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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

# **Institutionalizing the revolutionary movement: a study in the transformations of the Egyptian public sphere**

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Political Science

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

By

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Under the supervision of **Dr. Samer Soliman**

**July/ 2012**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the months that followed the January 25th 2011 Egyptian uprising an unexpectedly large number of political parties took shape. These parties emerged to serve the interests of various political forces present in society. Much of the public support was directed to the Islamist current in Egyptian politics, with the establishment of several political parties representing Islamist tendencies. Islamist domination in the political arena was somewhat expected after 80 years of political activity; what is more intriguing is how newly formed political forces managed to secure a place on Egypt's political landscape. The Egyptian popular movement had to be channelled to reach this goal. Institutionalisation was an inevitable path that the revolution<sup>1</sup> had to follow; hence, many of the revolution's activists started to organise their political activities within the framework of party institutions.

The months that followed the revolution in January were destined to introduce a new political order in the country. Political activists had to develop in parallel with the emerging new political order and the political opportunities inherent to it. In time, this dynamic field of opportunity tightened up. Activists of the revolutionary protest movements<sup>2</sup> found that violence against them was rising over time, illustrated in individual cases and group clashes. This rising cost of protest on activists was mirrored in an atmosphere of rising social alienation, counterrevolutionary political activity, and a state of general insecurity.

In reaction to limited political openness, some activists of the revolutionary protest movements deemed it important to take the revolution to the next step: institution building. This was the opportunity for the revolution to enter mainstream politics. Institutionalising the revolutionary protest movements' principles and demands necessitated the formation of new political parties. But this process unfolded, also,

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<sup>1</sup> In this research, "revolution" in the Egyptian context refers to a long process of political activity aiming at change, sparked by the mass uprising of January 25th 2011. The factors that led to the Egyptian revolution developed over at least a decade of political activism, reaching a peak during the Tahrir Square uprising. The dynamic process of the Egyptian revolution continued beyond the January uprising and impacted the unfolding transitional period.

<sup>2</sup> The concept revolutionary protest movements here refers to the sum of all political actions that took place after the uprising in January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The revolutionary protest movements in that sense means the sum of all revolutionary organisations, initiatives, and groups that became active within the broad framework of fighting authoritarianism and advocating democracy.

within the context of narrowing political horizons as the transitional period got underway, governed by the ruling military council.

*i. Institutionalising revolution: questions and answers*

This research studies the political opportunities offered by the prevailing military regime amid the new political order that unfolded — or was enforced — in the transitional period. How has this political order reshaped politics in the public sphere to accommodate revolutionary groups — a movement constituted of forces alienated for over a decade and isolated in public space? In reacting to narrowing political opportunities, the revolutionary protest movements formed political parties, institutionalising the revolution and accommodating it within the mainstream. How successful was this process?

This research focuses on the Egyptian Social Democratic Party (ESDP) and the Egyptian Stream Party (ESP) as case studies to understand how post-January 2011 political parties approached mainstream politics, and how the revolutionary protest movements developed to further penetrate the public sphere of Egyptian politics. The focal concern of this research is to investigate how these political parties were formed in the aftermath of popular participated uprising, and what characteristics they inherited from a long heritage of informal activism to mainstream politics.

The research is divided into three main sections. The first chapter examines the political opportunities that characterised the transitional period. This chapter investigates the strategies the military regime adopted to shape public opinion, including the Constitutional Declaration of March 2011 that set the legal framework for political participation in the transitional period. Some political forces were able, or were enabled, to take advantage of this political opportunity more than others, determining the overall character of the institutionalisation of political forces that participated in the revolution. The chapter ends by tackling how the public sphere was engineered around certain conditions on political activity.

The first chapter of the study will be dedicated to examining in-depth the Constitutional Declaration enforced by the military elite, along with the law on political rights, and the law on organising political party activity. The chapter will contextualise the legal framework within which political forces were obliged to interact, and whereby the role of each would be determined, eventually defining the mainstream public sphere and permissible political action. The chapter provides an overview of political forces active during the transitional period, classifying them according to their impact on the political process. It also tries to ascertain the stance of the ruling authority on political actors present on the scene and on how the transitional period should proceed.

The second chapter of the research focuses on the new characteristics demonstrated and practiced by the revolutionary protest movements. Modern and creative techniques in social mobilisation that characterised the movement were developed to confront a tightly controlled political order. The purpose of studying the movement's characteristics is to understand the possible transformations introduced to the public sphere by the revolutionary protest movements as a whole. This chapter constitutes, in effect, an examination of the groups that constitute the revolutionary protest movements, with a direct focus on its structure, practices and strategies. What characteristics of the movement could be carried over into the newly emerging political institutions of the revolutionary protest movements? Factors such as ideological constraints, the role of organisers, and mobilisation mechanisms are all of potential impact on the institution building process.

The last chapter of the research is concerned with the case study of political parties that emerged to represent the revolutionary protest movements. How did these parties form, how their institutions were established and organised, and how did they transfer the revolution's qualities and characteristics into mainstream politics? The focus of this chapter is to examine the new political party system that emerged soon after January 2011. Pro-revolution parties are defined and classified according to capacity and function, and success in transforming the alienated "counter-society" of revolution into the mainstream of the public sphere.

*ii. Timeframe and limitations*

A challenge that might impede the progress of this research is the numerous transformations that have characterised the political scene after January 2011. The absence of a well-structured plan for the transitional period is also a challenge, in that ambiguity has necessarily reigned amid a lack of clarity on anticipated changes that ought to govern political progress in the country.

For pragmatic purposes, this research is limited to the timeframe that extends from the early days that followed the 18-day January uprising to the opening of the new parliament. During this year of transition, the public sphere witnessed tremendous transformations that affected its nature, this being the core focus of this research. Although this timeframe might not be sufficient in analysing the whole transitional period, it is of sufficient length to understand the evolution of the new political party system, to analyse the emergence of new political parties that carry characteristics of the revolution, and to examine the transformations introduced to the public sphere and the political order in Egypt.

This research contributes to the argument of understanding the emergence of a new political order with studying different aspects constituting the framework governing the formation of this order.



## CHAPTER ONE

### CONCEPTUAL AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Huntington's defines revolution to be; "a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies. Revolutions are thus to be distinguished from insurrections, rebellions, revolts, coups, and wars of independence."<sup>3</sup>; this definition demonstrates how scholars of modernisation theory examine the concept of revolution. For an action to be revolutionary it entails association with an extreme and rapid activity that results in radical change in the state structure and/or the social class structure in a given society.

Characteristics associated with revolutions, such as violence, made it less favourable for the school of modernisation. Huntington proposes that in order for states to overcome any possible revolution, state structure should expand to include various forms of political institutions that channel popular demand to the state apparatus. Political institutions in theory of modernisation are formal channels through which state administers political reform rather than being threatened by revolutions.<sup>4</sup>

John Foran argues that the huge conceptual shift between reform and revolution, as proposed in Huntington's analysis, is a product of many changes in the state structures, resulting in equivalent changes in revolutionary patterns of protest and action. The decline of "the age of revolutions" is accompanied with the rise of a new age of collective movement.<sup>5</sup> In his study of the outcome of revolutions, Foran theorises for a new age of revolutions, in which continuous collective actions changing the social order replace the sudden radical approach of change. The author studies revolution as a continuous process in which change is being introduced gradually through a continuous process of organising the collective demands.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Huntington, Samuel P., *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 264.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Foran, John, *The Future of Revolutions* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 24-25.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Foran, *Introduction on the future of revolutions*, 9-10.

Farida Farhy argues that democratic reform demands are a new way to approach and understanding revolutions; that with the great development of the role and structure of the contemporary state, revolutions became no longer concerned with the state only, but rather social and political conditions. New strategies and techniques introduced to collective action resulted in a blurring of the distinction between reform and revolution. Studying the Eastern European model of change, Farhy emphasises that movements that erupted during Eastern Europe's transitional period carried many of the characteristics of revolutionary protest movements, especially in terms of mobilisation strategies. In studying the outcome of the Eastern European experience of change, Farhy concludes that political reform movements could maintain similar practices to that adopted by revolutions, such as civil disobedience, mobilising international attention, and negotiating with authorities for change.<sup>7</sup>

Farhy contests Theda Skocpol's definition of classical revolutions as acting upon a given class structure. Eastern European experience has proved that movements are also considered revolutions because they aim at reorganising and restructuring the state order as well as redefining its relationship to society.<sup>8</sup> Political movements mightn't result in a rapid restructure of the social order, but could definitely result in a gradual process that pushes for a revolutionary outcome in terms of social order.

Adding to the previously mentioned, the change in the concept of revolution is a product of a number of shifts in the structure of the state, the reorganisation of social structures, and continuous shifts in the international system. It is evident that contemporary authoritarian regimes demonstrate sufficient institutional flexibility to allow staged minimal reforms, instead of being challenged by transformations; in reaction to such conditions, social structures have witnessed shifts in the basis of struggle beyond class issues alone, which made revolutions inevitable, even though might take place gradually.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Farhy, Farida, *Democratic Reform: New ways of understanding revolutions*, in *The Future of Revolutions*, ed., John Foran (London: Zed Books, 2003), 42.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* Farhy, "Democratic Reform," 44.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Farhy, "Democratic Reform," 45.

This thesis adopts Farhy's definition of revolution as a long political process of change instead of a single sudden action that reshapes the societal class order and reorganises the state structure. In the Egyptian context, the final outcome of the space of political opportunity opened up the revolution cannot be accurately predicted. In this sense, the revolution is not a single event but an unfolding process. In particular, this study puts in focus how a new space of political opportunity emerged to integrate new political actors — the political forces of the revolutionary protest movements — into mainstream politics. Expanding on this, political opportunity, as an independent variable, has impacted on the public sphere and on the nature and characteristics of political actors, as dependent variables, in the political arena.

The research depends mainly on two concepts in studying the Egyptian revolution: first, the concept of political processes, to understand the strategic nature of the present space and political framework, as well as its outcomes; second, the concept of public sphere, which theorises on the impact on defining the public sphere of the new space allowed by the political opportunity.

### ***The concept of political processes***

Political Processes model in studying rests mainly on the factor of the Political Opportunity as a focal axe. According to Charles Tilly political opportunity “concerns the relationship between a group and the world around it. Changes in the relationship sometimes threaten the group's interests. They sometimes provide new chances to act on those interests.”<sup>10</sup>

Political opportunity caps the political process approach of studying social movements,<sup>11</sup> as presented by scholars Charles Tilly and Sydney Tarrow in the 1980s. This school of thought theorises that

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<sup>10</sup> Tilly, Charles, *the components of collective action*, in, *From Mobilisation to Revolution*, Charles Tilly ed. (New York, Random House: 1978), 7.

<sup>11</sup> The study of social movements has developed along three main schools of thoughts: the resource mobilisation school, the political process/political opportunity structure school, and the new social movements approach. The resource mobilisation approach studies a given movement's life cycles, revealing the important of the allocation of resources to its ends. The new social movement approach focuses more on the cultural and class framing of the movement's participants, and hence adopts an individual level of analysis in understanding the movement. The political process approach, which is the one adopted in this

social movements<sup>12</sup> be judged based on what the interaction between the present political forces offers in terms of political opportunity. In accordance to the political opportunity structure, the movement develops. Political opportunity is defined as the context offered as a result of the interaction between various political actors. In this sense, political movements remain highly dependent on various socio-political conditions, such as the legal context, composition of the ruling elite, and its practices.

Charles Tilly provides measurable components that evaluate the success and failure of social movements resting on two levels of analysis. First, the micro level of analysis in which the movement's success depends on the framing of interests, mobilisation, and organisation. On the macro level of analysis, the movement's success depends on the political opportunity proposed by the ruling regime to different organisations as well as to social movements present in a given society.<sup>13</sup>

In an addition to the theory, Tilly presents a historical analysis of the development of social movements in 19th century Europe, using this analysis as the basis of a "political processes approach" in studying social movements.

Other scholars added to the political process model of social movements analysis. In his historical analysis of European social movements, Tilly's book parallels Sidney Tarrow's study of the civil rights movement in America.<sup>14</sup> In his study of collective action, Tarrow introduces concepts such as "Political Opportunity", "cultural framing"<sup>15</sup>, and "mobilisation"<sup>16</sup>. These concepts provide a framework within which

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study, focuses on the role of the state in designing the space of political opportunity through which the movement is permitted to develop.

<sup>12</sup> In his book *Power in Movement*, Sidney Tarrow defines social movements to be "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities".

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Tilly, *from mobilisation to revolution*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> In his attempt to raise the importance of political opportunity in the study of social movements, Tarrow emphasises that, "changes in the political opportunity structure create incentives for collective actions. The magnitude and duration of these collective actions depend on mobilising people through social networks and around identified symbols that are drawn from cultural frames of meaning."

<sup>15</sup> In his analysis, Tarrow uses the same definition of the Cultural framing that Tilly presented in his study, which is "the effort by activists to assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilise potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to mobilise antagonists".

social actors of given social movements interact with the political opportunity structure offered at a given point of time.

Tarrow was the first to consider the impact of individual activists and movements in the broader sense of shaping political opportunity. To further explain, in times when political opportunities open up for social actors, movements develop; with the mobilisation of ordinary people aided by cultural framing, the movement is sustained in a manner that fundamentally challenges others. It is only then that a social movement can be approached as an entity that is closely affected by the surrounding political and structural order.<sup>17</sup> Political opportunity is the state of the existing political environment in which actors of the counter sphere (those seeking change) are allowed a space to develop and later take places in the public sphere. This is to say; political opportunity is the means by which counter political activity can be transcended and assimilated into the public sphere as a mainstream actor.

The present research derives its theoretical assumptions from the political opportunity structure approach to understanding social movements. Using Tilly and Tarrow's theory, the Egyptian case can be studied. Political opportunity in this research appears to be a prerequisite for any political change to take place. On the other hand, to the extent to which political opportunity is opened up to revolutionary protest movements, bringing a once alienated counter presence into the mainstream.

This thesis depends heavily on the political processes model of studying social movements in understanding the outcome of the Egyptian revolution. Political opportunity and political mobilisation seem to be the most reliable factors of the theoretical approach in studying the Egyptian case.

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<sup>16</sup> Mobilisation is defined to be, "the process by which a group acquires collective control over the resources needed for action. Those resources may be labor power, goods, weapons, votes, and any number of other things, just so long they are usable in acting shared interests."

<sup>17</sup> Tarrow, Sidney G., *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

## ***The concept of public sphere***

The notion of the public sphere has been championed by Jürgen Habermas to identify the space between what is private and what constitutes public authority, creating links between individuals and power. “We call events and occasions ‘public’ when they are open to all, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs and [the] public authority of the state,” Habermas writes. Proceeding with defining the public sphere, Habermas added that it is the space or domain that powerfully displays representations and carries public opinion, yet its meaningfulness depends heavily on critical judgement of the different discourses flowing through this space.<sup>18</sup>

According to Habermas, the public sphere is the realm of social life where issues of common concern are addressed freely by citizens, shaping and influencing public opinion. It’s the domain in which public directions and attitudes are formulated.<sup>19</sup> Regarding the public opinion structure, Habermas identifies it to be a space in social life that includes a number of individuals sharing common concerns, interests, and characteristics, and in which participation is granted to all.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, by the theory of the bourgeois public sphere, it is possible that public space is tilted to serve the interests of those with greater power at the expense of smaller and weaker actors.

Notion of the public sphere and counter alienated spheres have received heavy theoretical criticism from the feminist school. Nancy Fraser denies Habermas’s assumption of the universal nature of the public sphere, arguing instead that the emergence of alternative spheres among subordinate groups raises the issue of the mainstreaming identity undergoes in society.<sup>21</sup> Put in other words; the mainstream or bourgeois public sphere is constructed as a result of continuous waves of exclusion and discrimination against marginalised

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<sup>18</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, “The Public Sphere,” in *Media Studies: A Reader*, ed. P. Marris and S. Thornham (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 55.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, Sue, “Reconfiguring the Public Sphere: Implications for Analysis of Educational Policy,” *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 53:3 (September 2004): 230.

<sup>20</sup> Ezzat, Heba Raouf, “Self, Space and Time: From the public sphere to the political street,” in Eman Ragab, ed., “Theoretical Approaches: In the analysis of international politics” (Arabic) in *International Politics Journal* 187:47 (January 2012): 32.

<sup>21</sup> Fraser, Nancy, “Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice,” *Studies in Social Justice*, 1 (November 2007): 30.

sectors of society, such as the lower classes and women. In accordance, alternative public spheres emerge to compensate for political exclusion.

Furthermore, Fraser contests Habermas's assumption of the "common concern" that motivates political actors within the public sphere. Providing a long margin of time, what might be considered private at a certain point in time — such as issues of gender equality — could be an issue of common interest in another given time.<sup>22</sup> Theorising the concept the "politics of parity," Fraser emphasises the role of the ruling authority in promoting embedded social arrangements and reflecting social norms is manifested through systematic exclusion of some categories of citizens and the qualities associated with them.<sup>23</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu is one theorist who believed that the state was responsible for the emergence of marginalised zones of politics. The state institutions remain the core actor behind the structuring of the public sphere. In his words, the state is "not crudely an instrument in the hands of the ruling class," yet it "is far from completely neutral," or "completely independent."<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu argues that state attaches labels and categories to particular groups present in society; through naming and classifying, the state wields power over social perceptions towards such groups.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, others have taken issue with the rigidity of Habermas's conceptualisation of the public sphere. Sue Thomas proposed that the concept should be understood as more fluid than structural.<sup>26</sup> Excluded forces could find their way to acceptance in the public sphere. Harold Mah's criticism focuses mainly on defining the public sphere as a unitary entity. Mah argues that Habermas's definition only serves certain disciplinary aspirations, underlining the role of identity politics in creating unified and integrated

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Fraser, "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition," 25-26.

