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Graduate Studies

[BEYOND URBAN DEVELOPMENT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE DECISION  
TO BUILD A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL[NAC]]

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

[Arsany Medhat Naiim]

TO THE

[MA-Political Science]

SUPERVISED BY

[Dr. Mostafa Hefny]

Edited by

Mary Aravanis

[Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024]

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

[MA-Political Science Master of Arts]

***Declaration of Authorship***

I, [Arsany Medhat Naiim ], declare that this thesis titled, “[Beyond urban development: the political economy of the Decision to build a new administrative capital [NAC]]” and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University.
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

Signed:



Date: 8 Feb 2024

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DEFENSE COMMITTEE

*Abstract*

Following major societal upheavals, regimes often embark on grandiose infrastructure projects, particularly new capital cities. This thesis delves into the political-economic motivations behind such seemingly monumental undertaking, taking the case of Egypt's New Administrative Capital (NAC) as its prime example. Through meticulous analysis, it argues that three key drivers—legitimization, legibility, and clientelism—underpin this decision, ultimately fostering a process of power consolidation. Legitimization: The NAC serves as a potent symbol of a "new era," offering the post-upheaval regime a platform to showcase its modernity, efficiency, and commitment to progress, thereby bolstering its legitimacy in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences. Legibility: The planned capital, with its meticulously controlled physical and social organization, promises to render the population and their activities more "legible" to the state, facilitating surveillance, resource allocation, and ultimately, political control. Clientelism: The construction and management of the NAC presents a vast network of lucrative contracts and patronage opportunities, fostering loyalty and cementing the regime's ties with select economic and political elites. These interrelated motives, intertwined with the pursuit of control and influence, constitute what this thesis terms power consolidation. By examining the NAC through this lens, it sheds light on the broader phenomenon of mega-projects as instruments for regimes to not only rebuild infrastructure but also to reshape the political landscape in their favor.

### *Acknowledgements*

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for their unwavering support throughout my Master's journey. To my father, Medhat, and my mother, Magda, thank you for believing in me even when I doubted myself. Your constant encouragement and sacrifices have been my bedrock. To my sisters, Sylvia, Christina, and Sofia, thank you for always being there for me, offering a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. Your love and laughter kept me going when the journey felt long and arduous. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Mostafa Hefny for his invaluable guidance and supervision during my thesis work. His insightful feedback and expert mentorship were instrumental in shaping this research. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Amr Adly for his early contributions. His initial support and insights helped set the foundation for my research path . "Special thanks to Dr. Nadine Sika , and Dr. Amr Adly for being the first to agree to read my thesis . Their expertise and support were truly a gift. Finally, I am grateful to Michael Safwat and Mina Safwat for their unwavering encouragement and presence at my thesis defense. Their faith in my work and their willingness to lend an ear calmed my nerves and boosted my confidence.

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السياسي "المصريين : هتشوفوا مصر ثانية بعد افتتاح العاصمة الإدارية الجديدة". 2022. El- Sisi, Abd El- Fatah.”

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ردًا على إنشاء العاصمة الإدارية. الرئيس السيسي: نفذنا مسارات ذات فكر لتجاوز مشكلة ” El-Sisi, Abd El-Fatah.”

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URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z76755qQ1gk>

## List of Abbreviations

new administrative capital city [NAC]

Public Private Cooperation [PPC]

the Administrative Capital for Urban Development (ACUD)

the National Service Projects Organization (NSPO)

the Armed Forces Land Projects Agency (AFLPA)

the Ministry of Housing's New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA)

The National Authority for Tunnels (NAT)

the state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC)

the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces (EAAF)

China Fortune Land Development Company (CFLD)

$\lambda_c$	carrier wavelength
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**Chapter I**  
**introduction**

Introduction

In March of 2015, at the famous "Egypt the Future" conference in Sharm el Sheikh, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi revealed the birth of his ambitious project, the new administrative capital city[NAC]. In a swift decision, this mega project was due to be built from scratch, east of the current capital. In 2014, General Abdel Fatah El-Sisi became the president of Egypt after ousting the previous president Mohamad Morsi in 2013. The deposition of Morsi was supported by a substantial number of Egyptians, however his overthrow was ensued by political and economic instability. The Muslim Brotherhood, to which Morsi belonged, strongly combated this act, and foreign states, such as America and Britain, considered Morsi's overthrow to be an illegitimate coup. Additionally, terrorist acts were on the rise following Morsi's 2013 overthrow. Prior to this, however, the country was already in political and economic chaos. The chaos was mainly a result of disputes between Islamist groups, liberals, and the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to strikes by the general population due to a shortage of crucial resources such as gasoline. The unveiling of such a mega project is set to take place in such a condensed amount of time, arouse a fundamental question. **Why would a new regime which is described by being authoritarian and came after two upheavals decide to build a new administrative capital city from scratch in the desert?** It is an appealing question because this is a mega project which requires a huge amount of resources and finance, while the country has been facing economic and political instability since 2011.

What is hypothesized in this thesis is that regime power consolidation is one of the main reasons for taking decisions like this, in already critical situations. In order to scrutinize this hypothesis, I will use three main concepts in comprehending and analyzing what is happening in the process of building NAC : legitimacy, legibility, and clientelism. The reason for choosing these three concepts to frame my analysis in this thesis, is that the three concepts are related to building power between two main actors - rulers and subjects - as will be shown. Secondly, after investigating these three concepts in my case, the new Egyptian administrative capital city, I observed the application of the three concepts in the process of building it.

This is a thesis about the political economic motivations animating the decision making towards mega projects in new authoritarian regimes. In order to find out the political economic motives of authoritarian regimes behind initiating mega projects, I will scrutinize the case of the Egyptian President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi's regime and the decision to build a new Egyptian administrative capital city from scratch in the desert. This study aims to find out and explain objectively the motives of the new Egyptian regime that led to the decision to build a new administrative capital city , and not to judge if what is decided is wrong or not. My analysis will not be led by a theoretical framework because the issue which is under scrutiny is large and difficult to be covered by a theoretical framework. Instead, I will use a conceptual framework because this gives me the opportunity to discover more aspects and analyze them in my case. In each chapter, I will introduce the concept which will be used and its parameters that will be investigated in the data about building NAC. This will be followed by the examination of the application of the concept in NAC or not. This mentioned strategy

will be trailed through the three coming chapters which are: legitimization, legibility, and clientelism.

Before starting my study, I should state the difference between a state and a regime. Then I will review what is written about mega projects because a new administrative capital city is regarded as a mega project. Mega projects have been a phenomenon of states with particular interest in new regimes. One example of these projects is cities and, more specifically, capital cities. The main question is what motivates regimes to divert incredibly significant capital, including political capital, to construct a new capital city often at great cost of both resources and the environment?

Differences between state and regime, especially in Egypt.

In this section there will be clarification for the difference between the regime and the state in Egypt. The reason for adding this section is to differentiate between the decision maker and the tools that are used to apply the decision. As will be shown in this section, the state is the tool which the regime uses to apply its agenda. The current new regime of El- Sisi came after two terms, and the Egyptian state was established centuries ago. Thus, what is meant by the consolidation of power is the consolidation of the regime's power and position using bureaucracy and restructuring state business relations. State and regime are two crucial categories to approach power. This applies to Egypt and to many other cases. Different regimes contributed to Egyptian state formation (Adly, Hatab, J. Brown 2020, 25). The current structures which govern Egypt today go back to the nineteenth century. Egyptian rulers constructed these

structures to strengthen their ability to mobilize the society's resources, develop the country economically, and make it more powerful internationally (Adly, Hatab, J. Brown 2020, 26). After 1952 the state was used as a tool in the hands of the regime to employ various social and international strategies (Adly, Hatab, J. Brown 2020, 33).

Max Weber views states as compulsory associations. These associations claim control over territories and the people within them. In order for the state to control and administrate the territory and the people it has to have certain institutions. These institutions are the administrative, the legal, the extractive, and the coercive institutions. The structure of these institutions differs from one state to another (as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, SKOCPOL 2010, 7). Stepan adds that officials benefit from the great organizational strength inside and through existing state organizations, as well as benefiting from a unified sense of ideological purpose. This enables them to use state intervention in order to ensure political order and promote national economic development. Such authoritarian reforms may be initiated when bureaucratic elites maintain ties with existing dominant classes (as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, Skocpol 2010, 10). The officials which are mentioned here may refer to the rulers or the regime. Here the regime is on the top of the state institutions, and it uses the state to achieve certain goals.

A new capital city project involves building hospitals, centers, departments, universities, ministries, and embassies. Additionally, big infrastructure projects are also initiated. One famous scholar who has written heavily about mega projects is Flyvbjerg. He defines mega projects as “large-scale, complex ventures that typically cost US\$1 billion or more, take many years to develop and build, involve multiple public and private stakeholders, are transformational, and



impact millions of people” (Flyvbjerg 2014, 6). That is why a new capital city may be regarded as a mega project.

### Motives of regimes using the state to have mega projects

What is written about mega projects informs our explanation of why regimes decide to have mega projects using the state. The literature of mega projects is interdisciplinary because the subject is discussed in engineering, economics, political science, and management. Several seams are investigated under mega projects, which include: the definitions and the **Classifications of mega projects**, **challenges in mega project management**, **benefits and economic impacts**, **stakeholder engagement and social impacts**, **sustainability and environmental considerations**, best practices in mega project management. However, the literature on all the previous seams collectively will not contribute to answering the question of this paper. The concentration will be on the scholars **who explained consequences** or outcomes of mega projects and the motives of states and private sector behind it. What they said is relevant to understanding the reasons of the decision by a new regime which came after two upheavals to have a new capital city. This is strongly related to our hypothesis because a new regime may target the consolidation of its power through having a significant mega project like a new capital city.

Scott argues in his book “Seeing Like a State” that the reasons for state decisions and actions is **making a society legible**. **Legibility** is arranging the population in ways that simplify the **classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion**. In modern societies, legibility is attained through establishing cadastral surveys and population registers ,

inventing freehold tenure, designing cities, and organizing transportation by governments (Scott 1998, 2). Gaffney posits that urban development and socio-spatial discipline may be rooted in infrastructure development projects that are linked to recent, future, and proposed international mega-events. Gaffney arrived at the conclusion that mega-events fix space in order to accelerate capital through directing public money towards tourist, leisure, communications, and transportation projects (Gaffney 2010, 25). Sanjay Sangvai contends that politicians use mega projects to capture the public imagination, and function as legitimating symbols for the government in office. They are also used to strike at opposition by branding them as “the nation’s dream” (Sanjay Sangvai 1994, 537, Dorman 2016,3-4, Soderlund, Sankaran, and Biesenthal 2017,5).

Hubbard and Hall assert that the motives of governments in the nineteen seventies behind government decisions to have urbanized mega cities and projects was to attract investment and achieve economic growth (as cited in Vento 2017, 69). Leitner and Sheppard stated that, “One way of attracting investors is through appealing to professionals and tourists” (as cited in Vento 2017, 69). At the same time, governments try to persuade citizens that these projects are to compete globally for tourism and prestige. Hens, these projects are meant to create a feeling in the citizens minds of a harmonious, united, and homogeneous community (as cited in Vento 2017, 72). Piven, Friedland, Foster, and P. E. Peterson maintain that one main government’s objective from mega projects is development (as cited in Altshuler and Luberoff 2003,47). These are the motives of states behind mega projects, **but motives are not facts.** Motives are potential reasons which can either be realized on the ground, or not. The question is what are the consequences of mega projects that were found by scholars ?

## Consequences of mega projects

The economic consequences of mega projects may be a part of the reason for initiating such kinds of projects again , and that is why I review what is written in relation to this subject.

Porter and Sahoo postulate that infrastructural mega projects improve the opportunity of countries to attract foreign investments and promote growth . Investors will be attracted to the country which has modern advanced cities and infrastructure because the operation of their companies and factories will be easier in such an environment (Porter 1990, 3-12; Sahoo as cited in Dimitriou, Mourmouris & Sartzetaki 2015, 4310). Neba and Ngeh stated that many countries adopted the policy of having infrastructure mega projects to attain economic development (as cited in Dimitriou, Mourmouris & Sartzetaki 2015, 4313). Flyvbjerg asserts that mega projects may yield economic benefits to society, in case of the successful completion of them . Such benefits include, one: creating and sustaining employment; two: the project can contain a large element of domestic inputs relative to imports; three: it improves productivity and competitiveness; four: it benefits consumers by higher-quality services; five: it improves the environment. However, he holds that there are several challenges which may rise during the delivery of it. These challenges may replicate the positive outcomes of mega projects (Flyvbjerg 2014).

Other scholars suggest that mega projects may not yield the positive effects anticipated on the economy or all of society. Jessop argues that mega projects lead to changes which cause more neo liberal forms of governance. These ways of governance depend on public-private

partnership, authoritarianism, and a lack of democratic accountability. Imrie and Thomas found out that mega projects may not increase economic activities; Cochrane reached a conclusion that mega projects may not encourage investments as it is demonstrated; Turok contends that construction activities did not necessarily lead to the increase in the local employment. And finally, Hubbard and Hall observed that the attractive investments through mega projects led to more inequalities of wealth and income (as cited in Vento 2017, 70).

Button Maintains that the stage of executing mega projects have negative effects on the environment such as increasing carbon dioxide emission and the sound pollution (Button 1990, 63-64). Mumford agrees with Button that mega projects, like building modern cities, leads to unintended social and environmental problems . examples of such social and environmental problems are the concentration on quantification and the neglect of qualification and alarming and malign explosions of energy that might disrupt the entire ecological system (Mumford 1961, 569-570). Although Button has some critiques to mega projects, he admits in his book "Transport Economics," that some mega projects may be a solution to congestion and traffic jams in some countries" (Button 1990, 63-64).

In relation to the stage of executing the mega projects, several challenges may arise during this stage. Flyvbjerg postulated in his book "Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition" that mega projects recorded deficient performance in relation to economy, environment, and public support (Flyvbjerg 1998, 12). The deficient performance is due to long lead times and complexity, lack of deep experience of managers and planners in charge, involvement of multiple actors and stakeholders with conflicting interests in decision process,

and uniqueness bias with managers which results from the nonstandard technology and design (Flyvbjerg 2014). Hirschman agrees with Flyvbjerg that the main reason for the negative results of mega projects is not considering the risks while taking the decision to have a mega project . It is not taken into consideration because the decision has been taken authoritatively without consulting stakeholders or the civil society (Flyvbjerg 1998, 3-12; Hirschman 2013, 73-90). Hirschman depicted some negative consequences of mega projects on the economy despite their benefits, such as the absorption of resources away from other sectors of the economy that need to develop. This is called the crowding-out effect. Secondly, mega projects can be highly risky because of the uncertainty of the demand for the project and the costs involved. As a consequence, the cost of the project may be overrun, and the progress may be delayed. The result may be the reduction of the investor confidence in the project and the increase of debt (O. Hirschman 2013, 73-90).

As it is shown scholars do not agree on continuing or stopping mega projects, and yet, we continue to witness the initiation of such projects. Thus, finding out what is written about the reasons for the continuation of the execution of new cities may inform our answer to the main question.

#### New cities as mega projects in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

In this section, I will review what is written about the motives to build new cities, although those already built may still be empty. New cities are regarded as a kind of mega project, and reviewing what is said about it adds to the explanation of the reasons for building a

new capital city. After the Second World War, the concept of creating new towns spread as a way to capture the imagination of people and states (Sims 2014, 197). Some developing countries strive to achieve the same today, through building newly well-planned cities (Healey 1986). These were, or at least meant to be, “comprehensively planned, independent and relatively self-contained communities, usually built from scratch, large enough to provide housing, public facilities and socio-cultural opportunities within its borders for the employment of its residents” (Doan and Abu-Bakr 2010, 3).

One target from building new cities is urbanization. UN Habitat defines urban planning as a complex set of ideas that guide both planning-decision-making-processes and urban outcomes. These usually aim to achieve particular social, political, or environmental objectives. It is, therefore, a significant management tool for dealing with the unprecedented challenges facing 21st century cities and attaining the goals of sustainable urbanization (UN Habitat2009). urbanization as A strategy for urban development Originated in the west, as a direct response to concerns over the unhealthy and polluted living conditions of the poor, disappearing open green spaces, and political upheaval in industrial cities (Hobson 1999). This process expanded to what are today referred to as “developing countries” in the colonial period, to improve community health and general sanitary conditions for the agents of colonial capitalism (Healey 1986).

Ichimura, Li et al, World Bank postulated that maintenance of urban infrastructure in more than one country has not kept up with the latest developments. Oecd, Wu, Zhu suggest that the reason is the lack of public funds because the focus of local governments and private project developers is on economic growth. Hence, they prefer profitable activities such as real estate

development rather than less profitable public infrastructure (As cited in Koppenjan 2009, 284).

