	6
1.5 EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE STUDY	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MODERN WESTREN THOUGHT.....	7
2.2 CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MODERN ARAB THIOUGHT	13
2.3 THE ARAB SOCIOLOGICAL REALITY AND THE MODERN CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY	15
2.4 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EGYPT	20
3. PREREVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT.....	22
3.1 THE SITUATION IN EGYPT PRIOR THE REVOLUTION	22
3.1.1 Socioeconomic Context Prior The Revolution	22
3.1.2 Political Context Prior The Revolution	26
3.2 CIVIL SOCIETY PRIOR THE REVOLUTION	31

3.2.2 Analyses Of Egyptian Civil Society Prior The Revolution.....	31
4. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION	41
4.1 BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE REVOLUTION EVENTS.....	41
4.2 CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION SUCCESS.....	42
4.2.1 Civil Society As Social Capital Reservoir And Community Incubator	43
4.2.1.1 Unity spirit.....	43
4.2.1.2 Anti sectarianism culture	46
4.2.1.3 Aspiration for change	46
4.2.1.4 High mobilization.....	48
4.2.1.5 Training	48
4.2.1.6 Innovative organizational structure.....	50
4.2.1.7 International sense	52
4.2.2 Effective Roles During The Revolution	53
4.2.2.1 Public awareness	53
4.2.2.2 Public campaigns	54
4.2.2.3 New media utilization	56
4.2.2.3 Urgent societal roles.....	58
4.2.2.4 Non formal education	59
4.2.2.5 Social entrepreneurships	60
4.2.2.6 Revolutionary movements.....	61
4.3 CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION FAILURES.....	62
4.3.1 Political Polarization.....	62
4.3.2 Lack Of Planning.....	63
4.3.3 Funding	65
5. EGYPTIAN CIVIL SOCIETY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT.....	67
5.1 SUMMERY AND CONCLUSION	67
5.2 DISCUSSION	68
5.3 RECOMMENDATION	70
REFERENCES.....	72
CURRICULUM VITAE	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1.1 : GDP, HH income and expenditure (per capita, real terms, 2000=100).....	24
Figure 3.1.2 : Number of Fatalities in Incidents of sectarian Violence, 2006-2011	26
Figure 3.2.1 : Civil society growth rate	32
Figure 3.2.2 : percentage of civil society organizations per region	35



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.3.1: Interviewing Group	4
Table 3.2.1: Total numbers of civil society organizations in the last two decades	31
Table 3.2.2 : Number of organizations in certain fields (Nasr, January 2005) ...	34



1. INTRODUCTION

Civil society rights are well acknowledged in literature and by international human right agencies (Simmons, 2009). However, it may be an argument that it is useless to think about civil society right now, where the cohesion of the society itself is, indeed, a questionable issue. But, if I recall the immortal sit-in of the Egyptian people in "Tahrir Square" in the first beginning of 2011, there was no sign that the rebels will succeed in reaching their dream of "*Bread, Freedom, and Equality*". No one imagined that these three words would change the history and represent a nation's dream to end decades of backwardness and dictatorship. Again, with no hope in a democratic progress or international interference, people gathered in this peaceful sit-in for 18 days, facing the excessive violent repression made by the state authorities. The power of dreams, union, hope and struggle are pyramids to success (Ghonim, 2012) and its pillars kept the Egyptians standing. Believing in a better tomorrow and in a brighter future, they stood still for days. That summoned the spirit of the revolution—a spirit that reminds us with the famous Russian drink toasts to "*the success of our hopeless cause*" (Geremek, 1992). Such spirit encourages us to optimistically address the questions of the future.

The importance of such work emerged immediately after the declension in the revolutionary tide and what could be seen as an interim victory for the counter-revolution in all the Arab spring countries, especially in Egypt after the military coup carried by Abdel-Fatah Al-Sisi, Former Defense Secretary. In the years following the coup, Egypt experienced one of the worst human rights crises in its modern history. The killing of protesters by the Egyptian Security Forces, mass detentions, forced disappearance, the trial of civilians in military courts, extensive use of death sentences, the arrest of journalists and the forced evictions of families in the Sinai Peninsula. Obstruction in the democratic way became a reality a long with the deterioration of the economic conditions to the stratum (Offe, 1987) that is hard to stand. Simply, the revolution's dream of "*Bread, Freedom, and Equality*" was taken away after the coup.

In such dark times in the nation's history, the power of dreams is needed to prompt the masses of their call for altering their reality and creating a new world that respects their

humanities, rights and willingness. Scholars and revolution's leaders are obligated to draw a dream for the future of the Arab spring, learning from the past mistakes that they have committed (Ghonim, 2012; Harb, 2011; Hamdy and Gomma, 2012). This thesis is considered one of the attempts to visualize Egypt's revolution future through a very important aspect, which is civil society reformation.

"Fellowship is life and lack of fellowship is death, but in hell, there is no brotherhood, but every man for himself" (Tawney, 1926). John Ball, the leader of the peasants' revolt. Ball said these words in 1381. His words defined the necessity of fellowship, which is a foundation of civil society. It is also a shared principle with the Arab spring itself. Masses assembled in squares and streets, and everyone was ready to die for the man standing beside him. This similarity between the civil society and the revolution is a fraction of the similarities that were heavily illustrated during the first days of the revolution. Such similarities make it necessary to re-discuss the concept of civil society in the context of that revolutionary phenomenon.

Civil society in the Arab spring countries was one of the aspects that caused and helped the revolutions to succeed in the very early days (Howard & Hussain, 2013) Although the civil society contributed to the formation of the uprising, the revolutions showed how primitive civil society was in those countries that it did not help too much in the process of achieving the spring's objectives, which led, in most countries, to the retreat of the revolutionary wave. One of the most important criticisms that could be made to the civil society leaders, activists and even Arab theorists is the concept they had about civil society (Norton, 2001) the very narrow concept which sees the civil society as if it is just the NGOs, neglecting any other form of the civic movements, along with another critique that they have left out any political organizations from being part of the civil society in areas that suffer from severe political blockage. Such claims needed a further study.

The unique theme of the Arab Spring (Absence of: vanguards, ideology, violence) indicates the Arab spring revolutions carried opportunities and enablers. In addition, it has a unique model in terms structure, behavior, organizational culture and mechanisms of action according to its teleological objectives. All this shows the demand of holding a

future vision to reform the civil society in countries of Arab Spring to suit the revolutionary context.

1.1 RESEARCH STATEMENT

- How did the civil society participate in the formation of the Egyptian Revolution?
- What were the roles of civil society during and before the revolution?
- What is the impact of those roles in the success or failure of the revolutionary demands?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To delineate civil society participation in the formation of Egyptian Revolution and its role in setting the stage for the revolution breakout.
- To examine the roles of civil society before and during the revolution, roles played by the civil society activists, organizations and movements.
- To explore the mutual impact of the revolution and civil society in the success or failure of each other.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODELGY

The thesis is based on descriptive and analytical methodology, with primary and secondary research. The study conceptualizes the civil society in the west and the Arab context and how it develops in accordance with each of them. Later on, thesis reviews the roots of the concept in the Arab culture, and then descriptive secondary research for the political and social context of the revolution is conducted for a better understanding of the causes of revolution. . Egyptian civil society prior to the revolution was also studied based on its composition, geographical distribution, sectorial orientation and civil society-state relation, which are all going to be discussed further. Finally, primary research regarding the role of civil society in the revolution and how it helped shaping the trajectories of success and failure of the revolution will be performed. The primary research is meant to study the civil society as a social capital incubator that its activities before the revolution helped in forming the revolution itself, pointing to the roots of the revolution significant

characteristics in the activities of civil society prior the revolution. The primary research also studies some effective roles played by the civil society during and after the revolution in addition to the revolution failures that the civil society contributed in shaping it.

The primary research is conducted through fourteen detailed semi-structured interviews in order to come up with a better understanding of the role of civil society in the 25th of January revolution. The interviews discussed different aspects with the interviewees such as their experiences in civil society before the revolution along with their experiences during the revolution. Another aspect to be discussed is their common understanding of the concept of civil society. In addition, their perspectives about the role played by civil society in shaping the revolution trajectories of success and failures have been discussed.

1.3.1 Interviewing Groups

S.No	Participants	Details
1	Initiators and activists	Those are the primary drivers of the civic order. They are the believers of the revolution principals, motivated by the urge and need to change. They sustain a set of qualifications (network, personal skills...) that permits them to be active and deal with the problems they want to confront
2	Officials	Those who had an official role to play within the state, especially that interfered in the relation between the state and the civil society
3	Organization leaders	Those who worked in one of the civil society organizations.
4	Initiatives leaders	Those who initiated or participated in creating a civil initiative or movement.
5	Value-based entrepreneurs (social entrepreneurs)	Entrepreneurs with the social innovation or enterprise that have a social impact.

Table 1.3.1 Interviewing Group

1.3.2 Criteria Of Choosing Candidates

- a) Initiators and activists:
 - At least five years of civil work.
 - Participated in at least three initiatives or organizations.
 - For initiators, they, at least, founded or co-founded one civil initiative or organization.
- b) Officials:
 - Had an official role in the state sector in the revolutionary era.
 - Had a supportive role in the revolution.
 - Interacted in any level with the civil society.
- c) Organization leaders:
 - An organization that worked at any sector related to the civil society.
 - Has been established five years ago at least
 - Preferable an organization that worked in pre/after the revolution.
- d) Initiatives leaders:
 - Initiative that worked at any sector related to the civil society.
 - was established, at least, two years ago
 - Preferable an organization that worked in pre/after the revolution.
- e) Value-based entrepreneurs (social entrepreneurs):
 - Entrepreneur with a social motive besides profit.
 - The enterprise survived at least one year.

1.4 POINTS OF SIGNICANCE

Understanding the civil society within the framework of a phenomenon, which is still developing.

1.5 EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

The desired outcome of the study is:

- To raise some questions about the concept and its relevance of the Arab context in general and Egypt in particular.
- To predict the future of the Egyptian revolution, keeping in view the understanding of the exact overall context, in which the revolution took place.
- To analyze the effect of the civil society on the revolution formation and trajectories of success and failure.
- To have a better understanding of the role of civil society in the 25th of January revolution.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

What do civil society organizations in the Arab countries do to deepen the concept of democracy? Have the institutions of civil society been able to exercise that role properly to serve the process of democratic transformation in the Arab countries? (Saleh, 2012) All the pervious questions are discussed widely among the Arab scholars nowadays especially after the breakout of Arab Spring back in 2010.

The purpose of literature review is to focus on questions related to civil society in the Arab countries and the compatibility and convenience of the concept of civil society with the Arab reality, along with the importance and necessity of the role played by the NGOs in the Arab spring. This chapter focuses on the conceptual study of the civil society concept itself—how did it emerge and develop in the Arabic thought? And whether it is stemmed from the Arabic context. The importance of asking such questions at this juncture which the region is going through where the reformation of Arab societies occurring as a result of the revolutions that broke out at the beginning of this decade, lies in being an establishment to reconsider some basic concepts to fit the current context and the civilized heritage of the region. In addition, the importance of this study is to understand how those different conceptual perspectives of civil society in the Arabic thought may affect the role played by the civil society, its activists and organizations after the Egyptian revolution.

2.1 CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MODERN WESTREN THOUGHT

The concept of civil society has expressed concerns and phenomena that are different historically in the development of political thought (Norton, 2001), so its implications are associated to a particular historical context. The next section discusses the most important turning points experienced by concept as a result of the associated historical context with the conceptual study at any given time, so as to help determine the suitability of any of these concepts to the current reality of the Arab region, as explained later.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes stated that civil society is a politically organized society through existing state on the idea of social contract

(Nagel, 2005). In relation to John Locke, this concept means that the existence of politically organized society within the state, which regulates the enactment of legislation (Held, 2013). Rousseau in the eighteenth century sees the civil society as a society of the sovereign that is capable of forming the will of the public identifies, rulers and the ruled society (Habermas, 1991). De Tocqueville emphasizes the role of civic organizations that are active in the scope of the state in a narrow sense (Putman, 1995). Gramsci Marxist views civil society as a bourgeois cultural hegemony that opposes the process of control that characterizes the political sphere (Bishara, 2012). For analysis, the study first addressed the literature review about western thought, focusing on the political and historical context.

Literature highlighted that the concept of civil society is not only relatively new, but is also a Western concept (Hanafi, 2002; Alagappa, 2004; Kaldor, 2004; Gilson, 2011). Its development was contributed to the drafting of various schools of thought within the framework of Western civilization. The first appearance of the civil society concept was related to other philosophical ideas and political theories that paved for the revolutions that swept Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Ehrenberg, 1999). That was against “Feudalism”, the autocracy of European kings backed by the divine right by the church back then (Brown, 1974), and the rise of the “Sovereign states system” where a community of strangers replaces the neighbor’s community and a need to a new social order emerged (Brown C. , 2000).

It was Thomas Hobbes and John Locke that were considered pioneers among philosophers, who used this concept. Both Hobbes and Locke found the civil society as a result of a social contract granted by the politics of gathering people to achieve a certain purpose. The main difference between these philosophers is the fact that Hobbes did not see the existence of an institutional differentiation between the state and civil society, whereas Locke characterized the state from civil society, without eliminating the ties binding them (Geremek, 1992). Later on, the concept started to mutate in a way and Western scholars, philosophers, sociologists and political scientists started to study and criticize it, including Rousseau, Hegel among others (Burchill, 2001).

Hegel distinguished between civil society where spontaneous interactions based on habits, customs and traditions take place, and the state as legal and political institutions that perform within the same set of relations as the society (Stefan, 2008). He considered civil society as a separate realm, a "system of needs" which intervenes between the family and the state—a realm within the dialectical relationship happening between Hegel's perceived opposites, the macro-community of the state and also the micro-community of the family (Pelczynski, 1984). Civil society is the realm of relationships, as it exists in the modern industrial capitalist society, for it had emerged at the particular period of capitalism and served its interests of individual rights and private property (Stillma, 1980). Hegel said that the civil society could only exist across an eligible state that resolves its internal problems and secures its continuation and evolution typically. That is why the subordination of civil society to the state power is necessary (Rashed, 2003). The civil society- state relation in the Hegelian philosophy depends on a type of variation and interdependence, and despite the civil society's independence of the state, this independence is supposed to be limited by the state. Civil society's need to the state is more than logical; it is realistic and even moral need (Rosenberg, 1994). Civil society cannot be an ethical space and remain civilian unless it is politically organized and subjected to the supervision of the state and its hegemony. It is impossible for civil society, as perceived by Hegel, to exist without the state (Zaleski, 2008). The reflection of the Renaissance along with the entrenchment of the idea of a sovereign modern state in addition to the widening size of urban and cities were evident in Hegel's philosophies related to civil society (Bishara, 2012).