<sup>23</sup> Fraser, Nancy, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," in *Redistribution or Recognition?* ed. Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (London: Verso Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Act of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 34.

<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 175.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* Thomas, "Reconfiguring the Public Sphere," 245.

political entities.<sup>27</sup> In criticising Habermas's unified public sphere, Mah develops a whole new school of thought that studies the role of individuals in establishing parallel spaces of social and political interactions.

Picking up on Mah's theory of multiple spheres, Heba Raouf Ezzat traces the transformations introduced to the Egyptian public sphere during the past decade. Ezzat charts the presence of multiple discourses in society, reflecting the interests and power holders present in society.<sup>28</sup> The proliferation of discourses is part of a general societal change brought on by a series of transformations that occurred in the configuration of public space. One of these transformations is the sudden absence of elite domination.

In this thesis the concept of Public Sphere refers to Habermas' early argument on the nature of the concept: the domain in which public directions and attitudes are formulated; at the same time negates Habermas' emphasis on the structure of the Public Sphere as a one-layered domain. Aided by the theoretical contribution made by Fraser, Mah, and Ezzat, the structure of the Public Sphere in this research is a multi-layered domain than- to an extent- inhabits once alienated groups.

### ***Public sphere as zone of contest***

This research analyses the Egyptian public sphere and its transformations following the January 2011 uprising as a zone of contest between two primary actors: the ruling authority and political individuals shaping revolutionary groups. With the help of Bourdieu, the role of the ruling authority in shaping the public sphere, as well as the mechanisms governing its practice, can be brought into focus. In accordance, the role of political opportunity appears decisive in understanding which political actors are allowed into the public sphere, while others remain marginalised. On the other hand, corresponding to the cultural and political frames imposed on the public sphere, Harold Mah and Heba Ezzat's understanding of the concept of public sphere helps illustrate how even in the context of state control, alternative discourses and actors are emerge that challenge the ruling authority's capacity to tailor the public sphere according to its own

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<sup>27</sup> Mah, Harold, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:1 (March, 2000): 155.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Ezzat, "Self, Space, and Time," 32.



interests.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, this research is a study of the transformations introduced into the public sphere as a result of individual choices developed in multiple alternative spheres to the mainstream and that correspond in their needs and demands.

Understanding the possible outcome of the revolution in Egypt necessarily entails a focus on the abovementioned two concepts. Both the political opportunity and the public sphere are interrelated and complementary to a great extent — each reacts to the other, as to some extent each is engaged in struggle with the other. In this context, the emergence of a political opportunity structure following the fall of the old regime and the taking over of power by the military regime is of high importance in understanding the transformations brought to the fore by the emergence of new political actors in society, and the nature of these political actors, along with the fluidity in between the counter public sphere and mainstream politics vis-à-vis the public sphere within which interactions between all political forces take place.

This research in particular is concerned with the role of political opportunity- a factor of the political processes model- as the independent variable according to which the public sphere is formulated, and the individual choice of the political active individuals shaping revolutionary groups in placing its political activity- as a dependent variable- in the political scene.

### ***Assumptions associated with the research***

One main assumption that this research is based upon is that the political opportunity structure offered by as a product of continuous interaction between various political forces present has favoured political parties formation, and formal politics in a general sense. The fact that political opportunity was opened up for party activity while the grip was being tightened on the informal revolutionary protest movements pushed some revolutionary groups in the direction of political parties formation. This assumption is grounded mainly on views expressed by political activists involved with different revolutionary organisations -which will be presented later in the research, in addition to analysis of the legal framework governing political activity during the transition period.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Ezzat, "Self, Space, and Time", 34.

Another assumption is that political institutions — referring to political parties — do form a mainstream of politics during the transition period. This is to say, for the revolutionary protest movements to be present as an active political force in Egyptian politics, and to transfer its principles and values into political agendas, political institutions reflecting this identity had to be formed.

In the present Egyptian context, the public sphere isn't separate from counter public sphere. It is due to the revolution, and the emergence of new political actors in an atmosphere of high political fluidity, that the counter society and the mainstream public became complementary. In a sense, counter forces got the chance to impose a set of transformation on the traditional public sphere — the society Egyptians had known for so long.

The assumption about introducing new political actors to the mainstream politics rests on a long history of theoretical contributions on institutionalisation that started with the modernisation school developed by Samuel P. Huntington. In theorising the role of institutions in containing political participation, Huntington emphasised on role of institution building as the main channel indicating that a new social order has emerged in any given society.<sup>30</sup> In respect to Huntington's theory of organisation, political parties seem to be the only form of political activity that is accepted within the state's formal political order that shapes mainstream politics.

### **Conclusion:**

This thesis is an attempt to study the outcome of the ongoing revolutionary process in Egypt. Revolution in this research depends heavily on Farhy and Foran's definition of the concept, as along process of continuous political changes. For the purpose of theoretical analysis, the thesis refers to the political processes model and public sphere as two concepts understanding the development of the revolutionary protest movements through the long process of the revolution. The analysis rests heavily on factors of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 24.

political opportunity structure and political mobilisation as the core of the political processes model; meanwhile, the focus on Public Sphere is dependent on modern adaptations of the Habermas' definition of the concept.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **POST-UPRISING EGYPT AND THE BIRTH OF AN ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SPACE**

The Egyptian revolution- with enforcing new actors into the political scene- created a new political opportunity. The study of political opportunity here is the analysis of the context controlling political practice. In this chapter we will examine the political context engineered as a product of the interaction

between various political forces present to organise political practice during the first year of the transitional period. The first section is concerned with the process of engineering political opportunity in the light of various political changes occurred during the first year of transition. The second section focuses on the structure of the public sphere that developed in reaction to the political opportunity offered to political forces.

It's important here to note that the public sphere is directly affected by the ruling regime's interventions, such as in the case of legislating and enforcing the legal context controlling political participation, the direct involvement of ruling figures in politics, and the ruling authority's discourse shaping public culture. Hence, it remains important to identify the multiple roles played by the ruling authority in directing public participation, and public perceptions toward different active political actors present in the public sphere.

This study comes after a decade in which President Hosni Mubarak's regime maintained several self-survival strategies; some of them were maintained ever since the first days of its existence, such as regular parliamentary elections and the formation of political parties, while other strategies were implemented in reaction to both the rising internal pressure led by the informal political opposition –“Kefaya movement” an example, and foreign pressures by the George W. Bush administration of the United States– along with other international actors, such as allowing a wider margin of opportunity for an informal opposition to emerge and holding the first named “Competitive” presidential elections in the modern history of Egypt. For the purpose of relieving that pressure, Mubarak's regime maneuvered democratisation to serve the ruler's interest; many of the processes mentioned could have driven democratisation, yet the regime's absolute control over them resulted in the feeding of authoritarianism in the country. Some could argue that an election represents the ultimate process of democratic practice, but it takes an authoritarian regime to use elections as a mean to enforce the ruling elite and its patronage network in the country's politics.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Schedler, Andreas, “The Nested Game of Democratisation by Elections,” in *International Political Science review* 23:1 (January 2002): 104- 106.

Mubarak's regime was an obvious example of an authoritarian system that tended to accept any changes to the governing mechanism that would ultimately reinforce its power and maintain its existence. Many studies analyzing the endurance of authoritarianism in Egypt have concluded that the ruling elite administering this type of regime tends to adopt some democratic measures -such as elections, yet maneuvers results to maintain the political status-quo.<sup>32</sup>

That's to say, the outcome of political processes varies largely according to the ruling regime, and corresponds to the elite's interest in the outcome. The political opportunity and the mechanisms of participation allowed in a given society could easily identify the governing type of regime.<sup>33</sup> Elections –as a practice manifests democracy- is considered an inauguration of a new democratic era, or so is perceived among countries of the first transitions in Huntington's third wave of democratisation model such as in Southern Europe and South America,<sup>34</sup> this character is perceived differently in countries with struggling democratisation process, such as in the case of the countries of the Arab Spring.<sup>35</sup> In country like Egypt, Elections comes to be perceived as a demobilisation tool controlled by the ruling regime to encourage further fragmentation of the opposition.<sup>36</sup>

For decades Egypt's political opportunity was static under the Mubarak regime, until mass frustration, international pressure and local challenges pressured the ruling regime for change. For over a decade, Egypt has experienced continuous transformations in the structure of its political opportunity, which

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* Schedler, *The Nested Game of Democratisation by Elections*, 103.

<sup>33</sup> In his article, Schedler examines how countries of the third transitions within Huntington's Third Wave of Democratisation in Africa and Latin America manage to use election in the favor of their power continuation. In his analysis he favors the following mechanism to be the ones used by Authoritarians to manipulate elections: Electoral Fraud, Political Repression, Manipulation the Actor Space, Manipulating Rules of Representation, and Unfair Competition.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Schedler, *The Nested Game of Democratisation by Elections*, 103.

<sup>35</sup> Lust- Okar, Ellen, "Divided they Rule: the Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition", in *Comparative Politics* 36:2 (January 2004): 159-160.

<sup>36</sup> Lust-Okar in her article, "Divided they rule: the Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition", studies political environment, and the level of coherence and coordination among opposition forces as a focal unit of analysis in understanding the outcome of political processes. In her examining typology of the Moroccan and the Jordanian experiences, Egypt remain closer to the divided political environment existed among the Moroccan opposition forces. The authoritarian regime control over the political processes and the expansion of the state relationship with the loyalist opposition- in both cases of Morocco and Egypt- have aided the regime to endure its authority and control over the outcome of democratisation process.

constantly fluctuated according to the level of political fluidity and the demand for political participation. The January 25<sup>th</sup> uprising could be examined as an outcome of the political opportunity offered during Mubarak's regime, and at the same time an inauguration of novel opportunity offered by a new ruling authority to meet a completely different political context and public demand.

***First: Constructing post-uprising political opportunity***

The January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution is considered a mass objection to Mubarak's authority, existing living conditions, and tightly controlled political opportunity. After 30 years of political oppression and regular violent practice to terrorize political activists, mass demonstrations succeed in toppling Mubarak. It was only then that political opportunity underwent some radical changes to contain an unprecedented willingness to participate politically.

The dramatic shift in political participation behaviors was evident in the mobilisation patterns practiced during the uprising; this was a clear indication of the birth of a new era of activism, and in correspondence with this a new political opportunity had to be crafted.

Many central factors are considered to be behind the newly engineered opportunity. From one side the change of ruling elite -from the publically hated regime of Mubarak which the masses revolted against, to the military authority which acquires a large margin of public acceptance ever since 1952 revolution- is considered a central factor behind allowing a new opportunity into Egyptian politics. On the other side the radical change in the political forces' capacity, organisation, and strategic planning added serious impact to demands for a new opportunity structure. Both the change in the structure of the ruling elite and the increasing power of political forces can justify the change witnessed in political opportunity.

The transformations resulting from the ouster of Mubarak's regime and the recognition of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) as the ruling authority have enforced a new context within which political practice is allowed; this context has changed in accordance with the pressure applied by various political forces active in the society. That's to say, political opportunity in the transitional period is a

product of interactions between two struggling forces in the society. The ruling regime remains the main actor influencing the process of engineering political opportunity, yet political actors of the opposition are also decisive factors to be taken into consideration throughout the process. The drafting process of the law on parliament formation is a standing example that demonstrates the role of negotiation and compromise between the ruling authority and the other political forces present in the society; the initial proposal by the military authority was to change the law to a full party list system, but in reaction to the pressure of various political forces it was first changed to half party-list and half individual system, and eventually to the currently present law with two third of the seats elected through party-list candidacy and the last third is elected according to individual candidacy.

In studying political opportunity, this paper mainly focuses on the political and legal context controls the political practice during the transitional period.

### ***I: Legal Context***

Some two months after Mubarak was ousted from power, the SCAF suspended the working 1971 Constitution; a public referendum followed on 19 March 2011 in which 77% of the total vote was in favor of maintaining the Constitution with some amendments. An interim constitution which included the amendments was announced on 23 March inaugurating the SCAF as the sole legitimate authority in the state.

The SCAF's role and responsibilities as specified in the constitutional declaration resemble to a great extent the role and responsibilities bestowed by the 1971 Constitution to the president. In addition, the new authority was granted control over all state institutions and powers. Article (56) of the interim constitution gives absolute power to the SCAF; accordingly, the SCAF's authorities combine both the legislature and the executive powers, and range from issuing the national budget and legislating new laws to appointing the head of the cabinet and its ministers. In fact, the wide range of authority granted to the SCAF in the interim constitution equipped the new ruling elite to be as authoritarian as the old regime. This legal framework has allowed the SCAF to assume absolute power over the state during the transitional period, particularly in light

of the absence of all state's elected institution like the People's Assembly, the lower house of Parliament. In such a context, the SCAF became the sole institution responsible for reestablishing political order in Egypt after the uprising.

One of the pressing tasks that fell on the new regime's shoulder was the revision – if not the creation – of a new legal framework with the ability to accommodate the unprecedented willingness to participate that was demonstrated during the uprising.

The legal framework constructed by the SCAF to accommodate political practice consists of two basic laws, Law no. (40) of 1977 on organising the activity of political parties, and Law no. (73) of 1956 on organising political rights.<sup>37</sup> Below is a digest of the implications of both on the current political situation, and how widely this legal structure shapes the opportunity for different political forces that emerged after the uprising to practice.

### ***The law on organising political rights***

This law drafts the context within which political processes take place, tackling a wide range of issues from who is eligible to vote to the details of the electoral process. The 1956 law was modified by the SCAF in 2011<sup>38</sup> to delegate absolute authority over the electoral process to the Higher Elections Commission. The function given to this commission ranges from compiling lists of registered voters and determining the role played by civil society in monitoring elections, to overseeing elections and announcing the results.<sup>39</sup> The members of the commission are all from the judiciary; Article (3), section (A)<sup>40</sup> does not stipulate the involvement of any public figures, politicians, or political parties in the electoral process. The decision to give the upper hand to the judicial branch, under strong influence by the SCAF, was considered

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<sup>37</sup> In reaction to the radical changes introduced to the political culture after the 25 January uprising, both laws mentioned were modified on instructions from the military authority with the approval of the government.

<sup>38</sup> According to the SCAF's decision, acting as a Law no. 18 of 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Commission functions mentioned in Article 3, Section F from the law on political rights.

<sup>40</sup> Modified twice by declaration with the power of Law no. 46 of 2011, and the declaration with the power of Law no. 110 of 2011.



by many to be seriously flawed. In addition, Article (3) Section (D)<sup>41</sup> on the commission's rules of procedure states that secrecy is granted to its discussions; this article denies the right to transparency in the decision-making process.

Aside from many flaws in the law, it carried a number of changes that positively affected the reality of the electoral process to a great extent. Article (11)<sup>42</sup> addressed one of the most corrupt practices in the electoral process, which involved the misuse of voting cards; the article states that individuals have the right to vote using their personal ID cards instead. Another change to the electoral process was specified by Article (40)<sup>43</sup> in the section on penalties: it stipulated a maximum fine of 500 EGP for abstaining from voting, which resulted in mass voting –though denied the individual choice of not voting- during the People's Assembly elections.

### ***The law on organising the activity of political parties***

This law constructs a framework for the legal recognition of political parties, issued back in 1977 during Anwar Sadat's era. The law in general tackles the process of legal recognition of political parties. The conditions for official recognition stated in Articles (4) and (5) are obscure to the extent that they enforce a state of vagueness with regards to the recognition process. For instance, the condition stating that party principles should not contradict with -unspecified -national security conditions or the maintenance of national unity allows the commission to subjectively approve one party and refuse another. The lack of objective measures allows a large margin for granting legality only to groups not able to threaten the dominance of the ruling regime.

Aside from the subjective requirements that political parties must meet, some practical steps are also demanded. Article (7)<sup>44</sup> includes practical conditions that political parties must fulfill to obtain legal recognition, such as the notarized official authorisation of 5000 individuals representing the founding

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<sup>41</sup> Modified by declaration with the power of Law no. 46 of 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Modified by declaration with the power of Law no. 46 of 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Modified by declaration with the power of Law no. 124 of 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Modified by declaration with the power of Law no. 46 of 2011.

committee of the party, and the publication of the names of the party's founders in two widely distributed daily newspapers. This pressured political parties to deploy all their resources to collect a sufficient number of authorisations and drained their financial resources in paying for newspaper advertisements.

Party finances are legally overseen by the commission; Articles (11) and (12) of the law grants the commission a free hand in requesting verification and documentation from the parties if considered needed. All political parties must submit annual financial reports to the commission according to the law.

Financial control is not the only legal constraint that allows the commission control over party activity after official recognition: foreign communication and partnerships must also receive the commission's approval. Article (26) denies political parties the right to any foreign communication or partnership without reporting first to the Higher Elections Committee and obtaining approval.

This law is considered a tool in the hand of the government and the ruling authority not only to limit the number of political parties, but also to allow room to maneuver the party's activity after recognition. Although this law allowed a large number of political parties to be established, the party system remains fragile and closely controlled by the state apparatus.

## **II: Digest of the socio-political environment**

Understanding the socio-political environment in place during the revolution entails studying the new regime's administration of it. There are a number of features that characterize the new regime's administration of the transitional period.

Political uncertainty and vagueness have been the main characteristics of the transitional period. The SCAF has practiced a crisis management approach instead of strategic planning. Over a whole year of transition, the ruling regime has tended not to initiate political decisions, but rather been influenced by the

political demands of mass demonstrations. Decisions such as those regarding the parliamentary and presidential elections, although appearing to be the regime's main concern, were never taken or pushed forward unless the pressure of popular protests that swept the country was too much to avoid. Tougher decisions such as proposing a timetable for the transitional period and a deadline for the transition of power were taken after more critical episodes of unrest that extended to deadly clashes with police and army forces. Drafting a plan for the transition has cost the revolution a huge number of martyrs. This environment of political absurdity and the lack of information on decision-making processes has denied the country a democratic political process and emphasised the rulers' monopolisation of power. Thus the pre-revolutionary fragmentation and conflict of the political order has been maintained.