Objectives behind and consequences of changing and building new capital cities in Africa

In this section, there will be a review of what was written about building new capital cities, specifically in some African countries, since Egypt is located in Africa, and it shares a lot with the African postcolonial states. These African countries are similarly situated economically, politically, and developmentally akin to Egypt. Thus, what scholars said and found in their studies of such mega projects in Africa would be fruitful to our answer. The African countries that attempted to change the location of their capital cities were driven by multiple objectives. Some of these were declared and publicized, while others were not. One objective which was achieved in new towns of Abuja, Dodoma, Gaborone, and Lilongwe is fulfilling national aspiration of a modern capital as a symbol of national identity through having modern urbanized capital cities (Doan and Abubakar 2010, 7-8). According to Watson, “African countries want to be seen as developing and catching up with the west through having modern cities with similar features to European modern cities” (as cited in Petra and Abubakar, Ismaila. 2010 7-8). He continues, “Through reviewing the master plans of these African cities [a low-density garden city with aesthetic landscape, modern architectural designs, and western urban form] this goal is achieved (Petra and Abubakar 2010, 7-8).

Kachipande studied new satellite cities established in Africa. These new towns and cities are “large planned, integrated, purpose-built developments nearby larger cities that are designed to curb urban sprawl to the suburbs and supplement ‘mother city’ expansion,” a design model

which is starting to spread in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kachipande posited that such new projects have had positive effects on their countries, such as enhancing the infrastructure, meeting the demands of their populations, helping cities be more autonomous, and improving the quality of life, at least for some people (Kachipande 2013). For instance, Apollonia and Hope City, which are located outside of Accra, were designed to reduce overcrowding in the city and to promote entrepreneurship (Gaffney 2010, 8). In the same manner, Tatu City, near Nairobi, was intended to alleviate Kenya's housing shortage and spur regional economic development (Adewunmi, 2011).

Following the 1952 revolution that ushered in a new era for Egypt, the prospect of relocating the capital from Cairo emerged sporadically as a topic of public discussion. Nasser's Pragmatism Preferred Investing in Cairo, not its Replacement. Despite occasional public musings about a new capital, there is no concrete evidence indicating serious consideration or active pursuit of this idea by President Nasser. One possible reason that needs to be further scrutinized for not changing the capital city in Naser Era is his commitment to enhancing the existing capital rather than abandoning it. Moreover, Old Cairo is Central Hub: Cairo's historical significance, geographic centrality, and established role as a major economic and political center likely weighed heavily in Nasser's decision to maintain it as the capital. In contrast, President Anwar El-Sadat demonstrably harbored aspirations to move the capital. His motivations remain debatable, ranging from concerns about Cairo's overcrowding and infrastructure strain to a desire to create a new symbolic center reflecting his vision for Egypt. Al-Sadat City: Construction activities commenced in the 1970s on a planned city dubbed "Al-Sadat City," envisioned as the new capital. The project aimed to alleviate Cairo's issues while embodying Sadat's modernization goals. Sadly, President



Sadat's assassination in 1981 abruptly halted the capital relocation project. Al-Sadat City remained largely incomplete, and subsequent administrations opted to focus on developing existing new cities within the Cairo metropolitan area(Feteha2012)<sup>i</sup>.

With similar goals in mind, new capital cities were initiated in multiple African countries, such as Abuja in Nigeria, Dodoma in Tanzania, Gaborone in Botswana, and Lilongwe in Malawi. Namely to “improve quality of urban life through the provision of adequate housing and basic services, more efficient transportation systems, and healthier environment (Doan and Abubakar 2010, 3). In such projects, usually a “modernist” approach to city planning, one which is characterized by grand plans and programs developed by experts who rely on scientific knowledge over local values and input, is adopted (Scott 1998, 103-110). As a result, such mega projects have negative socioeconomic impacts.

#### Consequences of new capital and secondary cities

Such a “modernist” approach to city building is criticized in some parts of the literature. The initiation of new cities have social and economic negative consequences. Lumumba reviewed many examples of such cities in Africa concluding that new urbanized cities are not inclusive of the poor segments of the population and that such cities end up being empty. Lumumba, Watson, and Hobson maintained that these cities are built without consideration to the context and poverty in African countries. They eventually simmer down to becoming a reflection of the fantasies of those who built them, rather than being realistic solutions to actual societal problems (Lumumba 2013; Watson 2013, 226-227; Hobson 1999, 19). Adham, poetically, expresses similar frustrations

with new cities in Egypt: “Places like Dreamland are physical spaces that only a small fraction of the population can dream of, while the rest are left in despair without further possibility to dream” (Khaled 2005, 14- 31).

Pots holds that governments demonstrate that the reason for changing capital cities is the enhancement of national pride and regional development, but he found that Lilongwe in Malawi has failed to fulfill regional development because the new site clearly favors one group of the population. Countries may declare certain attractive goals of building new cities in order to justify the project and gain the support of the people, while at the same time it may have hidden goals from this project (POTTS 1985, 193-194). Development may occur inside the capital city, but what is found in this city is that development will not spread automatically. He arrived at a second conclusion through the Malawian Example. **When a country changes its capital city, it is difficult to overcome the overwhelming economic attractions of the former commercial capital** (POTTS 1985, 193-194). What is more, such new capital city projects may not be fully completed due to the economic situation of the country in question. Mosha confirms this using Dodoma, Tanzania’s incomplete new capital city (Mosha 2004,2). “A budget deficit, fueled by a wave of oil price shocks, global recession, the collapse of commodity prices, droughts, and the effects of the break-up of the East African Community, prevented the completion of this project, and consequently its success” (Mosha 2004,2). The lack of resources and the globalization of world economies could be seen as two influences that had a detrimental effect on this project (Mosha, Aloysius C. 2004).

Scholars have heavily discussed the motives behind mega projects and cities. Also, they

investigated the impacts of such projects on the environment, society, and governments. However, few scholars talked about the relation between these projects and regime power consolidation, especially after upheavals. The main hypothesis of this thesis is that new regimes, especially after turmoil, attempt to consolidate their position and power, and one way for doing this is through building a new capital city. In order to find out the relation between building a new capital city and consolidation of power we should adopt one definition of power without heavily investigating the definitions of power because this is not the target of this thesis. What is crucial in this section is to find out what is written about the methods of consolidating power.

#### Power consolidation

There may be a relation between mega projects, and power consolidation by new regimes. In order to understand if this relationship exists, as I will hypothesize in this thesis, let us examine what is said about power and power consolidation. Weber defines power as "the probability that an actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests"(as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 2010, 161). There are two ways of conducting one's own will in a social relationship which are persuasion and inducement. "Persuasion refers to the act of convincing someone that something is in his or her interest. Inducement refers to the process of changing the incentive structure itself. Inducing someone to behave in a certain way requires the use of a reward and penalties system (as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 2010, 162).

Antonio Gramsci in his concept of hegemony agrees with Weber that power can be

consolidated through nonviolent ways such as the dominance of certain cultural and ideological practices in society. In other words, he believes that emphasizing the ruler's ideology and culture advances the hegemony of the ruling regime and hence its power without leaning to violence (as cited in R. Bates 1975, 153-154). In the same vein, Pierre Bourdieu referred to the concept of habitus which enhances the power of the group. According to Bourdieu "Habitus is a generative and a unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices" (as cited in Bennett 2007, 203). Power is practiced and reproduced in a group or a tribe through the internalization of social norms and practices. Bennett argues that the exclusion of other groups from practicing the social norms or chairing these cultural habits is a way for reproduction of the group's power (Bennett 2007, 203-204). Both Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu see that culture can be used in consolidation of power. Slavoj Žižek who is a Slovenian philosopher concentrates more on the role of ideology. He argues that power operates through ideology, and ideology is the construction of meaning (as cited in Petar 2014, 121-122). Weber distinguishes between three types of authorities which are traditional, charismatic, and bureaucratic. He postulated that power is maintained and practiced through the manipulation of resources (as cited in Bendix 1969, 555-558). Gaffney Lefebvre and Bobrow contend that "power operates through the creation of 'governable spaces' that are inseparable in their material and representational formations wherein the creation of governable spaces also produces governable subjects (Gaffney, Christopher. 2010: 9).

Legitimization, its basis, and methods

As it is shown in the previous section Power is practiced by power holders over power subjects in a specific area. Thus, as will be shown in the next sections, power holders should have the capacity to practice the power, and power subjects should approve the usage of this power. This approval is called legitimacy. What is hypothesized in this thesis is that there is a relation between mega projects and legitimization to consolidate power. Thus, what is said about legitimization and its basis contributes to our understanding and examination of the relation between megaprojects, legitimization, and power consolidation. On one hand, Wight postulated international legitimacy “as the collective judgment of international society about rightful membership of the family of nations; how sovereignty may be transferred; how state succession should be regulated, when large states break up into smaller, or several states combine into one (Wight 1972, 1). One example of international legitimization is the Republic of Kazakhstan. Matakbaeva argues that the republic of Kazakhstan legitimized itself in the international community through following the main trend of international relationships in its external policy. This trend is about "the voluntary refusal of nuclear arms by the republic, the fourth powerful in the world, and the support for initiative on nonproliferation of nuclear arms, The contribution to the counterterrorism, initiative of convention of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, announced on the 47th session of United Nations General Assembly in 1992”. All of these actions were done by the Republic of Kazakhstan to gain the support of states ( Matakbaeva 2013,514). Wight adds that another demanded principle of legitimization is globalization. The requirements of globalization are cooperation to achieve global, international, and national security. Moreover, international actors enforced a definite behavior on states as part of globalization. This behavior is about social-economic substantiality and practical responsibility for its internal actions which is achieved through an uncorrupted, economically

modernized sufficient state( Matakbaeva 2013,514) .

On the other hand, Gronau, Schmidtke, Beetham, Mulligan, and Wrong defined the concept of legitimacy as the rulers' justification of their right to rule. Legitimacy means that there is something which should be performed by rulers to justify their rule and to persuade subjects that obedience to them is rightful. (Gronau, and Schmidtke 2016, 536; Wrong as cited in Matheson 1987,200 ; Beetham and Mulligan as cited in Gronau, and Schmidtke 2016, 537). Both definitions of international legitimacy, and local legitimacy are related, but they are actually quite different from each other in their mechanisms and consequences. In both the ruler has to persuade others of his right to rule, and to gain their support. For example, the Commonwealth Secretariat tries to procure legitimacy from their member states and from the wider international community as cited in (Gronau, and Schmidtke 2016, 536). This is not applied to an international organization like the Commonwealth only - it is also applied to states. States try to persuade their citizens and international community of their rightfulness to rule. Easton Booth and Seligson agree that the main target of the process of legitimization is "establishing and maintaining a reliable basis of diffuse support for a political regime by its social constituencies." (As cited in Gronau, and Schmidtke 2016, 338). Additionally, Linder proposed that the legitimacy of governments comes from the support they enjoy among their citizens (as cited in Shaffer and Loveridge 2002, 174).

If legitimacy is the support of power subject to power holders, how is this support acquired by power holders? Authoritarian regimes, like that of Gamal Abdel Nasser, can utilize mega projects as a tool for legitimization. However, measuring the actual extent of this

legitimization remains difficult due to the inseparable nature of coercion and consent within such regimes. However, different scholars wrote about the different methods of attaining Legitimacy. Balandier and Berger argue that the knowledge in proverbs, maxims, history, and traditional wisdom, as well as abstract theories, are used by rulers or regimes to explain and justify why their subjects should obey them (as cited in Matheson 1987, 200). Benn and Peters asserted that legitimacy can be acquired conventionally through legal or customary rules and contracts (as cited in Matheson 1987, 201). Sjoberg stated that rulers may use religion in the process of legitimization because they may be described as sacred or their rule is sacred by religious documents or persons (as cited in Matheson 1987, 202). A third source of legitimacy as depicted by Saint-Simon, Balandier, and Berger, is experience. Here the power holder claims that he has some type of technical expertise which qualifies him to practice power (as cited in Matheson 1987, 203). Carl J. Friedrich and Nisbet see that constitutional legitimacy is the most widely applied one, especially in modern societies. This source of legitimacy is based on the will of the people (as cited in Matheson 1987, 203).

Wrong and Webber, referred to a fifth base of legitimacy, which is the ties between power holders and power subjects - in this relation, the two sides benefit. The power subject regards the power holder as significant to him and supports him (as cited in Matheson 1987, 204). Weber summarized the basis of legitimacy into three bases, which are the traditional, the rational or 'legal,' and the charismatic (as cited in Matheson 1987, 206). A more practical way of legitimization is mentioned by Christian Reus-Smit. He observed that some governments try to legitimize themselves through communication and symbolic policies, as well as institutional and structural reforms to persuade different social constituents of the rightfulness of their right to rule

(as cited in Wolin 1981, 536).

Habermas argues that when a country acquires the conditions of prosperity, the social credibility to the class of hegemon will be great, while other classes will also be ready to approve its definition of social reality. This is an integral part for internal legitimization (as cited in Matakbaeva 2013, 516). J. Gaida acknowledged that the increase of income for citizens is one way for governments to gain legitimacy. In the same vein, Martin Lipset demonstrates that satisfying the basic needs of the power subjects or citizens enhances governments' legitimacy (as cited in Matakbaeva 2013, 516).

#### State businessmen relations[Clientelism]

Legitimacy is so important for a ruler. El Sadat was able to issue the October paper, which sets out the infitah agenda due to the legitimacy which he gained through the 1973 October war (Rocco. 2021: 186). Also, El Sisi used the legitimacy which he gained through the events of 2013 to announce his program of reform. The program of reform is dependent on the IMF and the loan which will be taken from it. In both cases, there is reorientation of the Egyptian economy towards neoliberalism. The private sector is one winner from this policy. It will benefit from the reforms through the awarding of construction contracts, import licenses for consumer products and other investment opportunities. Moreover, what is hypothesized in this thesis is that a new capital city is used to consolidate power, in terms of political and economic power. One way of the enhancement of economic power is the cooperation between the public sector, which is the state, and the private sector, which is local and foreign investors. Forrer, Kee, Newcomer,



and Boyer define Public-private partnerships as “ongoing agreements between government and private sector organizations in which the private organization participates in the decision-making and production of a public good or service that has traditionally been provided by the public sector and in which the private sector shares the risk of that production” ( Forrer , Kee, Newcomer , and Boyer 2010,476). Knill, Lehmkuhl, Treibet al., NEWGOV, and Tollefson et al. 2012; Doelle et al refer to the actors who are engaged in governance by state and non-state actors (as cited in Steurer 2013, 388). Bdrzel and Risse regarded companies and civil society as non-state actors (as cited in Steurer 2013, 389) . On the other hand, Stoker defines government as the actors who “identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues” (as cited in Steurer 2013, 389). State actors may be referred to as public actors such as governments, and non-state actors may be referred to as private actors such as businesses.

Martin and Halachmi argue that cooperation between government and organizations in some sectors of the economy may yield a promising way of producing new opportunities to leverage financial, human, and technological resources (as cited in Greiling and Halachmi2012, 135). Ghere, Tennyson postulated that partnerships between public and private sectors is a solution to governmental problems, and this cooperation is especially needed in the infrastructural sector. Many actors support this strategy locally and internationally (as cited in Forrer , Kee, Newcomer , and Boyer 2010,475). Savas suggests that this trend will be more popular because it helps governments to finance projects, and hence relieves the pressure on governments’ budgets (as cited in Forrer , Kee, Newcomer , and Boyer 2010,475). Katzenstein claims that both state goals and the interests of powerful classes may meet together and influence

national policies. Two factors are crucial for the implementation of the national policies. The first one is the policy instruments available to the state, and the second one is the organized support it receives from key societal groups (as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol.2010: 10). Thus, “The meanings of public life and the collective forms through which groups become aware of political goals and work to attain them arise, not from societies alone, but at the meeting points of state and societies (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol.2010: 17).”

On the other hand, there is also criticism of PPC (Public Private Cooperation). Reese & Rosenfeld claim conflict of interests may arise in the processes of PPC, especially in the direction of economic development (as cited in Shaffer and Loveridge2002, 170). Krumholz adds that PPC could lead to inequitable outcomes and the loss of competitive fairness (as cited in Shaffer and Loveridge2002, 171).

Despite the negative consequences of PPC, Yakovlev asserts that state consolidation of power is achieved through bureaucratic restructure and new opportunities for informal ‘business capture’ by the authorities [state businesses cooperation] (Yakovlev 2006, 1051-1052). Souami, Verdeil, and Parker depicted one crucial characteristic of mega projects, which is the cooperation between the private and the public sector in the development or management of mega projects (as cited in BARTHEL2010, 136-137).

Cooperation between the state and businesses may take different forms. Hirschman refers to one form of the state business relations which is ‘exit’ and ‘voice.’ It is similar to the two strategies of keeping a distance from the state, and at the same time close integration with the state

in order to maximize profits from the special preferences and benefits obtainable from the government (as cited in Yakovlev 2006, 1034). Hellman, Jones, and Kaufman discussed another model called the state capture. In this model businesses lobby to have influence over centers of decision-making in order to issue decisions in favor of business groups (as cited in Yakovlev 2006, 1036). Grindle displayed other dynamics of the relations between the state and businesses. It is about the state having control over economic and social interactions, and structuring economic and social relationships (as cited in Kleinberg 1999, 82). McGuire summarized the forms of PPC into three forms which are policy/strategy making, resource exchange, and project based (as cited in Shaffer and Loveridge 2002, 175-176). Policy strategy making is similar to the leader-follower relationship, exchange resources are like the seller and the buyer, and the project base is like the joint venture relations Schaeffer and Loveridge 2002, 175-176).

In the case of Egypt, the state gained wide control over business following 2013, as will be shown in the below review.