Then the concept ended to represent intermediate social structures, institutions that are independent of the political power, which is able to regulate its own affairs and manage it independently of the state power (Nabi, 2006). In the classical liberal thought, which did not leave room for public sphere outside the citizen, the state and the market, all public spheres and not a state are the market, and all that is not public sphere is private. Civil society was the perception of the community outside the state based on the market economy then it became linked to the expansion of citizenship rights versus state (Bishara, 2012).

Socialist thoughts fluctuate among regarding civil society as bourgeois society and between regarding civil society valid as long as the state exists. Hence, the objective of the libertarian Marxist project is dissolving the state in the community, and thus demise of the need for the concept of civil society, and the demise of civil society itself with the modern state, which is its political twin (Stefan, 2008).—a philosophy that emerged during the Age of revolutions that synchronizes with the industrial revolution decades, following the peace of 1815, where several European countries were beset by social conflicts because the populations sought their rights against the customarily autocratic rulers of their states (Hobsbawm, 1996). However, this trend ended up melting the community in the communist east European state and breaking the civil society with iron and fire (Geremek, 1992).

Departing somehow from Marx, Gramsci did not think about civil society as coterminous with the socio-economic base of the state. Rather, Gramsci placed civil society within the political superstructure. Gramsci does not understand the 'state' in the narrow sense of the government. Instead, he divides it between 'political society' (the police, the army, legal system, etc.) —a realm of political institutions and legal constitutional control – and 'civil society' (the family, the education system, trade unions, etc.) – ordinarily seen as the 'private' or 'non-state' sphere, mediating between the state and therefore the economy. He stresses, however, that the division is only abstract which the 2, in reality, often overlap (Gramsci, 1972). He viewed civil society as the vehicle for bourgeois hegemony, once it simply represents a specific class. He underlined the crucial role of civil society as the contributor of the cultural and ideological capital needed for the survival of the hegemony of capitalism. Instead of posing it as a problem, as in earlier Marxist conceptions, Gramsci viewed civil society as the site for problem solving. The New Left appointed civil society a key role in defensive people against the state and therefore in asserting the democratic will to influence the state (Ehrenberg J. , 1999). In the case of Gramsci, such ideas emerged in the darkness of fascism prisons in other words in the context of the rule of radical authoritarian nationalism (Gramsci, 19972).

Despite the deep roots of the concept, it was more used during the 80s and 90s of the last century. There is a number of reasons for this development such as the fall of

communism and the democratic openings that followed, disenchantment with the economic and political models of the past, a yearning for togetherness in a world which seems ever-more insecure, and the rapid rise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the global stage (Edwards, 2014). However, the role of labor and trade unions in the ports of Poland on the Baltic (Gdansk), which went from the struggle on the union rights to the leadership of a civilian revolt against the totalitarian state and the one-party dictatorship, was considered a motive for restudying the concept. In addition, the Polish model makes the role played by the Catholic Church in that movement and the role of religion in such cases noteworthy and is not specific to Islamic communities. All this was the trigger to launch a dialogue on civil society in the 80s and 90s of the last century (Bishara, 2012).

Back then, the civil society concept was embraced by scholars and political groups and used as the slogan of democracy and civil rights. Every group dealt with the idea according to their perspectives and understandings. They invested the idea of civil society in accordance with their own ideologies, beliefs and interests and went out of it as they wished and wanted. The concept of civil society interpreted by its relation with almost everything, starting from social pluralism, human rights, public service, active citizenship, the fragmentation of power and ending with social and political participation (Powell, 2007). Therefore, this concept takes across the path of its development different connotations and meanings according to the philosophical, intellectual and ideological perspective interpreted it (Rashed, 2003).

Every time, the civil society term emerges on the top of political philosophy debates with total different meanings and research questions because the definition comes in structurally and historically variable context that generates new needs and new questions answered by the concept (Edwards, 2014). If we add to that change evolution theory and the accumulation of human knowledge as a context reverting to the concept of civil society, the study finds that the term revival each time comes at a point of the intersection of two axes: the axis of the historical development and the axis of the history of the theory itself, the history of knowledge and thought (Bishara, 2012). *“When the same phrase is used to justify such radically different viewpoints, it is certainly time to ask some*

deeper questions about what is going on. After all, an idea that means everything probably signifies nothing” (Edwards, 2014).

Civil society in the current era offers a ready answer for many issues. Civil society is a response to one-party authority in communist states, creating a social reference outside the state. Also it is considered the respond to the bureaucracy and the concentration of decision-making process in liberal states. Sometimes it is considered a respond to the control of the market economy on the social life, health, culture and art. Nevertheless, it is considered the respond to the dictatorships of the third world (Alagappa, 2004) on the one hand and on its organic and conventional structures on the other. Civil society is the expression of the same dream, the one that does not want to be called socialism nor liberalism nor radical democracy, and it looks for all positives of these concepts without sufficient courage to admit it (Arthur et al., 2010). It is like beggars’ soup a collection of the remains of different theories and different eras. Civil society is trying to achieve the impossible; it gives a new label for old dreams, trying to avoid the crisis, by changing the label. Civil society, at a certain stage, simply meant civil rights, and in the second stage considered the society based on contract. In the third phase, it refers to the parliamentary elections and their expansion and comprehensiveness, and finally in the fourth stage, the citizen's rights (Bishara, 2012).

The fact that civil society concept developed in the western thought through a process of political and social evolution where modern civil society institutions form is the last manifestations of it, might lead to introduce civil society institutions as the only solution that could lead to democracy in the Arab world. However, this is questionable research because it neglected the process of the whole society evolution that did not occur in the Arabic context. Hence, discussing the concept in the Arabic thought and whether it is related to the Arabic context or not has become a necessary subject. Keeping in view the above discussion, the focus of current research is to discuss concept of civil society in Arab context and presenting a more generalized view.

2.2 CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MODERN ARAB THOUGHT

The concept had the same level of controversy among Arab scholars as it had among western scholars. Mohammed Abed al-Jabri sees the civil society as the society where the relations between its individuals are based on democratic basis (al-Jabri, 2000). Mohamed AbdElFadil sees the civil society as the institutions, initiatives and activities that occupy the mediator center between the family as the basic unit and the state) Saleh, 2012) a similar perception to the new western thought that sees it the inevitable evolution of the social movements due to its link to the linked into official political systems by becoming both “institutionalized and professionalized” over time (Kaldor, 2010). At the same direction, goes Sad ElDean Ibrahim who defines the civil society as a set of free voluntary organizations that fill the space between the family and the state to achieve the public good, committed to the values and standards of respect and compromise, tolerance and the peaceful management of diversity. He states that these organizations are neither governmental nor hereditary (Familial). These organizations include assemblies, associations, trade unions, parties, clubs and cooperatives (Rashed, 2003). This definition consists of three major impellers: Willful act, collective organization, ethical impeller, where civil society exists with the free will of its individuals not such Kinship group as the family, clan or tribe, where the individual’s membership of these organizations was imposed on him by birth or legacy. It is not like the state, which imposes its nationality, sovereignty and laws on whoever born or lived at its land. Hence, civil society is collective organizations including members choosing the membership of their own volition. It is the organized parts of the community. It is the membership society: political parties, unions, associations, chambers of commerce (industrial and commercial) and cooperative (Rashed, 2003). Thus, it is concluded that this definition to exclude preliminary concepts such as the family and the tribe, clan, community, ethnic and social institutions also excludes the governmental institutions and keeps within the scope of civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations that is based on volunteer work. In accordance with prior definitions of civil society, it represents the kind of social, political and cultural organizations that is slightly outside or far from the power of the state

regulation and represent various levels and modes of expression and opposition by society towards all kinds of authority. It is the overall structures, organizations, and institutions representing the basic social, political and economic institutions that are not falling directly under the domination of state power (Lipset, 1959; Castells, 2011). That is the margin narrows and expands depending on the context in which the individual produces himself and his solidarity, sanctity and creativity. These are always the margins of individual and collective immunity and the distances separating the social level and political level. These are the margins where the most important elements of civil society lie in the malleability and extensions, which are located outside the borders of independence, especially the financial ones (Wanas, 1996).

Whatever the perspective used, there are common features of civil society among such theories (ElSayed, 2001):

- 1- Participation in the civil society is a voluntary act.
- 2- Civil society includes many components: different productivity enterprises, religious and educational institutions, professional associations, trade unions, political parties, and political doctrines.
- 3- Civil society organizations are characterized by their independence from the state on managerial and organizational level. Originally, the relationship between civil society and the state is separated. The state should not interfere in the activities of civil society, while civil society organizations should not be infiltrated by the state.
- 4- The state is a necessity for the existence of civil society and its proper function. The state, which is not subject to the absolute authority, its performance bounded by the rational rules.

These are the main features, which are almost fixed and common through the various concepts of civil society. Moreover, other features are depending on the historical context of the nations. However, at some point, it is subjected to external factors such as foreign occupation (ElJanahany & AbdelFattah, 2003). The mentioned concepts of civil society in the modern Arab literature considered a reverberation of western thought, where the Arab scholars consider the result achieved by the civil society towards the democratization

of the European countries and perceive it as a solution to the Arab dictatorships (Bishare, 2012).

2.3 THE ARAB SOCIOLOGICAL REALITY AND THE MODERN CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Scholars argued about the issue of suitability of the concept of the western roots with the Arab sociological context. Such claims impose itself to research starting with studying the linguistic overtones of the phrase (Civil Society) in Arabic language and comparing it with the other western languages. In Arabic, the word '*Mojtama*' is the equivalent of the word 'society', which is a descriptive noun of the place or time of which the act of (gathering or assembling) takes place. It differs from the term (society) in western languages that refers to a number of individuals who create a group of individuals as a result of some sort of commonwealth. The term (Civil) in Arabic is derived from the word (city or metropolis) which is defined by its antagonism of the (Bedouin society), and since the tribe is the essential ingredient in the Arabian wilderness, the (civil society) will be different to some extent from the (tribal society) (al-Jabri, In the criticism of the need for reform, 2005). While the (civil) term came as antagonism of three other aspects, savagery (primitive savage people against the civilized people), and in opposite of the military affiliation in politics (civilian versus military) and opposite of belonging to a religion (religious teachings versus civil law), the term 'civil society' in the European thought is thought to be a civilized society, where there is no power in it, in terms of the military or the church (ElJanahany & AbdelFattah, 2003). This shows the linguistic differences that the term has between Arabic and other western languages.

The concept of civil society emerged and developed in the western thought to reflect the history of modern Europe evolution (Kumar, 1993). In the 17th century, Europe entered the era of enlightenment known as 'Renaissance Age', where the economy transferred from the agrarian feudalism to industrial and trade-based economy. Associated with the industrial revolution and machine's invention is the movement of population and the migration from the countryside to the city where workers moved from homes or

workshops to the big factories, which include large numbers of workers. This resulted in two class one working for the other and a conflict between the interest of workers and the interest of factories owners. That was coinciding with the rise of the right of private ownership. These circumstances were behind the establishment of unions, trade unions and organizations by such interest group to defend their rights and their own-shared interests. Such bounds have had loyalty and affiliation of a large number of individuals no matter what differences there are between them in the conventional bounds such as kinship, religion, sex and color... etc.¹

The Arab countries did not fully develop to trade and industrial economy based countries yet (Lapidus, 2008), family and tribe still have a large and crucial role within their societies (Kawtharani,1988). Thus, speaking about the civil society from a western point of view becomes irrelevant to the social reality. That, in spite of all aspects that manifested for modernity in many of the Arab countries, represents only a virtual form of an amorphous mostly follower societies, which have numerous and different social patterns, which makes it possible for conventional patterns to dominate in many Arab countries (Lapidus, 2008). The Arab Islamic system is still considered a direct and immediate reference for most social groups and individuals whether in the countryside or the cities in the Middle East countries (Hanafi, 2002). Take into account that there is a collision between those cultural systems and the idea of the open ceiling of freedoms and rights in the relevant social formations of the idea of (civil society) and its concept in the West (ElFaleh, 2002).

This means that the emergence of civil society organizations in European countries has necessitated the declaration of rupture with the old frameworks of feudalism and the church (Kaldor, 2004). On the contrary, what happened in the Arab countries is that the emergence of civil society organizations did not lead to the abolition of the old traditional framework. In fact, it may be that the Arabic social frameworks coincide and co-exist with each other along with the establishment of parties and unions without substituting them

¹ (EzEldean)

(Hanafi, 2002). The lack of taking such social, economic, political and cultural paths in understanding the Arab case might result in a serious disconnection between the way modern Arab elite perceive the civil society and the way the civil society, actually, evolve in the Arab world (Al-Jabri-a , 2005).

If it is permissible or even natural that researchers disagree on the definition of civil society, there is a basic and intuitive reality that cannot be a subject of disagreement—a fact that the civil society is first an urban society. People in the city establish institutions so as to organize their social, economic and cultural lives. Therefore, these institutions are voluntary or semi-voluntary. People can choose to either engage with it or dissolve it. In sharp contrast with the Bedouin – village community, its institutions, such as sects, tribes, etc., are characterized by being natural ones where the individual would belong, integrate with and cannot retract from since his birth. Therefore, carrying out a research study in a country, with the absence or presence of its civil society institutions, has to start with looking into the status of “the city” in this country; does it dominate the society with its economy, institutions, traditions and heritage, or that the Bedouin – village community dominates with its institutions, traditions, values, behaviors and thoughts. With regard to Arab countries, clearly and without clarifications, villages and rural areas were and still are dominated with its institutions, behaviors, traditions and intellects. Moreover, it is dominated demographically Not only in mountains, plains, deserts, rural areas and villages but also in the cities themselves where the vast majority of its population consists of expatriates who came within the continuous waves of immigration to the city (Al-Jabri B, 2000).

The concept of civil society, in the context of the current reality of the Arab societies, raises the issue of what is known as “Al-Ahly” organizations which are formed organizations with traditional characteristics such as religious associations (Kawtharani,1988), which constitute the majority of the Al-Ahly organizations, cultural associations, which represent the peculiarities of local communities or minorities or private associations, which represent family endowments that their numbers have

increased since the end of the 90s such as Prince Abdul Qadir institutions, Sheikh Zayed institutions, etc. “Al-Ahly” community is a conservative community. Its regulations are usually inherited such as religion and local traditions. The civil society usually concerted sophisticated relations between different social groups, neglecting the interests of conventional groups such as tribal, sectarian, Familial interests which “Al-Ahly” society does not neglect. In addition, in contrary with the civil society, “Al-Ahly” society is related to religion in the Arabic context, whose organizations were one of the nation's (Ummah) which means to protect the nation’s civilized existence. Institutions like (Masced, al-Ifta, wakif... etc.) were considered part of “Al-Ahly” society. Such institutions were the guarantee of the whole society independence and the lack of state dominance in the Islamic and Arabic context (ElJanahany & AbdelFattah, 2003).