The Egyptian transition is also characterised by the regime's absolute control over all state institutions, active or suspended, and the systematic isolation of revolutionaries from the decision-making circle. Egypt's revolution was challenged by genuine obstacles that arose only a few weeks after Mubarak's ouster from power. Unlike in European revolutions or even the modern revolutionary processes of change in Latin America, Egypt is faced with a clear distinction between who owns the revolution and who governs.<sup>45</sup> In the reestablishment of political order activists of the revolution were not recruited to the decision-making apparatus; on the contrary the ruling authority systematically discredited the activists' role ended up with the marginalisation of their activity and all the qualities and values associated with them. (This will be later emphasised in a study of the SCAF's discourse in addressing the revolution and revolutionaries.) The principle of isolating the revolutionaries from the administration resulted in the rebirth of the opposition that directs its efforts against the new ruling elite – a similar situation to that which existed before the revolution.

The last characteristic describing the political environment under the military's rule is the lack of efficiency and achievement. The SCAF has demonstrated a great failure to achieve any of the demands that motivated the January 25<sup>th</sup> uprising, not only on the political level but also on the social and economic levels. The lack of security that has prevailed in the country and a number of economic crises have hit the

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<sup>45</sup> Amin, Galal, "*What Happened to the Egyptian Revolution?*", (Arabic), (Cairo, Shorouk Press, 2012), 154.

vulnerable majority of the population. Social justice, the primary demand of the uprising, was not present on the agenda of the interim authority.

Economic crises – such as the insufficient funds for pensions, the state’s inability to meet the annual increase in expenses stated in the national budget, and the severe shortage, if not disappearance, of natural gas cylinders – raised societal concern about the administration’s failure, and has decreased its acceptance among different sectors of the society, including the lower wage classes.

With the new administration struggling with deteriorating social and economic conditions, opposition and unrest in the country has increased.

## **Second: Constructing the public sphere in post-uprising Egypt**

In contrast to Jürgen Habermas’s classical definition of the public sphere,<sup>46</sup> the Egyptian public sphere is no longer a one-layered structure but rather a number of parallel struggling structures, not an integrative space but rather a space of contention, and not a sphere of equal opportunity but a sphere dominated by power owners.

During the past decade great transformations, such as allowing a controlled-emergence of the informal political opposition and conducting the first “competitive” presidential election in the modern history, have affected the construction of Egypt’s public sphere, which saw a shift from the domination of the one-party system to the rise of the counter informal movements. New features were introduced to the public sphere, such as the informal character of political forces present in the public sphere, the intensive usage of new means of communication, mobile phones, and mass media, and overcoming the elite dogma. Heba Raouf Ezzat, in her attempt to define the transformation of the scope of the public sphere to understand the new qualities that paved the way for the Egyptian revolution, concludes that the aforementioned qualities have expanded the definition of public sphere to include new forms of political activity – such as political

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<sup>46</sup> Habermas defines Public Sphere to be, “the realm of social life where issues of common concern are addressed freely by citizens, shaping and influencing public opinion. It’s the domain in which public directions and attitudes are formulated.”

movements.<sup>47</sup> Instead of analyzing mainstream and counter spaces separately, it could be argued that both spaces should be studied as two parts of the same sphere, that the two spaces are complementary and closely connected.

Evidently Egypt has witnessed the emergence of a new public sphere accommodating new political forces with innovative views and practices. The introduction of new political forces to the public was accompanied by the power owners' monopolisation of public perception. Negating Habermas's open public sphere of equal exposure and opportunity, the Egyptian public sphere continues to be dominated by the mainstream political practice and processes; thus it is constructed of different layers of what we could call public spheres or public spaces.<sup>48</sup> It was obvious after the January 25<sup>th</sup> uprising in Egypt that the public sphere had become fragmented to an extent that allowed room for a number of parallel and complementary spaces to develop in reaction to the continuous power struggle in society.

That's to say, a main public sphere or so-called mainstream is present, dominated by the ruling authority— composed of the new military elite, the few surviving old regime members, one major political force that was present during Mubarak's era which is the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to all political institutions including political parties.

Parallel to the mainstream public sphere are a number of minor spheres that developed in association with the increasing capacity for mobilisation, and which we could call the counter public sphere. These spheres include revolutionary protest movements and the newly emerged political forces. Counter – informal– spheres are characterised by limited membership and exposure ability, continuous innovation in communication modes and resource development to compensate for limited capacity, anti-structure sentiment, and a narrow scope in approaching society.

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* Ezzat, “*Self, Space, and Time*,” 33.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* Ezzat, “*Self, Space, and Time*,” 31- 32.

This classification of the public sphere is based on distinct differences in the characteristics of the political actors present and in the nature of the interaction they demonstrate.

The sum of all the interactions and discourses included in the different layers of the public sphere constructs the new definition of the Egyptian public sphere. In her attempt to define the concept, Ezzat concludes that public sphere in Egypt has changed due to the introduction of new characteristics that have imposed a redefinition of the space, the political actors, and the time frame – or the so-called political opportunity.

The importance of studying the structure of the public sphere is to introduce the framework of the enlarged political opportunity. For the military authority in Egypt, the public sphere represents the space through which political opportunity is introduced and interacted upon by various political actors in the society. Below is a summary of the distinctive qualities of the Egyptian public sphere.

The new features characterising the public sphere in Egypt can be divided into those related to communication, structure, and space. Communication became heavily dependent on social media and instant communication portals as they became one of the most used mechanisms for communicating and influencing political opinions. Facebook and Twitter became daily-used utilities by activists to share political ideas, interact, and mobilise. The role played by social media in promoting issues of corruption and torture, for instance in the case of the “We Are All Khaled Said” Facebook page, was evidently one of the motivators for the Egyptian revolution.

Another feature that characterises the structure of the public sphere in post-uprising Egypt is the organisation based on anti-hierarchical structures, and a general sentiment opposing leadership. Politics in Egypt, especially in the case of political movements, tends not to develop staged, structured organisations, rather depends heavily on personally initiated activity. Flexible membership is a distinctive characteristic affecting the nature of personal loyalty and committed participation in different causes. One outstanding

character of the public sphere is the heavy reliance on empowering membership; accepting personal initiative and act upon it became the most used organising strategy.

**Post- January active political forces:**

Before classifying the different political forces into mainstream and counter streams, a dire urge appears to identify the general map of actors, and to clearly identify their political affiliation and stand with/against the witnessed change in the society. In the fold of the new era in Egypt's politics, some political forces successfully maintained its presence despite the wave of change; these forces might have carried some of the old era's qualities to new political scene in Egypt. Some other forces were absolutely new to the Egyptian society, with genuine characteristics. The sum of both political categories could examine the transitional period in Egypt.

It was no longer business as usual after January 2011, the map of political forces present in the society witnessed radical changes. It was politically significant that January's uprising managed to topple down Mubarak as the head of the state and the ruling regime; this is with no doubt one of the most important changes that came up on the map of the acting political forces in the society; only then that the ruling authorities was delegated to another acting force, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces. The SCAF wasn't only introduced as the ruling authority and the head of the state, in the absence of a functioning constitution and a representative parliament, but also as the political force with the higher hand in defining the rules of the political game throughout the transitional period.

The SCAF, in the political power balance, is considered a politically conservative institution that was dominant in the country's politics since 1952, yet gained a more distinguished status being the ruling authority in the fold of the revolution; the institution's conservative character could be easily examined through tracing its practice throughout the transitional period that to a great extent aimed at preserving the existing status quo. The military regime depended on a widely expanded network, that was used by the old regime, connecting security, legislative, and economic institutions closely to the ruling authority.

The Muslim Brotherhood is another political force enforced itself as one of the decisive actors in post-January Egypt. MB with its political arm the Freedom and Justice party has represented the reformist approach in the Egyptian political equation. With its unprecedented capacity to mobilise the masses, FJP has invested its interest to lead the political scene through negotiating with the ruling authority over a stiff change towards democratisation. With its rigid hierarchical structure and the party's close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the Freedom and Justice was perceived as one of the loyalist forces that relates to the old regime.

The early days that followed January 2011 has witnessed the birth of a new Islamic actor in the political scene. Al- Nour Salafi party was politically introduced to represent a more radical approach in comparison to the Muslim Brothers; the party adopts a more rigid political stand than FJP specially in issues related to the relationship between politics and religion, the open negotiations with the ruling military authority, and the biasness to the revolutionary change. The significance of Al-Nour party as a new actor rests on denying the Muslim brotherhood the monopoly over the political Islam activity in Egypt. In the Salafi's attempt at preserving their independent identity, the party had to take stands opposing FJP's political position and agenda.<sup>49</sup>

The last political actor present in the scene are the revolutionary forces with its complex political and ideological composition. In this sense, revolutionary forces include all activist groups that existed prior to January uprising such as the National Movement for Change and April 6<sup>th</sup> and other movements that were formed later –such as the coalition of the revolutionary youth. It's important here to note that these forces took various forms of organisation ranging from institutional organisation to the adaptation of informal network organisational structure. Although the revolutionary approach was highly popular among Egyptians during the early stage of the transitional period, yet the high fragmented state of its groups has hindered its impact as a coherent front.

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<sup>49</sup> El-Hodeibi, Ibrahim, "The struggle's borderline and it's reality", (Arabic) Shorouk Newspaper, (May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012).



A number of political parties emerged to act as the political players representing the demands of the revolution, such as the case study presented in this research paper of the Egyptian Social Democratic party and the Egyptian Stream Party. This formal representation manifests the revolution's experience in institutionalising values and characteristics that surfaced up during January demonstrations. Informal organisation is another approach that is adopted among the wider sector of the revolutionary activists that participated in the uprising. The loose informal network structure appeared to many as the most convenient mean of organising the revolutionary lines outside the political convictions.

In classifying political forces between the mainstream and the counter one, actors are placed not only according to their ability to impact the political scene, but also according to the actor's capacity in mobilisation, building a solid base of supporters and direct followers, the novelty of the actor's characteristics, and the persistence of values associated with its practice. Below is an attempt to classify the abovementioned actors into two main streams present in the society.

### ***Defining the mainstream public sphere***

Habermas defined the public sphere as the space placed between private ownership and the ruling authority. This ideal type doesn't reflect the Egyptian reality, in which the ruling elite interferes directly in political life. Nancy Fraser argues regarding this matter that Habermas' bourgeois public sphere is a dictation of institutional norms controlled by the state to systematically categorise social groups and the qualities associated with them, in a manner that continuously excludes active forces in the society in favor of the dominant, state supported, force.<sup>50</sup>

After the ouster of Mubarak, authority was delegated to the armed forces. Its supreme council, the SCAF, was later announced to be the political arm of the armed forces and thus responsible for state administration during the transition period. The SCAF was granted absolute control over the state, similar to that of Mubarak's -against which the people revolted on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. For the new elite to tighten its

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<sup>50</sup> Fraser, Nancy, "Social Justice in the age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation", in *Redistribution or Recognition?* ed. Fraser and Honneth (London: Verso; 2003) 519.

grip on the political process, the SCAF had to interfere both directly and indirectly in political life. With this, the SCAF became an interactive player in the public sphere.

Other actors, aside from the SCAF and some former regime figures, were also present in the mainstream sphere. Some had been active since the 1920s – such as the Muslim Brotherhood – while others were new to the public: all forms of political institutions that were established after January 2011, amongst the two political parties representing this paper's case study and numerous political parties that took into formation.

Although the three political forces act in the same sphere, each approaches different social sectors. For instance, the SCAF has greater capacity to approach a wider section of society than the forces competing with it; with its high social penetration that includes the majority of the population and its huge capacity to address the whole nation. This doesn't mean the other competitive forces are equal to each other in terms of capacity or address the same social sector, on the contrary the power balance has given an advantage to the Islamic organisations over the other organised political forces. Among all the political groups operating, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, with its long experience and well-known history of political opposition, is recognised as the most active in the community. The Brotherhood's party caters for the lower-waged and middle classes, and addresses the religious majority in its speech. Next come the rest of the Islamic political parties, among them the Salafi Al-Nour Party, to address similar social sectors. Other political parties, the so-called civil bloc, address the wider middle class and the educated.

Although the political forces seem to address different sectors of society, all are competing for absolute hegemony over society. At this level of the public sphere a wide capacity of communication is accessible, a wide range of resources is available, open mobilisation platforms are allowed, and state support is granted. All of these features mean that political forces in the mainstream public sphere can maintain their presence over the long time.

**Defining counter public sphere:**

Compared to the mainstream, this is the less fortunate sphere in terms of resources such as the large organisational experience and the capacity to mobilise support. The counter public sphere initially emerged to place political forces that weren't accommodated in the mainstream space; new parallel spaces emerged to accommodate interactions excluded from mainstream politics. It took Egypt a decade of informal activism to develop a sphere to defy the hegemony of mainstream politics.

The counter sphere was developed to defend the existence of new emerging political forces that didn't meet any of the existing channels of participation and expression. In response to a tightly controlled and stratified mainstream, politicians resorted to inventing their own medium of interaction; hence, the counter public sphere emerged to adopt popular demands and issues. This new sphere presents a new paradigm of activism, in which innovative capacities and resources are generated and strategies are applied in new ways.

The differences between the two spaces are not just in capacities and resources accessed or strategies adopted, but extend to the nature of the political forces present in each space and the nature of the interaction between them. The harmonious way in which the political forces in the counter sphere interact differs distinctly from the mainstream's furiously competitive nature. One reason for this harmony is continuous ideological and philosophical revisions and modifications; mergers of different ideological backgrounds have allowed better cooperation between different forces. For example, we can find liberals believing in leftist values of social justice and the role of the state in granting that; post-Islamic ideology is another example, a political force that emerged to negate the full deployment of religion practiced by popular Islamic groups for the purpose of controlling society.

The weakening of ideological boundaries has enabled the counter sphere to attract mass attention; the climax of this phenomenon was witnessed during the 18 days of the uprising, when the masses perceived the cause as representative and inclusive, and average citizens mobilised.

Ideology was not the only factor that relatively vanished in the counter sphere: binding structures such as hierarchy, centralised practice, and rigid leadership also disappeared. Counter politics is fully dependent on cause-oriented, flexible and decentralised structures, individual initiative, and multi-leadership. Thus the role of the individual generates commitment and dedication, and enables wide participation.

The newly introduced sphere is also distinctive in its use of modern techniques to approach the masses and promote causes in order to overcome limited resources. A significant feature of the counter space is flexibility in implementing new mechanisms and adopting modern methodologies and techniques for mobilisation. The intensive use of mass media, with great emphasis on citizen journalism, distinguishes the counter sphere; other mechanisms, such as self-funding initiatives and direct communication with the people, are mainly adopted to compensate for lack of resources.

### **What is between the mainstream and counter public sphere in Egypt's politics:**

This research paper argues that the unprecedented political activity that took place during Mubarak's last decade and accompanied the uprising in January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 resulted in the introduction of new practices and values to the public sphere. With the introduction of these new practices, the structure of the public sphere was transformed, and the political activity was reshaped.

Some characteristics that distinctively define the mainstream actors, such as the solid institutional organisation, attracted some of the revolutionary protest movements' activists. The purpose of creating political players that could comprehend the social demands erupted during the days of Tahrir provoked many of the activists groups to initiate political parties. During the early months of the transitional period, it became clear that forming political parties would allow the values and practices associated with the Egyptian political movements to be transcended to the formal political game, which would eventually result in negotiating them as a main concern.

Some other characteristics were transferred from the counter public to the public sphere through the process of institutionalisation. Newly established political institutions accepted the enforced political process in order to become active actors in the public sphere, yet maintained its genuine features that kept its identity distinct from various other actors in the same sphere. In other words, the new political parties have maintained special characteristics during its institutionalisation process that impacted the overall scene of the public sphere. Characteristics such as the preservation of the party's informal activity aside, the loose structure, and the allowance of an open space for cross- ideological activists to meet under a general umbrella of the party's guidelines. Street activity and direct communication with the masses are two important characteristics that Egyptian revolution has imposed on the public sphere's actors.

In fact the double-sided impact from both the counter-public and the mainstream has raised a dichotomy in the political organisation in Egypt. The public sphere contained two opposing forms of organisations that kept competing over time, which is Hierarchical Structure vs. the Loose Hierarchical or Network Organisation. In the light of the rapid flow of events and the continuous need for decision- making loosening the rigid hierarchical organisation for the favor of allowing a room for personal initiative became inevitable. "It became axiomatic that the network is more powerful than the hierarchy"<sup>51</sup>, which was outstanding obvious in the influence of the network organisation during the eighteen days of Tahrir. Traditional actors of the public sphere found it impossible to maintain its conservative structure as its facing this new trend invading the atmosphere, hence initiated in allowing practices of individualism, and member empowerment in order to maintain its presence and compete.

### **Conclusion:**

This chapter argues that although Habermas' definition of the public sphere can be applied to different case studies, it carries limitations that don't qualify it to understand the transformations brought to the concept's structure as a result of the Arab Spring. It also argues that studying post-uprising political

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<sup>51</sup> Mason, Paul, "The New Revolutionary: Experts in Messing Up Hierarchies", in *The Arab Spring: Rebellion, Revolution and a New World Order*, ed. Toby Manhire, (UK: Guardian Books, 2012), 281-282.

opportunity in Egypt entails close analysis of some critiques of the theory, and of the distinguishing characteristics of the mainstream and counter public spheres in society.

The differences between the mainstream and counter spheres in shaping society's political attitudes do not reflect an absolute separation between the two; on the contrary the two impact each other constantly and operate in correspondence to each others' drawbacks. This means the definition and development of the structure of the public sphere are products of continuous interaction between the two. The fluidity of activists between the two spaces, especially due to high social mobility and a willingness to participate in politics – in protests, voting, party politics – after the uprising, is considered very high, and enhances the continuous exchanging of experience and sharing of methodologies and strategies.