## State businesses relations in Egypt

The policy agenda which the state's organizations adopt and use, is a function of the relationship between the state and society involving businesses because they are part of the society (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 2010, 183). Marx suggests the state is an instrument in the hands of the dominant class which controls the political powers of the state. As a consequence, this powerful class will use the state as an instrument to oppress other classes (as Cited in Levin 1985, 433). The ideas of Marx may apply to the Mubarak regime in his last ten years as president. Business elites used the regime to achieve their interests, and corruption was prevalent (Adly, Hatab, and Brown 2020, 42-43). Another Egyptian example for using the state as an instrument in the hands of the regime, is the Muslim Brotherhood. When Mohamad Morsi became president after the 2011 upheaval, he used his authority to fill all the top positions, such as the ministerial positions, with his group members. The main target of this action is to apply the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood through utilizing the state institution (El-Sherif 2014, 4).

Cardoso does not view the state as an instrument of domination in the hands of dominant classes only. He views it as an organization which consists of social networks of people. These people exist in their own right and have their own interests. When the state has the capacity to "implement official goals, especially over the actual or potential opposition of powerful social groups or in the face of recalcitrant socioeconomic circumstances," this would be state autonomy. Conditions that may drive the state to act autonomously include the extra national orientations of the state, the challenges the state may face in maintaining domestic order, the

organizational resources that collectivities of state officials may be able to draw on, and linkage with transnational structures (as cited in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 2010,9).

Roberto Roccu adds that post 2011, the military presumed a renewed role in the Egyptian economy as a **partner for transnational corporations** with business interests in Egypt. Here, the military is on the top of the pyramid. Civilian components of the ruling coalition, including the private sector, come in the second level (Roccu 2012, 182). This goes back to the business classes forfeiting power in favor of regime staff. Due to the removal of Mubarak in 2011, the presence of businessmen in the regime has not been recognized. Before 2011 there was an alliance between the Mubarak regime and big businessmen. **Consequently, a neo-liberal authoritarian regime**, with a bigger role given to capitalist businessmen in the regime and the state, was yielded. The considerable influence of capitalists in the regime led to the instability of relations of force both within the ruling bloc and within the society. This was one of the driving factors that led Egyptians to revolt against the Mubarak regime (Roccu 2012, 182).

Instead, after 2013, the regime - including the presidency - started to depend more on state institutions such as the military. El-Sisi has a long history of working in military institutions; as a result, he maintains strong relations in the military. In this case, businesses become subordinate to the military (Roccu 2012, 182). However, this does not mean that businessmen's roles diminished. **Patrick Loewert and Christian Steiner reveal in their article that NAC is a site for empowering different actors**. These actors are real-estate developers and military. On one hand, real-estate developers are empowered through working on different projects and increasing their investments. On the other hand, the military benefits through

controlling the allocation of new rent sources. At the end, this strengthened the president's position (Lower, Patrick and Steiner, Christian. 2019: 73). Khalil and Dill mentioned that the type of neoliberalism, which followed the 2013 uprising or revolution, is a mix of command economy and neoliberalism. This is called hybrid neoliberalism (Khalil & Dill. 2018: 575).

**Hybrid neoliberalism is defined as a mix between statism and neoliberalism.** Statism is the state control of the economy, politics, and society. On the other hand, neoliberalism is about deregulation by the state, and intervening minimally to ensure the attractiveness of the investment climate (Khalil & Dill. 2018: 576).

After reviewing the literature, what was found is that some scholars talked about legitimization, legibility, and clientelism separately; however, the literature does not suggest one complete process that consists of legitimization, legibility, and clientelism collectively. What this thesis adds, is a suggested recipe of an authoritarian regime process that consists of legitimization, legibility, and clientelism to consolidate an authoritarian regime's power after crises despite whether or not this agenda is successful or not. These three concepts are related to the construct of power. As will be shown, legitimization is about the acceptance of the power of ruler by the subjects, while legibility is about the preparation of the space where power will be practiced, and clientelism is about enhancing the economic power of a regime and its men to ensure the country's stability.

## *Chapter II*

### *legitimization*

#### Introduction

Al-Awadi argues that no political regime could maintain its political stability for decades, unless it has a certain level of legitimacy and consent of its people (as cited in Shahin ,Ahmed Fahmy 2017, 28). The consent of the people is crucial in the process of practicing power because the ruler will practice his authority over the people; thus, they should accept this authority. Even authoritarian regimes aspire to be legitimate. The main claim of this chapter is that legitimacy is one target of building a new capital city, and it contributes to the consolidation of the regime's power. In other words, this chapter intends to show **how a new regime believes that its legitimization process can be achieved through a new capital city**. Moreover, it will address how this process contributes to the regime's consolidation of power, especially after upheavals. We will begin by reviewing what is written about the meaning of legitimacy in order to find out the relation between legitimacy and a new capital city.

#### Legitimacy definitions

Alagappa defines legitimacy as the “right to rule” (as cited in Shahin 2017, 29). Merkl stated that ‘legitimacy is the unification of a nation through the agreement on the political values' (as cited in IBD, 29). Gilley equates between legitimacy and a particular type of political support; this support is rooted in common good or shared moral

evaluations (as cited in von Haldenwang, Christian 2016, 6). Lipset postulated that legitimacy is the ability of the regime to produce and maintain the belief that the present political institutions are the most congruous ones for the society (as cited in Shahin ,Ahmed Fahmy 2017, 29). Linz maintains that 'legitimacy is the confidence in the efficiency of the existing political institutions or regime, and they are better than any other that might be formed, and based on this belief, it can command obedience from its subjects' (as cited in IBD, 30). In the same vein, Mack Suchman argues that "legitimacy is the general perception that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" ( as cited in Reus 2014, 345).

The most familiar words that are used in defining legitimacy are belief, confidence, right, acceptance, unification, and support. The question is what are the sources or basis of this right, belief, confidence, or support? Defining the sources of legitimacy allows me to deal with more abstract objects which enable me to examine the manifestation of them in the new capital city.

### Sources of legitimacy

Dahl argues that there are three sources of stable legitimacy. Firstly, there is the belief that they ought to obey. If this first source of legitimacy fails , regimes apply the bargain model. In this model, people obey as long as they receive material benefits. The third source of legitimacy is applied as the last option. This option is the resort to



coercion to gain the obedience and the acceptance of the subject. In other words, in this case, they deter the subjects in order to force them to show their obedience and support to the regime (As cited in Shahin ,Ahmed Fahmy 2017, 29). These three bases of legitimacy are based on **incentives** which are offered to those who obey, and punishments applied on those who disobey. Moreover, this may not be regarded as sources of legitimacy, and it can be named as strategies of procuring legitimacy.

Weber depicted three bases of legitimacy which include: charisma, traditions, and the rational/legal sources. Charismatic legitimacy depends on the personal characteristics and qualities of a person which makes the people believe in him and his rule and the order revealed or ordained by him (as cited in Shahin, Ahmed Fahmy 2017, 32). The traditional base refers to customs or instructions in religion or culture which grant legitimacy to those exercising authority. Finally, the rational legal basis is that the way of putting the ruler in power is according to the law. Moreover, the ruler may have a clear logical vision for the improvement of the people and nation's future that persuades his subjects that he is the best to be in the ruler position. Consequently, the people would support him to realize what they want (as cited in IBD, 32). Easton suggests that there are three types of legitimacy: personal, ideological, and structural (as cited in IBD, 32). Easton's three types of legitimacy are similar to Weberian's three types of legitimacy. Marquez further clarified the sources of legitimacy, and he talked about people's main reasons for supporting a regime. These reasons are fear, habit, the expectation of short-term gains or long-term benefits, regime performance criteria, or belief in the superior morality of a ruler (as cited in von Haldenwang, Christian 2016, 5).

Christian von Haldenwang depicted more concrete sources of legitimacy, beginning with procedural legitimation. This type of legitimation depends on institutionalizing patterns of decision-making and implementation. Secondly, there is the role-based legitimation which is about the ruled belief and trust of specific institutions such as the military or central bank. Thirdly, charismatic legitimation is built on the conviction of the superior quality and superiority of a political leader. Fourthly, value-based legitimation is about specific preference orders that are offered by a specific leader or regime, such as security. Finally, there is the content-based legitimation. This type of support will be gained by a regime due to its material policies and performance levels (von Haldenwang, Christian 2016, 7). David Easton introduces one kind of legitimacy which is specific legitimacy. This kind is based on the evaluation of the political system in terms of filling public demands (as cited in Tannenberg', Marcus , and Bernhard, Michael, and Gerschewski, Johannes, and Luhrmann, Anna, and von Soest, Christian 2020, 79) Legitimacy is a vague concept to some extent for several reasons , but at the end decision makers are convinced of it. That is why we will find scholars talking about different sources of legitimacy as regimes may procure its legitimacy through more than one source at the same time .

Example of using sources of legitimacy in our case study of Egypt

Dekmejian reports that one example of a regime that based its legitimacy on the ruler's charisma is Nasser's regime. His charisma was acquired through the revolutionary legitimacy' of 1952 (as cited in Shahin ,Ahmed Fahmy 2017, 32). Hinnebusch maintained that Sadat had been using traditional, patrimonial, and some form of Weberian-rational

legitimacy ” (as cited in IBD, 32). Al-Awadi maintained that the main mode of legitimacy in Egypt is the legitimacy of economic achievement, especially under Mubarak. His regime claimed legitimacy because it provides proper economic achievements that modernize the country (as cited in IBD, 33). The Mubarak regime in this since was trying to acquire rational legitimacy based on his achievements which led to modernizing the country. Mubarak may have thought that modernization would improve the citizen's life hence he would fill a public demand, whether he succeeded in this or not.

After understanding the meaning of legitimacy, and finding out the sources of it, there should be examination for the presence of these sources in a mega project like a new capital city, as it is a part of our hypotheses. We examine how a new regime believes that a new administrative capital city will procure legitimacy to it after two upheavals, and thus contributing to the process of power consolidation. As such, NAC will be used as a case study of building a new capital city after two upheavals to legitimize a new regime. The methodology of my examination is through analyzing the governmental and officials’ rhetoric and speeches. Moreover, investigating the design of some already built buildings in the new administrative capital city may inform me about the regime's intentions. It is worth noting that the new Egyptian administrative capital city is still under construction, and therefore these are the only sources through which I may make sure that legitimization is one target of building a new administrative capital city.

#### Investigation of the procurement of legitimacy through NAC

From the start, the New Capital project has served for the symbolic legitimization of the

new regime. Among the first iconic buildings to be erected were Islamic Cultural Center, including the Grand Egypt Mosque which is named "El- Fatah El-Aliim" with capacity for more than one hundred thousand worshipers, as well as the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, the largest cathedral in the Middle East (Tawee 2023, 9). The main two components of the Egyptian population are Muslims and Christians. If the new regime wants to attach importance to the NAC, it has to build something related to Islam and Christianity. Islam was used in history to legitimize the regime's actions and decisions. For example, Islam was used in the time of President Gamal Abdul Naser to justify his socialist policies (Enayat 1968, 144). Whereas the representation of Christianity in Egypt has to do with protecting minorities and sending a message to the international community that there is no discrimination in Egypt against minorities.

Furthermore, the stress over religion through huge and impressive buildings cannot be separated from prior and post 2013 events in Egypt, when Christians were subjected to unprecedented sectarian violence, to the point that the military was fighting with Islamists. On the one hand, the Christians suffered from persecution prior to 2013, in the time of the Muslim Brotherhood and after 2013 when churches were burnt. According to Brownlee, on March 4, 2011, there were two martyrs after a church in Helwan was torched. Four days later, thirteen people, Copts and Muslims, were killed during a protest over the arson. On April 5, 2013, five Copts and one Muslim man were shot and killed in al-Khusus, Greater Cairo. Two days later, mourners were besieged at St. Mark's Cathedral in Abbasiya, Cairo (Brownlee 2013, 27). Even after Morsi's removal on July 3rd, arsonists burned a church in Minya in the south, while vandals struck a church in Marsa Matruh on the northwestern coast. Two days later, in the village of Nag

Hassan, near Luxor, a mob beat four Copts to death and razed twenty-four Coptic-owned properties (IBD2013, 28). In short, the Coptic Christian minority faces some persecution before and after 2013 and therefore it would make sense to show unwavering support for this community to obtain legitimacy from them.

Building a large church and a mosque in the new Egyptian administrative capital city may indicate that the new regime wants to legitimize itself through the traditional source of legitimacy which Weber referred to or the ideological source as named by Easton. When El-Sisi became president, he was keen on showing his support to Christians. One way to do this was through building the largest church in the middle east in NAC, after all what they suffered from. The support by the Christians can be recognized in welcoming El-Sisi in his visits to the Nativity of the Christ Cathedral (Alaa El-Din ,Aziz, Zayda, Nada2019). Building a magnificent cathedral may indicate that the new regime intends to procure legitimacy from the Weberian traditional base of legitimacy and Christian von Haldenwang's source of value-based legitimation. El-Sisi may be sending a message to the Christians that the new regime respects their religion. At the same time, the Christians may feel that they are secure under this regime after what they suffered in the time of Morsi's regime. This may be regarded as value-based legitimation. What is more, El-Sisi wants to project national unity which can be seen in building a large church and mosque at the same time and place, and these buildings are financed by the state's money. This message is sent to foreign actors and Egyptians alike. Foreign actors will not come and invest in a country where there are religious or sectarian clashes. Firstly, the message to the international community is that Egypt is a stable country where there is no discrimination against minorities, and there is harmony between the main components of the population (BBC News. 2019))<sup>ii</sup> Secondly, the message to Egyptian Christians is that the new republic or regime advocates for

them and preserves their rights as equal citizens. In this way, El Sisi - and hence his regime - strengthened their reputation and popularity among Egypt's Christian minority.

On the other hand, according to El Ahram Online and to the Egyptian television, El-Sisi talked many times about building mosques (Ahram online. 2023))<sup>iii</sup>. He and his regime may have intended to procure traditional or ideological legitimacy from Muslims through showing his religiosity, which may be recognized through building the largest mosque in the region. Moreover, the name of this Mosque is Al Fatah El Alim, and the name of the president is Abdelfattah El-Sisi. I am not sure if this similarity was intended or not, but it is worth noting. In addition to this, El-Sisi and his new regime have publicly been against the Muslim Brotherhood since 2013. Being a Muslim himself, El-Sisi intends to emphasize that his fight is not against Islam, but rather the governmental entity of the Muslim Brotherhood. Through building a grand Mosque called El-Fatah El-Aliim in NAC, the regime may be sending a message to Egyptians which is about stressing that the regime supports Islam. It is not only about supporting Islam, but it is also about spreading it through building many mosques in other locations. Islam is the official religion of the state, and the majority of Egyptians are Muslims. Through substantiating this in the new regime's actions, this may also furnish the regime with more support from Muslims.

The design of a public mega project like a new administrative capital city may tell us something about the regime's intentions. Sarah Tawee provides a clear description of NAC and the buildings inside it." The New administrative Egyptian capital city is located approximately thirty miles east of Cairo. It was first envisioned as a three-phase project spanning about 170,000

acres, to be implemented in its entirety by an Emirati real estate developer and fully financed by Gulf investors. Phase one consists of —41,500 acres, the size of Washington, D.C. It began in 2016 . The NAC will be a “smart city,” complete with a China-style central-command surveillance system to track all activity, including through live video broadcasts from 6,000 cameras”(Tawee 2023, 11).

“Phase one of NAC is supposed to include: Government District, including headquarters for thirty-four ministries, upper and lower houses of parliament, a cabinet building, and the Presidential Palace complex. It will also include the General Intelligence Service residential compounds and headquarters, home to the “largest money printer in the Middle East. the Banking District, hosting the mandatory new headquarters for state-owned banks, the Central Business District, featuring the Chinese-built “towers section” with twenty skyscrapers including the Iconic Tower - “Africa's tallest tower,” and the Diplomatic District, to which all foreign embassies will be expected to relocate. Eight residential districts, including luxury compounds, intend to house 1.5 million people. Knowledge City, touted as “Egypt's Silicon Valley,” is to serve as a tech and education hub, and the “Green River” central park, spanning more than one thousand acres will also spread across the capital. In addition, the NAC will also include the Arts and Culture City, including a 2,150-seat opera house and twenty-four additional buildings, the Islamic Cultural Center, including the Grand Egypt Mosque with capacity for more than one hundred thousand worshipers, the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, the largest cathedral in the Middle East, the Olympic City, where the regime hopes to host the 2036 Olympics, featuring a 93,440- seat stadium (the “second biggest in Africa”), the New Capital Airport, to become “larger than London's Heathrow Airport,” ‘Mixed Use’ areas for office buildings, restaurants,

and malls, including “Pyramids City,” a \$1.6 billion mega-mall, the Medical City, to host dozens of hospitals and clinics, a hotel, and a conference center, and finally, Expo City, where the regime hopes to someday host the World Expo “(Tawee 2023, 11).