There is a strong debate among Arab researchers about the relationship between the civil society and “Al-Ahly” society and the organizations that make up each one of them and whichever is closer to the reality in the Arab world. Some defend the hypothesis of the congruence between the two concepts and, therefore, their significance in Arab societies, taking into consideration the traditional and modern organizations in defining the concept of civil Society being a set of indicators and elements interrelated in social, political economic and cultural relations, arising from interaction between societal components, which are based on inherited basis like kinship standards (the family, the clan or the tribe), origin, race and religious, or progressive foundations according to ability, skills, education, income and productivity standards. However, the most important indicator to consider those powers as civil society ingredients, according to definition, is the level of member awareness, clearances of goals, tools used and finally homogeneity, solidarity and taking peaceful means to resolve conflicts and contradictions. The process of building civil society is linked to the specificities of the political, social and cultural structure (Rashed, 2003).

Another team rejects that argument and tries to distinguish between the concepts of (civil society and Al-Ahly society) as they point to two different community development levels, without excluding the idea that the Al-Ahly organizations as part of

civil society in the current context of the Arab countries, civil society according to this characterization does not mean all members of the civilian community, but is limited only in the conscious and effective citizens. In addition, it is divided into two parts: first, the professional civil society, including its network and the organizations that do not deal with politics directly, and form the closest segment to the concept and functions of civil society. Secondly, political civil society, which is limited to political organization, aims to control the government or participate in it or to be in the opposition role (Rashed, 2003). According to the above, it can be seen that the civil society as the voluntary social organizations that the individual join which consists of NGOs, trade unions and political parties, and similar volunteer organizations. These are organizations that mediate the relationship between the official state formations versus familial and conventional formations, such a perception can be more clearly mimics the reality of civil society in the Arab countries.

According to the previous discussions, the question of whether civil society as a western concept is compatible with the Arabic context or not and what the best way to harmonize the concept with the Arabic reality has become more urgent (Khoury, 2007). Moreover, four different possible answers were identified to these questions. The first is a clear 'YES' based on the idea of a positive, universalist view of the desirability of civil society as part of the political project of building and strengthening democracy around the world. For example, the global civil society network CIVICUS aims to help advance regional, national and international initiatives to strengthen the capacity of civil society'. The second is a clear 'NO' based on the argument that a concept, which emerged at a distinctive moment in European history, has little meaning within such different cultural and political settings. The third is an adaptive view, which suggests that while the concept is potentially relevant to non-Western contexts it will take on local, different meanings and should not therefore be applied too rigidly. Fourth, there are those who imply that the 'relevance question' is probably the wrong question to ask, arguing that the idea of civil society—whether explicitly recognized as such or not—has long been implicated in Africa's colonial histories of both domination and resistance (Lewis, 2001).

From the four different positions, it is perhaps the third and fourth are most persuasive. The idea of civil society cannot be easily dismissed as having little meaning outside its Western origins (the exceptionalism argument), nor can it simply be exported by Western donors and used crudely to build good governance in developing or transitional country contexts (prescriptive universalism). By examining the local meanings being created around the concept of civil society in certain Arabic contexts, it is possible to see how it has become part of an increasingly universal negotiation between citizens, states and market around the world (the adaptive argument). And yet it is not helpful to regard civil society as a new term nor as necessarily having uniquely contemporary relevance, since the control of public space, and the exercise of the power to include or exclude sections of the population as citizens has long been a feature of colonized Arabic societies (the ‘wrong question’ argument).

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EGYPT

The term “civil society” remains quite blurry, as a concept in Egyptian public and scholarly discussion. The discussion that was widened after the revolution took place. Civil society definition, composition and roles became a debatable issue among the politicians, scholars and activists.

In several instances, civil society has been accustomed to refer to civic associations (NGOs) registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs (gameyat ahleya). After the breakout of the revolution, there has been a lot of reflection on the necessity to broaden the definition’s scope to include a wider array of types of civic association. However, there is still no agreement on who to incorporate or exclude beneath the banner of civil society. As an example, some analysts in Egypt conceive civil society as a collection of organizations that share and promote “progressive” values, like operating for an additional open society, promoting gender equity and larger civil and political freedom. These analysts would commonly exclude civil society movements that are fundamentalist or conservative in orientation from their definition. Different scholars outline civil society as an arena that is independent of the state and the market. They have a tendency to ascertain

CSOs as a force of resistance against government hegemony, and an area that is independent of the government. For people who espouse such a thought, CSOs that are characterized by a high level of state intervention would not be thought of to belong to the non-governmental arena. Below their definition, a major proportion of CSOs would be excluded on the premise of being considered “Gongos” (Government-organized-non-governmental organizations). Some definitions of civil society tend to concentrate on the podium being occupied by “non-political actors” and would consequently exclude political parties and specific groups from their definition. The insinuations from the government’s discourse on civil society replicate an official perception of civil society because the set of NGOs (gameyat ahleya) that, in conjunction with the government and also the non-public sector, work to handle a collection of social ills and alleviate economic condition (Center for Development Services, 2005).

However, whereas the idea of a partnership between CSOs and the government pervades the official discourse, it remains additional of rhetoric than a mirrored image of its real position. Despite the variety of definitions and their signifiers, it is safe to mention that almost all definitions of civil society do not take under consideration the complete scope and heterogeneity of the sector, a sector that is various in terms of organizational structure, mandate, membership composition and position in society and with the government.

The purpose of the literature review is to focus on questions posed and objectives set. The focus was on concept of civil society in Egypt. In the next chapters, an in-depth study of the Egyptian civil society and its role throughout the revolution is carried out. This study is going to play a vital role within the future discussions regarding the development of the Egyptian civil society to suit the Egyptian post-revolutionary context, beginning with the development of the concept itself and ending with the development of civil society internal mechanisms of action.

3. PREREVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT

In this section, the social and political context in Egypt before the 25 January Revolution will be discussed with respect to certain aspects such as poverty, inequality, corruption, political freedom, civil rights and standards of living. This will be briefly addressed for a better understanding of the causes of the revolution of 2011, which had a total absence of anticipation among the academics, political activists and even the opposition leaders. *“There was a complete blockage in every aspect of the public sphere. Nevertheless, the worst thing was the lack of dreams. There were no dreams for tomorrow. There was no hope back then. No One saw it coming. I myself didn't.”*² An academic professor who is considered to be one of the opposition leaders during Mubarak’s era stated this. He emphasizes the lack of anticipation of the revolution due to the political and social context of Egypt in the days prior to the events. He also describes the whole situation as a public sphere blockage.

3.1 THE SITUATION IN EGYPT PRIOR THE REVOLUTION

3.1.1 Socioeconomic Context Prior The Revolution

Starting from socioeconomic perspective is essential for an understanding of the whole prerevolutionary context. Aspects such as standards of living, health, poverty, wealth distribution, infrastructures, education and employment rate will be discussed in this section.

By 2010, the poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines reached its highest point of 25.2%. 1.38 million Egyptian live below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 per day³. Furthermore, Thirty-five slums around the country are inhabited by nearly 45% of the Egyptian people. In addition to 100000 homeless children recorded in Egypt according to a UN report.

² Interview 1, Former presidential Adviser, May 2015

³(World Bank, 2010)

The unfair distribution of wealth and the concentration of growth in the upper layers of the society of businessmen, government officials, politicians and the elites is also a noticeable issue. According to the World Bank's World Development Report of 2005, the Gini Co-index is 0.34, indicating a high level of socio-economic inequity. The lowest 20% of the population only share 8.6% of the country's income or consumption levels, while the highest 20% of the population share 34.6% of the country's income or consumption levels. Egypt has enjoyed a very prolonged growth phase since the late 1980s. Between 1996 and 2010, the country saw growth rates above 5 percent, including peaks of over 7% between 2006 and 2008⁴. Despite this overall growth, household welfare did not improve during the maturation period. This would imply that growth did not trickle down to the general population. Thus, while the public may have been reading about the overall growth in newspapers, they were not experiencing it first-hand. Reading and hearing about growth evidently increase expectations for a better future while experiencing none of the benefits of growth crushes these same expectations. The mismatch between GDP growth and household welfare has increased over time, which can be seen in Figure 2 below. The wedge between gross domestic product growth, on the one hand, and household financial gain growth, on the other, magnified sharply throughout the period that preceded the revolution. It is too apparent that this wedge will increase not solely between gross domestic product and household financial gain measured with the HIECS however additionally between gross domestic product and household consumption measured with national accounts. Instead of growth in inequality, the information will indicate a major gap between the anticipated rise in income (represented by gross domestic product growth) and their actual rise (represented by take-home income) – a gap that has been magnified over the last decade that preceded the revolution.

⁴(Central Bank of Egypt)

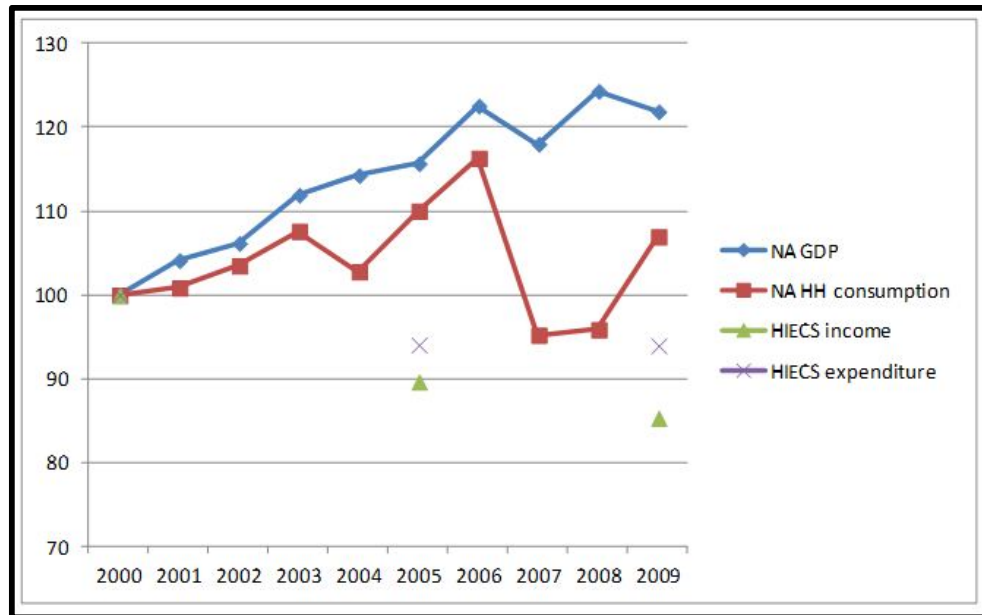


Figure 3.1.1 GDP, HH income and expenditure (per capita, real terms, 2000=100)⁵

Addition to poverty Egypt has done poorly when it came to the education and employment, with 26% total illiteracy rate in Egypt⁶ and 7% of kids out of school due to poverty. Education dropouts due to poverty are noticeable although there was no accurate estimate about it in the recent years. Unemployment rate reached 29% of the total who are able to work.

Health is another aspect of life standards where Egypt has failed. Eight million people are with diabetes where about three million of them are vulnerable to visual impairment as a termination of the disintegration of the retina resulted from medical neglect in public hospitals. According to reports of the Office of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 1.6 million people are infected with TB annually. After the revolution, many law cases accused the officials of Mubarak's era of corrupted deals of pesticides as food contamination is the primary cause for liver cancer that kills 400000 Egyptians annually. Approximately 17% of the population is infected with hepatitis while 20 million citizens are suffering from kidney failure. Egypt is counted among the top six countries

⁵(HIECS 200, CAPMAS National Accounts and IMF Economic Outlook database., 2005 and 2009)

⁶(Unicef, 2010)

worldwide in the number of people with acute anterior poliomyelitis. Likewise, 20 million Egyptian citizens are suffering from chronic depression.

Sectarianism is one aspect that could show how fragile the social fabric of Egypt had been before the revolution broke out. Discussing this issue and how the regime dealt with it back then leads to a better understanding of the prerevolutionary social context in Egypt.

The society was suffering for over a decade from the legacy of military dictatorship, which lasted for about sixty years. Sectarian incidents increased in the final years of Mubarak rule. From January 2008 to January 2010, 53 incidents of sectarian violence or tension occurred in 17 of Egypt's 29 provinces, averaging about two incidents a month⁷. These stresses were a consequence of the government's policies of creating a very polarized atmosphere to encourage the life of reverence within the Christian minority. That feeling resulting from the constant threats was pushing the Christian minority and the Egyptian Coptic Church to look at the Egyptian regime as a guardian, which reduces the effectiveness of the Christian minority in opposition out of fear of the unknown under that constant sensation of threat. Also, houses of worship such as mosques, and churches began to play a political role that was clearly evident in the two electoral sessions prior to the revolution⁸, where the two institutions supported the ruling National Democratic Party and worked for its election propaganda. These policies and sectarian tensions dramatically threatened the Egyptian social fabric that portended the occurrence of a sectarian conflict. The regime benefited from such incidents to install itself in power through playing with the Christian minority card to position itself in the international community as a defender of the Christian minority and the only guarantor of the deficiency of the eruption of sectarian discord in Egypt.

⁷ Governors are assigned by the President and are not elected.