Counter spaces accommodating excluded groups and principles associated with them don't only exist as alternative spheres of subordinate groups, as Fraser has emphasised,<sup>52</sup> but can simultaneously interact and develop into one unit of multi-related groups. To explain, the various parallel spaces developed to place excluded forces can be studied collectively in a manner that defines one parallel, inclusive counter public sphere. This counter sphere is not of equal political strength to the mainstream public sphere, yet has a great deal of impact on the public sphere through interaction.

It remains necessary in the study of public space to distinguish between the two different forms of public sphere, yet the sum of all interactions between both spheres construct political reality. The main purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to how the public sphere was constructed in response to the political opportunity offered in the country at this given time. Throughout a year of transition the ruling regime attempted to expand the margin of freedom for political participation and expression as a mechanism to contain the unprecedented political fluidity that followed the uprising. One management strategy was to direct political fluidity towards formal channels of expression instead of informal ones.

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<sup>52</sup> Fraser, Nancy, "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two –Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice", in *Studies in Social Justice*, 1:1 (Winter, 2007): 30- 33.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE TRANSITION TO A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM

This chapter is deployed to understand the development of different political actions and characters that could study the Egyptian revolutionary groups. How different revolutionary groups successfully managed to form a new public sphere that counters the existing mainstream politics. It's critically important here to note that political campaigns –as a clear example of revolutionary organisation- is studied here as a series of phases shaping a coherent unit; this unit refers in large to the revolutionary protest movements demanding change and democratisation.

Various revolutionary campaigns had an impact on the process of constructing political reality during the transitional period, and their shared features should be studied. In this research the revolutionary protest movements are studied as a comprehensive unit of multiple- actors, an extended network of campaigns that drives its identity from the cause that once derived the Uprising of January 25<sup>th</sup>. With reserving the genuine character of each campaign, the revolutionary protest movements are considered a qualified unit of study to examine common identity, practices, and tactics adopted as a collective platform for various revolutionary campaigns.

Some scholars argue that the Egyptian revolution is a byproduct of a series of continuous waves of protest and political activism initiated in 2004 with the popular campaign for change (Freedom now) and the Egyptian Movement for Change, also known as Kefaya, as the first movement calling for internal political change.<sup>53</sup> No one can claim that the development of the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt was coherent or directed towards a certain path; on the contrary, it developed and expanded to include different sectors of society over time. Studying the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt entails understanding its composition and dynamics as a series of continuous waves. Rabab El-Mahdi- one of the scholars who adopts the political process model as a theoretical approach in studying political movements- argues that the study of the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt entails constructing a map of different waves of

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<sup>53</sup> El-Mahdi, Rabab, “Enough!: Egypt’s Quest for Democracy”, in *Comparative Political Studies*, 42:8, (August, 2009): 1012- 1013.



protests; wave that continuously develops in reaction to the changing political opportunity.<sup>54</sup> In this sense, the 18 days of the uprising can be studied as an advanced wave of protest. During this wave the revolutionary protest movements demonstrated maturity and development, and acquired new characteristics.

With this analytical approach, the revolutionary protest movements could be studied in the form of consecutive and continuous cycles of political campaigning that are all different parts of the same movement. A movement is an inclusive concept that can accommodate various political campaigns, activities, and actions. The revolutionary protest movements representing a unified ground gathering different revolutionary initiatives demonstrated shared common identity, practices, and characteristics. A large number of political actions were taken and various political campaigns were organised, but all could be studied in a collective framework of one movement.

Prior to the uprising, revolutionary political movements tackled various pressing issues that were sometimes popular and adopted wide political demand, as in the case of Kefaya, and sometimes had core issues that concerned a limited social sector, such as the judges' movement against corruption or the labor movement. After the uprising, however, the revolutionary protest movements became more harmonious in terms of the motivating cause and the mechanisms used. With reserving a number of exceptions, the revolutionary protest movements was wholly directed towards advocating the uprising's principles of democratisation, freedom, social justice, and combating corruption and authoritarian oppression. This unified sentiment meant a new form of political interaction developed in the scene. Due to the informal nature of this interaction, the revolutionary protest movements were not and will not be accommodated into the mainstream public sphere, but rather had to establish its own counter sphere.

This section of research is concerned, on one hand, with understanding the practices of the revolutionary protest movements during the transitional period after the fundamental change in its performance during the uprising, and the characteristics associated with the movement that emerged in

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<sup>54</sup> El-Mahdi, Rabab, "The Democracy Movement: Cycle of Protest"; in *Egypt: A Moment of Change*, ed. Rabab El-Mahdi and Philip Marfleet, (Cairo: the American University Press, 2009) 87- 88.

reaction to the political opportunity. From the other hand, this chapter addresses the ruling authority's manner in reacting to this character associated with the revolutionary protest movements. In an attempt to understand how the SCAF has addressed this image examining the revolutionary protest movements, the chapter studies the SCAF's discourse in addressing the revolution and revolutionaries. On a final note, this chapter studies the impact of two factors; first the distinct character presenting the revolutionary protest movements, and secondly, the SCAF's attitude towards this character on the political order.

***First: Understanding Political campaigns and the revolutionary protest movements:***

“No to Military Trials for Civilians” is one of the political campaigns that emerged only a couple of months after the SCAF assumed power. It later shifted to become a movement against military rule as a whole. This movement dates back to the early signs of violence against protestors, when on 9 March, 2011 a number of protestors were arrested during the eviction of their sit-in in Tahrir Square and sentenced to prison by military trials within only 24 hours. The campaign was started by several active members of the ongoing Egyptian revolution and aimed at defending the right to a fair trial of 12,000 civilians tried before military courts, including many revolutionaries arrested from demonstrations and sit-ins.<sup>55</sup> The campaign has demonstrated strong organisational skills and built up a well-structured flow of work and command. The skeleton of the campaign, divided between committees on media communication, publication and research, and advocacy, has attracted a large number of supporters to join the cause and thus form a whole movement. One of the obvious mechanisms of this campaign is that it acts as a pressure group, delivering the message using media connections and stakeholders. In addition, the campaign has strategically focused on gaining international support. Within less than a year of activity, it collected thousands of supporters all over the globe, and succeeded in mobilising international support in 42 global solidarity events. It aims to gain maximum media and public exposure. Convincing all the non-Islamist members of parliament to wear scarves bearing the movement's slogan during the swearing-in session was an innovative and successful marketing strategy that branded the campaign as a movement adopted by parliamentarians. Approaching the

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<sup>55</sup> No Military Trials for Civilians website: <http://en.nomiltrials.com/p/international-day-of-solidarity.html>, last visited: 15 March, 2012.

political elite to adopt its cause has enhanced the outcome of the campaign and supported its identity as a pressure group.

“Military Liars” is another political campaign that has seriously affected the political scene, and contributed mass marches throughout the country to the mobilisation for January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 mass protest. This campaign emerged following an attack by the armed forces on protestors in front of the cabinet building in December 2011. The violent events ended with at least 12 protestors<sup>56</sup> killed and hundreds injured. The sole idea behind the campaign is to widely promote all violations practiced by the armed forces against protestors. It is considered one of the most successful political campaigns among those that emerged in the transition period, in terms of affecting popular perception towards the military’s practices. One of the vital reasons behind the campaign’s success was the heavy dependency on decentralised structure and individual initiative. The campaign’s work is based on showing videos that reveal the armed forces’ violent acts against protestors. The main idea is to prepare a number of videos and upload them onto the Internet so they can be easily accessed by anyone, and to achieve maximum dissemination. Allowing anyone to use the videos means activists can screen them in various venues that the campaign’s organisers do not have the capacity to access. Hundreds of public screenings have taken place all over the country, allowing the movement unprecedented social penetration, and eventually successful input. “In only one day the movement counted 17 screenings all over the country. Screenings started in Ain Shams University in the morning and ended in Damietta in the afternoon. No organisational capacity would have succeeded in coordinating such huge-scale activities without allowing people to initiate their role as participants in the movement,” comments Doha Samir<sup>57</sup> on the movement’s success.<sup>58</sup>

The above-mentioned political campaigns are examples of success that generated the qualities of the revolutionary protest movements that kept emerging and practicing throughout the year studied in this

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<sup>56</sup> Hesham Sheha, Health Ministry deputy, quoted in Al-Masry Al-Youm: <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=321691>, last visited April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Doha Samir is an activist who has been involved in many of the revolutionary initiatives that emerged after the uprising, such as those of the Military Liars campaign. She is also a political analyst and teaches political theory at Cairo University.

<sup>58</sup> Doha Samir, personal interview, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

research. Although the two campaigns are organised by different individuals, adopt different approaches to mobilising and approaching citizens, and target different sectors of society, they share many commonalities. The two campaigns share similar qualities and causes: advocating democratisation and fighting oppression and authoritarianism, and demanding change. Below is a digest of new characteristics introduced by the revolutionary protest movements during the uprising and persisting afterwards:

**Mobilisation mechanisms and popular participation:**

Although the past decade's political movement was the chief motivators of the current revolutionary protest movements, yet its evolution was challenged by hardships. Participation is one important challenge that faced pre-January 2012's political movement, which remained seriously limited. El-Mahdi argues that the limited participation that characterised experience of the political movement before the uprising doesn't reflect its failure or immaturity but the tight political opportunity allowed for the movement to perform mobilisation strategies.<sup>59</sup> The limited ability to mobilise that the movement suffered from weakened its effect on a wide range of citizens. What the 25 January uprising eventually proved to be was the beginning of a new cycle of protest characterised by mass participation. Political activism became popular among citizens, which motivated greater numbers to take part in one or various political movements and therefore attracted newcomers to join the cause. Popularity translated into participation and support. A wider range of Egyptians became interested in politics, and therefore became motivated to participate in different forms of activism and informal politics.

The unprecedented increase in participation reflected successful development in mobilisation mechanisms. The revolutionary protest movements in Egypt demonstrated innovative mobilisation techniques a few months before the uprising, which aided its performance and allowed its transfer to a more advanced phase of mass protest. Mobilisation techniques such as the usage of social media, the Internet, and direct contact with the people have mobilised newcomers to the movement. The April 6 Youth Movement and the "We Are All Khaled Said" Facebook page achieved a breakthrough in mobilisation mechanisms. The April 6 Youth Movement broke the barrier of political silence and redefined the relationship between

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. El-Mahdi, *Enough!: Egypt's Quest for Democracy*, 1027.

citizens and politics through campaigns and demonstrations that targeted the less fortunate areas of the country; this direct communication strategy brought citizens closer to political causes. This popular approach was also aided by the strategic technological solution proposed by the “We Are All Khaled Said” campaign’s dependency on mobilising the well-educated and internet using sectors of society and approaching households using intensive media deployment. Various mobilisation mechanisms attempted to enhance the movements’ mobilisation ability by approaching different social and economic classes.

Adopting various techniques of mobilisation was directly reflected in the social composition of participation. The social composition of protestors shifted dramatically before and after the uprising. Aside from the ordinary politicized activists, the uprising mobilised ordinary citizens into politics. Participation came to represent different social sectors and ranged between all classes and age ranges. Such a wide composition of participation allowed a society of change to emerge in Egypt, in which the revolution’s principles were accepted and implemented in various ways. One outcome of political activism during the uprising and the past year of transition is cross-class and cross-age sympathy with the movement.

### **Ideological backgrounds and structure building:**

Unlike political parties, political movements are by nature freed from rigid ideological dogmas. Participants might range along the ideological continuum as political cause has the ability to mobilise cross-ideology. The disappearance of the tightening ideological constraints and political commitments allowed citizens not previously politicized to have first hand-experience in politics.

The lack of ideologically binding guidelines allowed movement organisers to innovate flexible structures sufficient for the cause. The “anti-hierarchical structure” sentiment controlling the movement has allowed postmodern structures, which come to revolt against the traditional mechanisms of organisation that was once used to organise political opposition groups in Egypt, to take in values such as decentralisation, cross-cause coordination, and individual initiative, which have shaped the new movement structure. The focus on the role of the individual has generated commitment along participants. Allowing postmodern features into political structures has introduced new merits to the revolutionary protest movements based on

individual preferences in opposition to the hierarchical rigid structures; in this type of structure, initiatives and actions are bottom-up driven, freed of leadership dependency, and the heavily dependent on the empowerment of membership. Technology here plays an important role in making non-hierarchical organisation easy.<sup>60</sup> “It kills vertical hierarchies spontaneously, whereas the quintessential experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that movements became hierarchical, killing dissent within, channeling the energy in destructive directions.” Commented Mason.<sup>61</sup> In fact the network form of organisation –which is used by many of the initiatives of the Egyptian protest movements- has granted the new movement an edge of acting rapidly with causes over the conservative institutions present in the society.

The role of individualism and rational choice is another important character of the post-uprising movements. Ahmed Awni,<sup>62</sup> one of the activists involved with the political movement years before the uprising, refers to the birth of a new breed of activists as “the parachute activists”: “Parachute activists are the newly mobilised activists being introduced to politics, who prefer to jump from one active political group to another, with no commitment or hierarchical positions.”<sup>63</sup> This type of activist highlights an important character of the movement, which is flexibility. The inclusive nature of a political movement that aims to gain maximum support imposes a flexible structure on its organisation; this flexibility allows space for activists to initiate activities and to name their roles within the broad framework of the movement. Hence, activists of different political movements can cooperate for a certain cause, and later become easy to shift from one movement to another.

### **The role of organisers:**

There were various attempts to organise large protests against the violence and torture practiced by the Ministry of Interior prior to January 2011. These followed the tragic assassination of Khaled Said by two police officers. It was decided to challenge the Ministry of Interior on their national day, 25 January.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Mason, “*The New Revolutionary*,” 282.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Mason, “*The New Revolutionary*,” 281.

<sup>62</sup> Ahmed Awni is a political activist who contributed during the uprising and to many marches and sit-ins that followed. He has been associated with the revolutionary socialists for a long time, and currently is a member of various informal revolutionary initiatives, in particular Mosireen (an initiative for activist filmmaking), and has helped prepare footage and material for the Military Liars initiative.

<sup>63</sup> Ahmed Awni, personal interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

“Preparations were made by representatives of various active groups: Wael Ghonim, the administrator of the “We Are All Khaled Said” Facebook page, members of Youth for Justice and Freedom, the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the 6 April Youth Movement were all present to organise the demonstration,” says an activist<sup>64</sup> regarding the organising groups behind the 25 January protest.<sup>65</sup> This protest was the spark that initiated the uprising in the streets of Egypt.

“Only then did everything get out of the organisers’ hands. The movement was too far beyond the street; only then did the organisers have to follow what the people wanted. No political group or force could claim control over the street at that time; that was the time for individual initiative and popular acceptance and support. It was only then that all activists became equal and acted upon the street’s demands.”<sup>66</sup> The organisers’ role has witnessed fundamental changes, from organising supporters along a present agenda to only support the cause of the masses and follow their initiatives.

Leadership gained a different character during the uprising and afterwards. Traditionally, the concept of charismatic leadership has been the chief motive behind politics in Egypt; ever since Nasser, every Egyptian has chased the dream of the heroic political leader who would lead the country to salvation. Leadership also played an important role in the emergence of various political movements during the past decade. Kefaya’s founding declaration, approved by 300 well-known political figures, is a clear demonstration of the popular desire to follow a leader. The January 25<sup>th</sup> uprising came to heavily negate this: with its successful leader-less organisation the perception of leadership role as a savior has collapsed. During the 18 days of the uprising, but also for the revolutionary protest movements that followed, there was a dependence on decentralised decision making and the importance of the role played by the individual was highlighted. Individual participation in new movements such as “Military Liars” and “No to Military Trials for Civilians” appeared to be the sole controller of events rather than subordinate.

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<sup>64</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haridei is a member of the Egyptian Stream Party’s high board and a former parliamentary candidate.

<sup>65</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haridei, personal interview, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>66</sup> Ahmed Awni, personal interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The extensive reliance on the role of the individual also has its drawbacks that led to the absence of a leadership role, and this approach affected the communication ability of the movements. The absence of a unified leadership has weakened the possibility of negotiating with the authority for demands.<sup>67</sup>

These features have shaped the movements' performance. Changes of structure, leadership, strategies and means of practice announced the birth of a new era of activism in Egypt. The cross-class social composition of the movement enhanced its position in the political scene. The study of the movements' impact on the political reality throughout the transitional period entails a clear survey of the political opportunity allowed for its activity and its placement in the public sphere. Below is an attempt to examine the main features of the political opportunity allowed for the protest movements during the first year of transition. In reaction to this new political opportunity, the revolutionary protest movement would be placed in the political order.

***Second: Placing the revolutionary protest movements in transition:***

“There is a clear contradiction in terms of interests of the ruling military elite and the revolutionary forces, especially from the perspective of maintaining the existing political order against change; according to this conflict Egyptian politics is being drafted. In this struggle, communication between the two conflicting forces and the willingness to compromise lacks as a resource of the transitional period,” comments Ziad Akl<sup>68</sup> on the political order controlling the relationship between the authority and the revolutionary protest movements during transition.<sup>69</sup> Different views of political practice made the clash between these two political forces inevitable; the transition shifted from being a period characterised by cooperation to a period of contention. That was reflected in the tightness of the political opportunity allowed for the movement to perform.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* Amin, *what happened to the Egyptian Revolution*, 155- 156.

<sup>68</sup> Akl is a political analyst who works for Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

<sup>69</sup> Ziad Akl, personal interview, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.



Some activists believe that the SCAF has followed a systematic strategy to hinder the role of the revolutionary protest movements as a political force in the transitional period, and to undermine its impact on society. This strategy is seen to depend heavily on media propaganda against the revolution and all revolutionary actions taken, and the adoption of a labeling technique in creating a cultural frame that addresses the revolution.