According to C. Scott’s theoretical framework, the design of a city portrays the state - and hence - the regime as powerful. Perceiving the state as powerful by the citizens contributes to the legitimization process. After the 2011 and 2013 turmoil in Egypt, Egyptians suffered from lack of security due to what is mentioned in the introduction. Thus, the Egyptian new regime wanted to assure the citizens that it is powerful enough to secure them and control the country. One way of the projection of power is through NAC. The Large secured buildings in NAC with the magnificent and organized designs may give the citizens the psychological impression that the state involving the regime is powerful. Even some officials call the project the new republic , and calling it the new republic imply that there is something new is born which is distinct from the previous regimes. Once Egyptians believe in the regime and state abilities of safeguarding their lives, this may provide the new regime with the people's support. In other words, citizens may believe that the new regime is able to deliver security to their life which is a part of the definition of legitimacy. Additionally, the president and the ministers have strived in their speeches to persuade the people with the significance of NAC on their lives. The end goal of this persuasion is the procurement of more support . The source of legitimacy here is the Weberian rational source of legitimacy and the Eastin structural source of legitimacy. The new regime desires to portray the new state as structured and organized, and it believes that one way to do this is through the new capital city and its design.



### Examining the rhetoric of governmental and regime officials

In a speech by Egyptian president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi on Egyptian television, he answered the question of why the new regime is building a new capital city. He said “We have designed strategies which have a special ideology to overcome the problem which we have. This problem is about limited abilities, and the state will overcome this problem through innovative ideas. The main goal of the state was to target a specific problem and solve it. For example, there are forty new cities. These cities added to the state account ten billion pounds as capital. In facing the situation of poverty, we implemented unusual solutions for our problems. We have to generate ability from the available resources (El-Sisi2022, 3min3s) ”<sup>iv</sup>

The rational or content-based legitimization are obviously recognized sources of legitimization in the words of the Egyptian President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi. Through this speech, he tried to show to the Egyptians that his regime has a clear policy to improve their conditions and it has a superior performance. His target was the persuasion of the Egyptians that NAC is a solution to multiple obstacles. In other words, he tried to convince citizens that this project brings money to the state, and this money can be used to solve their problems. El-Sisi wants Egyptians to believe in the NAC and the regime’s policies, and this is part of the legitimacy definition. If Egyptians believe in the regime's policies, it means that the people started to believe that the regime is able to deliver to them what is good. The Egyptian president is cultivating legitimacy through talking about the expected outputs of the project. The outputs may not be realized yet; however, he has strived to gain the citizens support through talking about them.

The legitimization of ruling through mega-projects is not new in modern Egyptian

history. It at least goes back to Nasser's high dam, Sadat's new towns, and Mubarak's Toshka project. In the time of Gamal Abd-Nasser, he was talking in most of his speeches about his mega projects. Songs were used in the time of Nasser as a way of legitimizing his projects like the songs which were sung by Abd El -Halim and Om -Kalsom. For example, Abdul El Halim Hafez sung a song called Hekayet Shaab, with lyrics written by Ahmed Shafik Kamel. This song was about the high dam and the accomplishment of it. Some of these songs were financed by the state. This shows the practicality and essentiality of legitimacy in an authoritarian regime like Nasser's.

Secondly, in a speech for the Egyptian prime minister Mostafa Matboly, he mentioned that "digitization and automation of government services are at the top of the priorities of the Egyptian government. There is an obsession with technology and control. The idea of NAC as a model city is linked to legitimization with state-led modernization. Through digitization we will be able to control corruption through separating between who receives and offers the service. Moreover, it enhances the clarity and the Oversight of institutions. The new administrative capital city will enhance state administrative reform through the use of the most advanced administrative methods and tools in managing and administering state affairs. The new administrative Egyptian capital city is an example of the enhancement of digitization and automation of governmental services. We understand that fighting corruption is not the responsibility of governments only, but it is the responsibility of citizens also. The whole nation has the key role in fighting corruption" (Matboly, Mostafa.2022. 53)<sup>v</sup>.

One of the problems which Egypt suffers from is corruption. Corruption leads to the loss

of a lot of money that can be used in favor of the common good of the nation. One solution for this problem is digitizing governmental operations to be more accurately monitored. According to the prime minister, the new administrative capital city contributes to the processes of digitization. He is trying to procure legitimacy through convincing Egyptians that the new regime has an unobstructed vision through the administrative capital city to solve the problem of corruption. This is exactly what is called by Christian von Haldenwang ‘content-based legitimization’ and by Eastin, ‘structural base of legitimacy.’ In other words, the prime minister tried to convince the Egyptians that the government, which is a part of the regime, performs professionally through unobstructed vision to improve their conditions. The indication of this performance according to him is the new administrative capital city which will contribute to the improvement of their conditions and governmental operations.

Thirdly, there are several attempts by El- Sisi and the government to show that NAC is crucial in the process of Egypt’s development. In his speech about the new administrative capital city, Al-Sisi said, “When we inaugurate the new administrative capital city, you will witness a new state.” He continued, “a new state is not only about the buildings. A new state is a meaning, content, and shape.” He ended his talk by saying that this is what we want to do (El - Sisi, Abdul El- Fatah. 2022. 45s)<sup>vi</sup>. He did not mention the kind of change; however, it is inferred from his talk that this change is to the better. Finally, he links between the state, the future, and NAC. What the Egyptians care about is their future. He attempted to associate the citizens’ future with the future of the state and NAC. If the people care about their future, and the Egyptian president associated their future with the new state and capital city, they will care also about NAC. He tries to attach importance to the regime's biggest project (Tawee 2023).

In order to have a better analysis of El-Sisi's words, I shall borrow the words of Sheldon S. Woun who states, "Modern and ancient theorists commonly believed that founding—or giving a form or constitution to collective life—is reckoned to be the most notable action of which political man is capable. It is superior to other types of political acts because it aims to shape the lives of citizens by designing the structure or "dwelling" which they and their posterity will inhabit (v Sheldon S. Wolin. 1981: 401)." The Egyptian president tries to convince Egyptians that this project will change the meaning of their lives. According to political theorists, this is the most important political act, especially when this change is for the good of the people. In the speech of the Egyptian president, it was clear from his toon that the change which he meant is for the better. Thus, he wanted to show the public the importance of such a project on the republic and their lives to acquire more support for the project and his regime. As it is shown, the members of the Egyptian regime are trying to obtain the provision of the people through persuading the Egyptians that they have an unclouded vision and policies for the administration of Egypt. These visions and policies would solve more than one problem, and the realization of these policies and vision is possible through the new administrative capital city. Here the regime is trying to procure support for the big mega project of the capital city. If it succeeded in obtaining the support to their big project, they would succeed in procuring legitimacy to the regime because this is their project.

Fourthly, when the Egyptian minister of finance was asked about the reasons for building the Egyptian new administrative capital city. He answered by mentioning "that the new administrative capital city is a way to solve the problem of Egypt's future. He was talking about

traffic problems. He added instead of solving the problem of the traffic in a street in Cairo, the Egyptian state will solve the problem of Egypt from the root through the new administrative capital city. He regarded the high Egyptian population as the root of the problem of traffic congestion. Moreover, this mega project contributed to employing thousands of workers. He said that such projects should continue to provide the youth with job opportunities “(Egyptian minister of finance. 2022. 3min9s)<sup>vii</sup>. There are three keywords in his talk to understand his intentions. **These words are future, employment, and traffic**. This is the same strategy of cultivating legitimacy. It is about underlining the outputs of the project and how these outputs will benefit the citizen. The minister highlighted two important problems in Egypt, which are unemployment and traffic jams. He proposed NAC as the solution for traffic jams and unemployment. This is because there are people who are working on the project, and who will live in it. As a consequence, unemployment will decrease, and the problem of traffic congestion will be solved totally or partially. Such output may not have been realized; however, this is a way of marketing NAC. This shows the intentions of one important actor in the state. He wants to enhance the legitimacy of NAC, and hence the legitimacy of the regime. Once again, there seems to be a link between NAC and the broader modernization of the Egyptian economy and society. These are all central to the government’s discourse. This is also content based legitimization.

#### The relation between legitimacy and power

Weber considered material capacity and legitimacy as crucial factors of power. He argued that legitimacy enhances the stability of political orders (as cited in Reus 2014, 345) In the

previous chapter, Weber stated two ways of the practice of power which is force or persuasion. Edmund Burke argued that the availability of using force is temporary, and political order cannot govern a nation using force all the time (as cited in Reus 2014, 346). Reus justified what Edmund Burke argued by mentioning that the use of force in the practice of power all the time, is expensive. A political order that wants to apply what it wants using coercion needs to maintain a regime of credible threats, provide largesse in return for compliance, and pander to special interests (Reus 2014, 346). Thus, this political order should be supported by a number from the nation in order to practice persuasion as a way of power practice.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, In the case of Egypt after 2013, it was not about legitimizing the state itself. Rather, **it was more about legitimizing the new regime and** the succession after an old one has been removed. The Egyptian regime after 2013 involving the president, prime minister and ministers have been trying to use NAC as a mega project to legitimize their rule locally and on the international level. More than one governmental official talked about NAC and its expected positive out-comes on Egypt. Despite whether what they say is true or not, their intentions are manifested in their actions. They are trying to persuade the Egyptians that the choice of NAC as a mega-project was the right one. The regime's official rhetoric has revolved around ensuring citizens that the project had many positive effects on them and the state. Once the people were convinced that this is the right project for Egypt, this means that they have believed in the regime's choices and decisions. NAC is an area of cooperation between the Egyptian state and foreign actors such as China and Arab Gulf countries. Besides, it is an area of cooperation, it is a

message to the states which deny the international legitimacy of the Egyptian regime.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Legibility**

##### Introduction

Our investigation in the case of Egypt and the motivations of building NACC after two upheavals yielded the following. The results of the two upheavals of 2011 and 2013 were the deposition of Mubarak's and Morsy's regimes. These events triggered the economic and political instability in Egypt. After the previous two events a new regime headed by a military general Called Abdual-Fatah El-Sisi came to power. What is hypothesized in this thesis is that when Abdel Al-Fatah El -Sisi became president, he found a need for the consolidation of the regime's power. His regime is a new one which came after a disturbance. He perceived the consolidation of the new regime's power as a priority, thus announcing the initiation of a mega project which is a new administrative capital city. What has been demonstrated in the previous chapter is that legitimization is one motivation behind deciding to build NAC, and this contributes to the process of consolidation of the regime's power. Legitimization is one form of the relationship between the ruler and his people which the Egyptian regime aspire to attain through NAC. I will try in this chapter to find other motives behind building NAC which contributes to strengthening the relation between the ruler and his subjects from the length of the ruler, and hence consolidates the regime's power.

There is a need in this stage for a concept which elucidates the relation between the ruler and his subjects, and how the ruler will make sense of a population as in his mind especially in



authoritarian states. Since the main question of this thesis is about the motives or ambitions of the ruler of building a new administrative capital city, I should strive to look from the length of the ruler. The main hypothesis is that legitimization, legibility, and clientelism are crucial inspirations behind Building NAC. These three motivations contribute to the consolidation of the regime's power. What has been demonstrated in the previous chapter is that legitimization is one motivation behind deciding to build NAC. In this chapter I will argue that legibility is a second motivation behind the regime decision. Legibility, according to my understanding of what Scott wrote, is the requirement and the desire for the governed to fit within the grasp of the governor (Scott 1998, 2).

I will show that the building of NAC provides opportunities to make sense of a population, as in the minds of authorities. The new space provides a new opportunity to rewrite that relationship between ruler and governed. Using modern advanced techniques of administration may boost this process of making sense of a population. In this chapter I will present an introduction of legibility concepts and high modernism. The second section will be about how the use of modern technologies enriches legibility, by analyzing what Sheridan wrote about Foucault. This will be followed by a third section to explain why other concepts of mega projects failed short to explain the motives of building the NAC. In the fourth section, I will show how the description of the concept of legibility by Scott can be observed in the design of the NAC, while the fifth section is about how the regime's Discourse reveal their legibility motives to make sense of the population. In the sixth section, the regime's belief in the necessity of the application of modern technology in administration will be illustrated through the regime's speeches. Finally, I will demonstrate that the current Egyptian regime perceives old Cairo as an

ungoverned and uncontrolled city, and this new capital city will change that. In order to do this, I should divulge some articles and reports which the government received about the ungovernability of Cairo.

Legibility concept and modern technology's enhancement of it

I will Deploy the concept of legibility drawing on the work of James Scott, particularly from his book 'Seeing Like a State.' Legibility is a useful concept that will help in understanding what is happening in the NAC. The legibility concept allows me to look from the length of the ruler in order to answer the question of his motives. For a head of state, legibility is something constructive. It is about ordering the population by the state in ways that abridged the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion (Scott 1998, 2). In other words, it is changing political and administrative issues to an area which the authorities can act on and govern it. These ways of changing the political and administrative issues are such as permanent last names, the standardization of weights and measures, the establishment of cadastral surveys and population registers, the invention of freehold tenure, the standardization of language and legal discourse, the design of cities, and the organization of transportation. The target of this legibility is the central recording and monitoring of the country data and operations (IBD 1998, 2). The reason for this change is to make all of these matters clearer to the ruler and the regime in order to be in control of the area and people. Legibility is making the people available as targets of governing. According to Scott, some rulers govern their people through making them fit into boxes physically and administratively. One way of facilitating this process is through building a new capital city.

It is important to acknowledge that in the early stages of the New Administrative City

(NAC) project, legibility might not be a paramount objective due to the initially low population density. The new regime views legibility as a future ambition, to be attained once the project reaches completion and the city becomes fully populated. However, beyond mere legibility, a key motivation for the NAC project is organizing the population in a manner that facilitates essential state functions like taxation, conscription, and maintaining security. This encompasses both future residents of the city and individuals who will interact with the state within its boundaries, whether by utilizing its facilities or working for its institutions. In this way, the NAC serves as a planned space, not yet populated but intended to streamline interactions between the state and its constituents.

Another concept that will help in explaining what is happening in NAC is high-modernist ideology. It is about “self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws” (IBD , 4). It is about the usage of modern technological tools and machines in the production and administration processes.

Although the Egyptian regime may not have this concept in mind, there are some appearances of the application of this idea in NAC, especially in **administration**. The Egyptian regime may not have had this concept in mind when it decided to build NAC, however the rhetoric of the government, and the design of NAC, involving the technological system of administration there, indicates that the regime believes in the necessity of deploying technology, as will be shown. Moreover, there is a belief in the usage of modern technological tools and its

ability in tightening the control of the society by the regime using the state. According to Scotte, high modernism is an explanation for why states behave as they do. Scott did not accept that officials belief explicitly in high modernism, but rather officials and rulers believed in the necessity of the technologies and resources of the modern state against native practices that are ungoverned by them. In the case of Egypt, as will be shown, high modernism attracts the regime and the Egyptians to NAC. However, I do not suggest that the regime and the government does not believe in technology and modernism. What I argue here is that the regime believes that attaching high modernism to NAC makes the project more good-looking to the Egyptians; At the same time, the regime recognizes that using technologies and high modernism enhances the discernibility and administration of the society. The idea is that the ideology of high modernism is not an explicit reference to some doctrine, but rather it is embedded in the state that seeks to create a space for top-down action.

Beyond Panopticism and enhancement of legibility through modern technologies.

As will be demonstrated in this chapter, Egypt's NAC is well equipped to manipulate and force citizens (i.e., bodies) into submission in a Foucauldian sense. Connor Sheridan clarified what Foucault said... Foucault's panopticon is about methodizing a way to facilitate the surveillance process being continuous to control bodies, modify behavior, and grantee the security of the hierarchical system through cultivating a continuous feeling that one is being watched most or all the time even if he is not really watched or monitored . His idea is realized through building a tower in the middle to give the feeling to the people that they are monitored from this tower (Sheridan 2016, 3). Sheridan claims in his thesis that the new panopticon replaces the central observation tower with surveillance cameras. The web of

windows is replaced by procedures for data entry such as microprocessors built into operating equipment, or the control interfaces that record operator inputs, or daily system updates provided by crafts workers in their remote field sites (Sheridan 2016, 3).

There is a difference between what Foucault said and what Sheridan claims. Foucault meant by using the observation tower is the methodization of a way to simplify the scrutiny process being incessant to regulate bodies, amend behavior, and guarantee the security of the hierarchical system through cultivating a continuous sensation that one is being watched most or all the time even if he is not really watched or monitored (as cited in Sheridan 2016, 3). In Sheridan's thesis the central observation tower and web of windows are replaced by surveillance cameras, and procedures for data entry. Thus, the monitoring process in Sheridan's conception of new Panopticism is not just an illusory monitoring process that gives the continuous feeling of being monitored as in Foucault's conception of Panopticism. In the new Panopticism according to Sheridan, the continuous monitoring or auditing is factual. As a result, the control of bodies, the modification of behavior, and the guarantee of the hierarchical system's security is more effective and stronger.

There is a recognized relation between high modernism, the new panopticism, and legibility. High modernism is the belief and usage of modern technologies in administration and security, but in Egypt, this is a belief in the necessity of using technologies, and the usage of up-to-date progressive technological surveillance systems in the NAC, in order to apply new panopticism. Thus, new panopticism is a form of high modernism. As a result, the discernibility of bureaucratic and security operations is more effective. Here the surveillance is more than what

Foucault imagined with Panopticism because this is not unreal surveillance, but it is total scrutiny and that is why legibility is a more applicable concept for what is taking place in the NAC. In the future, individuals venturing outside their familiar neighborhoods will face a heightened level of state control. Surveillance cameras will track their movements, rendering them significantly more exposed to state scrutiny and potential intervention. This shift raises concerns about individual liberty and privacy in an increasingly monitored society.