⁸(Transparency International, 2009)

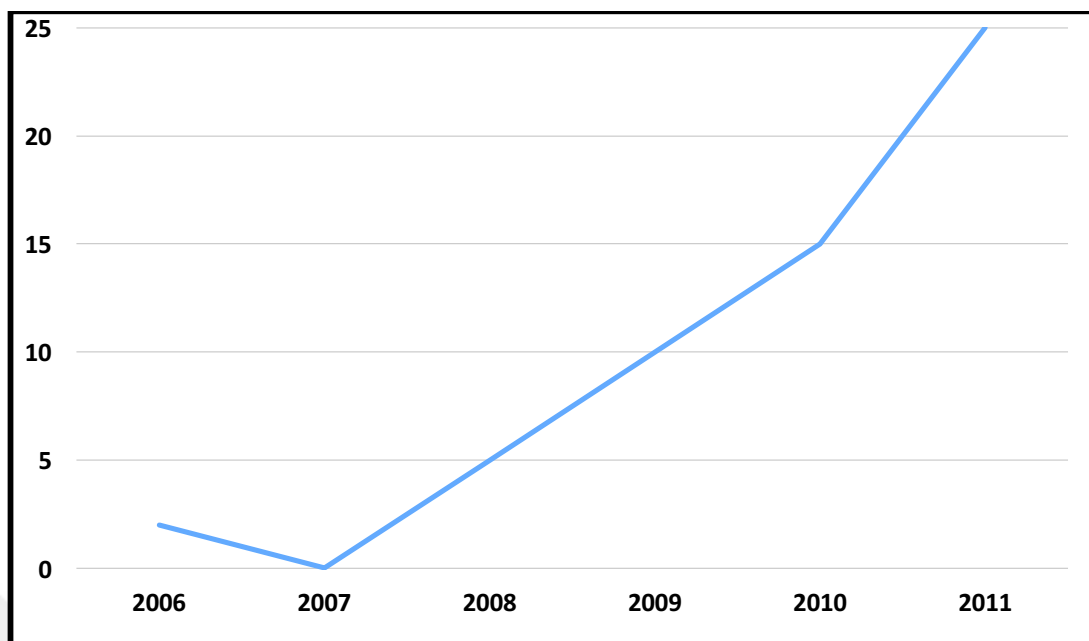


Figure 3.1.2 Number of Fatalities in Incidents of sectarian Violence, 2006-2011⁹

In every aspect listed above, statistics show that Egypt was suffering during Mubarak's last years in rule. “All of that was a result of 60 years under the military dictatorship. It was a process of extermination of the Egyptian people without bloodshed. It was genocide by the corrupted governments”¹⁰. This quote shows the mindset of the Egyptian people. This mindset and the increasing public anger against Mubarak’s corrupted regime were some of the main drivers that ignited the revolution. The suffering public easily joined the political activists once they saw the slightest hope of change advocated by the revolution’s slogans in the very early demonstration.

3.1.2 Political Context Prior The Revolution

After discussing the socioeconomic aspect, the political life prior to the revolution, which is very important in the understanding of the whole revolutionary context, will be thoroughly discussed. The last election that took place under the Mubarak's regime almost a month before the revolution¹¹ would be the perfect example to describe the political

⁹(Human rights first, 2011)

¹⁰Interview 2, Chairman of the British Egyptian Association, July 2015

¹¹Its first round was on November 28th 2010 and its last was on December 5th 2010

context before the revolution. *“The extreme election fraud happened in 2010 is summarizing the political situation before the revolution. We were facing a state not a governing party as any free election. The state leadership could not stand the little opposition that they experienced in the last electoral cycle. They took every precaution they could manage to prevent a free, democratic election by then. Their claim was so clear No more official opposition,”*¹² says a former Shura Council¹³ member, describing the election from the opposition point of view. Back then, the Egyptian government applied an abolition of judicial supervision of elections, the police prevented voters from voting and there were many accusations of fraud¹⁴. All this occurred while many political opposition powers refrained from taking part in the elections. The outcome was for the ruling National Democratic Party with 510 seats out of 518 seats—more than 98%—and the complete absence of official political opposition. The Egyptian government made the decision to eliminate the official opposition, which had been present the highest percentage in the history of the Egyptian parliament by more than 27% in the previous cycle of the legislative elections.

A related aspect of the political context is the basic political rights and freedom of expression, which will be discussed, in the following part. Article 47 of the Egyptian Constitution states that *“Freedom of opinion is guaranteed”*. However, there is a conflict between paper freedom and practical freedom. Egypt's Emergency Law—the nation has officially been in a state of emergency since Anwar Sadat's 1981 assassination—allows the government to detain citizens at no cost for thirty days. What is a lot of is that the proven fact that the interior Ministry can renew the detention repeatedly with very little or no rationalization. In 2009, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights reported 71 cases of impulsive detention, several of which were politically actuated.

The government's tactics were not limited to prosecution of individuals. Opposition political parties, opposition newspapers, and NGOs cannot operate in Egypt

¹² Interview 3, former Chairman of the National Security Council SC, May 2015

¹³ Was the upper house of the formerly bicameral parliament of Egypt

¹⁴(2010, p. 5)

without first getting a permit from the regime. These organizations recognized that they could merely continue in good standing if they treat Mubarak with kid gloves. Excessive criticism was resulting in a revoked license, or criminal charges for bureaucratic infractions. The government has used the emergency law to imprison a number of bloggers, but each instance has contributed to an embarrassing international outcry. When all else goes wrong, there is always old-school thuggery. Journalists and dissidents have accused the Mubarak regime of sending goons to abduction, assault, and sometimes abandon them in the heart of the desert (Aqeel, 2011).

Corruption is another aspect that is common in the historical prerevolutionary political context. According to Transparency International 2005, the corruption perceptions index score was 3.4 (10 being not corrupt, and 0 being very corrupt). Egypt fared as 69th out of 158 countries appraised, indicating relatively widespread corruption in the public sector. Corruption reached the highest level in Egypt in the last few years before the revolution in 2011. The main anti-corruption indexes and experts indicate widespread corruption in Egypt, with almost no improvement over the last five years. Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index for instance, has continuously ranked Egypt poorly in relation to other countries in the region, pointing to high levels of public sector corruption.

Experts agree that corruption in Egypt is pervasive and has taken many forms, ranging from bribery and facilitation payments in order to get things done in different sectors (e.g. police, customs, education), to kickbacks paid by companies to public functionaries in order to receive government tenders, trading in influence, embezzlement of public finances, money laundering, as well as political corruption and widespread nepotism. Citizens' assessment of the extent of corruption within the public sector varies. While nearly 20 percent think that corruption exists in government agencies and public initiatives in general, some pointed to specific government agencies, the highest being the ones in the health care sector (14%), police (13%) and educational institutions (12%).

While there are legal regulations governing bribery (including facilitation payments) offered to civil servants, they are not efficient in practice. Illegal acts by civil servants such as accepting gifts, hospitality and facilitation payments in return for

speeding up the operation of carrying out governmental action have become usual practice in the Egyptian public administration. The Egyptian Ministry of State for Administrative Development has specified several areas where corruption and bribery are commonly found, such as in public services (e.g. police, education), customs and taxes, public utilities, and procurement¹⁵. In this context, according to Egypt SME Survey Report, 47% of business owners who took part in the survey reported paying bribes to receive government tenders. 42% of the small- and medium-size enterprises taken part of the survey reported having paid bribes to obtain licenses in the establishment process, while 29% had paid bribes to government officials in different circumstances during the operation of the company¹⁶.

The Arab Spring has illuminated that political corruption in Egypt was rife under Mubarak. The most discussed issue has been the phenomenal quantity of money that the ex-leader and his cronies allegedly siphoned off from public funds. The highest estimate for the stolen assets, as covered by Reuters (2011), exceeds US \$70 billion, in addition to the excessive concentration of presidential powers. Findings show that the executive branch had co-opted the police that were subjected to political interference underneath Mubarak and used as an instrument to suppress political opponents and common citizens. The executive conjointly has had influence over the judiciary in political cases, contravening the constitution that guarantees judicial independence¹⁷. However, the decline in judicial independence during Mubarak's last years in office was not as sharp as the deterioration in other fields, such as government accountability, civil liberties as well as depravity.

However, when discussing political corruption in Egypt, related issues such as abuses of public funds and fiscal resources in election campaigns in the forms of vote buying and abuse of the state machinery cannot be left out. According to a Transparency International study, widespread buying of votes marked the legislative elections of 2005 and 2007 and the local elections in 2008. For illustration, a bribe for one vote in the 2005

¹⁵(Business anticorruption Portal - Egypt, no date)

¹⁶(CIPE & Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2009)

¹⁷(Business Anti-Corruption Portal, 2011)

People's Assembly elections was believed to range between EGP 500–1,000 (USD \$90–180). Moreover, the prevailing party in presidential, legislative and local elections has utilized public facilities such as public transportation. Candidates of the ruling party also utilized public properties during election campaigns¹⁸.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the close ties between powerful businessmen and the government combined with the lack of regulations on revolving doors and conflict of interest have all contributed to creating room for corruption. Reports about the existence of widespread nepotism, bribery and patronage deployed after the revolution. For representative, the reports show that the selection process of public officials is constrained largely by unclear rules, and the children of public sector employees are prioritized when it comes to work in the sector, regardless of their qualifications, confirming those claims that favoritism and informal relationships commonly affect the execution of judicial decisions (Aqeel, 2011).

That was a brief of the political context in Egypt prior to the revolution, regarding the democratic process and political rights. Such environment made the public lose their faith in the democratic process and lose any hope of possible political reform. Later, that became another drive for activists and people to look for an alternative for the democratic process to achieve such desired reform. Moreover, after the breakout of Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, the revolution stood out as the alternative reform mechanism.

This comprehensive perspective about the political and social context of Egypt before 2011 to give an insight about some of the main causes of the ignition of January 25 Revolution. These insights are to help forecast the future of the revolution in Egypt by widening the perspectives used in the current Egyptian reality analysis.

¹⁸(Transparency International, 2009)

3.2 CIVIL SOCIETY PRIOR THE REVOLUTION

In this section, the civil society before the revolution will be discussed. Aspects such as Egyptian civil society composition, distribution, functional rules and its critiques along with the state civil society relation pre revolution is going to be discussed in detail. In the following chapter, the role of civil society in forming the revolution and shaping its trajectories of success and failure will be further explained.

3.2.2 Analyses Of Egyptian Civil Society Prior The Revolution

In order to analyze the civil society in Egypt, the section starts with studying its composition and distribution among the Egyptian provinces then understanding the functional arena where the civil society used to operate before the revolution ending with the state- civil society relation to have a full awareness about the Egyptian civil society prior to the revolution.

Egypt has one of the strongest civil societies in the region in terms of the quantity of the civil society organizations. As shown in the next table, the country had an observed rate of growth in the number of civil society organizations in the last two decades¹⁹.

Period	1991-2	2001-2	2006-7	2011 ²⁰	2012 ²¹
Num.	13000	16000	21500	27000	37500

Table 3.2.1 Total numbers of civil society organizations in the last two decades

These numbers are for the organizations that are registered in the Ministry of Social Solidarity, while there is a significant amount that is not registered, or declared as civilian nonprofit companies not as NGO. The last two decades have seen growth not only in the number of societies and charitable organizations, but also in its growth rate, reaching nearly 1,600 Association registered annually in the last four years prior to the Revolution (Aqeel, 2011). This increase reached the maximum of over 10000 registered associations in the year 2012, one year after the revolution.

¹⁹Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

²⁰General Federation of associations and civil institutions.

²¹Ministry of Social Solidarity database.

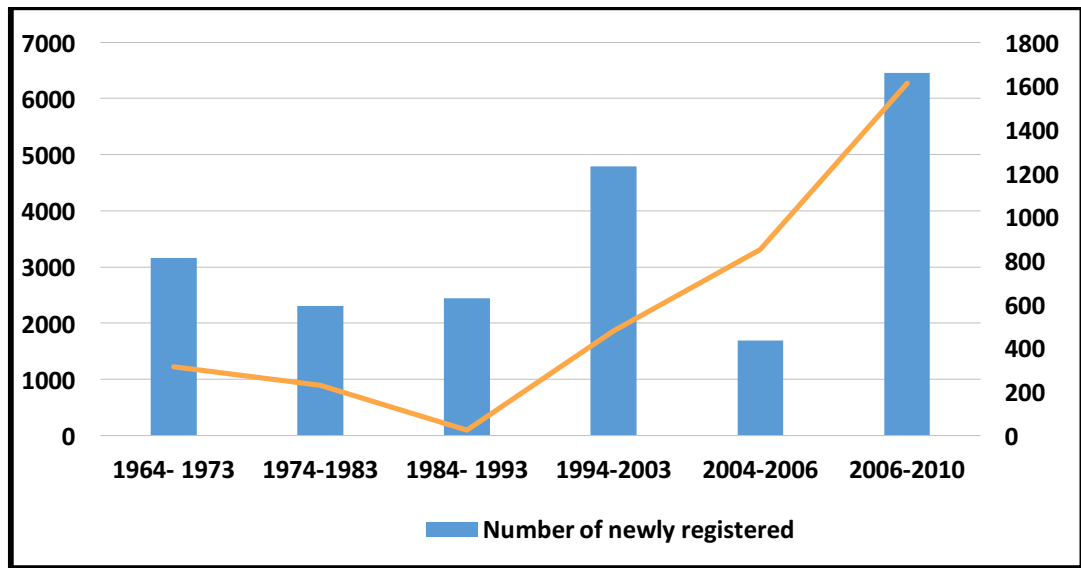


Figure 3.2.1 Civil society growth rate

The figure above shows the growth rate in the civil society in Egypt in the last five decades, showing the numbers of newly registered organizations in period from 1964 to 2010 and the annual average of new registered organizations.

The data revealed that the average annual number of associations that are registered has strongly increased in the last ten years. This evolution in civil society organizations did not stop on numerical increase only, but bypassed to increase the diversity of fields of work that these organizations operate.

These fields could be categorized mainly in the following five functional categories (Nasr, January 2005):

- Leisure and socializing activities such as social, local, youth clubs, Recreational associations and Sports associations.
- Social assistance and social services delivery such as mutual aid groups, community development organizations, welfare associations and services and development NGO's.
- Knowledge-oriented activities such as cultural associations, research promotion association and educational associations.
- Societal interest representation under two main subcategories of Membership-based interest groups such as business associations, professional associations

and trade unions or membership based sectorial movements such as women's movements, youth movements and cultural movements.

- Public interest advocacy such as issue-oriented organizations (human rights, women's rights, worker's rights), good governance and accountability (democratization, rule of law, transparency and integrity, election monitoring, civic and voter's education), environment protection, heritage protection, consumer protection, independent public fora and independent policy research institutions.

Associations under each category are more involved in issues of public governance reform and social and political change from the ones under the previous category of those five categories listed above. Also, moving from a category to the one followed by, means going from the more self-centered associations to the service oriented associations, to the membership interest centered associations to the organizations presumably focused on the public interest. Thus, in each Arab country, the relative weight and the level of autonomy and activity of each category of civil society organizations might determine to what extent civil society is starting to influence public sector and public governance reform in the country.

The latest data available in 2005 shows the magnitude of and the percentage of the civil society organizations in certain fields of total 16000 organizations by then.

s	Field of operation	Number of organizations	Percentage%
1	Educational and cultural	10	0.0625
2	Business and small owners	12	0.075
3	Professional associations	9	0.05625
4	Workers and trade unions	5	0.03125
5	Women's movement	11	0.06875
6	Youth movement	22	0.1375
7	Human rights	29	0.18125
8	Women rights	10	0.0625
9	democracy	3	0.01875
10	Elections & transparency	10	0.0625
11	Citizenship & civic education	2	0.0125
12	Rule of law	1	0.00625
13	environment	38	0.2375
14	Research institutions	22	0.1375
15	Public fora	2	0.0125
Sum.		186	1.1625

Table 3.2.2 Number of organizations in certain fields (Nasr, January 2005)

The numbers show that although the increase happened in the numbers of fields where civil society organizations operate, the number of organizations working in such fields is still significantly low. Whereas the remaining 98.8% or over 15000 organizations operate in only three fields: welfare & social services, recreational & socializing and societal interest representations. These numbers increased after the revolution according to the interviewed group of activist, but there is no available data supporting that yet.