Social segregation was one of the strategies used by the authority to affect the population's perception of the uprising and the revolutionary protest movements in particular. "Egyptians were victims of a systematic labeling process that continued to stress on each to define his stand from the revolution. Labels such as secular vs. Islamic, stability vs. change, and protest vs. the wheel of production are all intertwined choice options that individuals had to position themselves along," Awni says on the contentious atmosphere that controlled Egypt's political scene after the uprising. This continuous defining process hindered efforts to unify the different groups of the revolutionary protest movements, let alone those to unify the whole nation under one cause of change.

The role of the political atmosphere is also really important in understanding the framework within which the revolutionary protest movements developed and functioned. Some activists believe that the atmosphere of political uncertainty was just a product of a number of critical junctures that empowered the authority to control the political scene. Salma El-Nakash<sup>70</sup> believes that the sole motivation behind the SCAF's practice is to stop real change from taking place: "The SCAF handles the situation as if it's only a minor event that demonstrated discontent, that's why containment seems to be the logical strategy in dealing with revolutionaries rather than answering the demands of the people."<sup>71</sup> Some other activists believe the SCAF has an organised strategy to affect the popular perception of the revolution and the principles associated with it. "The SCAF is using the soft power approach, which means they won't dare commit an act as stupid as the Battle of the Camel [an infamous mounted attack on protesters in Tahrir on 2 February 2011], but deploy all other means such as media propaganda to promote the purpose of their presence in

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<sup>70</sup> El-Nakash is a political activist long associated with the leftist Tagammu Party, who is currently a member of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party.

<sup>71</sup> Salma El-Nakash, personal interview, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

power against the immaturity of the revolutionary protest movements. This strategy may result in demobilising the revolution and name the SCAF as the protectors of the revolution, but nothing would change in the political scene,” Doha Samir says.<sup>72</sup>

El-Nakash believes that the role of junctures to an extent has served the revolution’s interest because all violent acts have eventually resulted in the sympathy of different social sectors with the revolution. “The SCAF is constantly losing ground among Egyptians – every time violence erupts a different sector of society joins the revolution. It was only after the Maspero massacre [on 9 October 2011] that Christians became an active sector in the revolution, and also after the direct attack on female activists during clashes erupted in front of the cabinet women became an integral part in the movement,” she comments on the gradual decrease of popularity challenging SCAF’s legitimacy.<sup>73</sup>

### ***Third: Analyzing SCAF discourse:***

Throughout a year time of transition, SCAF has successfully presented its image as the protector of the revolution and the force that ousted Mubarak off power. SCAF’s well-crafted image is a product of continuous strategic effort that was transcended to the public. SCAF discourse addressed to the nation was a vital key for sketching such a heroic image for its institution and its patriotic role in the national victory over the old regime. Discourse represents a mean deployed by the military authority to construct a distinctive image that separates the army as an institution and political governor from the revolution as well as carried a strong and direct message placing itself as the new ruling elite. Over a year of transition, SCAF addressed the nation through different means of media, but Internet communication through the social media portal Facebook remained the most used mean of communication to address the youth. The next section demonstrates a number of features that defined SCAF’s discourse, using a hundred Internet communiqué posted on Facebook over the past year of transition.

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<sup>72</sup> Doha Samir, personal interview, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Salma El-Nakash, personal interview, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

*Addressing their image:*

SCAF insisted in many of its communiqués to distinctively present the integral relationship between both its political role and the Armed Forces institution; hence, it carries both political power and the heritage of the army in the Egyptian history. Such a deliberate connection between two separate roles has placed the SCAF on the top of the state as the protecting shield of the Egyptian nation. Features shaping SCAF's image vary according to its stand from the revolution from one side, and from the old regime on the other side. In the process of assuming its position as a superior power owner, SCAF had to construct a respectively equivalent image in the society's perception.

One focal image SCAF deliberately sketched for its institution is "the revolution's protector"; such an image was clearly addressed ever since the first announcement made by SCAF- in February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011- declaring full protection for protestors. Fatma El-Zahraa Abdel-Fataah –in her study on the SCAF discourse- estimates that 68% of SCAF speech directed to the public was mainly focused on the army role in protecting the revolution and revolutionaries.<sup>74</sup> Such a constructed image has placed SCAF to be the guardian of the revolution, its protective resort, and the alpha factor for its success. The great emphasis on the heroic role played by SCAF in the revolution has constructed public consensus on the legitimacy of its power as the revolutionary government.

After being granted the legitimacy as the post-revolution ruling authority, SCAF had to construct a better superior identity that distinctively separates between its institution and other competitive political forces interacting in the public sphere. The other image that the SCAF's discourse has sketched is "the whole country's guarding shield that's not associated with struggling power forces in the society". In a whole year of transition and continuous power struggles, the SCAF tended to emphasise on this image as an independent institution that stands independently from different political forces.

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<sup>74</sup> Fatma El-Zahraa Abdel-Fatah, "This is how SCAF spoke: a read in the higher council's speech transformations in a year of power" (Arabic), El-Masry El-Youm Newspaper: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/print/655271>; last visited: February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 2:34 PM.

The last image shaped by the SCAF discourse on its role is “the source of reality and truth”. The SCAF stressed on its role as a reliable source of truth and the reality spokesperson. Communiqué no. (28)- posted on Facebook in March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011- is an evident demonstration for the image the SCAF was trying to promote; in this message SCAF threatens media persons of spreading rumors on the earlier’s intention to maintain power beyond the transitional period destined to end by the end of 2011. This communiqué comes in a series of messages directed to the people warning of the sever impact that rumors spreading in the society have on stability and security.

### *Addressing Revolution and Revolutionaries:*

January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution was enforced as a new political event in the political scene; hence, revolution and revolutionaries became a legitimate force that impacts Egypt’s politics. Therefore it was normal for the SCAF to directly include January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution in its discourse and to direct its speech to forces motivated it.

One could note that the motivating idea behind applying modern techniques of communication such as Facebook and social media demonstrates high interest shown by authority to approach young revolutionaries using one of the most used utilities by them. Admitting the legitimate role played by young revolutionaries, the SCAF has repeatedly directed its speech to youth of the revolution. In communiqué no. (22)- posted in February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011- the SCAF apologizes for violent attack on protestors relying on the institution’s credit of trust; here directing speech to the revolutionaries doesn’t only reflect recognition, but also addresses their role as the decisive actor in the political scene. Over a margin of a year of transition, Internet communiqués issued by SCAF shifted from addressing the youth behind revolution to addressing the great people of Egypt.<sup>75</sup> This shift resembles the swing witnessed in the general mood of the society as well as of the SCAF from addressing revolution to addressing a number of different political forces active in the society; a shift that could be clearly analyzed by studying the SCAF’s discourse approaching the revolution and revolutionaries over a year of time.

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<sup>75</sup> Up till February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (in Communiqué no. 4) almost all SCAF online communication was directed to the youth of revolution, which was later changed to address the great people of Egypt instead.

Generally, the SCAF discourse has handled January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution positively; a positive sentiment that extended to name January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution to be the predecessor of July 23<sup>rd</sup> revolution<sup>76</sup>; such a positive approach has imposed certain characteristics in describing the revolution. Characterise the revolution to be peaceful, tolerant, Unitarian, and motivated by good intention has granted the SCAF a chance to deny any other forms of revolutionary actions;<sup>77</sup> that's to say, SCAF has created a certain stigma around January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution through which all revolutionary actions could be judged. In addition, none of the motivations behind the revolution or the principles associated with it were mentioned in SCAF discourse. Implanting such a binding peaceful image of the revolution allowed the SCAF to negate any revolutionary actions that followed January 2011. All revolutionary actions such as sit-ins, anti-regime demonstrations, and mass marches were all denied by the peaceful definition of the revolution.

This image actually extended to associate revolutionary actions with the crisis hitting the Egyptian economy and the lack of security that the society is suffering from. In communiqué no. (52)- posted in May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011- SCAF clearly attack on different forms of protest and name it to be the sole reason behind economic hardness and the deteriorating security condition; such an accusing tone escalated in communiqué no (58)- posted in May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011- accusing protestors to plan for driving a wedge between the Egyptian people and the armed forces.

Criticizing revolutionary activities entailed the continuous attack on revolutionaries as well. SCAF's discourse, which later became official narration used in media, mainly targeted attacking protestors; one obvious feature of the discourse is the categorisation enforced on the youth of revolution to be the innocent youth of January 25<sup>th</sup>, and the peaceful heroes of the revolution; such static categorisation has provided exclusivity over the concept to pro-SCAF protestors only, and isolated protestors of the transitional era from January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution.

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<sup>76</sup> Marshal Tantawi's speech in the memory of October 5<sup>th</sup> war.

<sup>77</sup> In its Communiqué no. (51)- issued in May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011-, SCAF stresses on the peaceful and tolerant nature of the revolution, and denying that any of the violent acts taken by protestors to be related to the revolutionary merits of the youth of revolution. In addition, the message posted on Facebook associate protests with the deteriorating economic conditions and the lack of security that Egypt is experiencing.

Labeling the youth of revolution has allowed SCAF to orchestrate state discourse to attack protestors using similar techniques used by Mubarak regime, such as stressing on the infiltration of the naïve protestors by foreign provoking elements, and the deny of the representativeness of Tahrir- and other protesting spots all over the country- to the demands of the general population. In communiqué no. (65)- posted in June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011- SCAF states that Tahrir has been motivated by an organised strategy to drive a wedge between citizens and the armed forces, in addition accused protestors with the misuse of martyr's blood to destabilise the nation.<sup>78</sup>

Concluding; SCAF discourse has shown great deal of strategic planning to isolate the revolution from the political forces and individuals behind it. It's obvious that SCAF intended to acquire the image of belonging to the revolution, while denies it from the revolutionaries themselves. Evidently revolution remained a higher quality that was used by the new regime to gain greater weight and legitimacy over the society, while on the contrary all revolutionary actions initially attacking the ruling authority were heavily attacked and captivated away from its revolutionary identity.

#### **Addressing political forces and institutions:**

In continuation to SCAF attacking strategy on revolutionaries, all informal political forces were condemned as well. Political forces were never considered as a partner in the political process, but rather a convicted force that aims at destabilizing the state and negatively impact its economic and political status. The SCAF discourse has ranged from indirect attack on a number of actions and decisions taken by political forces to the direct attack on April 6<sup>th</sup> movement in communiqué no. (74) –issued September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011- in which the movement was accused to serve foreign strategies to topple down the state.

Convicting political forces for being traitors to the nation's interest and to the Egyptian state didn't consist with the SCAF's supporting position from formal political forces. In many occasions Marshal

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<sup>78</sup> This message was issued by SCAF to comment on violent clashes that broke down between protestors and police forces in the neighboring area to the Ministry of Interior. Its important here to note that the violent clashes followed on anonymous attack on an official celebration attended by families of martyrs.

Tantawi and other SCAF officials paraded with the democratic parliamentary elections that the nation has witnessed, and the important democratic role performed by political parties in pushing the wheel of democracy forward.

Such a dual position from formal and informal political forces has granted political parties the state blessing and support over informal political movements. In communiqué no. (5) – posted in February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012- the SCAF admits with the important role of the institutional political forces in denying traitors –in clear notification to protestors- the chance to cost Egypt any further loses; the communiqué is a clear statement positioning the SCAF from different political forces interacting in the society.

#### **Fourth: Factors helped hindering informal politics in Egypt:**

Some factors generated with the practice of the revolutionary groups have challenged the impact of the revolutionary protest movements in general on the political order. Below is an attempt to understand how these factors fit in the broader framework of the revolutionary protest movements.

##### *First: Personalising the revolution.*

One main characteristic of the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt is the lack of leadership due to the spontaneous nature of its members' participation. The early establishment of the "Revolutionary Youth Coalition" was the first step towards creating a personalised group to negotiate with the authority. The coalition's members are among the organisers of the 25 January demonstration, yet don't represent the whole movement; they are in general among those in the movement who believe that negotiations with the authority is the most convenient strategy in administrating the transition. This circumstance was used by the SCAF to serve their interest. Addressing this group as the leaders of the revolution eventually led to isolating them from the body of the revolution- the masses. The anti-leadership sentiment that characterised the uprising has left the coalition vulnerable to attack.

*Second: The establishment of political parties.*

The obvious purpose behind allowing the establishment of dozens of political parties in an uncertain political atmosphere and an instable political order was to breed a new political elite. This new elite, although once part of the revolutionary protest movements, was introduced as a reformist group aiming after their interest in power. This situation in fact radically isolated the movements from political institutions, and didn't allow revolutionary forces to institutionalise their movement in a proper manner.

*Third: the emergence of a parallel opposition movement and infiltrate the revolutionaries' lines.*

This strategy was a continuation for the old regime's management strategy in approaching loyalist opposition and to fragment the unified line of the movement.<sup>79</sup> This strategy provoked extremist groups of the fabric of the revolution ending with confrontations, which was marketed as an act of immaturity and political malpractice.

As a product of this strategy various protest groups were developed to counter those present in Tahrir and other revolutionary squares in the country. The famous Abbassiya Square protests were a clear demonstration of how parallels can exist to confront the revolutionary protest movements and eventually weaken the unified identity of the revolution.

*Fourth: Acquiring legitimacy.*

The SCAF used legal processes to serve their interests in preserving power and legitimising monopolisation. The referendum on constitutional amendments is one obvious example how it manipulated a legal process to gain control over society. "The main problem with the transitional period in Egypt is the state of vagueness and the lack of information. For example: marketing for voting "yes" in the referendum, supported by the military regime, stimulated great support among activists. Such wide support from activists and ordinary apolitical citizens was a result of a lack of information, since everyone knew that if you vote "yes" we would maintain the old constitution of 1971 but knew nothing about what could happen if we voted "no"; that was seriously misleading because it created a situation of voting for a defined choice or

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* Lust- Okar, *divided they rule*, 162- 164.



voting for the unknown,” Abdel-Rahman Haridei says of the SCAF’s strategy to use the referendum to grant legal legitimacy beyond the revolutionary legitimacy.<sup>80</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

The political opportunity for activism was tight during the transition, yet the revolutionary protest movements enforced its presence as an active political force in society. The spillover effect of the movement into numerous political initiatives and campaigns was driven by a higher political motive not to be contained or oppressed. Inevitably the movement existed and had a strong position. In reaction, the administration of the transitional period designed the whole political process to maintain a similar political order to that which existed before the revolution. Hence, the transitional period was designed to avoid enhancing the movement or its existence as a power-sharing partner in the political process. Excluding the movement from the political process generated a contentious political atmosphere.

It’s important here to highlight the role of the revolutionary protest movements’ inexperience and its lack of a comprehensive, unified vision in giving the authority the chance to exclude its role in designing the transitional period. “We, all political forces, didn’t have a real vision for transition. It’s our failure that the transitional period was engineered this way. During the early months that followed Mubarak’s resignation we thought initiatives such as “naming a civil presidential council” or “drafting a constitution before elections” were nonsense; now we realise that these initiatives are closer to logical than any other option that the army forced on us,” Haridei says on how the political process was designed to deceive the revolutionary political forces.

Dina Abu-el Fetouh, an activist, believes the generation gap to be the reason for the development and preservation of this contentious atmosphere in the transitional period. “The revolution was mainly led by young and middle-aged citizens who revolted against the old generation and the old mentality. That’s why later on – during the transitional period – that generation gap became more radical, between the majority of the population that was raised to believe that the Egyptian military is patriotic enough to ground stability and

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<sup>80</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haridei, personal interview, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

social justice, and the youth who are against the dogmatic, dominating patriarchal mentality that prevails in society,” she comments.<sup>81</sup> The completely different views of the revolutionary protest movements as a political force from those of the authority meant clashes were inevitable. This atmosphere has hindered the role of political activism and eventually undermined all revolutionary attempts to change the political order. Instead of advocating principles associated with the revolution and enhancing its role in the political process, the revolutionary protest movements were bombarded by a systematic process of discrediting its role in the society. As a result, most revolutionary actions remained limited to the counter movement for change, while others leaned toward participating in mainstream politics using political institutions. Both meant the continuous oppression of informal political activity.

This chapter is an attempt to understand the composition of the revolutionary protest movements. Various political initiatives and groups act independently within the broad framework constructed by the revolution’s principles, causes, and demands. This chapter, from one side, searches for an understanding of the main characteristics associated with the post- January revolutionary protest movements, which later could be used to understand the revolution’s practices; and from another side, examines how the SCAF has addressed these characteristics and dealt with it.

In examining the SCAF’s discourse it became obvious that political opportunity, in reaction to the sum of all political forces interaction, was in the favor of containing informal political practice as an attempt to direct it to formal channels.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided evidence for the common characteristics shared by various political initiatives of the revolution. Characteristics such as the lack of ideological rigid guideline, the individualistic character of these initiatives, and the empowerment of membership are all, for the purpose of the research, generalized to characterize the revolution. Later in the next chapter the research will test the hypothesis that these characteristics were transcended through institutionalisation process to the mainstream politics.

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<sup>81</sup> Dina Abul-Fetouh, personal interview, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTRODUCTRION TO THE EGYPTIAN PARTY SYSTEM AFTER JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>

It was not a classical condition of authoritarianism that the Mubarak regime enforced on the Egyptian state over the past 30 years, but rather a hybrid system that combined absolute control over state institutions with a number of superficial democratic practices. Some of these practices were adopted regularly and became a tradition, such as parliamentary elections, while others were adopted recently in reaction to international pressure, such as presidential elections. One of the factors that the Mubarak regime paraded was the large number of political parties. Right before the uprising Egypt had 21 active political parties, yet none had shared power with the ruling regime or even been considered a partner in the political process.

For years the political party system in Egypt remained fragile and closely coopted by the ruling regime. Allowing a controlled party activity of various opposition groups was one of the strategies used by the regime to enhance its control over political practice.<sup>82</sup> Egypt, under Mubarak, had for years witnessed the presence of political parties, but the practice has proved them ineffective and insignificant in the political order.