Other concepts of mega projects and why it failed to explain the motives of building the NAC

There are many concepts that may help in explaining what is happening with the NAC, but most concepts may serve in explaining one or two aspects in the process of building this mega city. Legibility is the concept which makes sense to me, since it is actually about how a regime gets the space to function upon the ruled people. Although, there are other concepts which may have discussed the reasons and effects of mega projects, these concepts are fully short to explain the motives of rulers. For example, one concept which may help in elucidating an aspect of what is occurring in NAC is the big man concept. The big man is the highest figure straddling economic and political life. He is habitually the physical portrayal of personal rule. Firstly, the capital of the political system is his individual property; secondly, allegiance of the people to him rather than to bureaucratic standards or procedures is the principle which determines who will take the highest official positions. Finally, the distinction between the private and the public sector is blurred. This concept may be found in both autocratic and democratic regimes (DRISCOLL 2020, 523). However, the big man concept does not clarify the effect of the control of political and economic resources on him and his regime. Moreover, the

concept puts the nature of the ruler more into consideration, and does not talk about the effect of his projects on his people. Additionally, it does not state the target of using economic and political resources.

Another concept that may discuss the intentions of security regimes of building gated communities is domesticating security, but this concept failed in discovering the real intentions of some regimes behind gated cities. Moreover, it failed to clearly elucidate the effect of creating a gated city on regime power consolidation, and the administration of the country if this gated city is to be the capital. Low argues that the reasons for building gated communities is increasing inequality, endless warfare, and militarization of everyday life, in addition to placing boundaries towards lurking terrorists and prohibited immigrants—images that are subjugated by the media to generate a ‘culture of fear.’ Domesticating security is controlling these wider security apprehensions and local worries through residential packages designed to alter these risks and provide physical, social, and financial protection (Setha and Maguire 2019, 142).

A third concept used in understanding mega projects is alienation. Although this concept illustrates the effect of mega projects on part of the population, it cannot provide explanation of the rulers’ intentions and motives behind initiating mega projects. Bayirbag and Penpecioglu grabbed alienation as 'a worldwide apparatus enabling the accumulation of capital' through physical displacement and dispossession. One participant of this process is the state in terms of its ideological apparatuses and disciplinary processes of criminalization and control (Sert and Kuruüzüm2022,146). This concept is about the state using its power to control and initiate mega projects to achieve economic benefits. As a result, it causes disaffection to a portion of society. It

refers to the economic incentives that mega projects may offer to the state, but it does not tell us how this control by the state is acquired. It explains the effect of mega projects on some citizens. And the target of this chapter is to look for the motives and intentions of the Egyptian regime. the need here in this chapter is for a concept which discourses how the Egyptian state tries to make sense of the population, and how building a new administrative capital city contributes to this process.

#### Investigation of the legibility concept, in the case of Egypt

What tends to make the governed area more legible is an authoritarian regime. This regime is keen and able to practice the complete weightiness of its forcible power to carry these high-modernist designs into being, and ultimately gain control of space and people. The most fruitful soil for this legibility project has typically been times of war, revolution, depression, and struggle for national liberation. In such conditions, emergency situations foster the confiscation of emergency powers (Scotte , 5). The legibility of a society offers the capability for bulky-scale social engineering, and high-modernist ideology provides the desire, the authoritarian state provides the determination to act on that desire, and a weakened civil society due to a failed revolution, for example, stipulates the leveled social ground on which to build (IBD, 5). In other words, high modernism is an opportunity for a new regime involving the government, to act on society. Moments of upheavals are relevant for this statist ideology because after upheaval society is drained, and opposition is minor. As a result, the state can take decisions to alter the system of administering society.

The situation before, during, and after 2011 and 2013 is the justification for the decision



of building NACC to achieve legibility. For the new regime after 2013, the solution for the resulting devastating circumstances of the two upheavals was the projection of the regime's power and the control by the new regime of the state and society. The location and method of administration should change to make space, as well as making administrations more comprehensible and legible to the regime in order to arrange and manage people in a way that guarantees security economically and physically. The location of administration should be widened, organized and secure. The method of administration should be modernized to enable the new regime to control not only the center of administration, but also the country - especially after the turbulence and the unstable situation from 2011 till 2014 in Egypt. The old, Dilapidated capital became outdated for the state, and, from the perspective of the new regime, this led to the events that unfolded from 2011 to 2013. What happened in this period may be regarded as the victory of society over the state. The location, control, and the demographic organization of capital cities play a role in revolutions (Skocpol 1982). On January 25, 2011, demonstrations broke out across Egypt, most notably in El-Tahrir, where most of the ministries have been located since the creation of modern Cairo under Khedive Ismail. Governmental employees were not able to reach their offices, and they were not able to do their responsibilities. Consequently, most of the state's ministries were blocked (Joya 2011). In 2012, demonstrators gathered around the presidential palace to demonstrate against Morsi and his party. This palace is located in Masr El-Gedida, near the center of Cairo (CNN Wire Staff 2012).

When the new Egyptian regime came to power, it wanted to consolidate its power over the society; It wanted to show that it is in control of its area. One solution was to build a new area which is legible. As a result, the new regime - as will be shown in the government's rhetoric

- decided to temporarily abandon the old ungoverned, incapacitated Cairo and to build a new legible capital.

### Illustrations of the ungovernability of Cairo

In this section, I will try to reveal some complaints and reports of the ungovernability of old Cairo. If I succeed in presenting how the new regime of El-Sisi and his government perceive Cairo as an ungovernable area through the official reports and complaints, this will show that there is a problem with old Cairo, and will take our illustration and discussion to the next level. The next level is about the solution. One solution is to solve the glitches and the malfunctions of old Cairo. Another solution is to create a new governable and legible area.

Firstly, according to the world bank report , Cairo suffers from a fundamental problem, which is traffic congestion. Consequently, it suffers from an environmental problem due to the gas emissions resulting from the substantial number of cars. Traffic congestion has adverse effects on both the quality of life and the economy<sup>viii</sup>. Secondly, in an article in the official Egyptian newspaper El- Ahram by Wagih El-Sakar called ‘Cairo gets rid of its pain and revives its global heritage,’ he reports that there are many complications in old Cairo due to the presence of most, if not all, ministries in it. The solution from his and the government’s perspective is the construction of a new area and the transfer of the ministries to it <sup>ix</sup>. Do we have to build a new capital city to solve the problem of traffic congestion? Already, the regime initiated many infrastructural projects of building new bridges, digging new tunnels, and widening streets, and all of these projects will contribute to the solution of the traffic congestion. There is a deeper

reason for building NAC c- not to mention that not all who live in Cairo will reside in NAC.

Another problem in Cairo specifically, is the slums. Doaa Khalifa, a journalist in El-Ahram - the official Egyptian newspaper, reports that over sixteen million Egyptians live in vicious conditions, in slums, most of which are based in the Greater Cairo metropolitan area. Inhabitants are forced to live in inhumane settlements. This is due to a severe shortage of affordable housing in the cities. In these slums, people suffer from lack of electricity and sewage services. Moreover, they are exposed to neglect by the state, including regular forced evictions. A prime example of one such area is Manshiyat Naser, which suffers from all the issues mentioned above. Moreover, such places may not be fully controlled by the police, and hence are high in crime rates. Additionally, as we have seen in 2011, 2012, and 2013, most of the vandals who threaten the people, and the state, came out of such places.

Previous data reveal that Cairo suffers from more than one problem, and these problems have accumulated over many years. As a consequence, Cairo, the old capital, became an ungovernable city. This has become obvious during the events of 2011 and 2013 when demonstrators came out against the previous two regimes, and vandals threatened the control of the state. When the new regime of El-Sisi came to power, it chose to create its new legible clear area of government. As will be shown in the coming paragraphs, this regime's belief lies in that this new governable area will help it in governing the whole country.

#### Illustration of the legibility motives behind NAC through its design

In this section, I will illustrate through the design of NAC that legibility is one motivation

of building it. In 2011 and 2012, Due to the fact that the center of administration and the presidential palace are found in the crowded capital Cairo, the country was not under control. It was not under control because Cairo is a large capital city where millions of people reside, and the administrative state's ministries are located in it. Moreover, the people can reach the center of the city through different streets, and some of these streets were not previously monitored before these upheavals. Furthermore, the regime was not in control of Facebook, which is a modern means of communication that played a large role in the upheavals. Thus, it makes more sense for the new regime to exercise power over an area which does not have all of these accumulations and history of compromises between state, mediators, and society that are present in the old capital

Scott talks about the relation between the organization of a city, control, and policing. Streets laid out in straight lines intersecting at right angles, and buildings of uniform design and size, were built according to a single, overarching plan intended to reflect the grandeur and impressive power of the state (Scott 1998, 55-56). Scott's study explains how some cities are designed to allow for the mobilization of soldiers at any time to suppress upheavals and implement the orders of the authorities. The designs of organized, urbanized cities are also meant to facilitate different methods of persuasion and inducement such as delivering mail, collecting taxes, conducting a census, moving supplies and people in and out of the city, putting down a riot or insurrection, digging for pipes and sewer lines, finding a felon or conscript, and planning public transportation, water supply, and trash removal (IBD, 56).

The design of NAC is similar, if not identical, to what is described in the previous paragraph by Scott. According to Taweel, "NAC is located approximately thirty miles east of Cairo. It was first envisioned as a three-phase project spanning about 170,000 acres, to be

implemented in its entirety by an Emirati real estate developer and fully financed by Gulf investors. Phase one consists of 41,500 acres, the size of Washington, D.C., and building began in 2016. In addition to this, NAC will be a “smart city,” complete with a China-style central-command surveillance system to track all activity, including through live video broadcasts from 6,000 cameras “ (Taweel 2023, 11).

As previously illustrated in Chapter II, the NAC will comprise of numerous sub-cities, each of which boasts its own impressive feats. These include the Medical City, The Arts and Culture City, the Expo City.... (etc.). What has been displayed in this section is that the urban design and architecture of NAC is an expression of power. It is located and designed in a way that makes it **not** easily accessible to the general population and enables security forces to maneuver easily inside it, as every street is surveilled. It is more legible to the new regime since they designed and built it from scratch. Secondly, each district in NAC is devoted to serving a specific target, and this target is clear for the administration, and hence the regime. This clarity of the plan of NAC empowers rulers to control and manage the center of Egypt’s administration effortlessly.

#### Illustration of the legibility motives through regime’s discourse

In a speech by the Egyptian president about the new administrative capital city El-Sisi said that “when he announced the idea of building NAC, some people insisted on staying in Cairo, even while it was crowded . On the other hand, what we intend to do with the NAC is less expensive and more profitable. When we inaugurate the new administrative capital city, you will witness a new state.” According to him, a new state is not only about buildings; a new state withholds meaning, content, and shape. He ended his talk by saying that “this is what we want to

do”<sup>xi</sup>. Firstly, the president stated that the solution to the problems of old Cairo, such as being overcrowded, is to go to a new place. This is the same mentality of the regimes which aspire to achieve legibility. It is about the rulers observing a problem in the old space, and thus from their perspective, the solution is building and creating a new legible space in order not to have the same problem which is in the old one ( Scott 1998). Secondly, the state of Egypt is an old established one, and creating a new state refers to the impetus of the Egyptian regime’s leader. he tends to differentiate his period as a president from other eras by designing a new area of state administration . it seems from his words that the new space permits him to design his new state, and through this new state the regime will be in control of the country, as will be shown in the Egyptian prime minister's words later in this paper. Scott specified that the end goal of legibility is the monitoring of state operations, and control of space and people. NAC enables the regime to achieve this goal.

When the Egyptian minister of finance was asked about the reasons for building the Egyptian new administrative capital city, he answered by mentioning “that the new administrative capital city is a way to solve the problem of Egypt's future. He was talking about the traffic problem. He added, instead of solving the problem of the traffic in a street in Cairo, the Egyptian state will solve the problem of Egypt through the new administrative capital city<sup>xii</sup>. Again, the solution of the illegible traffic in Old Cairo is the creation of a new city with legible traffic. There might be other causes of the problems in Cairo, and the complete solution to these problems may not be through building a new city. The solution for the regime is to create what is legible, and this is not erroneous, but there are other aspects which the new regime should consider, and this can be discussed in other papers. According to Scott, legibility is about clarity in order to control - from the perspective of authoritarian

regimes, this control is possible by creating a new space to control the area and people.

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Thirdly, in an interview with the Egyptian prime minister on extra news from NAC, he mentioned that “the idea of building NAC is the transfer of the strategic administration of the state in these new ministerial head offices. At the same time, the direct service providers will remain in old Cairo and other governorates. The strategic government and planning of the state will be in NAC.” He added that the idea of NAC is the creation of the suitable environment for the employee to work<sup>xiii</sup>. Firstly, Matbouly is certain that the usage of digitization and technology empowers the regime to regulate not just NAC, but it permits the regime to be in control of all of Egypt. Scott mentioned that legibility is ordering the state to facilitate the functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion; and what is said by the Egyptian president, prime minister, and minister of finance about the targets of NAC is exactly like what has been mentioned by Scott. The reason for choosing legibility from the perspective of the Egyptian new regime is the central recording and monitoring of the country's data and operations.

Illustration of Egyptian State official belief in the necessity of technology to enhance legibility in bureaucracy.

In the same vein, in the same speech of the Egyptian prime minister Mostafa Matboly, he mentioned that “digitization and automation of government services are at the top of the priorities of the Egyptian government. There is an obsession with technology and control. The idea of NAC as a model city is linked to legitimization with state-led modernization. Through

digitization, we will be able to control corruption through separating between who receives and offers the service. Moreover, it enhances the clarity and the oversight of institutions. The new administrative capital city will enhance state administrative reform through the use of the most advanced administrative methods and tools in managing and administering state affairs. According to Matboly, the new administrative Egyptian capital city is an example for the enhancement of digitization and automation of governmental services<sup>xiv</sup>.

Part of high modernism is about the usage of technological advances in the administration of states. Digitization is a form of the modern technological advances of our century, and this process enables us to count and manage people through digital screens and count them as numbers . Through the creation of controlled governed space between governor and governed, digitization contributes to the process of legibility. The digitization process entails the reshaping of the bureaucratic apparatus so that it works more efficiently to control people. The rhetoric of the prime minister shows the belief of the regime in the usage of modern technology in administration. The design of NAC and the usage of modern technology in it proves that the new regime of El- Sisi wants to make society, especially NAC, more legible in order to be controlled. The usage of modern technology does not only enable the control of NAC only, but it also enables the regime to control other governmental operations remotely through digitization. The design of NAC and what is said by the Egyptian prime minister, shows that surveillance cameras, microprocessors built into operating equipment, the control interfaces that record operator inputs, and daily system updates provided by crafts workers in their remote field sites are there in NAC. Firstly, this shows the belief of the regime in the ability of modern technologies to enhance its control over society and facilitates classic state functions of taxation,



conscription, and prevention of rebellion. Secondly, The Egyptian prime minister did not refer to legibility directly, but he mentioned that the digitization in NAC enhances the clarity and the oversight of institutions. Clarity is one synonym for legibility. Most of the prime minister's speech is about the legibility motive.

## Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that legibility is one motivation behind building NAC. Legibility is organizing the people by the state in ways that reduce or facilitate the classic state roles of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion (Scott 1998, 2). The design of cities is one way of reducing or facilitating the classic state roles (ibid 1998, 2). The end goal of legibility is the monitoring and control of space and people. Scott argued that who applies the concept of legibility is authoritarian regimes, especially after periods of turmoil such as revolutions. Authoritarian regimes usually prefer to be in control of state and society due to its nature of authoritarianism, especially after upheavals. Finally, the usage of modern technology facilitates legibility in security and administration (ibid 1998).

What has been observed in the case of Egypt and building NAC, is 1) President Abdul El-Fatah El-Sisi and his regime came to power after two upheavals. 2) The situation in Egypt in 2013 was not stable due to the deposition of the previous President Mohamad Morsy by the military, supported by large demonstrations against the Muslim Brotherhood. 3) El- Sisi and his regime realized that there is a need to be in control of the state and society. 4) This control can be obtained through legibility. 5) What has been illustrated through the

president's, prime minister's, and minister of finance's words is that NAC is one way to make the state and the society readable and legible for the regime. Moreover, the usage of modern technologies enhances legibility.

**Chapter IV**

**Clientelism**

Introduction

As discussed in my earlier chapters, after the two upheavals of 2011 and 2013 in Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi - who is a military general - became the president. He initiated building his regime's mega project, which is NAC. This announcement arouses questions about the regime's motives in deciding to build a new administrative capital city from scratch in the desert east of Cairo. What was witnessed in Egypt after the two upheavals may be a potential reason for taking such a decision. The political and economic situation were not stable following the removal of the two previous presidents, Muhamad Husny Mubarak, and Muhamad Mursi. What is hypothesized in this thesis is that El- Sisi and his new regime recognized the economic and political volatility in Egypt. Consequently, he and his regime concluded that there is a necessity for the regime's consolidation of power in order to rule and control the state and society after the previous occurrences.