Another aspect that helps with the understanding of the composition of the civil society in Egypt is its geographical distribution. The data of 2007 shows the concentration of these organizations in some regions than others²². That was one of the challenges faced the civil society after the revolution, which explained later.

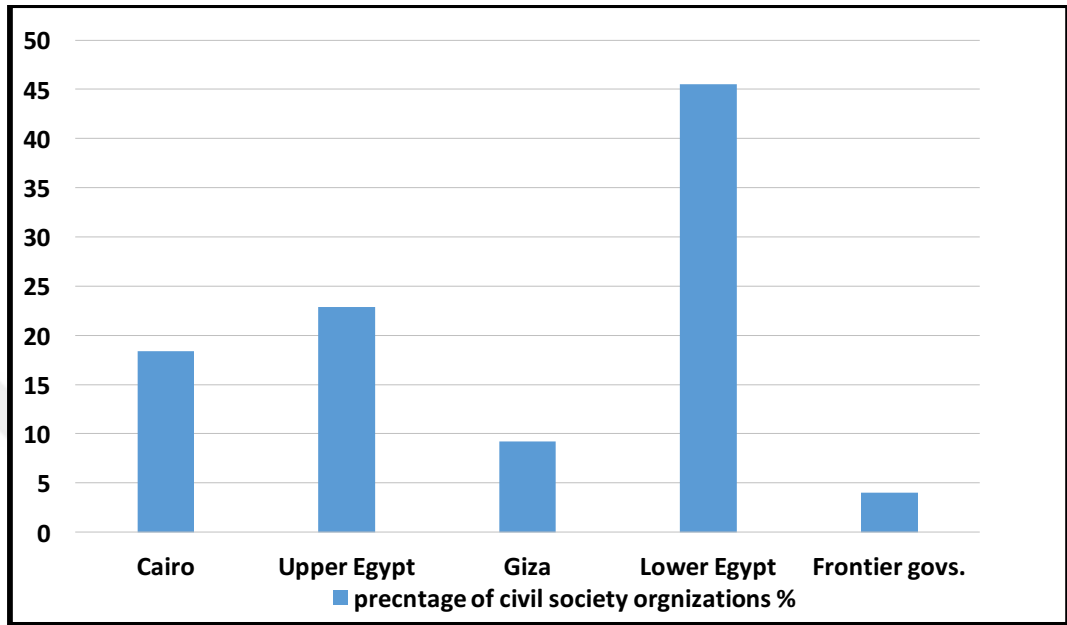


Figure 3.2.2 percentage of civil society organizations per region

The figure above shows about two local provinces(Cairo and Giza) which had about 30% of civil society organizations. Where the Lower Egypt of 11 local provinces had only 45% of civil society organizations. On the other hand, Upper Egypt of seven local provinces had only around 22% of civil society organizations. In addition, the frontier 6 local provinces had lower than 5% of the civil society organizations. That reflects the degree of centralization Egypt had in the distribution of the civil society organizations.

Egyptian civil society prior to the revolution has been subjected to many critiques from academics, as well as activists, starting from critiques to the conceptual understanding in the Arabic literature and ending with some fundamental operational critiques. This thesis will also discuss those critiques and focus on the state-civil society relations. *“Civil society is part of the Egyptian society. It may be the active part of the*

²²(UNDP, 2008)

society, but still it is inherited with the main characteristics of the society itself. Inherited with the same sociological diseases such as dependency, bureaucracy and randomness."²³ Says an interviewee, speaking about the civil society in Egypt before the revolution. She argues that the civil society had the same characteristics that the society itself has in general. She points to three of these primary features. First, 'dependency' where the whole society depends on the state to provide the main services with no willingness to participate in creating such services themselves. Besides, the civil society is relying on the state to provide the sufficient fund to their activities or at least to identify the volunteer work paths, which they cause to comply. Second, the 'inoperative bureaucracy', which is widespread in the Egyptian government, is also deployed as a culture of decision making within civil society organizations. Most projects and creative ideas are faced with difficulty in obtaining approval and support within civil society institutions as a result of that bureaucracy. The last characteristic the interviewee refers to is the 'randomness' where the lack of planning is very noticeable for her in most of the civil society organizations she worked for.

State-civil society relationships are crucial determinants of the capacity of CSOs to be self-organized and self-regulated, to provide public goods and services, to conduct efficient social action or to influence the public sphere and public policy. Egypt possesses one of the most vibrant research and study centers, as well as human rights and women's rights NGOs and charitable organizations in the region. It also required all of Egypt's 16,000 organizations to register with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Applications by some long-established human rights organizations were rejected. NGOs are not allowed to take part in political or syndicate activities, must serve the 'public interest' and have internal regulations to be formally registered in the ministry database (Nasr, January 2005). Section (11) of the Act (84) of the year 2002, the governing law for the work of NGOs banned any political activity practice on political parties only that are limited under the law of parties. And any union activity practiced on the trade unions are limited in accordance with the laws of the unions. In addition, the laws banned NGOs from making a profit.

²³ Interview 4, Founder of CSO, June 2015

The state-civil society relationship has been a subject of ongoing debate since the revolution “*Our relations with the state remained a hypersensitive issue before and after the revolution. The legalization process and state supervision of our activities with constant interference in our internal regulation and volunteer management policies has been always one of the most annoying challenges we had.*”²⁴ The interviewee refers to the issue of the state-civil society relationship from her experience point of view. She mentions that sometimes they had to cancel some of their planned activities for “security reasons” which was the label they use for any interference from the government in their work. Moreover, she emphasizes on the legal struggle she had to found her organization in the first place.

Freedom of organization and assembly has been one of the main constraints CSOs have where they have to apply to the state for permission to register and to have meetings which are often arbitrarily refused. Laws do not specify standards for granting or denying registration and meeting places. The activities of all NGOs, especially human rights organizations, can therefore be disrupted at any time by allegations that they engage in political activities. Many organizations are not officially registered. This is either due to very stringent laws, organizations refusing to be recorded under such laws, denial of registration to many of those who do decide to apply, or simply that some establishments (particularly those in rural regions or small establishments), do not try to register (Aqeel, 2011).

Funding for the CSOs is another limitation that they face. State funding is submitted to many constraints, one of which is intervening in the organization's activities. On the other hand, the foreign funding is a very sophisticated issue, too, due to the constraints donating agencies set along with the constant threat they will suffer from the government encasement of spying for foreign nations—an encasement that is quick to utilize whenever they take part in any activities that are inconsistent with the government's vision for the establishments of civil society (Center for Development Services, 2005).

²⁴ Interview 4, founder of CSO, June 2015

The number of civil society registered organizations that receive from the government was 3036 by 2012 with percentage of 8.5% of the total number of registered civil society organizations²⁵. Besides the very significant lower number of organizations, these organizations rely largely on state funding which often makes them vulnerable to the risk of arbitrary decisions to withdraw funds.

Egyptian CSOs are also doubtful about the aims of interventions of foreign governments in the region. Foreign aid from certain governments (such as the USA) is not welcomed by many organizations. Considering the historical context of the region, fear of foreign interference in 'sensitive' issues, hidden agendas and political manipulation have made foreign funding for civil society the object of much controversy. Many CSOs are not conversant with international funding procedures and how to report to donors and many do not have specialized staff dedicated to fundraising.

One of the early female bloggers in Egypt states, "*Civil society- state relationship in Egypt was a strange relationship in my opinion. On the one hand, most of the activists and civil society workers were from the opposition or at least intellectually the nearest to it by virtue of their proximity to the Egyptian society and its problems and suffering. On the other hand, their choice of activities that they practiced was very strange, they helped the regime to stay for a period of a few years by bringing the society relievers for its problems that softened the popular anger against the government and prolong the regime survival. The activists disrupted the revolution for a considerable period without knowing by doing so.*"²⁶ She argues that despite the awareness and good will of the civil society activists by that time, they did not actively participate in increasing the political awareness but they reduced that when they interfered giving temporary solutions for such problems and reducing the public anger. She argues that such charitable actions helped the regime to survive for a couple of years. One particular example she gives to clarify her viewpoint is that by the end of 2005, a village in Upper Egypt faced a serious problem with the clean water supply. People had to travel about three hours a day to get their supplies of clean

²⁵ Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

²⁶ Interview 5, One of the early Egyptian female bloggers, August 2015

water. The public anger reached its peak after they got to continued promises from the government to solve the problem without taking any actions. Then she participated along with other volunteers in RESALA charity organization in a project to establish a clean water pipeline to this village. Long discussions were held during planning the project about what other activities they may add in order to maximize the benefits of the project. Back then ideas such as organizing awareness sessions to teach people their civic rights and how they can claim their demands legally were denied to avoid any conflict with the government. After finishing the pipeline, the villagers were satisfied about that temporary solution provided by a civil society organization, not the state, and they did not take any further action. In the end, this temporary plastic pipeline became their permanent solution and the public anger declined severely. According to her, this incident and others were emphasizing that the state was not able to provide such essential services to the people, but such intensive interference from the civil society towards the charitable activities on behalf of the cultural and civic rights awareness activities helped the regime to survive for at least four years and postponed the breakout of a revolution for this period.

On the other hand, some CSOs, most notably human rights organizations, openly contested the government on its policies and have sought greater accountability on its role for human rights violations. For example, two human rights organizations, the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre and Al-Nadeem Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture organized a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Justice quarters in downtown Cairo, to demand an end to the use of torture and other human rights violations committed against citizens in detention. The demonstration, which involved more than 150 people, was organized in collaboration with various new formed activist groups, such as “Youth for Change” and the “Street is ours”. The campaigners demanded that police and detention officers responsible for human rights violations be held accountable by the government²⁷. Yet, most CSOs’ energies were not directed towards holding the state accountable, an impression that was confirmed by the regional stakeholder survey which showed that more than half the participants (59%) were of the view that CSO engages in

²⁷(Zero Tolerance for Torture, 2005)

activities to promote more transparent practices by the government were weak (Center for Development Services, 2005). Only a minority of CSOs was involved in activities aimed at holding the state accountable, and perhaps because of their small number, they have had limited success in this area.

This chapter was to give a brief insight about the circumstances surrounded the revolution ignition. In order to fully understand Egypt prior to the revolution and the Egyptian civil society as well, thus understanding the causes of the revolution breakout and later on understanding the role played by the civil society in shaping the revolution's success and failure trajectories as explained in the next chapter.



4. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION

January 25th was a unique revolution. It had certain features that distinguished it from its historical predecessors, features such as the lack of revolutionary vanguard and leadership in addition to the absence of a dominant ideology, as it also was not a result of a class conflict nor the struggle of students or the trade unions or even opposing an external occupational forces and it was not an uprising against dominant ideas or ideologies (Brinton, 1965). All these characteristics helped differentiate it from any other revolution. Moreover, the early 18 days of the revolution surprisingly showed some characteristics inherited in the society, which were hidden. That resulted in a lack in revolution's anticipation" *No One saw it coming. I myself didn't*". Academics and politicians around the globe admired these characteristics at the time of the revolution breakout. All this was a reason for the Egyptian revolution to be respected by the entire international community as being a shocking surprise to the Egyptian regime, according to former presidential adviser²⁸.

After reciting a brief chronology of the revolution events during its early breakout days, the chapter discusses the role played by the civil society in shaping the trajectories of revolution success by tracing the similarities between the civil society movement prior to the revolution and the revolutionary movement itself, in addition to some effective roles played by the civil society during and after the breakout of the revolution. Moreover, the chapter discusses the failures both civil society and revolution faced as a result of their influence on each other.

4.1 BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE REVOLUTION EVENTS

In December 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old man doused himself in paint and set himself on fire in front of a local municipal office in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. Bouazizi's act of desperation highlighted the public's boiling frustration over standards of living, police violence, rampant unemployment, and lack of human rights. Afterwards, protests

²⁸ Interview 1, Former presidential Adviser, May 2015

began in Sidi Bouzid. They were quickly spread across Tunisia, and then the entire region, starting what is now known as the 'Arab Spring'. In January 2011, and days after Ben Ali stepped down of authority in Tunisia, activists in Egypt called for an uprising in their own country, to protest against poverty, unemployment, government corruption and the rule of Hosni Mubarak, who had been in power for three decades. On January 25 2011, which was a national holiday to commemorate the police forces, Egyptians took to the streets in large numbers; calling it, the "Day of Rage" as the first day of Egypt's uprising. The demonstrations spread throughout Egypt and clashes between the protestors and the police forces took place causing three deaths on the first day of the revolution. However, none of which were in Cairo the Capital but in Suez and Saini. Three days later, another but yet more spreading protests took place countrywide and much bloodier clashes between the Police Forces and protestors happened. At night, thousands of anti-government protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square stood their ground despite troops firing into the air in a bid to disperse them. Moreover, the protesters declared the start of an open sit-in until the fulfilling of their demands. The sit-in continued for 15 days and demonstrations kept taking place all over Egypt. Clashes countrywide resulted in 1075 deaths²⁹, most of which happened on the 2nd of February at what is known as the 'Camel Battle'. On February 11 and after tens of thousands of people taking to the streets across Egypt in angry protests, Hosni Mubarak stepped down and handed over power to the SCAF³⁰.

4.2 CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION SUCCESS

For a better understanding of the role played by civil society in the revolution, it will be studied by looking at the change brought about by the civil society in the Egyptian public mindset, especially young people who were the main participants in the revolution. Such change defined the organizational structure of the revolutionary movement. Moreover, the civil society has greatly helped igniting the revolution and shaping it by changing the collective consciousness of the Egyptians during the years prior to the

²⁹(Wiki Thawra, 2011)

³⁰Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

revolution, either by creating a political and social context or by preparing civil society activists, who would fuel the revolution later on.

Egyptian civil society institutions served as a social capital reservoir and community incubator for youth. It brought enormous changes and additions to the young people mindset. This will be examined by tracking the similarities in the activities and outcomes of both, civil society and the revolutionary movement; the way they impacted each other and the roles carried out by civil society organizations during and after the revolution.

4.2.1 Civil Society As Social Capital Reservoir And Community Incubator

The uniqueness of Egypt's revolution lies in these qualities inherited in the Egyptian society due to the movement that has been taking place in civil society in recent years, particularly since 2004. These qualities such as unity spirit, anti-sectarianism culture, the high mobilization with bravery and the will to sacrifice, the high desire for change, the new innovative organizational structure and communication mechanisms and highly qualified participants all characterized the Egyptian revolution. These qualities acquired by civil society activists helped the success of the revolution, which manifested itself clearly on the early days of the revolution, especially in the Tahrir Square's sit-in. This section will discuss a wide range of these acquired qualities and track their roots within civil society activities and institutions.