This deteriorating party system and the corrupt political atmosphere were fundamental reasons for the mass uprising that broke out on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The deteriorating party system forced political participation into the informal sector and resulted in the formation of a political movement that developed and gained strength over a decade. The political movement in Egypt started with the establishment of Kefaya in 2004 to serve a popular will to demand political participation in an authoritarian system that denied them that right.

It was when Mubarak regime's attempted to tighten its grip on the whole political scene in the 2010 parliamentary elections that the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt succeeded in gaining sufficient capacity to mobilise the masses over the 18 days that ended with Mubarak's ouster. By January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the

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<sup>82</sup> Bellin, Eva, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective", in *Comparative Politics*, 36:2, (January 2004): 144-145.

protest movements had attained its maximum mobilisation ability and reached the peak of its momentum; all of this participation energy had to be accommodated in the political process afterwards.

It was obvious that the numerous political parties that formed right after Mubarak's fall would not all necessarily play a decisive role in Egypt's politics. Only a limited number of these parties became legally recognised and ESDP is a good example of such parties that became effective in the political scene at an early stage of its development; other parties remained active at the same time failed in meeting the prerequisites entailed by law for legal recognition, such as in the case of ESP. An even smaller number became active in the political process and in the parliament specifically. This section of the thesis is concerned with introducing a general overview of political parties to the reader, and specifically classifying and defining the political parties that shape this case study depending on two main sources: first, the theoretical literature on classifying political parties; second, the activists' – party and non-party members – evaluation of party institutions.

### **First: Introduction into the case study**

#### **I: The Egyptian Social Democratic party:**

The Egyptian Social Democratic party represents a successful case for studying the emergence and formation of political parties that affirm its loyalty to the revolution's principles in combating authoritarianism. Although the presence of a tough political environment filled with uncertainty and the tightened political opportunity that works along a short timeline, this party has presented itself as a well-structured institution that managed to place itself fourth among the biggest active political parties in the parliament, and to take the burden of forming the civil advocating bloc against the domination of the Islamists over politics.

It's important here to find the relationship standing between this party and the revolution, in terms of its formation, practice, as well as the theoretical and philosophical background. This section is dedicated to understanding how revolution's principles were represented in the party formation process.

### **Party philosophy and vision:**

Examining the party agenda, for the transitional period, one could easily notify the outstanding gratitude given to the role of the revolution in inspiring the party's formation. As an introduction to the party program, the party states that its institution comes to take part in the post-revolution era, in which the revolution has crafted the first step in a long revolutionary wave that will impact all state institutions, and would pressure for creating a new democratic society.<sup>83</sup>

Party agenda states that the institution's vision is designed around creating a democratic republic, through answering the revolution's demands. In order to approach the revolution's demands, the party took the initiative to adopt party and non-party members' demands and invest in legislating it; such a stand represents an aim at the collective unity of democratic actors of the party and non-party organisations under an overarching umbrella. The party's interest in the political game was all focused on affecting the political order and to push the process of democratisation forward; gaining legislative authority and participating in drafting the national constitution was the most convenient tool to serve such an interest.<sup>84</sup> The party program gives attention to the important role played by the newly established political institution as a partner in the political process and writing the country's constitution; one mechanism stated in the program to be the mean to enforce the party on the political scene is elections, which is granted a special stand on the party's priority list.

### **Party's history of formation:**

Party's vision is directed to implementing the third way politics, also known as social democracy. "Our party believes that politics shouldn't force any constraints on citizens, with the complete protection to their social, political, and economic freedoms. Social democracy doesn't entail the enforcement of any harsh measures of radical change on citizens such as extensive nationalisation; on the contrary this philosophy

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<sup>83</sup> Party Program (the Egyptian Social Democratic party); <http://www.egysdp.com/>; last visited: April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012; P. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Party Program (the Egyptian Social Democratic party); <http://www.egysdp.com/>; last visited: April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012; P. 8.

depends heavily on a broad understanding of human rights, as well as examining the globe without ideological constraints.”<sup>85</sup>

The Egyptian Social Democratic party, and the social democracy as an ideology in general, is a broad coalition formed of uniting a number of political groups that were all involved in supporting the revolution and advocating enforcing the revolution’s principles, “the party started with one or two groups with social democratic background, a group advocating citizenship rights called the citizenship observatory, Egypt Freedom group headed by Amr Hamzawy known of its liberal tendencies, a group of activist members of the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement, a large group of the popular campaign for supporting El-Baradei, the justice and freedom group, and later joined members of the Be Positive initiative.”<sup>86</sup> These are the main groups forming the party structure, and the interaction between them represents the party’s internal politics.

The incoherent group structure, and the various conflicting backgrounds have challenged the stability of the party structure. Dr. Emad Gad, member of the People’s Assembly on the behalf of the party, believes that internal conflict in the party has affected the party formation and the party’s image in the public, “different stands adopted by the various groups within the party framework from choosing a presidential candidate. The ongoing struggle over choosing a pro-revolution candidate that might have a limited chance of winning such as Khalied Ali, against other groups advocating the endorsement of a strong candidate such as Amr Moussa is an example on how stagnant decision making in the party is.”<sup>87</sup>

Experience has proved that internal dispute between various groups composing the party remains limited to conflicting political stands and never extended to the internal fraction extent. Interaction between these groups remained smooth and flexible to a great extent, with reserving the Egypt Freedom group’s withdrawal from the party as an exception. One interesting remark on this party is the continuous mobility of members of different groups to integrate in other ones. Dr. Ihab El-Kharat, a Shura council member on the party’s behalf believes that the great level of mobility present in the party leads to its enrichment, “I joined

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<sup>85</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>86</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

<sup>87</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

the ESDP initially as member of the Justice and Freedom group, which is more a local based group mainly in Alexandria and Assuit than present clearly on the national level. Now I cant call myself a member of this group, but rather a member of the party. With the evolution and development of the party structure I became closer to the Citizen Observatory and the Social Democratic groups” he commented. Ihab doesn’t deny the presence of internal dispute as a result of the grouping acts; “some of the members of the groups formed the party believes themselves to reserve a better status than the new members joining the party. While on the other hand, the new members believe status should be based on qualification and efficiency.”<sup>88</sup>

“I joined the party along with 40 of my group members, representing the Citizenship Observatory group. We found in this party an opportunity to carry positive action towards our goal in the civil state and the anti-discrimination society” commented Emad Gad on how did he got involved with ESDP as a member of a research group on religious strife in Egypt, “The majority of my group are Christians, hence we attracted many of the members of the Egyptian Christian community to support the party” he added.<sup>89</sup> Gad reflect on his own experience in being a group member that is integrated in the party context, in which he that his group membership, unlike others, has completely dissolved in the party structure, “We, as a group, think highly of the party’s potential in serving the dream for which the citizenship observatory group was initially formed. Hence, we don’t regularly meet any longer, instead we participate in the party activity.”<sup>90</sup>

Internal dispute is not based only on group structures, but also have further dimensions such as the role of the reformists against the revolutionary tendencies in the party, as well as the role of ideologies as a core motivator of conflicts. Though none of the party members could fit in the criteria for a reformist who believes in reforming the existing structures rather than changing it, yet there is an ongoing struggle between the reformists or so also known as the political process advocates, and the revolutionaries within the party. “This conflict reflects the composition of the post-revolution political scene in Egypt. Some might lean to fit in the political order and believe in the role of the political process, while others believe that the

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<sup>88</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

<sup>89</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>90</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

revolutionary protest movements is the only way out of the current political crisis.”<sup>91</sup> Another dimension of the party internal conflict is the clash between the groups fighting for civil liberties, mainly Christians, and the members with leftists’ tendencies. “Christians are not yet a politically experienced group, and solely concerned with their life style, that’s why the extensive present of members advocating socialism might rebel them. Such a stand is also met with the arrogant reaction from the leftist groups in the party depending on their long history of political experience”<sup>92</sup> Ihab el-Kharrat believes that although Christians represent the majority of the party’s voting bloc, as well as the main sponsors funding the party, as still not placed in the decision making places within the party structure when compared to other groups, “this party is challenged by the political immaturity of some of the party members, in addition to the political illness affecting the practice of others”, he added.<sup>93</sup>

Aside of all the negative implications of internal dispute and the problem of grouping, Gad believes that party composition of different groups in terms of ideology, and political stands was translated into capacity when the party joined the Egyptian Bloc during the parliamentary elections, “the various political stands that was adopted by the different political groups in the party have allowed more flexible negotiations in the light of the party’s integration with the Free Egyptians party with classical liberal affiliations, and Tagammu’ Leftist party in the Egyptian bloc.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Remarks on party funding:**

Tracing funding sources required an understanding of the complex structure constructing this voting bloc. “The main voting bloc pillars of the ESDP are not labor by any mean, but mainly Christians, members of the economic Upper- Middle and Upper Class, the great majority of the intellectual community, as well as the absolute majority of the population interested in containing Islamists’ hegemony in the society” commented El-Kharrat on the construction of the party voting bloc, he added that in relation to this “the

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<sup>91</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>93</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interview, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.



donor basket of the party is mainly formed of big professionals in different fields such as construction, medicine, engineering, and businessmen, in addition to the Christians.”<sup>95</sup>

Records prove that ESDP collected funds of almost 10 million Egyptian pounds during its first year. Although records of this funding mightn't be as transparent as it should have been to all party members, but reports on funding are currently under the making to be presented in front of the party's general assembly destined to take place May 2012.

Emad Gad refers to the continuous notification of fund sources and allocation to the parliament members of the party, “Dr. Mohamed Abul-Ghar always tend to notify the two houses' parliament members on the behalf of the party with two main things; First, the sources of funding that is supporting the party. Second, the composition of our voting bloc. I believe that Dr. Abul-Ghar by doing so insist on implicitly sending a message to the party parliamentarians that these are the two core issues composing the party's priority list, which should be considered in their political practices.” With an estimate of 80% Christians in the composition of their voting bloc, and 95% of the contributors to the party capital, civil state seems to be placed on the top of the party agenda.<sup>96</sup>

## **II: The Egyptian Stream party:**

ESP is a moderate Islamic party that was mainly initiated by former, expelled, youth members of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>97</sup> The initiative developed in the light of clashes between the Muslim Brotherhood leaders of the old guard and the youth members over the membership in the political arm of the Brotherhood, also known as the Freedom and Justice party. The party program was heavily criticised by the youth members of the Brotherhood on the group of the direct involvement of Sharia and religion in political stands; Parallel to this, the youth proposed an initiative to form a youth political party that link the

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<sup>95</sup> Dr. Ihab El-Kharrat, Personal Interviews, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>97</sup> Party Program (the Egyptian Stream Party); <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/ar/2011/11/07/>; last visited: April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Brotherhood to the revolution. The initiative was initially proposed to take place in the light of the Muslim Brotherhood, but after rejection and expulsion of the initiators that party found its way independently.

### **Party philosophy and vision:**

The main motivating philosophy behind the party formation is the revolution. “The conflict between our group, that later formed the party, and the leaders of the Muslim Brother is the ongoing classical clash between reformists and revolutionaries. By the time we were calling for revolutionary change of the society, our leaders were only talking for accepting Mubarak regime’s offer for reform” with this Mosaab El-Gamal, a party founder, emphasised that a theoretical conflict on the two groups’ core believes was the reason behind the dispute between them, “We are a group who finds revolution is the only way for developing Egypt, while on the other hand our leaders believed reform and cooperation with the ruling regime is the only way for them to grant their organisation’s development only” he added.<sup>98</sup>

The philosophical rivalry between generations in the brotherhood was sufficient enough to provoke the furious clash that ended with expelling a group of the most active youth leaders in the brotherhood. “We were dismissed from the brotherhood, without even interrogation or questioning on any of our stands, because we refused to join the Brotherhood’s political party” clarified Abdel-rahman Haredi, a party founder, rationalising the reasons behind their expulsion from the party, “ after revising the Freedom and Justice political program we objected on the intensive usage of Sharia as a reference for political actions. After discussion, we came up with a working plan to form a youth party under the supervision of the Muslim Brotherhood; the main purpose behind this idea was to bridge the gap between the revolution and the brotherhood, since this party would have attracted members along the revolution’s line. Our working plan was heavily criticised by our leaders, and later we knew about our expulsion in the media.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Mosaab El- Gamal, Personal Interview, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>99</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haredi, Personal Interview, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The revolution has always been placed in the front of this party's planning for their agenda. The main philosophical contribution upon which ESP rests is "Main Stream politics" which is the politics of the ordinary people; hence, their vision depends on creating a better Egypt depending on the popular perception in defining so. The party advocates the civil state, and the protection of the individuals' liberties. The party might be against the establishing of an Islamic state governed by sharia, but is overwhelmed by the Islamic culture and the teachings of religion.

Depending on being a fruit of January 25<sup>th</sup>, revolution, and the adoption of mainstream politics, ESP is totally against imposing a ready-made political agenda on the people, on the contrary, the party founders believe that the political agenda comes next after approaching the Egyptian people's help in drafting it. "We have political scholars helping us formulating the main principles of our party's political agenda, such as Dr. Seif Abdel-Fatah, and Dr. Moataz Abdel-Fatah, but we are still obliged to consult the people in such principles", emphasised El-Gammal that the party's core believe is that citizens will always have more practical solutions to difficulties they are challenged with, using these solution is sufficient enough to develop a political program that approaches the widest majority of the population, whom are called the mainstream citizens.

The party is only based on a set on main principles along which its members are binding; these principles are only general goals of the party that was drafted during the transitional period and directly relates to the maintenance of the revolution's achievements and to continue implementing the unachieved demands.<sup>100</sup> The party adopts a citizen-based approach in interpreting political actions, and in defining political stands. In addition to the absence of the legal recognition, some might see that ESP is a revolutionary initiative rather than a well-structured political party, due to the lack of any political and ideological constraints as well as the absence of a guiding political agenda. "ESP is a party that is perceived by many to be absolutely dissolved in the revolutionary protest movements, this is of the highest value to us

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<sup>100</sup> Party Program (the Egyptian Stream Party); <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/ar/2011/11/07/>; last visited: April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

as party members. We might be late in establishing our party structure, but this will come in time, and when we do ESP would not only represent the revolution, but also the majority of the population.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Party’s history of formation:**

The composition of the Egyptian Stream party is simpler than the Egyptian Social Democratic party. The majority of the party membership is among what the party agenda calls the mainstream citizens, which are defined to be the average Egyptians whom have maintained their Islamic identity and culture. According to the party agenda, the party is aiming at approaching the wider sector of the population, which is not involved in politics, and not interested in the political process. In the party literature, un-politicisation is a shared characteristic by the average Egyptians; this is the bloc that the party is addressing.

The party is composed of a wide circle of political and strategic advisors, such as Dr. Heba Raouf, Dr. Seif Abdel Fatah, who are known with their moderate Islamic tendencies and the high civic political stands. “The main purpose of having political advisors is to strategically plan for the party’s political stands. Hence, our advisors had to compile with our philosophy as a party in approaching the mainstream citizens” El-Gammal emphasised.<sup>102</sup>

Below the level of the strategic planners, comes the party leading figures. The majority, if not the absolute majority, of the party leadership are among former members of the Muslim Brotherhood. “Leadership of our party is not only monopolised by ex-Muslim Brothers, on the contrary we have Esraa Abdel-Fatah a leading figure of the April 6<sup>th</sup> movement in our political bureau” commented Abdel-Rahman Haredei.<sup>103</sup>

The party composition becomes more diverse with moving downwards its structure. Party committees and initiatives are characterised by being popularly participated in unlike the party leadership

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<sup>101</sup> Mosaab El-Gamal, Personal Interview, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Mossab El-Gammal, Personal Interview, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haredei, Personal Interview, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

that is headed by some named individuals. The political background of the party members as well as supporters is diverse.

### **Remarks on party funding:**

ESP funding doesn't come as systematic as it is with the Social Democrats. The greatest bulk of funding that goes to the party is dependent on the party leadership's contribution, and members' fees. "Members' contribution doesn't come always in a financial form, but some of the members contribute to the party with their time and effort in an attempt to run the party affairs without heavy reliance on money" commented Haredei, "I, as a former party candidate for a parliamentary, funded my campaign depending on my personal spending, and some limited contribution coming from the Revolution Continues coalition that my party was a member of."<sup>104</sup>

Funding seem to be a critical issue that is facing the formation and later the sustainability of ESP. the limited funding that the party members managed to collect was allocated for providing the party a headquarter in Cairo and an even smaller branch in Alexandria. For the party to maintain its presence on the political scene, funds have to run into its veins, and this could be attained through mobilising more members to join the party, and to mobilise the support of some well known wealthy figures of the political scene.

### **Second:Classifying political parties**

Literature on political institutions has introduced numerous typologies that define political parties depending on different categorical classifications. Early attempts were made in the late 1950s by Sigmund Neumann; his typology categorized political parties according to members' interaction with the party organisation. This typology is divided into three main classifications. First, "parties of individual representation", which articulate the demands of a specific social group. Second, "parties of social integration", which have the organisational capacity to reach members of different social groups and in

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<sup>104</sup> Abdel- Rahman Haredei, Personal Interview, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

return demand their support. Third is an extreme model, “parties of total integration”, which demands full commitment and dedication from party members.

Another attempt was Maurice Duverger’s proposal to classify political parties according to organisation. Some parties have the capacity to develop a complex organisational structure and wide network that grants potential for “mass parties”; on the other hand, “cadre parties” depend on limited infrastructure to mobilise more highly skilled politicians with high socioeconomic status.<sup>105</sup>

With developments in politics all over the world, parties become complex to the extent that not only membership-based or organisational classifications could comprehend the modern party experience. Other scholars, such as Larry Diamond, believed that political parties could be classified according to their functions and position in the political equation of a certain state.