I have argued in chapter II that a ruler may consolidate his regime's power and practice power and authority over the people when these people accept or approve the role of the president, and hence, his regime. In other words, citizens should believe that the present political institutions are the most congruous ones for society and to be confident in the efficiency of the existing political institutions and regime. Based on this belief, the regime can command obedience from its subjects. Thus, one step in power consolidation is legitimization. Through the

investigation in the case of the Egyptian new administrative capital city, I concluded that one motive behind the initiation of the mega project NAC is legitimization. In chapter III , I tried to understand the relation between consolidation of power, legitimization, and NAC. One concept that is useful in understanding this relation between these three elements is legibility. It is about ordering the population by the state in ways that abridged the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion. Through the investigation in the case of NAC, I arrived at another conclusion, which is that legibility is a second motive behind the instigation of NAC. It is not just a motive, but it contributes to the consolidation of power because it enhances the regime's control of state and society.

If NAC serves the two motives of legitimization and legibility, how will it be financed? Also how does this financing contribute to the process of power consolidation? Moreover, how does the financial operation in NAC enable the regime to have new foreign and local networks or alliances to strengthen, not only the economic power, but also the political one? In order to answer all of these questions, I shall find a relevant concept which is useful in understanding the political and economic relations in NAC.

In this chapter, we will attempt to understand the NAC project through the prism of clientelism, and I will argue that clientelism pinpoints the regime in a network of relations which has dyadic dynamics with 1) international actors in which they serve as the client, 2) public corporations, and 3) local businessmen in which they serve as a patron. NAC is not about cementing patron-client relationships only, but it is also about the reconfiguration of this relation. This is available through this new project because of the regime's military

control and distribution of resources, including public ones, and thus everything should pass first through the state. NAC is not just an opportunity to create new clients by giving them more facilitated investment opportunities, but it is also an **opportunity to replace old ones through distributing new opportunities among the new ones**. Also, the regime would be able to enhance old clientelist relations through rewording some opportunities to old clients. A new project gives the chance for a regime to reconfigure his network of clients. In other words, it allows the regime to reward his loyal clients, punish his disloyal ones and replace them with new ones. In an old project, a regime may be able to change one or two clients, but in a new project that is built from scratch, the regime will be able to change twenty new clients at the same time. It has enormous political potential for blessing or rewarding new actors by the regime, and leaving untrusted clients behind. **It is the reconfiguration of the Egyptian political economy**. That is why I argue that it is a tempting prospect for a regime in need of power consolidation.

#### Choosing the relevant concept

One concept which is used in elucidating the organization of society in authoritarian, and sometimes democratic regimes, is **corporatism**. The target of corporatism, especially in an authoritarian context, **is the organization of society into groups**, the securitization of society's obedience and loyalty, and channeling the society demands (J. Brown, Hatab, Adly 2020, 53). J. Brown, Hatab, Adly argue that "state corporatism is the organization of society into a set of organizations that each has dominion within its segment (for instance, with a single, state-licensed labor union). The coordination of these groups is by the state, which thus takes on a strong role of funding the foundation of several social groups, allowing the state the cartel of

representation, designing their internal organizational structure, and channeling their demands through official institutions” ( IBD, 53).

In this context, invoking corporatism would not be productive, as state-business relations here function through informal, individualistic, and hierarchical dynamics. Corporatism, in contrast, relies on formal, official, and institutionalized hierarchies. Moreover, it did not talk about the distraction of old interest groups and the formation of new ones through NAC or any other project. Additionally, this concept does not help in explaining the role of NAC in the process of organizing societal groups. Although the target of corporatism is relevant to our case - which is the organization of society into groups, the securitization of the society’s obedience and loyalty, and channeling the society demands - it does not tell us how both sides [the state and society] benefit equally from this relation. Additionally, this concept helps in analyzing the relation between state and societal groups in a general sense, while I strive in this chapter to understand the relations between the regime through the state with local and international financiers of NAC and how this will contribute to the process of power consolidation. Finally, the concept of corporatism is about the relations between the state and society, while our case involves foreign actors and foreign relations. Thus, corporatism is not the best concept to use in our analysis.

One useful concept that will clearly elucidate the business relations between the different actors in NAC and the regime, is **clientelism**. Nicholas van de Walle argues that clientelism subsists in all policies. The form it takes, its scope, and its political roles, differs immensely across time and place (as cited in Hicken 2011, 290). As a result, this concept is adjustable to

different political, economic, and cultural contexts like autocracies and democracies. Hicken said that clientelism is a kind of exchange of benefits, and the target of this exchange is the political support by one side of this conversational relation, which is the client, to another side, which is most probably called the patron (Hicken, 2011, 290). Clientelism enables authorities to strengthen or destroy old network relations, and it also enables them to build new ones. This is possible through cutting or continuing the exchange of benefits processes between the two sides of the relation. These two sides may be called patron and client. Discerning who is the patron and who is the client depends on the position of each actor. In most situations the patron is someone who is in a higher position than the client, but he needs the client's resources to achieve something which is not possible to be attained without the assistance of the client (Hicken 2011). At the same time, several kinds of exchange may exist, so how can we differentiate between clientelism and other types of exchange? There is no generally accepted definition of clientelism, but there are key elements of clientelism which are highlighted by scholars. Thus, in order to discern clientelism from other types of exchange, I will follow the approach of Hicken of explaining the concept of clientelism through its four appearances. Then I will investigate the existence of these features through NAC.

#### Characteristics and sub-concepts of clientelism

In this section I will depict the features of clientelist relations based on what is written by Hicken and other scholars. Although clientelism is applied to elections and voting behavior, I will attempt to showcase how it can be applied in the case of the NAC, and how some qualities of clientelism can be seen.

One feature of clientelism is the dyadic relations. Scott, Lande, and Mainwaring

argue that in clientelist interactions, the patron and the client should have close social relationships or face-to-face relations with each other (as cited in IBD, 290). Although Weingrod, Kitschelt, Wilkinson, Stokes, and Muno acknowledge the essentialness of personal relationship in clientelism, they postulated that the patron and the client may not be directly connected. **Instead, the relation between the two may be intermediated by a chain of broker relationships** (as cited in IBD, 291). I lean to the view of the persistence of brokers and network in clientelism because the patron may be in a high position and may not be able to communicate with all his clients directly. Moreover, there may be a bulky number of clients, and one or two patrons may not be able to manage all the clients. Moerman, Curtis, Krishna, Scheiner, Wilkinson claim that the brokers should have standing in the community and are profoundly entrenched in local networks such as local government officials, landowners, **respected business people**, or other **local notables** (as cited in IBD, 291). However, this does not mean that dyadic relations are absent in the clientelist pyramid. Most scholars emphasized the presence of the dyadic relations in clientelism between the patron and high-level brokers, between high and lower-level brokers, and between brokers and individual clients (Hicken, 2011, 291).

The discussion of dyadic relations, patron, brokers, and client will take the conversation to the second feature of clientelism which is hierarchy. Scott, Lande, Eisenstadt, & Roniger contend that clientelist relations occur between a person who has a higher status and owns resources with a person who has a lower status, and will give his support and aid to the patron (as cited in IBD, 2011, 291). In other words, **the highest patron who owns the resources**, especially public resources, **channels these resources to his broker and the broker as a sub-patron channels**



these resources to his broker, and so on until it reaches the client down the pyramid. In return, each broker in this pyramid will channel his support and aid to his patron until it reaches the highest patron. In short, the broker is a client in relation to his patron, and he is a patron in relation to his client. As a result, there is a hierarchy. States are all sovereign and equal, so how hierarchy exist between them! Despite the principle of sovereign equality, power and resource disparities create a de facto hierarchy that governs interactions between states. A third characteristic of clientelism is **contingency**, which is found in all definitions of clientelism. Piattoni, Robinson, Verdier, and Roniger maintain that contingency is the transfer of a good or service by the patron or the client as an response to the deliverance of a give-and-take advantage by the other party (as cited in IBD , 2011,291). Kitschelt & Wilkinson said that the **reciprocal exchange may not be immediate**. In other words, one side may deliver the benefit to the other side [client or patron], and in return the other side gives a credible promise of the delivery of a different kind of benefit to the patron or client (Hicken 2011, 291].

A fourth characteristic of clientelism which distinguishes clientelism from other types of exchanges, such as bribery, is iteration. **Iteration** is the enduring or ongoing relation between the patron and client. The endurance of this relation is based on two factors (Hicken 2011, 292). Firstly, a patron may deliver an advantage to the client, and he is waiting to receive a benefit from the client in the future based on the client's promise - such as the candidates' and voters' relations in the elections. Secondly, as long as the reciprocal exchange of benefits is kept between the two sides, the relation will be upheld. In other words, if the two sides continue to send and receive benefits between each other, the clientelist relation will last. This is based on the mutual expectation by each side that the other side will deliver the benefit to him, **and this mutual expectation is acquired through earlier relations and experience between the two sides**

(Hicken 2011, 292].

These four sub-concepts of clientelism are interrelated. Although I acknowledge the essentialness of **personal relationships in clientelism**, I adopt the definition of Weingrod, Kitschelt, Wilkinson, Stokes, and Munro that the relation between the patron and the client may not be directly connected. Instead, the relation between the two may be intermediated by a chain of broker relationships, and face-to-face interactions may take place between brokers until it reaches the client. This is because the patron may be in a high position, and would not be able to communicate with all his clients directly. Moreover, there may be a bulky number of clients, and one or two patrons may not be able to manage all the clients. As a result of the dyadic relations, according to the accepted definition of clientelism, hierarchy should persist. Secondly, contingency and iteration are closely related. As long as the reciprocal relation between the patron and client is maintained, it is logical to be iterated because the subject or the substance of exchange is still bartered between the two sides. The contingency of the relation implies that there is iteration for two reasons. The first reason is that the contingent relation may take a long time to be completed, and the second is that this relation may be repeated more than one time. Thus, in my **investigation of clientelism in the case of NAC**, I will deal with dyadic relations and hierarchy as one characteristic of clientelism and with contingency and iteration as another characteristic.

#### Actors in NAC

There are many actors in NAC **involving state and non-state actors**. In order to differentiate between patron and client and broker I should depict the actors in NAC first. You

will find a list of the actors in appendix 1, 2,3. The Data in this section is extracted from The Project on Middle East Democracy report by Sarah Taweel. The Project on Middle East Democracy has collected this data from interviews, newspapers, television speeches, and officially accessible documents by The Project on Middle East Democracy report by SARAH TAWHEEL. This grate effort would not be possible to do by myself , and that is why I site this source.

However, Sarah Taweel -L tried to show through using this data the sources of finance to challenge the argument that nothing is paid in NAC by the state. My target from using the same collected data by SARAH TAWHEEL is different. The following data will illustrate the attempts by the new regime to reconfigure and cement new clientelist relations<sup>xv</sup>.

Investigation of clientelism in the economic relations between state and non-state actors and their political consequences [Political economy section]

I have illustrated till now that legitimization and legibility are two motives behind building NAC. However, the building of NAC is not a free task. It requires a huge amount of finance. Where this finance would have come and its effect on the economic and political power of the regime is the subject of this section. Mainly, as will be shown, the sources of finance are the international monetary fund which will not be discussed, foreign states, foreign companies, and big and small local companies that will be investigated. While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) does not directly finance projects like the new administrative capital (NAC), its broader support for the Egyptian state has helped enable this investment.

One of the strategies used by the Mubarak regime to compensate for the decline in rentier revenues was to resort to businessmen to pay donations for public benefit or society. We do not

mean handouts, i.e., financial flows from individuals to individuals, but financial flows from individuals and state bodies or to conduct one of the functions of the state (Soliman 2013, 260).

For example, a businessman contributes to the beautification of a city or to the construction of a school. This amounts to privatization of the tax system. Instead of paying the tax to the state to build the schools, the businessman himself builds the school. There are no figures available on this phenomenon. But there is ample evidence of their growth and spread. This phenomenon is often recorded in fields named after businessmen or companies that have participated in its development. In the chapter on the local level of the state in Soliman book “the strong regime and the weak state”, we saw how the experience of developing the city of Alexandria was founded on donations from businessmen. In addition, the prevalence of this phenomenon is also consistent in some studies that have indicated this. In return, the donor businessman obtains exemptions from some obligations such as fees, or that state institutions provide him with some privileges such as contracting contracts, supply contracts, etc. (Soliman 2013, 260) This potential for exchange manifests through the regime's cultivation of future supporters and its systematic replacement of past beneficiaries with new ones. Again, these clientelist relations are replicated again in the NAC project. While the specific location of exchange within the NAC may remain ambiguous, a latent exchange relationship undeniably exists.

In the following examples I will depict two main characteristics of clientelism which are dyadic relations and contingency. I call these two as main because the presence of dyadic relations based on the adopted definition of dyadic implies the existence of hierarchy. Also, as long as the contingent relation persist or the substance of exchange continue to be exchanged ,

the clientelist relation will be iterated.

#### Egypt and Gulf countries

In June 2014, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud supported and attended a conference to advocate for the recently chosen President al-Sisi and his consolidation of power against the Muslim Brotherhood. Just weeks after King Abdullah's invitation, the oil prices started dropping. As a result, the Egyptian regime did not want to publicize itself as a scrounger nation because the dropping of the oil prices made it less attractive for al-Sisi's Gulf allies to give away free money. Oil prices were around a third of what they had been in 2013. Consequently, the idea was changed into an investor conference (Taweel 2023, 12). Moreover, by late 2015, the threat posed by the Brotherhood in Egypt to the Gulf monarchies diminished because the Egyptian military regime had sufficiently consolidated its position. Additionally, the staunch supporter of El- Sisi, King Abdullah, died just weeks before the March 2015 event and he was no longer around to gather his Gulf allies behind the Egyptian president. Accordingly, El- Sisi has to find a new incentive for his Gulf allies as a prerequisite for further aid. The incentive here which was offered by the Egyptian regime is selling land and other state-owned assets in Egypt (IBD, 13). While several news outlets have reported on the involvement of GCC golf countries in the NAC project, the specific extent of each nation's participation remains undisclosed. Public information, including news articles and television reports, primarily mentions investments from the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. However, at this stage, it is difficult to ascertain the precise investment amounts of individual GC countries in the NAC.

Firstly, this relation is between two sovereign states, and I cannot say that there is a hierarchy. At the same time, we cannot deny the fact that some gulf countries are stronger than Egypt economically. Thus, we can say that the gulf countries in this relation may be regarded as

patrons, and Egypt is a client. Secondly, the dyadic relation is obvious here; there is a face-to-face exchange relation between Egypt and gulf countries, and this will be shown in further examples. Thirdly, contingency is obvious; in the beginning, Gulf countries supported El- Sisi financially in his fight against the Muslim Brotherhood because this organization was threatening the Gulf monarchs too. The Egyptian president Abdul Fatah El-Sisi defended the Gulf monarchs against the Muslim Brotherhood, and, in return, he received finance from them to consolidate his regime's position. In 2015, the threat to the Gulf monarchs by the brotherhood started to disappear and Egypt now would not offer something to be exchanged. As a consequence, the Egyptian regime has to offer something to its allies in order to maintain this relation and financial support. The solution was to sell state-owned assets, and in return, more investments in these state assets will flow from Gulf countries. Investments means that more money will enter the country, and this is good, but this money should be returned back to Gulf countries with profit. Consequently, the clientelist relation was iterated. The result is the presence of clientelist relations between Egypt and Gulf countries.

State owned institutions and companies as brokers.

According to The Project on Middle East Democracy report by SARAH TAWHEEL "In April 2016, a joint-stock company was established by the new Egyptian regime the Administrative Capital for Urban Development (ACUD), The target is to manage the anticipated multibillion-dollar deals with China and function as expert developer of the new capital. The company is 51 percent owned by the Ministry of Defense—specifically by two military agencies under its umbrella, the National Service Projects Organization (NSPO) and the Armed Forces Land Projects Agency (AFLPA)—and 49 percent owned by the

Ministry of Housing's New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA)( TAWHEEL 2023, 14).”

“ One decree, issued in November 2015, gave the AFLPA the right to form joint-stock companies with other domestic and international actors, significantly expanding its The ACUD's mandate includes managing land sales and their profits, awarding contracts to construction, technology, and services companies, and supervising sub-developers (such as NUCA and private developers) who would build and finance smaller parts of the city. With 20 billion EGP (\$2.3 billion) in paid-in capital from the defense and housing ministries— later increased to 80 billion EGP (\$6 billion) in 2020— and ownership over the 170 thousand feddans of land slotted for the project, the military-led company was well endowed to serve this managerial function. A second decree, in February 2016, allocated 170 thousand feddans to the agency for the purpose of building the new capital, stipulating that the land would serve as the AFLPA's in-kind contribution to the soon-to-be-established ACUD”(IBD2023, 15).

The above data illustrates that the **military is the closest broker to the regime**, and other state institutions are also trusted, but under the supervision of the military. Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi trusted this state institution to administer the building of NAC through supervising the process of selling the land, and the construction activities, as will be shown down. Although there are other state institutions involved in NAC, these ones do not play a key role like the military. President El- Sisi graduated from this institution, and Egypt was coming out from two upheavals. Thus, he has to choose a trusted broker to delegate some authorities to, and the military is this trusted broker. Secondly, he has to offer some incentives to the military members in order to support him, and to remain in control of the strongest institution in Egypt [the military]. Thus, the principle of contingency is there because there is something to be exchanged between the regime

and the state institutions, most notably the military. The regime allows the military to sell lands and administer the construction process in NACC which provide retired generals with work and the institution with money, and in return, the military supports him. As long as this exchange process is maintained, the clientelist relation is iterated. It is obvious that the Egyptian president is in a higher position than the military generals because he is their leader, according to the constitution. Discerning the power dynamics in Egypt is challenging. While the president has a military background, it is unclear whether the regime controls the military or vice versa. At the same time, the military functions as a broker between the regime and local and foreign companies. Accordingly, there is dyadic relation and hierarchy. Clientelism can be observed in these interactions.