4.2.1.1 Unity spirit

One of the most significant characteristics that were obvious for the revolution's observers is unity spirit among the rebels. Whatever ideological background or religious preference rebels had, they all shared the same objectives, goals and slogans in Tahrir Square.

One can easily refer to the roots of such spirit in the activities of civil society prior to the revolution. The National Association for Change is considered a clear example of such entities that established the concept of unity despite all political differences or even ideological differences. *“The National Association for Change was the beginning, and then we*

*learned how to be united behind clear and commonly agreed demands*³¹"; the interviewee refers to the National Association for change which was established in 2010. The association was built up of various different streams of thought, from the far right to the far left, with the participation of more than a dozen of political parties and movements and over 50 Egyptian public figures. In less than seven months from the date of issuance on March 2 2010, the association managed to compile about one million signatures to the statement "together we will change". This statement of ten demands was related to civic rights, especially the right of actively participating in the political life through nomination and election. The demands were as follows³²: Ending the state of emergency, empowering the Egyptian judiciary of the overall control of the entire electoral process, supervising the electoral process with the help of local civil society and international organizations, providing equal opportunities in the media for all candidates, especially in presidential elections, enabling Egyptians abroad to exercise their right to vote at Egyptian embassies and consulates, ensuring the right to stand in presidential elections without arbitrary restrictions in line with Egypt's obligations under the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and limiting the right to run for the presidency to two terms, elections by national number, the amendment of Article 76, Article 77 and Article 88 of the Egyptian Constitution.

These demands have been the foundation to the agreement people had on the revolution's simple demands of overthrowing the regime and immortal slogan of "*Bread, Freedom, And Social Equality*".

Another example for the role played by civil society movements in creating such spirit of unity is the case of Khaled Saeed. Khaled Saeed a 28-year old Egyptian man whose murder in front of his house by two policemen engendered protests, a Facebook page against torture and the subsequent Egyptian revolution that eventually overthrew former President Hosni Mubarak. These protests, vigils and demonstrations were the opportunity to combine a number of lawyers and political activists from various Egyptian

³¹ Interview 6, Egyptian Party Cofounder and its General Secretary, June 2015

³²(change, 2010)

political directions. *“For me it was the vigils and demonstrations following the death of Khaled Saeed the area which has been a witness on the dissolve of all my differences with others, and where I began to deal with other movements. This was the first time I was dealing with active members who are not members of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was the first time to get to know other people who also worked to oppose the government and face the oppression of the state,”*³³ said an activist and a Muslim brotherhood member about his experience in the demonstrations following Khaled Saeed's murder. For him and other activists, it was the first time activists from different ideologies worked together toward the same cause. The extreme brutality with which Khaled was killed and the social media spreading his pictures were the reasons that made his case a very popular one.

The murder of Khaled Saeed was not the first time that human rights organization plays a role in the unity of different political views. That ability can be traced to three main factors given human rights associations more capacity to take on this synthesis role. First, the issue of human rights is internationally recognized and is not subject to any kind of political or ideological negotiation. They are basic rights and are not subjected to the political process and the majority opinion. For example, if the Egyptian majority voted to allow the government's violation with regard to political prisoners, human rights does not give the right for the government to commit such violations and infringement on human rights. Second, human rights organizations is a common denominator where the liberal forces, socialist forces and the Islamic reformers all share the same interest for such an issue despite the motive behind it. Third, human rights is considered as a counter authority, while the non-democratic state insists on the exclusion of its opponents from the political process the civil society actors are keen to integrate everyone in this process as they consider the political participation as one of the major human rights (Aqeel, 2011).

This spirit of unity moved from the political and human rights field to the field of the revolution during the first eighteen days of the revolution. No movement or current raised demands or slogans other than what was agreed on. Moreover, when any signs of a rift were noticed or when some party or movement was trying to raise its own slogans and

³³Interview 7, Former University student's official of the Muslim Brotherhood, July 2015

demands, it was stopped by the protesters and prevented from doing so. This spirit was one of the factors in the success of the revolution at the beginning.

4.2.1.2 Anti sectarianism culture

Anti-sectarianism culture was too obvious in the Tahrir square's sit-in. This was clearly manifested in the famous picture when Christians were protecting the Muslims during their prayers and vice versa. That culture was prefunded deeply in the civil society's activities before the revolution and reflected later in the revolution as stated.

Some describes their participation in university student unions and charitable organizations as the main reason that they had this culture of anti-sectarianism and respect towards others' beliefs as they all work together in planning and practicing in these civil society activities. This illustrates the culture of citizenship without any religious segregation and acceptance experienced during these kinds of activities³⁴.

An explicit example of the great role played by the civil society against sectarianism was RESALA's role in dealing with some societal problems and sectarian tensions, which arose days after overthrowing Mubarak. When SOAL village witnessed a sectarian tension, as a result of the demolition of a church in the village, RESALA Association for Charity organized an aid convoy under "*Muslim and Christian ... One hand*" slogan, which is a slogan inspired with another famous call of the square "*one hand...*" which the rebellions used whenever a sign of tension started to arise between groups in the sit-in. The aid convoy distributed 300 bags of food among the poor however their religion was so as to spread the spirit of tolerance. It also organized charity exhibitions of clothes while the volunteers cleaned the streets and organized seminars on religious tolerance (Aqeel, 2011).

4.2.1.3 Aspiration for change

Another shift in the public mentality and political activists is the high political ambitions that started years before the revolution, a phenomenon Egyptian activists like to call the "Bigger dreams". This phenomenon was evident in the revolutionary demands

³⁴ Interview 8, Two times head of a university student union, August 2015

raised in the Tahrir sit-in, which easily can trace its roots in the activities of the civil society prior to the revolution.

For decades Mubarak made of himself a 'redline' which could not be crossed. Opposition had the opportunity to say almost anything about the government and the Ruling Party but Mubarak and his family. Even Muslim Brotherhood, the biggest opposition movement in Egypt, somehow reached a point of accepting him in power. That was until the early 2004 when Mr. Akef, the Former Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood contravened Mubarak for the first time in a press interview. Mr. Akef became the first one in his position to contravene Mubarak in the media, refusing the idea of nominating his son Gamal Mubarak for presidency—an idea that was widely spread at that time³⁵.

The same year Kefaya was founded. Kefaya is grassroots movement prior to the 2011 revolution, drew its support from all over Egypt's political spectrum. It was a platform for protest against Hosni Mubarak's presidency and the possibility he might seek to transfer power directly to his son Gamal. This was thought to be political corruption and stagnation. It was described as "the blurring of the lines between power and wealth; and the regime's cruelty, coercion and disregard for human rights." (Osman, 2010).

Such claims have been a foundation of the revolution's demand that was represented by "The people want to overthrow the regime" *acclaim*, redrawing the line of what is forbidden in political opposition and what is not, after years when the talk about the presence of Mubarak in power was totally forbidden. "*We dreamed big back then. However, it was not the first time to do so. We started years ago.*"³⁶ This quote describes this kind of ambition that brought into the public mind by the work of political and social movements within the contribution in the public sphere.

After discussing the unity spirit, anti-sectarianism culture and the higher ambition that civil society helped in forming in the public mentality, the high mobilization with the sacrifice spirit will be analyzed.

³⁵ Interview 3, former chairman of the National Security Council SC, May 2015

³⁶ Interview 9, Former Presidential Adviser, June 2015

4.2.1.4 High mobilization

The first 18 days of the revolution resulted in the death of 1075 people³⁷. The whole world witnessed the courage of these young Egyptian rebels who faced the police forces with bare hands. This willingness to die and sacrifice for a higher purpose was one of the amazing characteristics that manifested themselves in the revolution—again a characteristic that one can trace its route easily in civil society’s activities. *“I grew up in the Muslim Brotherhood, on the culture of sacrifice. We were raised on the stories of martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their faith. We lived with our parents and our masters, as they entered the prison of a period up to several years. They gave us a practical lesson in sacrifice for the greater cause, for the religion and the homeland,”*³⁸ says an MB member who fled the country after the military coup³⁹ that took place in Egypt in 2013. He points out that the sacrifices made by the Egyptian opposition in the face of state oppression was considered one of the reasons why the spirit of sacrifice among active Egyptian young people was spread, as under the Emergency Law prior to January Revolution, the government detained about 17,000 people. In addition, the number of political prisoners reached the highest estimate of 30,000 political prisoners since Mubarak came to power (Holder, 1994). Such culture spread among young people, especially the active ones whatever their ideology or political affiliation was— those who participated later in the revolution and were ready to pay the price of their freedom even if it was their own life.

4.2.1.5 Training

Leadership and managerial skills were another aspect to notice during the early days of the revolution, where a million-plus sit-in was organized and huge demonstrations countrywide were held.

Some explain the role civil society played in improving the managerial and leadership skills for the activist where skills such team building, event planning, risk

³⁷(Wiki Thawra, 2011)

³⁸ Interview 10, Muslim Brotherhood member, August 2015

³⁹(Ahram AFP, 2013)

management and leadership were taught through participation in university student unions, civil society organizations and other social activities. The activists later implemented these skills during their participation in the revolution⁴⁰.

Any social researcher who studies the Egyptian revolution is easily able to note that young people had the unique ability to assemble themselves and manage the field effectively. The Professor of Organizational Behavior states that he was not surprised by the presence of these organizational and management capacity among the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood, by virtue of being a well-established organization since decades. However, he was amazed by the geniality of the organizational capacity that he noticed in the Ultras youth⁴¹. They were able to organize themselves and had discipline that was impossible not to notice. The professor emphasized the role he witnessed played by the Ultras in the clashes that happened between the protesters and the police forces in the Tahrir Square⁴², where hundreds of Ultras came to downtown on November 19th2011, the day Egyptian riot police entered Tahrir to forcibly disperse a sit-in by the relatives of the victims killed during the country's January uprising. The Ultras have stood at the forefront of clashes with security forces. In many cases, they were armed with rocks, Molotov cocktails and firecrackers (Bilal, 2011). The professor was especially surprised by their discipline and the survival mechanisms they showed back then in the sit-in. The qualities that the Ultras gained from experiences with regard to confronting the police forces during the clashes that occurred in the stadiums since their first presence in Egypt in 2007 were also noticeable in Tahrir Square.

One of the political activists, who later became General Secretary for one of Egypt's biggest parties and an administrator of the Committee on political communication in the campaign of a presidential candidate, says that it was his managerial and leadership experience gained through his public work during the period prior to the revolution, whether through his previous membership of the Muslim Brotherhood before his resignation or through his participation in many of the institutions of civil society, that was

⁴⁰ Interview 8, Two times head of a university student union, August 2015

⁴¹ Ultras: football fan renowned for ultra-fanatical support.

⁴² Interview 1, Former presidential Adviser, May 2015

one of the main reasons that qualified him to play larger roles later in the outbreak of the revolution⁴³.

These examples prove the role played by civil society in the preparation of cadres, whether field or political cadres giving them administrative and leadership skills that helped later in the success of the revolution and the establishment of a set of civil society organizations or political parties that emerged after the revolution.

4.2.1.6 Innovative organizational structure

Another aspect to study is the organizational structure of the revolution and how the civil society and its movement prior to the revolution affected it. A new social composition started to form in the civil society few years prior to the revolution. This form is the activist's networks that started to grow since the blogging era, which goes back roughly to 2003. "*We created our own world. We all knew each other –virtually- that was up till the revolution, we all met at the square.*"⁴⁴ Says one of the early female bloggers in Egypt describing the emerging activist networks that later became very active during the revolution.

Before 2005, there were only a handful of bloggers in Egypt and about 40 total blogs. By 2005, the Egyptian blogosphere had burgeoned into several hundred blogs, with experts estimating the number at about 400. By 2006, this number had increased nearly threefold (Radsch, 2008). *Of course, these virtual networks grew intensively after the social media rising and Facebook entering Egypt.*

This social media created a safe environment to build networks of highly intellectual youth who were very active or, at least, interested in the public sphere. However, these networks were not just virtual. Two-time Head of the Faculty Student Union in Alexandria University describes these networks of activists saying that for him, it was too obvious, since he joined MOIC, he started to notice the same faces he sees everywhere. He has always said to his friends that few people run all of these activities, models and initiatives in Alexandria. Later on, he found that they all know one another

⁴³ Interview 6, Egyptian Party cofounder and its General Secretary, June 2015

⁴⁴ Interview 5, One of the early Egyptian female bloggers, August 2015

across the country. Almost a couple of hundreds, two or five networks were responsible for all this social mobilization a couple of years before the revolution. From his own perspective, the elimination of the revolution before it even started was very possible if the regime only targeted these networks of few, but highly active, young people⁴⁵.

MOIC, a student model which tries to imitate the work of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, is one of many non-formal education initiatives established a couple of years before the revolution. These models and other initiatives were established and run by these networks of civil society pioneers and young activists.

The Organizational Behavior professor describes the early days of the revolution when the demonstration flooded the streets of Egypt. The demonstrations were pre-planned virtually through social media and organized by some groups on field. The professor stated that it was hard on the state to face the revolution because of its uniqueness. From an organizational point of view, the state was used to face hierarchical entities, movements and organizations in opposition. The state gained experience through years in the security dealing with such an organizational form. These entities have clear and solid leadership, which means that it is easy to negotiate with or suppress them by targeting their leadership. Of course, no one can deny the role of such entities in the success of the revolution, especially due to its characteristics of the speed huddling, as well as the ease of organizing. Nevertheless, during the revolution, the state found itself facing a new kind of non-hierarchical entities and movements. Networks and groups of activists and young people were coming out in massive demonstrations on a very high degree of organizational discipline and coordination but without a centralized leadership. It was clear that these networks have emerged since while and gained experience in coordinating the work between them. This new form of arrangements caused paralysis of the state and its repressive agencies that did not get used to dealing with such a pattern.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Interview 8, Two-time Head of University Student Union, August 2015

⁴⁶ Interview 1, Former presidential Adviser, May 2015

4.2.1.7 International sense

Another aspect of study is the international sense that was present in the civil society and later on in the revolution. An activist speaks about the activities with international character elaborating his experience in organizing many events and activities among the university students, sometimes for the purpose of providing student services, and sometimes in order to disseminate awareness of some of the local issues and political rights, and sometimes activities of advocacy and awareness of international issues. For him, it was noticeable that non-politicized students' response increases significantly when they address international issues, like it happened in the campaigns associated with the Palestinian uprising in 2000, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the aggression on Gaza in the years 2006, 2008 and 2012.⁴⁷ He also refers to the activities carried out by student groups at universities in cooperation with other relief organizations as the union of Arab doctors and the Committee of relief in the doctors Syndicate in conjunction with the international humanitarian crises. Students were then organizing demonstrations at the university to support these issues or to put pressure on the Egyptian government and push it to play a more positive role in such cases. Furthermore, they assembled in-kind donations to the conduct of convoys of humanitarian and medical aid to those affected. He specifically mentions when students made donations to assemble medicines and baby formula during the campaign of Iraqi invasion and to buy artificial limbs for victims of the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

These and other activities strengthened the activists' attention to global issues. In addition, of course, when the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia took place, this was a cause for concern momentum that accompanied Tunisia Revolution in Egypt. Its impact momentum appeared amid the public when citizens tried to imitate Bouazizi and burnt themselves. A week before the beginning of events just four days after the stepping down of Ben Ali in the Tuesday, January 18, 2011, four Egyptian citizens set fire to themselves to protest separately on the living, economic and political conditions⁴⁸. The momentum in

⁴⁷ Interview 7, Former University student's official of the Muslim Brotherhood, July 2015

⁴⁸(Aljazeera, 2011)

the active youth circles made them enthusiastic to repeat the Tunisian experience in Egypt, to the point that can be observed when you hear the same slogans of the Tunisian revolution repeated in Tahrir Square.