### **Classifying political parties according to function**

In the chapter “Types and Functions of Parties”, Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond propose seven different functions for political parties. Their analysis was mainly driven by the fundamental function of political parties in classical theory, which is the articulation and aggregation of interests and the waging of electoral campaigns.<sup>106</sup>

The seven functions presented by Gunther and Diamond could be categorized according to purpose as follows:

#### **Functions related to electoral process:**

These are considered the fundamental functions behind introducing a given party as a political actor, and mainly revolve around recruiting elite politicians. The first function of political parties in the electoral

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<sup>105</sup> Diamond, Larry, *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore- Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 27.

<sup>106</sup> Gunther, Richard and Diamond, Larry, “Types and Functions of Parties”, in Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond (ed.), *Political Parties and Democracy ed. Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond* (Baltimore-Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 4-5.

process is “candidate nomination” so that each party can be represented during election time. Second is “electoral mobilisation” through different mobilising strategies and mechanisms; this function is primarily concerned with gaining the maximum weight of votes for the party’s candidates in election.

#### Functions related to representation:

“Issue- Structuring function”; this is the function in which the party closely serves it’s electoral campaigning through framing social interests into agendas and principles promoted using mobilisation strategies. The “societal representation” function is addressing issues of concern that relate to different social groups; this function is considered the seed for building up a national political party.

#### Functions related to governing:

These functions are performed by political parties taking part in the political power balance in a given society. “Interest aggregation” is one of the functions that require political parties to go outside their ideological and political constraints, and to reach different sectors of society through melding their separate, individual-based interests into broader agenda. An advanced function performed by political parties that are decisive partners in the political process is “forming and sustaining governments”; holding in-office positions gives political parties practical experience in implementing agendas. Finally, “social integration” introduces political parties as a political participation channel that links the society to authority. Parties are the catalysts used by different social sectors to participate in the political process.

Using the above-mentioned functions, Gunther and Diamond propose a typology for classifying political parties. This typology divides political parties into five different forms. First, “elite parties”, characterised by a minimal organisational structure in favor of elite members present within a specific geographical area. Second, “mass-based parties” are deeply rooted in the literature of the 19th and early 20th century, which mainly tried to understand the parties that emerged after the mobilisation of the labor class in many European countries. Mass-based parties’ fundamental characteristic is wide membership and rigid hierarchical structure. “Ethnicity-based parties” are the third type of political party presented by Gunther and Diamond. The main focus of ethnicity-based parties is a specific social sector; hence the agenda and all

political and social programs proposed by such a party are not concerned with the national interest, but the interests of a given social sector. Fourth, “electoralist parties” are mainly concerned with the electoral process, to the extent that party offices and staff act as a supporting group to the party’s parliamentarians. This party type is characterised by a number of specific functions such as candidate nomination, electoral mobilisation, campaigning, and a low level of citizen involvement. Finally, “movement parties” are a type of partisan organisation that falls in the space between party organisation and political movement.

### **Classifying political parties according to party capacity**

In his study of party systems after reform, Leonardo Morlino emphasises that political parties are usually classified according to party membership, party financing, party activity in the parliament, and the party’s relationship with the society. In his chapter “The Three Phases of Italian Parties”, Morlino summarises the development of the Italian political system after the Second World War.<sup>107</sup>

Post-war Italian parties were mainly classified as mass parties – closely associated with religious organisations, such as the Catholic church – with wide social bases of supporters, huge finances, parliamentary majorities, and elitist structures governing society. For some ten years the 1960s popular movement pushed for new, mid-sized or small parties that were closer to society. These developed into post-politics parties or so-called localist parties with more inclusive membership, and better penetration into society’s different sectors.<sup>108</sup>

Studying the historical evolution of the political system in Italy and the build-up of its organisational complexity, Morlino introduces four different categories to classify political party organisation.

The “modern cadre party” or elite party is the first model introduced by Morlino, characterised by a strong leadership, a vertical internal structure, a low or very low membership rate, and an electoral strategy that depends heavily on creating and maintaining identities related to the party. Secondly, the “electoral

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<sup>107</sup> Morlino, Leonardo, “The Three Phases of Italian Parties”, in *Political Parties and Democracy* ed. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (Baltimore- Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) 110.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* Morlino, “*The Three Phases of Italian Parties*,” 112.



party” is characterised by seasonal activity associated with election time; this party type is characterised by small organisational structure, heavy dependence on leadership, administration by marketing and communication specialists, and a close relationship to a certain topic or interest. Third, the “personalistic party” is solely focused on only one person – usually its leader and representative – and all organisational capacity is invested in supporting this sole person. Finally, the “movement party” is an intermediate actor between political parties and political movements, mainly concerned with mobilisation and participation along a specific issue or limited number of issues.

These four models are ideal when compared with the Egyptian experience; hence, understanding Egyptian political parties entails combining characteristics of different models.

The above-presented typologies studied political parties from different perspectives, yet there is clearly a wide range of similarities between them. These similarities indicate that these ideal models have sufficient explanatory capacity for the analysis of different political parties.

### **Third: Contextualising the case study**

None of the earlier typologies can closely and truly comprehend the Egyptian map of political parties that developed and expanded after the uprising. Political party models shaping these typologies rest on ideal explanations type of party organisations. Egyptian political parties and parties in developing countries have characteristics of a number of the models yet never identically equate with only one.

In order to understand political parties in Egypt one must identify characteristics that might fall in different models presented in the typologies presented by Gunther and Diamond and Morlino. In attempting to identify parties in the case study used in this research, characteristics of different party models have to merge together.

## Classifying the Egyptian Social Democratic Party

The Egyptian Social Democratic (ESD) Party is one of the most well-known of the political parties established right after the uprising. Aside from being recognised among members of different social sectors, the ESD party is considered a founding member of the electoral coalition known as the Egyptian Bloc and of the secular front in a broader sense. Ideologically, the ESDP adopts social democracy as a core of thought directing its political platform.

Originally the idea behind establishing the ESDP was to create an umbrella that resembles the Labor party in Brazil, with its ability to collect all active political groups in society to work together including civil society organisations and labor unions, and to align all these forces under one structural organisation. The social democratic ideology allowed a large platform that could give liberals and leftists a common ground. “Five political groups agreed on establishing a union or party that grants them more room for existing. These groups were the social democrats, headed by Faried Zahran; the Popular Campaign for Mohamed ElBaradei; Youth for Justice and Freedom, headed by Ihab El-Kharat; the Citizenship Observatory Group, headed by Emad Gad; and the Egypt Freedom group headed by Dr. Amr Hamzawy,” Sally Sami<sup>109</sup> says of the main ideological trends and political groups that shape the internal structure of the party and engineer the power balance map.<sup>110</sup> The diverse background of the party’s founders has enriched its political stance, and acquired it an inclusive platform that can relate to different sectors of society.

The ESDP has demonstrated clear institutionalising ability over the past year. Aside from attracting a great number of the 25 January revolutionary protest movements activists, the ESDP has played a decisive role over a year of transition through channeling the revolutionary protest movements’s demands to the ruling authority. Negotiating and bargaining with the military authority over the socio-political demands of the January 25<sup>th</sup> movement was one of the strategies that allowed the ESDP to enforce itself as a partner in the political process.

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<sup>109</sup> Sally Sami is a member of the executive committee of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party.

<sup>110</sup> Sally Sami, personal interview, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

### The ESDP's function:

“This party was at first established to be an umbrella that gathered different political groups advocating the social democratic ideology. The main purpose behind organising different groups in one party is to impact the political process through a long transitional period, using elections as a strategy to impose the Egyptian Social Democratic Party as an effective political force,” says Faried Zahran.<sup>111</sup> Zahran emphasises that political parties are by nature organisations that acquire political weight through enforcing their presence in the political reality using elections. The party's function, according to Zahran, is to lead political negotiations with the ruling authority to attain demands.<sup>112</sup>

The ESDP functions as an electoralist party: a main objective is to politically affect critical institutions such as the parliament, making room for the party in the political process. The ESDP has managed to gain a solid and well-organised parliamentary representation of 27 members; in order to achieve this in the 2012 parliamentary election the party had to deploy full capacity for the purpose, to the extent that building internal organisation came next, after the election. “It was only six months between the party's establishment and the parliamentary elections, that's why its general assembly and high board elections had to be postponed till after election time,” says Hani Naguib,<sup>113</sup> emphasising that the elections shaped the main function of the party for at least the initial period after its establishment.<sup>114</sup>

This electoralist function has extended from supporting candidates throughout the electoral process to supporting its parliamentarians in the parliament; one important function played by ESDP is to help its parliamentarians maintain close ties with their constituencies. In addition, the party is currently building up an internal research unit to generate policy papers for parliamentarians to present in the parliament.

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<sup>111</sup> Faried Zahran is a founding member of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party and a current member of its high board.

<sup>112</sup> Faried Zahran, personal interview, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Hani Naguib is a member of the high board of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party.

<sup>114</sup> Hani Naguib, personal interview, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

### The party's capacity:

In presenting his typology, Morlino built his classifications on four main capacity indicators: membership, finances, parliamentary activity, and relationship with society.<sup>115</sup> On analyzing its capacity one could argue that the ESDP has characteristics of both electoral and personalistic party models.

First, party membership: As mentioned earlier the ESDP is considered one of the most popular parties among different sectors of society, especially outside the Islamic voting bloc. Membership ranges widely along different professional and religious affiliations in a manner that grants diverse social representation.

Second, party financing: the ESDP depends heavily on the personal financial support of its members. Aside from membership fees, the party is mainly supported by donations from a number of members; “Christian businessmen and Politicians believed that through ESDP they would have an input in Egypt’s politics. Party membership became a mechanism through which a new sector, aside of the already existing various sectors, of the society would defend their rights.”<sup>116</sup>

Third, party activity in the parliament: the ESDP and the Egyptian Bloc represent the fourth largest bloc in the parliament after the Democratic Front for Egypt, the Islamic Bloc, and Wafd party, which indicates the active role played by the party inside the parliament.

Fourth, relationship with society: The ESDP tends to maintain a close relationship with the whole society. One core sector of society considered the seed that helped establish the party is the revolution as a reference, which is why the ESDP tends to maintain close ties with the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt. The ESDP also tends to reach different sectors of society and cater for their interests.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Morlino, “The Three Phases of Italian Parties,” 135.

<sup>116</sup> Dr. Emad Gad, Personal Interview, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

To conclude, the ESDP's capacity and its strategies for deploying that capacity proves that it carries characteristics of the electoralist and personalistic party models. The party's electoralist character entails reaching out to society either through membership or by maintaining a loyal voting bloc among different social sectors, while personalistic characteristics appear in the domination of a number of businessmen over party finances and the public exposure of only a limited number of members who are already public figures.

### **Classifying the Egyptian Stream Party**

The Egyptian Stream Party (ESP) presents a completely different model than that of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party. Unlike the ESDP, the ESP did not manage to obtain official recognition from the state; the party has failed to overcome the obstacles put in place by the political party organising law. Not having official recognition has not prevented the Egyptian Stream Party from practicing as a fully-functioning political party; in a sense, the party participated in the parliamentary elections as a member of the electoral bloc the Revolution Continues Coalition, and aside from its role in parliament, it invests a lot of its capacity in outreach campaigns and mobilisation activities.

The founders of the ESP are all former members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who had been expelled without notifying them with the rationalisation behind such a decision. Mohamed El-Qassas, Islam Lotfy, and Mosaab El-Gamal are the core figures behind the party; the three started their political careers during college as members of the Brotherhood, an organisation that they had developed long-lasting relationships due to family affiliations. Their roles as college activists and their interactions with other political forces active on campus were decisive in shaping their political identities, which include a belief that the national interest is a higher goal over organisational and political affiliations.

With the deteriorating political conditions in Egypt and accelerating political activism, the party founders – Qasas, Lotfy, and El-Gamal – became more involved with active groups affiliated with different ideological backgrounds, to the extent that they became active – against the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau

orders – in the political groups calling for the January 25<sup>th</sup> demonstrations, which later formally called themselves the Revolutionary Youth Coalition.

“When we were chanting for change and mobilising for the revolution, the Guidance Bureau and all high-rank members of the Muslim Brotherhood only saw reform,” says Mosaab El-Gamal, emphasising the huge difference in the views of the Guidance Bureau, which cared about the welfare of the Brotherhood as an organisation but not about the national need for and interest in change. He adds, “the only obvious view of the Muslim Brotherhood was to demand the existing authority – name it accordingly – reform its political stand in a manner that would allow the Brotherhood’s activity into the political scene; such a narrow-minded perception would not have allowed it to keep up with the rapid base of the street and the revolution.”<sup>117</sup>

Against the higher orders of the Guidance Bureau, the three founders of the party decided to follow the revolutionary path, which later resulted in internal conflict and their expulsion from the Brotherhood.

“The idea of the party was not a reaction, to challenge the Muslim Brotherhood for their decision to expel us, on the contrary it goes back to our attempt to organise a youth party from within the Brotherhood itself. The primary idea behind the Egyptian Stream Party was to allow young members of the Brotherhood to join a party independent from the [Brotherhood’s official] Freedom and Justice Party,” emphasises Abdel-Rahman Haridei, adding that the ESP founders rejected the idea behind the Freedom and Justice Party because they didn’t believe a party program should depend solely on Islamic Sharia. The ESP was an attempt to bring the Muslim Brotherhood closer to all Egyptians.<sup>118</sup>

The Egyptian Stream Party founders have a long history of organised political activity, yet their party came to negate all the values they were taught in the Brotherhood. They adopt a post-Islamist approach of reaching out to revolutionary youth, and directly relate to the political movement of the street rather than organised political institutions. The party’s insistence on participating in all revolution-related processes has

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<sup>117</sup> Mosaab El-Gamal, personal interview, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012

<sup>118</sup> Abdel-Rahman Haridei, personal interview, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

fed its reputation as an active force in the revolution rather than a political party; this reputation created a circle of supporters. Doha Samir – one of the party’s supporters – says, “While all post-revolution political parties remain reactionary to the revolutionary demands, the Egyptian Stream Party appears as an active partner in articulating and developing the revolution’s demands.”<sup>119</sup>

#### The party’s function:

The ESP fits the classic definition of the “movement party” with its close ties to the revolutionary protest movements in Egypt and its decision to deploy its full capacity to serve its cause. The party is not tied by any ideological or political constraints and is not even bound by a solid formulated political agenda or program, so it has a wide margin of freedom to relate to the continually developing and changing demands on the political scene.

The only exception that the ESP has is its limited membership; the party membership didn’t reach the sufficient 5,000 members to grant the institution the legal recognition. Although the party remained unofficial, it practiced its campaigning function during the parliamentary elections by aligning with the Revolution Continues Coalition’s campaign, and demonstrated a fairly functioning internal structure.

#### The party’s capacity:

One could argue that without official recognition ESP shouldn’t be considered a functioning party, yet it carries potential that proves sufficient capacity for analysts to consider it one.

Membership may be limited to the extent that didn’t qualify the party for legal recognition, yet a wide and expanding circle of supporters has formed of potential members and intellectuals advocating the party’s cause. Due to its low level of membership, the ESP faces the obstacle of financial hardship to an extent that its lack of potential in membership mobilisation and fund-raising strategies might challenge its sustainability.

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<sup>119</sup> Doha Samir, personal interview, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Another indicator of the hardship facing the ESP is their weak if non-existent representation in the parliament. The party is a member of the Revolution Continues Coalition, which consists of the ESP, the Popular Socialist Coalition Party, the Freedom Egypt Party, and a number of the revolutionary political groups including the Revolutionary Youth Coalition. The Revolution Continues Coalition came through one of the more competitive parliamentary elections in Egyptian history with a good stand, managing to win seven seats in the parliament – among which none were for the ESP. One could argue that such a weak parliamentary representation translates into institutional failure, while others could trace a model of a political party closely tied to the revolution that is still in the making. The only success that the ESP has attained is the correlation shaped in the social cognitive mentality that relates the party to the revolution and revolutionaries; this correlation indicates a direct positive association with a certain sector of society – that is, the revolutionary protest movements.

#### **Fourth: Evaluating the case study**

As during Mubarak's era, the formation of political parties after the uprising faced many challenges constructed by the ruling regime. Legal constraints represent the main obstacle faced by many political forces in their attempt to form party organisations. Heavy financial demands and the high cost of organisation have made the process of institutionalisation of political parties difficult. Aside from the legal framework, pressuring political parties to form institutions and meet the conditions mentioned in the governing law over a short margin of time in order to be allowing to join the parliamentary elections was another crucial challenge facing political parties' establishment. The time between the SCAF's declaration of the law on political parties in April and the November parliamentary elections was consumed with the recruitments demanded for legal recognition; hence, newly established political parties were not given the chance to search for a social base, mobilise supporters or members, or even form a voting bloc. This situation also affected political parties' institution-building processes, and limited the possibility for any of these organisations to establish a concrete internal structure or at least institutionalise their agenda and later on transfer it into electoral programs. Weak internal structures were related to the tight opportunity allowed for political party formation and hindered the administration of successful electoral campaigns; this resulted in minimal parliamentary representation and the domination of parliament by religious political parties.



The tight political opportunity offered for party establishment reflected an insufficient context for building a functioning multi-party system. Furthermore, the legal and political stands have hindered all possible attempts by the political forces to develop and grow beyond the boundaries of outcast counter political practice.

Institutionalising values and practices associated with the uprising and the revolutionary protest movements was a precondition for establishing a post-uprising political order in Egypt. In order for the new regime to maintain the political status quo, it had to squash any possibility of establishing a new political order that translates the revolution's demands. Hence, the revolutionary protest movements were destined to remain outcast from the formal political process and so access to mainstream politics remained conditioned by the ruling regime's patronage, network, and interests.