The regime and foreign states and companies

According to The Project on Middle East Democracy report by Sarah Taweel “NUCA and NAT under the Ministry of Transportation—led by General Kamel al-Wazir, a close al-Sisi ally, have taken debt for new capital projects. “The "world's longest monorail," linking the new capital to Cairo and its western suburbs, will cost an estimated \$4.5 billion, financed by loans to NAT from a syndicate of international banks. A light rail train connecting the new capital to Cairo's eastern satellite cities cost \$1.2 billion, financed by a loan to NAT from the Chinese state-owned Export Import Bank of China. And while it cannot be added directly to the new-capital-expenditures ledger, a third major project—a high-speed electric train linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean at an estimated cost of \$4.5 billion, financed by more loans taken on by NAT<sup>87</sup>—will pass through the new capital and the "new summer capital" in New Alamein on Egypt's Mediterranean coast. By 2022, this once small government authority, established in 1983 to build the metro system in Cairo,



became "the largest project owner in the Middle East," with most of its project financing from loans"[IBD].

Such projects require a lot of money and experience. The finance would come from banks such as the Chinese banks, and the technologies of having high speed trains and skyscrapers would come from Chinese companies, but why would China do this? China's desire to expand investments in Egypt under its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and the growing rapport between al-Sisi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, may be a reason for the Chinese assistance. However, this is not enough (IBD, 13).

The Egyptian regime is leveraging the international competition between America and China, and this may be a reason for procuring the Chinese loans. Additionally, the relations between Washington and Cairo were deteriorating because the white house and the congress were disapproving of the new regime for deposing Mohamad Morsi. I argue that the Egyptian regime was in need, especially between 2015 and 2016, to show Washington that there are other political international players who are ready to replace it. If what is procured from the Chinese banks is comparable to what is received from western institutions and the United States, this suggests a different kind of dynamic. The Egyptian regime exploits the international competition between the two giants to construct or cement a new kind of relationship with the Chinese regime.

According to the POMED report about NAC in January 2016, "Egyptian officials met with representatives from the state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) and saved seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for NAC projects. These non-binding agreements guaranteed to build what was to be the core of the first phase of the new capital—financed with a \$3 billion loan package from Chinese state-

owned banks, but after more than a year of negotiations, the CSCEC pulled out over financial disagreements. Plans for the low-to middle-income housing were scrapped and Egyptian construction companies were awarded the task of building the ministries instead, overseen by the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces (EAAF), a powerful agency under the Egyptian Ministry of Defense, and a longtime manager of massive public works project<sup>(IBD, 13)</sup>. Secondly, another Chinese state-owned company, China Fortune Land Development Company (CFLD), signed a \$20 billion preliminary agreement with the Egyptian government in October 2016 to develop fourteen thousand feddans. But by December 2018, the CFLD deal also fell through over revenue-sharing disagreements<sup>(IBD, 13)</sup>.” Foreign companies have received multimillion-dollar contracts, mostly for technology and services in the NAC.

Although these mentioned agreements between the Egyptian state and Chinese state-owned companies fell, the value of the attempted loans by the Egyptian regime from the Chinese banks was comparable to what is received From Washington and western institutions. This expresses the intentions of the Egyptian regime to cement a clientelist relation with China. At the end, Egyptian officials reached a concession with China to build and finance another \$3 billion area of the new capital, the "towers section" of the Central Business District—with twenty high-rises, including (as Egypt's state-controlled media and government officials never fail to mention) the tallest skyscraper in Africa (IBD, 13). Secondly, Chinese companies are working on a light rail train connecting the new capital to Cairo's eastern satellite cities at a cost \$1.2 billion, financed by a loan to NAT from the Chinese state-owned Export Import Bank of China (IBD, 24). This is a kind of illustration for the insistence of both sides to maintain their relations through the NAC project. In this relation, I argue that Egypt is in the position of the client because it is not the side that has the higher hand. China is an economic and political giant, and Egypt is a regional key player, but Egypt is more in need of the finance which will come from China because of their

turbulent relations with Washington. Although the finance was not a gift, but rather a loan which should be repaid, Egypt has been in need for dollars to enter the country.

As I have mentioned before, according to the NAC design, there are several projects which require special technologies. These technologies are not available in Egypt, and thus there is a need for foreign actors. One actor who is interested in having good relations with Egypt is China. China has an ambitious project which is the Belt and Road Initiative. In short, this Initiative is about linking China to the west through advanced and served sea and land roads. The Suez Canal is part of this project, and the NAC is near the Suez Canal. Moreover, the high-speed train will connect the ports of the Red Sea to the ports of the Mediterranean Sea. However, this is not enough of a price to be paid by the Egyptian regime to Chinese companies. Facilitated loans from Chinese banks were taken by the Egyptian regime to finance its projects in NAC later. Again, there is no hierarchy between Egypt and China but there is a reciprocal relation between China and Egypt that is characterized by dyadic, contingent, and iterated relations. Once China's project of the Belt and Road will be completed, China will have good relations with President El-Sisi's regime, and its companies will receive money that is taken by Egypt from the Chinese banks. This money should be paid back with interest to China. On the other hand, the NAC project will be completed according to the most advanced technologies bestowing to what Al-Sisi plans, with enough finance available, as well as an enhanced international relation with a key international economically and politically powerful state, which is China. This is a dyadic contingent relation that will iterate as long as there is exchange between both sides. Despite the fact that hierarchy may not be recognized in this relation, three principles of clientelism

were observed.

The regime and big and small construction and real estate companies.

According to THE PROJECT ON MIDDLE EAST DEMOCRACY, “The main developers, NUCA and the EAAF, subcontract to dozens of contractors and construction companies to do the actual building of the new capital's various districts. They award projects directly—without competitive tendering to long-time partners of the military. Many of these contractors and construction companies have subsidiaries to provide building supplies, or they otherwise purchase from supply companies that have long-standing ties to the military or from the military itself (most notably for cement and steel) (IBD, 30).”

THE PROJECT ON MIDDLE EAST DEMOCRACY continues to explain, “This arrangement increases opportunities for the military-led company to capture rents from the private companies and public entities operating in the NAC. Egyptian construction companies were awarded the task of building the ministries instead, overseen by (EAAF), a powerful agency under the Egyptian Ministry of Defense and a longtime manager of massive public works projects (TAWHEEL 2023, 14). hundreds of real estate developers are purchasing plots/investing in some sections of the city—namely in the R7 and R8 residential districts and the Investors' Area. The role of real estate developers is to buy the land, secure project financing, oversee design and construction, and sell the properties. In the case of the new capital, most developers buy land from the ACUD with down payments of 10-20 percent and installments over three to four years.<sup>100</sup> In turn, they finance much of their building activity through loans and payments from customers—individual homebuyers, or more often, speculative real estate investors “(IBD, 26).

It is worth noting that most, if not all, of the private local small and big companies are owned by retired generals, either sons of retired generals or some old loyal clients such as Hesham Talat Mostafa. In unison, there are some public companies that are also managed by generals. At the same time, there are no disloyal businessmen such as the Muslim Brotherhood involved in the list of clients provided. This can be observed in Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4 . This demonstrates the aspect of clientelism of reconfiguring clients. Through rewarding businessmen and generals with more investment opportunities, the regime enhances their relationship with them. I call this cementing already established relations. Also, through the omission of some disloyal businessmen from the list of beneficiaries from the NAC project, and replacing them with others, the regime reconfigures its clientelist network; I may call this the reconfiguration of clients. Reconfiguring clients is not practiced in authoritarian regimes only, but it is practiced in democratic ones also. Moreover, it is not practiced on the state level or the political level only, but it is practiced on the local and business level also; since I control a resource that many want to share with me, I have the right to choose who will benefit from this source and who will be prohibited from using it.

According to the New York Times, in the past six years alone, the International Monetary Fund has given Egypt three loans totaling about \$20 billion, even as American aid kept flowing in (Walsh and Yee, 2022). It is difficult in Egypt to know exactly where the loans go, but it is expected that at least part of these loans will go to the financing of the NAC. In other words, securing loans from the (IMF) enabled the state to fulfill its existing obligations and make significant investments in the NAC. Secondly, Walsh and Yee in the New York Times confirm what is mentioned by the Project on Middle East Democracy report by Sarah Taweel. Walsh and

Yee stated that the finance of NAC will come from Chinese capital, as well as high interest bonds, in addition to some Emirati developers who are also working in the new capital. According to El-Sisi, the finance of NAC will come from foreign and local investors and sales of government land in central Cairo and Egyptian developers (Walsh and Yee, 2022)<sup>xvi</sup>. The previous data approves the clientelist nature in NAC. NAC is not built to enhance clientelism only, but it is built using clientelist relations. In other words, the motive of building it is the enhancement of clientelist relations, and at the same time, it would not exist without the clientelist relations.

## Conclusion

The previous data reveals that there is a complete hierarchy in the relation between the regime and the big and the small construction and real-estate companies. As a patron, the regime delegated some authority to military institutions and others. The military, as one of the big brokers, had to sell land to big and small investors in order to acquire more money; it had to distribute construction projects among construction companies, and these construction companies subcontract these projects with smaller construction companies and contractors. The military will do this through searching for its loyal big and small clients. On the other hand, these clients do not have any other opportunity of investment instead of dealing with the military. For example, Orascom Construction, as one of the giants in the construction industry, has to deal with the military because the military controls all the mega projects in Egypt. At the same time, Orascom has to sustain its ability to work on more projects in order to grow. Clientelism is obvious in the relation between the regime, military, big and small construction, and real-estate companies. Firstly, there are dyadic relations

because the exchange of benefits takes place between a patron, broker, and client. Secondly, in this chain of interaction there are face-to-face relations between each section in the chain. Thirdly, the hierarchy is recognizable. The patrons supply clients with investment opportunities and money, and in return the clients achieve what is required from them. The patron may be a broker because he distributes the opportunities among other brokers or clients. In return, he shares with the client a portion of the money given to him. Consequently, dyadic relations, hierarchy, contingency, and iteration are also found in this relation.

## *Chapter V*

### *Conclusion*

#### Introduction

In conclusion, it has been observed that some states decide to change the location of their capital cities particularly following major political events, upheavals, or revolutions, with many of these states being in Africa. With the purpose of answering this question, I studied the case of the pledge of the new Egyptian administrative capital city. In 2011 and 2013, two different Egyptian regimes were ousted due to large demonstrations and strikes. As a consequence, the country was in a volatile economic and political situation. In 2014, when Abdel Fatah El-Sisi became the president, he announced his regime's project of building a new administrative capital city from scratch in the east of Cairo, the old capital city. The decision of building a large urban modern city and changing the center of the country's administration, raises the question of "Why would a developing state like Egypt decide to build a bulky metropolitan modern city and to change the state administration to it?" I followed an empirical path utilizing conceptual tools. Judging if the issue under study is wrong or not is the normative line that I will not track. My target in this thesis was to find out regimes' political and economic reasons and motives, especially authoritarian ones, of deciding to initiate a mega project.

#### What was hypothesized

What was assumed in this thesis is the following: The answer to this question cannot be detached from the consequences of the two upheavals of 2011 and 2013. When former military



general Abdel Fatah El-Sisi came to power and became on the top of the Egyptian regime in 2014 as president, he discerned the economic and political precariousness. He is not just a former military general, however, he was also a key participant in the events of 2011, and especially 2013. He led the coalition that ousted the previous president Mohamad Morsi. This coalition was supported by a substantial number of Egyptians, however there was opposition by the Muslim Brotherhood, and some foreign states such as America. What is postulated is that President Abdel Fatah El- Sisi perceived regime power consolidation as a priority and a necessity, particularly after the economic and political feebleness which resulted from 2011 and 2013. Regime power consolidation consists of three processes according to this thesis which are legitimization, legibility, and clientelism.

#### Approach and framework

The approach that was tracked in the investigation of NAC is the political economic approach. The reason for choosing this approach is that NAC clarified the regime's motives, which are related to the enhancement of both the political and the economic power of the regime. Secondly, the rational conceptual framework is adopted because I was trying in this thesis to explain and understand many issues in NAC which are difficult to understand through one unified theoretical framework. In this conceptual framework, I strove to elucidate what is happening in NAC by the regime and his clients through three concepts which are legitimacy, legibility, and clientelism. This demanded an introduction of each concept and the explanation of the application of them. Then I had to examine if each concept was applied in NAC or not.

#### What was observed and concluded

In chapter II, I tried to find a rationalization behind the design of NAC and what is said by the regime's and government's members about NAC. One concept which was useful in

analyzing what is happening in NAC was legitimization. Legitimization is the claim by a ruler, and those who surround him, that they have the right to rule and administer a country - for example - because they are the most congruous ones for this role. This suggests that there are strategies of procuring legitimacy and bases of procuring this legitimacy. Strategies are the way of gaining legitimacy, bases are the references or recommendations of a specific religious, cultural, legal, or traditional source to obey rulers.

There are three strategies for procuring legitimacy. The first is that the people believe that they have to obey their rulers based on a holy book, as an example. The second is offering incentives and benefits to the people who approve the ruler's right to rule. The third is the strategy of coercion. Rulers procure legitimacy through the use of force, and the people accept the ruler's right to rule out of fear of being punished or tortured. However, this claim should be based on a specific reference in order to be approved by the people. Examples of the basis of legitimacy are the procedural legitimation, the role-based legitimation, the charismatic legitimation, value-based legitimation, or the content-based legitimation (von Haldenwang, Christian 2016, 7). David Easton introduces one kind of legitimacy which is specific legitimacy (as cited in Tannenberg', Marcus , and Bernhard, Michael, and Gerschewski, Johannes , and Luhrmann, Anna , and von Soest, Christian 2020 ,79). Different regimes in Egypt have used some of these sources. Gamal Abdel Naser (1956 -1970) based his legitimacy on his charisma and achievements. Mohamad Anwar El- Sadat (1970-1981) based his legitimacy on his achievements in the 1973 war. Mohamad Husny Mubarak (1981-2011) built his legitimacy on his contribution in the 1973 war and modern economic achievements. Also, El- Sisi acquired the support of the Egyptians due to his contributions in the upheaval of 2013 against the Muslim Brotherhood.

I concluded through my investigation of the concept of legitimization in NAC that one motive behind issuing a decision to build NAC is legitimization. Firstly, through building the largest mosque in the Middle East, and church in the NAC, El-Sisi and his regime want to attain more legitimacy from the traditional or ideological source of legitimacy. Secondly, the design of NAC as an organized modern capital city demonstrates that the regime wants to persuade citizens that it is powerful and working on the right track. Thirdly, the regime has never failed to mention NAC and its advanced technological designs and projects, and their effect on the peoples' lives. It uses rational or content-based legitimization in most of officials' speeches. Legitimacy is crucial not just for democratic regimes, but it is necessary for authoritarian ones as well. Weber considered material capacity and legitimacy as crucial factors of power. He argued that legitimacy enhances the stability of political orders (as cited in Reus 2014, 345) . Thus, I have argued that legitimization is one motive behind initiating a decision to build NAC, and I have found some illustrations of this argument. Additionally, the legitimization motive is linked to the process of the regime's consolidation of power because it enhances the stability of political orders.

In chapter III, I argued that legibility is one motive for taking the decision to build a new capital city. Legibility as a concept was useful in understanding the intentions of rulers. It is about rulers, especially authoritarian ones, who tend to order the population using the state in ways that ease the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion. It is changing political and administrative issues to an area which the authorities can act on and govern. The application of this concept may be manifested in permanent last names, the standardization of weights and measures, the establishment of cadastral surveys and population

registers, the invention of freehold tenure, the standardization of language and legal discourse, the design of cities, and the organization of transportation. The target of this legibility is the central recording and monitoring of the country's data and operations.

With the advancement of modern technologies, rulers and their regimes have a habit of attaching the modern technological flavor to their projects of legibility. This may go back to the leaders' belief that the incorporation of modern advanced technologies in their projects of legibility enhances their control over society. Moreover, they may be convinced that adding modern advanced technologies to their projects make these projects more appealing for the population.

High modernism is the self-confidence that comes with scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws. Although some regimes, such as the Egyptian regime, may not have this concept in mind, there are some appearances of the application of this idea in their projects of legibility, such as the NAC, especially when it comes to administration. In short, according to Scotte, high modernism is an explanation for why states behave as they do. Scott did not accept that officials explicitly believe in high modernism, but rather officials and rulers believe in the necessity of the technologies and resources of the modern state against native practices that are ungoverned by them. As a brief summary, legibility is enriched through the use of modern advanced technologies. This can be further clarified through what Sheridan has written about using Foucault's ideas. She suggested that the replacement of surveillance cameras, and procedures for data entry to the central observation tower and web of windows, is not just an illusory monitoring process that

gives the continuous feeling of being monitored; in this case, the continuous monitoring or auditing is factual. As a result, the control of bodies, the modification of behavior, and the guarantee of the hierarchical system's security is leisurelier and stronger.