These aspects such as unity spirit, anti-sectarianism culture, the high mobilization with bravery, the willingness to sacrifice, the high desire for change, the new innovative organizational structure and communication mechanisms and highly qualified participants were all studied to show how profoundly civil society movement in the last years' prior to the revolution helped in shaping the public mentality, hence shaping the revolution and its trajectories of success.

4.2.2 Effective Roles During The Revolution

This section looks at the role played by the civil society during the early beginning of the revolution, starting from the first 18 days until the coup that took place in June 2013. In addition, it also discusses how the civil society activities contributed in the success of the revolution. Roles such as civil right campaigns, election observation, occasional political campaigns, news reporting, urgent societal roles, social entrepreneurship, non-formal education and cultural activities will also be discussed.

4.2.2.1 Public awareness

The Egyptian civil society organizations played an important role in education and public awareness of civic rights. NGOs have been active in this field, particular in human rights and civil society organizations. In general, it can be summarized that the most important areas of activity of civic organizations in this regard are as follows (Aqeel, 2011):

1. Awareness of the legal and constitutional rights: registered organizations as human rights organizations are responsible for the activity that aims to educate a wide range of segments. Some of the most important rights introduced by civil society organizations during the last ten years are workers' rights, the rights of people with disabilities, children's rights and women's rights.
2. Training on the international instruments for the protection of human rights, which focuses primarily on civil activists, youth volunteer, university students and young lawyers.

3. Training on election observation skills: The circle of these exercises widened after it obtained a court order in favor of this organizations to monitor the elections in 2005. There are a large number of organizations which were active in such as the provision of such exercises, which helped to empower young people to stand on violations related to the electoral process in 2005, which was a strong impetus to the revolution

Egypt witnessed its first free legislative elections after the revolution of January 25, 2011, and these elections were of great importance because they brought legislature that put Egypt's new constitution. In 2012, a free presidential election took place and brought Dr. Mohamed Morsi as the first freely elected president in Egypt's history⁴⁹.

Hence, Egyptian human rights organizations have been keen to intensify their efforts in raising awareness of the new electoral system, which took place based on the election – a mixed system between the closed proportional list and individuals. In addition, many of these organizations were keen to organize their efforts to parliamentary and presidential election monitoring to ensure fairness and guarantee broader citizens participation.

According to data of the National Council for Human Rights, the number of civil society organizations that have applied for permits to monitor the parliamentary elections has reached 128 civilian organizations; this participation from the civil society organizations played a great role in supporting the democratic life in Egypt.

4.2.2.2 Public campaigns

Public campaigns by the civil society activists are another role to be addressed. Where occasionally civil society activists were organizing campaigns for targeting a certain issue, usually they did not establish an organization for this kind of activities because most of these issues are seasonal lasting only for a period such as military trials for civilians.

Since it took over patrolling the streets from the police on January 28, 2011, Egypt's military has arrested almost 12,000 civilians and brought them before military

⁴⁹(The Washington post, 2012)

tribunals. This is more than the total number of civilians who faced military trials during the 30-year rule of Hosni Mubarak⁵⁰. As a response for that group of activists, lawyers and representatives of human rights, organizations and journalists formed “NO to military trials for civilians” after the break-up of the Tahrir Square sit-in by force on March 9, 2011. This is a group that states on their official website⁵¹ that they strongly condemn the violations the army commits towards civilians under the pretense of protecting the country from thugs. They demand an end to all military trials of civilians, and granting those who had been charged/sentenced a fair trial in front of their regular civilian court. This group organized media campaigns. It provided legal support to defendants, created a hotline to file a complaint about any situation in which civilians exposing to military trials and, in some cases, they organized demonstrations and public awareness campaigns. They also provided, in cooperation with the Hisham Mubarak Law Center, a working paper containing proposals to end the file of military trials for civilians in Egypt and provided it to the ruling junta at the time. Generally, the group aims to end once and for all such abusive practices such as the military trials for civilians in Egypt.

These occasional activities were not only taking a humanitarian line and focusing on civil rights like in the example of 'NO military trials' but sometimes it also played a political role. Another example is discussed next.

The second round of the presidential elections of 2012 elections has become sandwiched between two candidates: Dr. Mohamed Morsi and Lieutenant General Ahmed Shafiq after they got the most votes out of 13 candidates⁵². A group of civil society activists located in Alexandria established a campaign under the name “*NO SHAFIQ*”. The campaign consisted of social media campaign, vigils, demonstrations, election propaganda, and awareness convoys which went to more than five Egyptian governorates in order to call for non-election of the candidate Lieutenant General Ahmed Shafiq and marketed him as a candidate of the counter-revolution and the military. One of the participant on this campaign talks about that describing the situation back then and the

⁵⁰(Human Rights Watch, 2011)

⁵¹(NO to military trials for civilians, 2011)

⁵²(Egyptian presidential election , 2012)

significance of such campaign where it was not easy for them to stand idly by then. He argues that their options were clear, either choose a candidate representing the revolution, even if he was not their first choice or the best representative of the Revolution, or choose the other candidate who stood clearly for the counter revolution whom was chosen by Hosni Mubarak to be the Prime Minister of Egypt to stand next to him in his last days after the outbreak of the revolution. They had to move quickly and decisively. It was the civic duty of everyone to defeat Shafiq and make the revolution triumphs.⁵³

This campaign has been reproduced in several Egyptian provinces and under other names. The most known is the virtual campaign "*Squeeze lemon*" which called for the election of Dr. Mohamed Morsi, in spite of all the objections which was directed by the organizers of these campaigns themselves to Dr. Mohamed Morsi. The organizers of these seasonal campaigns saw these kinds of campaigns as one of the reasons that encouraged people, especially young liberals to vote for the Islamist candidate Mohamed Morsi and the resolution of the presidential race in his favor to be the first freely elected Egyptian president.

4.2.2.3 New media utilization

Another important role played by the civil society utilizing the media in favor of revolution is a noticeable issue, which will be discussed. While in the Arab Spring, demonstrators and young activists used social media networks to spread information quickly unprecedented, citizens and reporters used these tools to transmit the events moment by moment, making a radical shift in the traditional press. Civil society activists did not limit their use of social media on mobilization, advocacy and lobbying for human rights issues they are working on, but they expanded the use of it to another level (Aqeel, 2011):

- Electronic broadcasts on the Internet: There were at least four radio stations owned by civil rights organizations, “Rights” Radio, “Our Freedom” Radio, “Ma'at” Radio and Radio “Mahrousa”.

⁵³ Interview 8, Two-time Head of a university student union, August 2015

- Information networks on human rights issues: The most active initiatives in this field are the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, Civilian network, Arab Foundation to support civil society and WIKI THAWRA. WIKI THAWRA is the statistical database of Egyptian Revolution. It is an updated database of the numbers of casualties, wounded political prisoners and those who forcibly disappeared during the events of the Revolution since January 2011 up until now.
- Election monitoring operations. Among the most important initiatives in this regard is the use of geographic information systems GIS to monitor the elections (The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development), the use of SMS in election monitoring (National Council for Human Rights) and the use of personal observers who update and publish their reports through the global media and social media (We Are Watching You and the Eyes of Egypt, April 6).

One of the early female bloggers in Egypt explains the role played by some activists who used YouTube as a medium of spreading their ideas and the revolution values stating that. Later YouTube gave the activists the opportunity to express themselves and their ideas better and spread the revolution's values. Bassam Youssef was one of the most famous pioneer Youtubers of course as he started at the early beginning of the revolution, when rebels were desperate to find someone to express them. During the course of upcoming years, the number of Youtubers increased and they became able to reach higher numbers and truly help in the formation of the Egyptian citizen awareness. There was significant diversity of content between comedian Youtubers such as Joe Tube, heavy knowledge content like Alshakhanahand the simple and colloquial content Atwakanana for example. All this also helped spread the revolution values among all segments of Egyptian society.⁵⁴

The blogger mentioned some of the most famous youtubers in Egypt Such as Bassem Yousef who is the most popular youtuber in Egypt with a channel over 2 million subscribers and 200 million views. In 2013, Youssef was named one of the "100 most

⁵⁴ Interview 5, One of the early Egyptian female bloggers, August 2015

influential people in the world" by TIME magazine⁵⁵. Another one she mentioned is Youssef the owner of Joe Tube channel, the third most famous YouTube channel in Egypt with 1.6 million subscribers and 150 million views⁵⁶. They both share the same category of cynical political criticism. Some YouTube channels used animation in political and societal criticism like Egyptoon. In addition, others used social media as a carrier of reporting the news such as RASD, which is Egypt's largest news network now with over 5 million followers on Facebook. This shows the role played by the media especially the new media utilized by the activists along with civil society organizations to serve the revolution's goals.

4.2.2.3 Urgent societal roles

Civil society organizations also played a role in facing some urgent societal roles all across the country during and after the revolution. Some provided financial aid and in-kind donation to those affected by the revolutionary events, especially the families who lost their breadwinner. Others organized street cleaning and garbage collection campaigns, blood donation campaigns or initiatives to regulate traffic in the streets and squares and maintain security through local security committees.

One of the social activists talks about his initiative that he founded in the very first days of revolution where every institution stopped working. There were no police forces on the street to fight criminals whom the regime released to terrify the people. There were no police forces to regulate the traffic. It was a complete chaos. That was when he initiated *Mantikaty* initiative. The participant organized themselves into teams for planning, case studies, results analysis, public opinion measure, funding and field work such as lighting, paving, lifting garbage, traffic regulating and securing the neighborhood. *"The regime message was too clear, either chaos or me. And our answer had to be clear too; neither you nor chaos."*⁵⁷ He refers to the events associated with the revolution of the absence of security and some basic services, such as raising waste and street lighting. He also referred

⁵⁵(TIME, 2013)

⁵⁶(YouTube Top 100 Most Subscribed Egypt Channels List , 2015)

⁵⁷ Interview 11, Social activist, June 2015

to the terror spread among the people after an exodus of a group of Egyptian prisons led to the withdrawal of nearly 23,000 prisoners⁵⁸.

He and his fellows initiated one of many initiatives at this time, which aimed to replace the collapsed state by doing a set of basic services, such as security provision, regulation of traffic and waste management—a range of services, which they claim if they did not provide would cause anger of the masses against the revolution and rebels and would eventually lead to the loss of the public support which caused the success of the revolution in the first place.

A Muslim Brotherhood member talks about the role she played in a committee established by the brotherhood for the sake of taking care of the families affected by the revolutionary events. For some, it was just the feeling of belonging that they need. In addition, for others, it was a financial aid. Others were the help to the success of their small businesses, which guarantee them a stable income. She states, “*That was the least thing to do for them... Those people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of our freedom.*”⁵⁹ She shows the motive behind working in this committee to help the effected people during the course of the revolution’s event.

Some organizations were concerned with the issue of martyrs and the injured such as Orman Charity Association, which launched an extensive campaign targeting the help of families of martyrs and the injured. The campaign was based on two basic axes, the first which was the urgent treatment of the victims of the revolution free of charge, especially those with serious eye injuries. The second axis was the care of the families of martyrs by offering 20 *Umrah* trips to the mothers of the martyrs and providing in-kind assistance through the distribution of 300 tons of meat, 20 thousand blankets and 20 tons of food to the affected people (Aqeel, 2011).

4.2.2.4 Non formal education

Non-formal education and cultural activities became one of the most active fields of the civil society after the revolution. “*The revolution showed us that one of the society*

⁵⁸ (Prison Legal News, 2011)

⁵⁹ Interview 10, Muslim Brotherhood member, August 2015

biggest problems is the spread of ignorance and lack of general culture even among the educated.”⁶⁰ says the founder of a cultural civil society organization. She founded her organization after the revolution. This foundation focused on increasing the public awareness to cultural issues such as political rights, historical heritage, along with the deployment of continuous learning culture, and teaching a range of skills such thinking skills, criticism skills and increasing the artistic taste. It also attempted to achieve its goals by organizing public lectures, specialized training courses, training camps and artistic exhibitions.

Another form of cultural activities is the initiatives and groups which were created after the revolution without a clear form of regulatory or being officially registered with the state. 'Imprint Team' is one of these groups that were formed after the revolution, focusing on the historical heritage issue. The team started its activities such as online blogging, online events, on field events, writing articles, specialized studies in subjects shrouded in mystery or counterfeiting, printing novels and historical patrols and communicating with academics to provide in-depth academic studies of the historical subjects. The founder of this team states, “*Imprint team was my personal lifetime dream. You cannot build the future of nation that doesn't know its past.*”⁶¹ That shows the importance activists gave to the cultural issues in shaping the collective conscious.

4.2.2.5 Social entrepreneurships

Another form of the civil society contribution after the outbreak of the revolution is the social enterprises, where civil society activists started some business enterprises that have a social impact besides its profitability. *Ma3mal* was one of these projects, which is a Co-working space that provides a working environment for young entrepreneurs and the freelancers. The founder of *Ma3mal* speaks about the reason they chose this business model to start after the revolution *where they wanted to create a space to bring people together, a space similar to Tahrir square but on a business level that allowed the creation of other enterprises.*⁶²

⁶⁰ Interview 4, Founder of CSO, June 2015

⁶¹ Interview 11, Social activist, June 2015

⁶² Interview 12, Social Entrepreneur, August 2015

Madarat for publication and distribution is also one of these projects, which was founded after the revolution, for the purpose of serving the revolution and its principles in the first place, even before profit. *Madarat* works as a publishing house, which publishes, translates books and provides them to consumers at an affordable price in order to deploy a set of values, especially the revolutionary values.