Despite all the challenges a number of political parties were established in an attempt to institutionalise values and beliefs associated with the revolution. Some of these political parties managed to attain legal recognition, while some remained active and present with no legal standing. Among both types the Egyptian Social Democratic Party and the Egyptian Stream Party preserved a connection between their organisation and the ongoing revolution in the street. Still, these parties were pressured by a well-drafted political order hindering the role of political parties and minimizing their impact on society.

In this section we trace the internal deficiencies affecting political parties' practice. These deficiencies resulted from a weak and rushed development process, and a pressing transitional period.

- Institutionalisation:

One focal reason for establishing political parties in fold of January's revolutionary wave are to institutionalise the principles and values associated with it. To a great extent, both parties' political agendas and political stands refereed heavily to the demands of the revolution. This was obvious during the parliamentary election campaigns: the electoral agendas of both the ESP and the ESDP reflected the direct

demands of the uprising, such as social justice, combating corruption, and establishing new state institutions. Participating in political processes such as the parliamentary elections has enabled the two institutions to be presented in the mainstream public sphere and to presented its values to a wider sector of society. With reserving that ESP didn't win any of the parliamentary seats, yet campaigning for elections has allowed the party a wide margin to market its principles to the people.

But for these political parties to preserve their impact on the political process, a well-structured organised institution had to be established. This is the greatest deficiency that challenges the preservation and consistency of political parties with membership among protestors who took an active role during the uprising. The experience in party establishment among protestors of the revolutionary protest movements - though still young- has faced hardness resulted from the attempt to organise voluntary political action and building organisations in an atmosphere that rejects the traditional structure of organisation.

The pressing political atmosphere and continuous contentious struggles on many political fronts that has not allowed party leaders a chance to organise parties internally. Although parties' institutionalisation shouldn't be judged over a short period of time, a year of transition was sufficient to comprehend the birth processes of these parties, and to judge the significance of their presence in the political process. Institutionalisation will always remain an ongoing process that demonstrates party development.

The ESDP seems to be performing better than ESP in developing an institutionalised structure. "The internal structure of the party has different committees with specific specialties that operate independently. Decision making is centralised to an extent in the executive committee," comments Nehal El-Banna, a leading member of the ESDP, on how the party operates.<sup>120</sup> Although internal structure is centralised, it is democratic: "It was only due to the political rush for elections, that the party delayed internal elections until after the upcoming presidential elections," says Magd Zahran on the party's democratic processes.<sup>121</sup> All these developments qualify the ESDP to establish a well-organised institution.

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<sup>120</sup> Nehal El-Banna, personal interview, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>121</sup> Magd Zahran, personal interview, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

For the ESP these developments are delayed; aside from the absence of legal recognition, a lack of internal development affects its institutionalisation process. The party operates more like a movement than a political party. “The Egyptian Stream Party is an attempt to recreate the Tahrir movement with its voluntary actions and spontaneous organisation,” comments Mosaab El-Gamal, one of the founders.<sup>122</sup> This sentiment has affected the internal development of the party, and the lack of internal structure will constrain the party’s capacity to establish a political institution.

With a lack of sufficient institutionalisation comes the important role of leadership and leading figures. Political parties of the post-uprising era are criticised for being personalised to a great extent. Salma El-Nakash is an ESDP member who became interested in the party because she believes its leaders – public figures such as Mohamed Abu El-Ghar and Ziad Bahaa El-Din – are trustworthy.<sup>123</sup> Member Ziad Akl says, “political parties in Egypt had been associated with important figures in politics for a long time. As a product of a long heritage of personalised politics, many of the new political parties are challenged by membership inactivity. Party members prefer to remain inactive instead of supporting an institution that emphasises only the role of its important members.”<sup>124</sup>

- Mobilisation mechanisms:

Newly-established political parties tend to communicate and mobilise using similar means to those used in informal activism, such as intensive usage of social media; direct communication with the masses, and using street politics are other mechanisms of mobilisation used by political parties. In addition to similar mobilisation mechanisms, new political parties and informal organisations of the revolutionary protest movements also crosscut in their mobilisation pool; both kinds of organisations still mobilise among the same line of activists, the largest number of these activists are with affiliation to the protesting actions that characterised Egypt’s politics during transition. This has resulted in the absence of a hardline societal support base which was evidently a reason for the limited success achieved by new parties in the parliament.

<sup>122</sup> Mosaab El-Gamal, personal interview, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>123</sup> Salma El-Nakash, personal interview, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>124</sup> Ziad Akl, personal interview, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

With the domination of Islamic parties over traditional venues of mobilisation and the heavy reliance on religion as a tool to gain support, new parties had to innovate new means of mobilisation. The use of modern techniques of mobilisation attracted support for the newly-established parties among upper-middle and middle class activists, rather than the lower classes.

- Internal fractions and sustainability:

The continually pressing political atmosphere and the conflicting nature of the political opportunity governed interaction within party leaderships. The parties' stance against regime practices and the endless struggles over designing the political system created conflict as members have different views on and reactions to these conditions. Internal conflicts were not only present between leaders and party members, but between party members as well.

Due to various political experiences and political ideologies, internal friction is a common deficiency in post-uprising political parties. The ESDP, unlike the ESP, is one of the parties formed by groups from various political backgrounds, ranging ideologically from liberalism to socialism. Although this wide ideological background can enrich the party's experience, it is also reflected in different if not conflicting perceptions.

Another conflicting tendency in the party is due to continuous internal conflict between two political wings: a revolutionary wing, mainly young members of the party advocating integration with the revolutionary protest movements, confronts a reformist wing that supports the long political process enforced by the military elite and negotiation with the ruling authority.

This situation has great implications for the stability of the party not only in terms of its internal structure, but also in terms of its interaction with and stance against the ruling authority. A hesitant position on the ruling regime's practices is considered a general feature of the newly established political parties, and

reflects the power struggle between their different political wings. Continuous internal compromises resulted in the absence of a consistent political stance according to which the party could be perceived.

Aside from the public's perception of the party's political stance, internal friction has a serious impact on its stability and sustainability as a unified entity; indeed, it provokes divisive tendencies. Internal friction also refers to the problem of grouping among different social and religious groups of the party's members. The formation of a coherent Christian bloc within the party lines reserved heavy criticism.

It's important here to clarify that there is a thin line between membership diversity and internal friction. Generational and professional diversity will always be an addition to a party's capacity, in the sense of contributing various experiences and viewpoints to its practice, while internal friction will always be a malignant threat to a party's sustainability. The ESP, with members almost all of similar ages and political experience, might face deficiency in terms of the one-sided viewpoint that limits its capacity out in the diversity of society.

- Membership loyalty and commitment (membership quality):

Larry Diamond is one of the scholars who theorise for a direct relationship between modernisation and democratic development and weak membership loyalty.<sup>125</sup> With increasing numbers of more varied parties, individuals seem reluctant to figure out their political affiliation and to imagine their role in the political process, therefore remain hesitant in their believe in political parties and the role of their participation in it.

In Egypt, things seem to be slightly different: in light of unprecedented political fluidity and willingness to participate, parties are faced with the obstacle of a long negative heritage. Political parties are perceived in the Egyptian cognitive memory to be ineffective in the political process and coopted by the old regimes; hence, newly-established political parties are perceived in a similar manner.

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<sup>125</sup> Diamond, Larry, "Introduction", in *Political Parties and Democracy* ed. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (altimore- Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) x- xi.

In addition to a negative image and heritage, political parties are also challenged by competition from the informal revolutionary protest movements. The presence of alternatives has attracted participants away from parties. With the domination of individualism in political practice in Egypt, informal activism remains more popular than political parties. Accordingly political parties tend to act independently rather than represent certain institutions. Nehal El-Banna of the ESDP says of the importance of party loyalty in enhancing post-uprising political parties' relationships with the movement: "A large number, if not all, our members are also members in many of the revolutionary protest movements and participate in all revolutionary actions and demonstrations, yet never associate their participation with the party. With all our manpower in the streets, sometimes against party instructions, the party's position in reacting to events taking place in the street is weakened."<sup>126</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

Political Parties in Egypt have been working in conditions not of their making, but rather were imposed on the parties' practices. These conditions undermined the significance of the whole political atmosphere and therefore undermine the role of political parties as an actor in this atmosphere. The institutionalisation process, whether stand weak, of the post-January political parties has proved that characteristics of the informal politics, referring to the revolution, will inevitably transform the whole practice of politics in Egypt.

The Egyptian Social Democratic Party could be referred to as a successful political organisation that managed to overcome all legal and political obstacles in order to become an active institution. With the party being an active political actor in the public sphere it carried the positive and negative character associated with the revolutionary protest movements. ESDP's activity in the public sphere, while carrying characteristics such as the loose institutional structure, the cross- ideological membership, and the dependency on modern techniques of mobilisation (all of which are related to the revolutionary protest movements) has transcended qualities of the counter informal sphere to the formal political process.

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<sup>126</sup> Nehal El-Banna, personal interview, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The Egyptian Stream Party, while remaining an unofficial political organisation, has stood as an example for an attempt to institutionalise the revolution. Not meeting the legal and political prerequisites for official recognition has challenged the party's practice and constrained its activity within the counter sphere.

This chapter has concluded that institutionalisation of the revolutionary protest movements has witnessed successes and failures of different political groups to form political parties. Those who managed to succeed in forming political parties overcame prerequisites not of their own making, at the same time, were able to inject their own qualities and character into the institutionalising process leading to an eventual transformation within the public sphere.

## *CONCLUDING REMARKS*

### *LEARNING FROM EGYPT'S EXPERIENCE*

With Egypt embarking on a new political phase marked by the January 2011 uprising, the importance of determining the factors affecting the construction of the new political order is clear. In an attempt to answer to this concern, this research depends heavily on studying the legal, political and social frameworks that governed political activity during transitional period in which this new political order was drafted. How these frameworks have engineered the public sphere and established criteria for accepting some political forces in at the expense of alienating others is of key importance in understanding the politics of post-uprising Egypt. One important finding is that the framework governing the public sphere in Egypt has favoured formal politics with its institutional forms over informal street politics; this is to say, constituting political parties appeared to be a decisive criteria for the acceptance of political forces into the public sphere.

The problem with the Egyptian experience is that the institutionalisation process started ahead of the stabilisation of the new socio-political order that was supposed to emerge after the revolution. The institution building process came to reflect all the fluctuations occurring on the political scene, showing that social order still in development. This unstable socio-political order was reflected in the political parties established during the transitional period. It also was obvious in the military regime's inconstant stance towards these political parties and their position in the political process. This is to say, in reaction to the continuous changing nature of the political order, political currents faced difficulties in establishing stable organisations.

In light of the political opportunity structure emerging during the transitional period, there was no room allowed for the revolution to channel its activity into mainstream politics — which entails being active in the process of setting up a new political order — except through formal politics. Political parties remained the doorway through which change was supposed to pass based on the demands of the masses. In reaction to this, political parties emerged to contain active members of the revolutionary protest movements and to promote its values and principles.



Some expected the emerging political opportunity structure would make revolutionary groups disappear, but they didn't. The cyclic nature of the revolutionary protest movements is a decisive character that helped the Egyptian revolution retain its core characteristics. The cycles of protest that emerged and followed the uprising in January helped draw out the principles, values and demands that later formed the collective consciousness of the revolutionary protest movements.<sup>127</sup> This collective consciousness was characterised by new sentiments, such as decentralised organisation, cross-ideological mobilisation, self-organisation as opposed to formal leadership, and a suspicion of structures in the struggle to confront authoritarian power.

The introduction of these new characteristics into politics was the duty of the new political parties. In other words, with the introduction of new practices and characteristics on the part of the revolutionary protest movements, starting with the January uprising and in reaction to continuous cycles of protest provoked by high political fluidity, the political order witnessed transformations in reaction. This new political order added the new cultural frames and political strategies that the revolution introduced, which also affected political parties established during the same period. Political parties were, then, only a catalyst through which the prevailing values in society — represented by the revolutionary protest movements — was transposed to become part of the political process, present in the formal political equation.

Judging the role of political parties in reflecting the revolution in formal politics in this research is mainly influenced by Patricia L. Hipsher's comparative analysis of the Chilean and Brazilian experiences.<sup>128</sup> Hipsher's analysis of the two cases was based on understanding how political parties could sustain a movement in society.<sup>129</sup> While the Chilean experience in institutionalising its political movement — led by student protestors — led to minimal, if any, results, the Brazilian experience has successfully borne fruit.

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* El-Mahdi, *Enough! Egypt's Quest for Democracy*, 1015.

<sup>128</sup> Hipsher, Patricia L., "Democratic Transitions as Protest Cycles: Social Movement Dynamics in Democratising Latin America," in *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century* ed. David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 153.

<sup>129</sup> In their book *The Social Movement Society*, David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow introduce the concept of the movement society to refer to changing societies that witness heavy change in their political order as a result of popular uprisings. The authors employ the concept of "movement society" for societies in which the new political order reflects exactly the movement's demands, values and practices.

Hipsher's analysis rested on the level of integration that the movement was allowed during the process of institution building. This is to say, the Chilean political party formation process developed in isolation to the movement, which provoked the latter's isolation, while in the Brazilian example, political parties were closely associated with the movement, therefore integration occurred.<sup>130</sup> The Egyptian institutionalisation experience rests in the middle between Hipsher's two case studies.

From one side, political parties in Egypt carried significant characteristics of the revolution into formal politics. Party political agendas reflected, in a broad sense, the revolution's demands and principles of equality, social justice, and good governance. On the other hand, these very same parties were attacked in systematic fashion by the ruling elite to hinder the impact of the revolutionary protest movements on the process of establishing the new political order; this in addition to the long heritage of inefficiency in party political practices in Egypt. This atmosphere put Egypt's party political practice in a challenging paradox between societal and state influence. Admitting the limitations imposed on the party building process in Egypt, this research nonetheless affirms the high capacity of these parties to transfer the values of the revolution into the sphere of formal politics.

Aside of impacting formal politics, political parties in post-revolution Egypt came to reflect the revolutionary protest movements's characteristics in its internal structure, or lack thereof. Flexible with the adoption of innovative mobilisation techniques, on the one hand, while internally fractious and lacking membership loyalty and commitment on the other, are all characteristics transposed from the revolutionary protest movements into post-revolution political party structures. Other characteristics present did not relate to the revolution, and in some instances contradicted its nature, particularly the personalisation of politics.

Political parties in post-revolution Egypt may not have successfully transferred the power and depth of the revolutionary protest movements in society in Egypt into formal politics, yet they have impacted formal politics greatly and paved the road for a new cycle of institution building that could take the country's politics in a more revolutionary direction.

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* Hipsher, *Democratic Transitions as Protest Cycles*, 168-169.

Theoretically, the research conclusion compliments Ellen Lust-Okar's theory on regime management strategies in the Arab world. Lust-Okar examines Arab regimes, including Egypt under pressure to liberalise. In order to avoid any loss of power, ruling regimes tend to approach reformist groups and to create institutions that shape government-opposition relations.<sup>131</sup> The lessons learned from the Egyptian experience proves the validity of Lust-Okar's analysis; during the transitional period the ruling authority embarked on a process of liberalisation — such as allowing for the establishment of political parties and conducting parliamentary elections — that resulted in underlining its presence and power compared to relatively weak political parties without the capacity to rival the regime.

Indeed, the outcome of the Egyptian experience in establishing political parties after the ouster of Hosni Mubarak didn't end up with a power sharing arrangement, but rather maintained a similar situation to that which existed in Mubarak's days, with vain political parties present to prove that liberalisation is taking place. Elections and institution building was but the strategy through which the ruling regime expanded its authority over the country.<sup>132</sup>

What could constitute a concluding lesson of the research is that some democratic practices can be manipulated to serve authoritarian interests. Political party formation in Egypt, which is one important practice of democratisation and the first step in building a new political order, was administered in a manner that enabled the same already existing political forces to maintain authority: traditional political forces such as the Islamic bloc, as well as key powers like the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Meanwhile, new political forces that emerged from the revolutionary process — such as the ESDP and ECP in the case study analysis conducted in this research — faced obstacles in the legal and political frameworks SCAF established and that eventually resulted in a weak party system.

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<sup>131</sup> Lust-Okar, Ellen, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Incumbents, Opponents, and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.* Lust-Okar, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World*, 175.

The case study showed that ESDP as a functioning party could represent a decent model for an opposition party and an active actor in the parliament and the scene, while ESP would remain struggling with hardships of the harsh legal framework. The two post-January parties could have shaped a new political system that leads to democracy, yet didn't happen. The early beginnings of the Egyptian experience in party establishment has demonstrated that civil political parties will remain outside the equation of power sharing, but remain active as an opposing bloc.

The fundamental gain for these political parties was to impose its character and cause change in the public scene. This means, political parties might not be a powerful actor in administering the political order, but definitely headed changes that transformed this order's character. By doing so, political parties transcended, even if with limitation, characteristics of informal politics to the mainstream public sphere.

One of the characteristics transformed the Egyptian public sphere is the increased importance of anti-elite political actors such as the Kefaya youth movement, the April 6 Youth Movement, and the "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook community. These new actors were more creative in overcoming the regime's strategies deployed to alienate their presence in society. The fall of elite dogma is closely associated with decreasing attention paid to the role of ideological and organisational affiliations in political activity in favour of a more flexible approach based on national interest.<sup>133</sup>

Another characteristic demonstrative of the transformations introduced in the Egyptian experience is the informality of individual interactions with public space, or what is also known as the non-movement approach. Such interactions do not depend on ideological vision or a certain cause but rather situation. Political participation became associated with spontaneous reaction to the certain situations, rather than strategic planning. Hence, the public sphere became characterised by continuous transformations and changes in reaction to new forms of media and electronic communication as well as new political actors emerging in society.

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* Ezzat, "Self, Space and Time," 32.

Newly- established political parties might not be integrated in the political decision-making position, but have definitely affected it to a great extent. The transformations brought on the public sphere will always change the political practice in Egypt.

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