4.2.2.6 Revolutionary movements

Some other form of the participation of civil society members and activities in the revolutionary course is the revolutionary movements, which mainly focus in participating in what they called a revolutionary course, especially activities that prevent any kind of violence between the society members on the base of political disagreements. *Ahrar* Movement was one of those movements whose members were known of taking these anti violence initiatives to protect stadiums of riots and convince fans of the importance of maintaining security after the revolution and before the escalation of events that took place in stadiums. One of *Ahrar* movement founders along with his wide range of civil participation says, “*I helped in founding one of the biggest parties in Egypt and became its general secretary. However, I still see my participation in Ahrar movement as my best choice as it was the appropriate entity in a timely manner. That was the kind of work needed by then.*”⁶³ he emphasizes the importance of such contributions to the success of revolution.

The last section was a try to elaborate the role played by the civil society in forming the revolution and igniting it in the first place and later on shaping its trajectories of success.

⁶³ Interview 6, Egyptian Party cofounder and its General Secretary, June 2015

4.3 CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION FAILURES

In 2013 and after almost three years of the revolution breakout and the overthrow of Mubarak, a coup, led by the defense minister by then and the current President Abdel Fattah ElSisi took place, taking over the power from Egypt's first elected president, President Mohamed Morsi. The coup that resulted in the authoritarian survival in Egypt was built on a transition rule of systematic oppression and restriction of fundamental freedoms (ARAS, 2014). This coup considered a declaration to the failure of the revolution. The next section will discuss the share of civil society in causing such failure, addressing the political polarization and lack of planning. Moreover, the chapter addresses the civil society funding and how it was affected by the revolution failure.

4.3.1 Political Polarization

Unity spirit among the rebels was one of the most important factors in the success of revolution. Such a spirit did not last long enough and ideological polarization started to raise and dominate the political and public sphere.

One of the former presidential advisers sees that the main mistake that happened in the course of the revolution was converting the revolutionary path into a competitive reformist path. The path started only one month after the overthrow of Mubarak in March 2011⁶⁴ in the referendum on the constitutional amendments. Although the results were somehow high with 77% for the constitutional amendments, he and others see that it was the beginning of the fragmentation of the revolutionary class, which started to widen later along the democratic path of two referendums and three elections. He states that the democratic process is a competitive process by definition. Competition among the rebels to take over power made it too easy for the counter-revolution to manipulate the aspirations of everyone and led to the extermination of unity spirit that defined the revolution in the first place.⁶⁵

The ideological polarization started to rise during the democratic course. Campaigns were a concrete proof on this polarization. Former member of the National

⁶⁴<https://referendum2011.elections.eg/>

⁶⁵ Interview 1, Former presidential Adviser, May 2015

Security Council SC sees that during the campaigns, an ideological tone started to rise and struggle over state identity between the Islamists and secularists took place even within the rebellions the struggle that could not be sensed during the early days of the revolution. According to him, that was one of the greatest reasons for the latest failure of the revolution.⁶⁶

Civil society was part of this polarization. Anti-secular and anti-Islamism groups started to form. Those kinds of movements started to lead social media campaigns, organize demonstrations or even involve in violent actions like what happened in events of the Alaitthadia Palace, which resulted in 13 casualties or the events of Mohamed Morsi deposal and the assault on the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood that resulted in 64 casualties⁶⁷. NGOs engaged in political work and used its activities in the various election campaigns. *“That was disrespectful of every one to use the need of poor to gain success in the elections.”*⁶⁸ Says the founder of one of countrywide spreading civil society organization talking about some practices witnessed during the elections. Such polarization was one of the major reasons for the revolution’s failure.

4.3.2 Lack Of Planning

Planning for the civil society activates and its contribution to the sustainable development has always been one of the major critiques to the civil society in Egypt⁶⁹. This critique proved its importance after the revolution. The data collected from the interviews shows this issue as one of the major reasons of the weak participation of civil society in the revolutionary path after the overthrow of Mubarak.

The rush of civil society and revolutionary activists towards the political arena was a noticeable phenomenon after the overthrow of Mubarak. The General Secretary of one of Egypt’s biggest party sees that a remarkable number of activists shifted their interest towards politics after the revolution. He sees that such shifts are life proof of the lack of

⁶⁶ Interview 3, former Chairman of the National Security Council SC, May 2015

⁶⁷ (Wiki Thawra, 2011)

⁶⁸ Interview 13, CSO Founder, May 2015

⁶⁹ (An Overview of Civil Society in Egypt : Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005)

planning. On the other hand, some of them had no potential of success in the political arena and they insisted on practicing politics in exchange with their meaningful participation in the other arenas of the public sphere.⁷⁰

Another evidence of the lack of planning was the decrease in providing some charity work and services. This was the result of the rising of other types of civil work, which were not possible due to the oppression before the revolution. Forms such as movements, initiatives, groups even parties started to emerge instead of the ordinary civil society organizations. Although that might seem like an improvement, the result was negligence of a group of traditional and important charity work. Negligence that used by the counter-revolution to use the needy people and phenomenon such vote buying started to increase in the elections that took place after the overthrow of Mubarak.

The tendency of civil society activists to involve in cultural and non-formal education in exchange of instant charity work is another proof of the lack of planning. While the ordinary people were waiting for urgent change in their life condition, civil society activists focused on the cultural activities as they found that ignorance is one of the most dangerous challenges facing the revolution. Although this is a very strong argument, the nature of culture change is that it takes long time to reach its goal while people kept waiting for their living standards to improve with no sign of this upcoming improvement. In the end, that resulted in the mass losing faith in the revolution capability to meet their needs and they eventually watched the counter-revolution take over the power through a military coup but they preferred not to take any actions to oppose it.

The lack of coordination between the civil society organizations is source of diffusing efforts, wasting resources and reducing the possibility of providing definitive solutions to problems. During the revolution and in the upcoming months post-revolution, the lack of coordination was very clear.

A solid example of the lack of coordination is the last parliament election-taking place before the coup. Before the parliament elections, Freedom and Justice Party⁷¹ offered

⁷⁰ Interview 6, Egyptian Party cofounder and its General Secretary, June 2015

⁷¹ The party that won the largest number of seats in the same election

a proposal of unified electoral list under the name of “National list”, where they wanted to include all the revolutionary powers to reduce competition among the rebels themselves and to limit competition between the revolution and counter-revolution. That idea, which had been initially popular among the political powers then it soon failed. Those revolutionary parties and powers failed to coordinate with one another forming this unified electoral list, prompting each faction to contest the elections separately and eventually increased the rift between the revolutionary powers, according to the former member of the Shura Council and Chairman of the Economic Committee then.⁷²

This issue of lack of coordination was not limited to the political arena. The founder of one of countrywide spreading civil society organization says, “*I can’t count the number of activities we had to cancel because of that.*”⁷³ Talking about the contradictions that she faced sometimes between the activities she organizes and the activities of other organizations. That was a result of the lack of coordination between these organizations. Moreover, some time due the competition on funds, volunteers and positioning among the organization they affect the quality of civil work and defuse the efforts, thus decreasing the expected outcomes.

4.3.3 Funding

Funding is also an issue to study with regard to how it affected the work of civil society after the revolution and thus how it limited the effectiveness of its contribution. Civil society organizations founded after the revolution continued to face the same funding problems as before. Depending on the state or self-funding was the main funding strategy after the revolution, which caused a significant problem.

Both activists shared almost the same experience that they had to put an end to the initiative or the organization out of financial problems. They both shared the same concept of not getting a state fund as that reduces the interference from the government in their activities. They also had a hard time to get an international fund due to the regulations and restrictions they faced, especially both of them founded their initiative newly after the

⁷² Interview 14, Chairman of the Economic council SC, July 2015

⁷³ Interview 13, CSO Founder, May 2015

revolution. In the end, they used member contributions as the main source of funding, which restrained their capacity of doing the desired activities, and later on, they decided to give up their ideas and have a closure of their initiatives.⁷⁴

The study of the role contends by civil society, each by creating the scene of the Egyptian revolution and preparing the society for its breakout or through the active roles contend by its activists and organizations in the success of the revolutionary demands clarifies the importance of civil society in the formation of such a revolutionary phenomenon. Consequently, whoever is inquisitive about learning the Egyptian revolution and working for its success, they need to require the civil society and its role inside the revolution into consideration. Such overlap between the mobility within civil society and the revolutionary movement, not solely manifested within the form of the successes of the primary revolutionary demands, but additionally appeared in mutual failure in the respective roles of both the revolution and the civil society as a result of the impact they had on one another.

⁷⁴ Interviews 6,11

5. EGYPTIAN CIVIL SOCIETY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT

5.1 SUMMERY AND CONCLUSION

The conception of civil society is still controversial within the western modern thought. Its latest manifestation is the third sector and NGOs. Such manifestation resulted from long path of European evolution. Unfortunately, most of the modern scholars conceive the civil society within the same manner. the reason behind this can be that they see the contribution the current civil society does in ensuring the democratic process in the western countries. Therefore, they hope it does a similar in fighting the Arab dictatorships. Such a method of thinking neglects the very fact that the Arab societies are completely different from the western societies and it developed to its current form through a unique course of evolution, Whereas, the Arab spring considered as an ideal chance to re-discuss the concept it is necessary to take into consideration such critique and provide attention to the Arab civilized heritage.

Civil society has played a major role in qualifying the activists and the creation of the Egyptian society to become prepared for the outbreak of the revolution. Civil society, its institutions and active members participated in shaping the course of the Egyptian revolution through the many roles it has played after the outbreak of the revolution. Their role had a great impact on the success of the revolutionary first demands. As civil society contributed to the success of the first revolutionary demands, it also had to bear part of the burden that caused the current failure of the revolution. This understanding of the role played by civil society has become necessary to forecast the revolution's future, avoid the mistakes of the past, and have a civil society with a more positive role in shaping Egypt's future as a whole.

The social and political contexts in Egypt pre the revolution were an explicit example of the squalor conditions that any society may suffer from under a military dictatorship, where the Egyptians suffered from low living standards along with a political blockage with no hope in the future. Nevertheless, the revolution of January 25 came as a

glimmer of hope for Egyptian aspirants to get rid of the stifling country's military rule that lasted for nearly sixty years. It became the glimmer of hope in the desired change and the Renaissance, which was dreamed by the Egyptians for decades.

5.2 DISCUSSION

The comparative study of the current political and social context with the pre-revolutionary context discussed in Chapter Three is one way to predict Egypt's near future. Such comparison shows a worse position relating to Egypt's economic situation and Egyptians living conditions, along with the political obstruction and tyranny happening now in Egypt, and taking into consideration the change brought by the 25th of January revolution in the public –especially in the mindset of young people. There has been a change that kept manifesting itself in daily demonstrations in Egypt for over than 1000 days since the military coup took place. All these factors make it safe to predict a new revolutionary tide in the near to medium future. This expected revolutionary tide should give extreme care and attention to the achievements and the mistakes of the past in order to learn how to enhance the success of the next revolutionary wave and limiting its possible setbacks.

As shown in Chapter Two, the term “civil society” expresses a western concept in the first place—A concept that has been controversial and differing along the course of western thought development according to the political and historical context. In the end, the emergence and development of the civil society concept took place as a part of the development of the western political philosophy itself. Hence, the Arab social and historical context differs from the western one. A debate about the relevance of the concept and its manifestations to Arab reality must take place. Also, the phenomenon of the revolution and its impact on Egyptian society as a whole is an opportunity to re-examine the concept to fit the larger Egyptian social context after the revolution and exploit the Arab and Islamic cultural heritage pervasive in the Egyptian society to reshape Egyptian civil society and its institutions to have a real influence in the Egyptian political future.

An in-depth study on the role played by civil society in the starting the revolution's spark and later the formation of its success and failure trajectories had been delivered in

Chapter Four, where civil society played a key and important role as a social capital reservoir and community incubator before 2011. This role was evident in the spirit of unity and sacrifice and the creative social configurations etc. that appeared in the early days after the ignition of the revolution. Another aspect of discussing the role played by the civil society is its procedural role during the revolution, where the civil society activists played very important and necessary roles such as: education and public awareness of civic rights, election monitoring, and public campaigns, facing some urgent societal needs, Non-formal education and cultural activities. This type of active participation of civil society activists spotted the importance of its role in helping the revolution success in the first place. Later on, that resulted in a severe interference by the coup authorities to limit the effectiveness of the civil society and its institutions in the Egyptian public sphere. Repression either by laws that limit the effectiveness of civil society and impose government control on it or by cutting off funding for these institutions, sometimes comes to the nationalization of these institutions and imposing of the government guarding on them and ending with detentions or persistent pursuit of civil society activists from all the different currents.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Starting from the new post-revolutionary context, a conceptual study that neither imposes the western perspective nor totally neglects it by the pretext that it is not compatible with the Arab context, but combines between the two ideas, looking for the modern perspective of civil society and its organizations in the same time exploit the Arab and Islamic cultural heritage pervasive in the Egyptian society expanding the concept to include other formation than the modern organizations such as social movements and religion-based institutions etc. is recommended to reach a better representation of the phenomenon.

For the anticipated next revolutionary wave, it is highly important to maximize the changes brought by the first wave in the Egyptian public mindset in order to create more active participation by the Egyptians. Encouraging the youth to invest more of their time and efforts in the civil society activity is one way to guarantee the level of active participation in the political process that would result in the desired change in Egypt's reality. Meanwhile, tracking the laws, policies and interferences made by the current coup governments in the Egyptian civil society is important. Such acts are a priority for counteracting to take place by the rebels in the near future.

With regard to the geographical distribution of the civil society organizations rather than the centralization in Cairo the capital and the major cities, it is necessary to expand its existence especially in Upper Egypt and frontier governorates.

Regarding the sectorial orientation, bringing attention to non-politicized philanthropy activities and charity work becomes a necessity to restore the spirit of unity that has been lost during the years following the revolution as a result of the negligence of such activities by civil society activists and their interests shift to politics, which is a competitive process by definition. It also restores the confidence of the Egyptian people in the revolutionary activists, particularly after the military coup succeeded in distorting their image and bringing them to public opinion as a group of opportunists and non-nationalists belonging to foreign agendas. In addition, civil society institutions must give special attention to human rights issues, especially after the revolution encountered fierce

repression machine belonging to the military coup authorities. That repression machine left more than 40,000 political prisoners and more than 1000 Egyptian martyrs as a result of various attacks of security forces. This humanitarian crisis resulted in many affected people who are in need for special attention in order to be reintegrated into the Egyptian society and avoid the risks of radicalization or isolation from society as a result of what they have suffered from. Moreover, the process of political awareness is also a guarantee that the expected revolutionary tide is not to be retrogression in the future. Hence, the Egyptian civil society must work on further activities related to the political awareness process.



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