The investigation of these three concepts [legibility, high modernism, and new panopticism] in NAC demonstrates that the application of the three concepts is there. The old Egyptian capital city has become ungovernable from the perspective of the new regime based on what happened in the two upheavals. As a result, the new regime aspired to have a new governable area, and this is clear through the officials' speeches and announcements. Secondly, the design of NAC is perfect for the rulers and lastly, NAC is equipped with cameras and monitoring systems in the streets and administrative buildings, which tighten the control of the regime over the state and the control of the state over the society. I concluded that legibility is one motive behind deciding to build NAC. Legibility is boosted through the use of modern advanced technologies of monitoring. All of these processes contribute to the consolidation of regime power because it enables the regime to control the streets and the state administrative buildings at the same time. As a result, the center would be safe from any future rebellions or insurrections, and the state would save more money through monitoring the various operations. Additionally, digitization is expected to connect the buildings in governorates to the buildings in NAC. Thus, the regime through the state will be able to control the governorates' administration too.

In Chapter IV, I strove to detect how a huge project like NAC will be financed, and how the new regime will benefit from the process of financing this mega project while they are in the

midst of their consolidation of power. In short, there are several interrelated questions that were answered in this thesis. The first question which already has been answered is that there are two motives of deciding to build NAC, which are legitimization, and legibility. However, this answer arouses another question. How would a state which came out from two upheavals, with an unstable economic situation, be able to finance such a huge mega project? Even if the finances were provided, how would the new regime of Abdel Fatah El-Sisi take advantage of this finance process internally and externally?

One useful prism to approach this question with, is clientelism. Clientelism is a relation between two sides, usually a patron and a client or several clients. The base of this relation is the exchange of benefits between these two sides. For example, a patron may need political or financial support, and in return, a client may need special services, incentives, or investment opportunities. That is why scholars characterized this kind of relation by being dyadic, hierarchical, contingent, and iterated. Moreover, as long as the patron controls the resources, he will be able to reward his loyal clients by allowing them to benefit from this source, and punish the disloyal ones by prohibiting them from profiting.

After my scrutiny of clientelist relations in the case of NAC, what was found is the subsequent. Firstly, there are different actors in NAC. These actors are the regime, state institutions such as the military, foreign companies, and big and small local companies. It is worth noting that the relation between the patron and the client may be intermediated by a chain of brokers. Although one crucial characteristic of clientelism is the direct relations between the patron and the client, the intermediation by the brokers does not mean that this characteristic is not there. The direct relations still exist between the chain of brokers until it reaches the client. In

other words, the resource is channeled from the highest patron to the first broker, and this first broker will channel this source after taking his part to his sub broker until it reaches down the pyramid. In short, there is a highest patron, and this patron has a client, and this client is regarded as a patron for the broker who receives a part of the wealth. This wealth is channeled through the pyramid until it reaches the last client, and in return, all the members of this pyramid will be loyal and will offer their support to the highest patron and their sub-patrons.

After studying the case of NAC finance, the clientelist relations are obvious through NAC. Firstly, the regime tries to reconfigure its network of clients and patrons through such a project. The reconfiguration process takes place by giving some investment opportunities and administrative incentives to some old and new clients through an important institution, such as the military. The objective of these offerings is the upholding of the clients' loyalty to the new regime and securing the necessary finance to its NAC project. At the same time, the new regime punishes some clients for their disloyalty through stopping the contingent relations. For example, the regime does not allow some investors to invest in NAC. Secondly, El-Sisi's regime strives to acquire more money through selling more land to international and local investors. In the relation of the regime with foreign states, the regime may be depicted as a client. El-Sisi has been receiving more finance from them which is a source, and in return, the regime shows its support to these states against their conspirators. While the upper hand may seem to be in the hands of the foreign states, both sides are equal and sovereign, and both sides are in need of each other equally. In all of this is another issue that can be studied in another thesis.

Mainly, the four sub-concepts of clientelism which are dyadic relation, hierarchy, contingency, and iteration were tracked in this chapter. The enquiry of clientelism in NAC showed and clarified the clientelist relations between the regime and key local and foreign

businessmen, while also looking at brokers such as state institutions [military and other ones]. The participation of such institutions, as shown in chapter IV, is crucial in the enhancement of the alliances between the regime and these key state institutions. It is not about the enhancement of the relations between such institutions and the regime only, but it is also because the regime trusts them. The previous explanations of clientelism are manifested in the relations between the regime, state institutions, foreign states, local and foreign small and big businesses. Ultimately, clientelism is about acquiring more political and economic power by the regime.

If power is about the probability that an actor in a relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will through persuasion and inducement, the application of the three concepts illustrates that; 1) The new regime tries to persuade his people and foreign actors that he is the right one to be in this position (through mega projects such as the NAC) in order to obey him [legitimization], 2) The regime intends to have more control over the country in order to be able to do its duties and deploy inducement if needed [legibility], 3) The Egyptian regime tries to maintain and widen its network of clients and supporters to guarantee their avocation to most if not all its decisions [clientelism]. The three concepts are related to the enhancement and enrichment of the regime's power; Thus, I called upon these three processes the consolidation of regime power.


Looking forward, the findings of this thesis invites us to consider the fate of such a project in changing the international political and economic environment, including the Russian-Ukraine war, attacks on Gaza, and other exogenous regional political economic updates.



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### *Appendix 1*

a SMALLER EGYPTIAN "PRIVATE SECTOR" COMPANIES table

Company	Regime connections
WADI EL NIL CONTRACTING AND REAL ESTATE	Reportedly owned by General Intelligence (mukhabarat) and vice chaired by a military general
EL AGYAL FOR CONTRACTING AND TRADE	General manager is a military general
ABNAA SINAI	Founder and owner, al-Organi, has

	collaborated with the military in joint security operations in the North Sinai and in business ventures
ARGYNZA CONSTRUCTION	Long-time subcontractor for the military

*Appendix 2*

## LARGE EGYPTIAN private SECTOR COMPANIES building NAC

Company	Majority Owners	Relation to the regime
ORASCOM	Sawiris family	
HASSAN ALLAM HOLDING	Allam family and the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation	
TALAAT MOUSTAFA GROUP (TMG) HOLDING	Talaat Moustafa family	Hisham Talaat Moustafa was a central crony of the Mubarak regime. Al-Sisi pardoned him from prison (convicted of killing his ex-girlfriend). Talaat

		Moustafa has since donated billions of pounds to the regime and led several of the regime's major real estate projects
ROWAD MODERN ENGINEERING (RME)	Elsewedy family and Mahlab family	Chaired and co-owned by Mohamed Mahlab, son of Ibrahim Mahlab— a high-ranking member of the ruling National Democratic Party during the Mubarak era, and former minister of housing, then prime minister under al-Sisi, before becoming the president's adviser for national projects
CONCORD	Ahmed el Abd (son of a former high-ranking official in the Ministry of Land Reclamation,	Police generals head Concord's "public relations;" and since October 2021, the CEO has

	appointed by Sadat in 1972) <sup>334</sup> and Ahmed Abdel Rahman Suliman (son of a former board member of the Arab Contractors) <sup>335</sup>	been Mohammed el Shimi, previously chairman of the state-owned Petrojet and Ganoub el Wadi Holding Company—the former with close ties to the military
REDCON	Established by Admiral Mohamed Safwat el Gamaal, and now led by his son, Tarek	el Gamaal, who was appointed to the original board of the ACUD as an "expert" representative
GAMA CONSTRUCTION	founded by retired Air Force officer General Abdel Minam Tawil. Triangle Group now led by the general's sons	owns companies in energy, defense, and construction; a longtime supplier of foreign defense equipment to the military
SAMCRETE HOLDING	Saad family	Founded by prominent Mubarak-era businessman Sami Saad, <sup>349</sup> and now led by his son, Karim Sami Saad

SIAC CONSTRUCTION	Established by a former high-ranking engineer at the state-owned Arab Contractors and now led by his son, Nehad Ragab	
EL SOADAA GROUP	Founder and chairman, Said Mahmoud, and family	
GHARABLY INTEGRATED ENGINEERING COMPANY (GIECO)	El Gharably family	The Gharably family is related to former EAAF chief, General Ehab al-Far

**Appendix 3**

## Foreign Companies with Major NAC Contracts

Gulf Companies	
MARASEM Majority Owner Saudi Arabia's largest	Estimated total NAC contract values: 15 billion EGP by July 2019. <sup>386</sup> For NUCA: sections of the R5 district; 212 feddans of the
ASGCEGYPT Majority Owner	For NUCA: at least one hundred residential and mixed-use buildings in the R3 and R5 residential districts; all of the
Western Companies	

SIEMENS	\$3 billion contract for high-speed train linking the new capital to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean; \$2.34 billion contract (with Orascom) to build NAC power plant, and an additional
DELL TECHNOLOGIES	Contracts in the Knowledge City and elsewhere in the NAC.
CISCO	\$300 million contract (in partnership with a local company) from the Ministry of Communications to supply equipment and
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC	At least €100 million in new capital contracts to build technological infrastructure, power stations, and electricity
ALSTOM	A €2.7 billion contract to design, build, and install seventy
ORANGE	A \$135 million contract to build and run the NAC's main Data Center
ELECTRICITE DE FRANCE (EDF)	Contract to manage the new capital's electricity distribution and
DORSCH GRUPPE	Contracts to manage water (including drinking water, irrigation, and wastewater treatment) and to manage the new capital's
MASTERCARD	A 10-year strategic partnership with the ACUD for a smart card
GIESECKE+DEVRIENT	A €260 million contract for "the largest money printer in the Middle East"
HONEYWELL	At least 2.2 billion EGP to set up a surveillance system and the Integrated Command and Control Center

#### *Appendix 4*

State institutions and public companies involved in NAC

ACUD Administrative Capital for Urban Development: Joint-stock company set up by the Abdel Fattah al-Sisi regime in April 2016 to serve as "master developer" of the New Administrative Capital (NAC). Owned 51 percent by the Ministry of Defense—specifically by the National Service Projects Organization and the Armed Forces Land Projects Agency—and 49 percent by



the civilian Ministry of Housing, specifically by the New Urban Communities Authority. The ACUD's mandate includes managing NAC land sales and their profits, awarding contracts, and supervising sub-developers.

- **AFLPA Armed Forces Land Projects Agency:** Co-owner of the ACUD under the Ministry of Defense. A once-modest agency (est. 1981) with an original mandate to manage the sale of military land and real estate that had gone out of use. A presidential decree issued in November 2015 gave the AFLPA the right to form joint-stock companies with other domestic and international actors, significantly expanding its opportunities for profit-making. Another presidential decree, in February 2016, distributed around 170,000 acres of state land to the agency for the purpose of building the new capital, stipulating that the land would serve as the AFLPA's in-kind contribution to the soon-to-be-established ACUD.
- **AOI Arab Organization for Industrialization:** A main arm of Egypt's state-owned defense industry, led by military generals. Enjoys many profitable NAC contracts, including for the "smart system infrastructure" in the Knowledge City and for the manufacturing and installation of furniture for the new parliament, cabinet, and ministry buildings.
- **CUHC Central Union for Housing Cooperatives:** Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Housing and typically led by retired generals. In the NAC, overseeing the tendering process for the companies building housing compounds for members of cooperatives for employees of key state agencies like the military, police, and energy companies.
- **EAAF Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces:** Under the Ministry of Defense, a longtime manager of public works projects whose economic role al-Sisi has expanded further. Supervising construction of the NAC's Government District, Diplomatic District,

Knowledge City, Arts and Culture City, Sports City, Olympic City, some roads, and utilities, and four residential districts. Enjoys handsome cuts of all the contracts it manages.

- EEHC Egyptian Electricity Holding Company: Runs under the Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy. Borrowed more than \$2 billion to build a new power plant in the NAC. Also buying land to build residential and commercial projects in the new city.
- GACHC General Authority for Construction and Housing Cooperatives: Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Housing, retired generals traditionally lead the Authority. GACHC purchased more than five hundred acres in the NAC, which it has sold to about a dozen cooperative housing associations for state employees. Together with the CUHC, it has overseen the tendering process for builders of the cooperative associations' compounds.
- MCIT Ministry of Communications and Information Technology: The second-largest ministerial spender in the NAC, distributing billions to tech infrastructure across the new capital to make the "smart city" smart.
- MOH Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities: Administers the New Urban Communities Authority, which owns 49 percent of the ACUD, and has been the largest spender in the new capital.
- MOMP Ministry of Military Production: Has "won" lucrative NAC contracts from the ACUD including for solar panels, water tanks, pipes, and thousands of elevators.
- NAT National Authority for Tunnels: Under the Ministry of Transportation, NAT has accumulated billions of dollars in loans for massive rail projects connecting the NAC to other areas of Egypt.

- NSPO National Service Projects Organization: A military co-owner of the ACUD, under the Ministry of Defense. The NSPO has profited from massive sales of steel and cement used in the NAC—the most important raw materials needed for the new capital.
- NUCA New Urban Communities Authority: Under the Ministry of Housing, NUCA is the ACUD's civilian, minority co-owner. It paid in most of the cash used to create ACUD's budget. In charge of financing and developing the Central Business District, the Green River, two residential districts, and most roads and utilities throughout the new city. Has taken on huge debt to conduct the NAC project, including a \$2.55 billion loan from China. It is Egypt's largest real estate developer and is tasked with addressing Egypt's housing issues by developing new cities in the desert.
- ARAB contractors the main public sector company building the NAC
- HOLDING COMPANY FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (HCCD): Under the Ministry of Public Business Sector

### Important Notes:

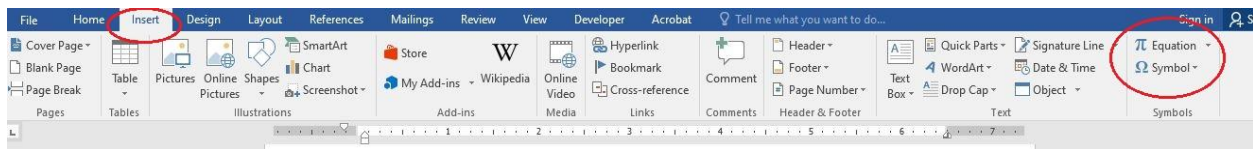


Table X: Title of the table

Column Header				
Body text				

<sup>i</sup> To read the complete article visit: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-12/sadat-city-a-cautionary-tale-as-egypt-leader-plans-new-capital>

<sup>ii</sup> To read the complete news you can visit: BBC News. Egypt opens Middle East's biggest

cathedral near Cairo . BBC News. WEB 7 January 2019.url:

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<sup>iii</sup> To read the complete article you can visit: Ahram on line.” Sisi instructs building large

inclusive mosques across Egypt to spread 'true religion' - Urban & Transport - Egypt “ 02

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March 2023. Web: <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1235/484654/Egypt/Urban--Transport/Sisi-instructs-building-large-inclusive-mosques-ac.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> To watch the complete speech, you can visit: El-Sisi, Abd El-Fatah.” رداً على إنشاء العاصمة ”  
2022. extra News.3min 3s.  
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU9VtDndAak>

<sup>v</sup> To watch the complete speech of the prime minister you can visit: Matboly, Mostafa. “ تأتي ”  
2022. ON TV. 53 S. URL:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z76755qQ1gk>

<sup>vi</sup> To watch the complete speech of the president you can visit: El- Sisi, Abd El- Fatah.”  
2022. TeN TV.45S. Url:  
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<sup>vii</sup> You can watch the interview with the minister through: Egyptian minister of finance.”  
2022. Sade Elbalad.3min 9 S. Url:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm\\_AlvSpp10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm_AlvSpp10) In an interview for the

If you want to watch the complete interview.

<sup>viii</sup> To read the complete world bank report go to : <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/publication/cairo-traffic-congestion-study-executive-note>.

<sup>ix</sup> To read the complete article go to:

<https://gate.ahram.org.eg/daily/News/202791/3/674138/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-.aspx>.

<sup>x x</sup> To read the complete article go to: <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/62321/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-slum-crisis-persists-amid-housing-abundance.aspx>.

<sup>xi</sup> If you want to watch the complete speech visit: El- Sisi, Abd El- Fatah.” السيسي ” للمصريين :

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<sup>xii</sup> To watch the complete speech, you can visit: Egyptian minister of finance.” مستقبل مصر..

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<sup>xiii</sup> To watch the complete speech, you can visit: Matboly, Mostafa. “ تأتي العاصمة الإدارية الجديدة “

2022. لتكون محفزًا للإصلاح الإداري.” ON TV. 53 S. URL:

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<sup>xiv</sup> To watch the complete speech visit: Matboly, Mostafa. “ تأتي العاصمة الإدارية الجديدة لتكون “

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z76755qQ1gk>

<sup>xv</sup> For more details you can access the report through “Clientelism : TAWHEEL, SARAH.” AL-SISI'S BUBBLE IN THE desert- The Political Economy of Egypt's New Administrative Capital.” THE PROJECT ON MIDDLE EAST DEMOCRACY (POMED). Washington, D.C . June 2023. url: visit: <https://pomed.org/publication/report-egypt-new-administrative-capital>

<sup>xvi</sup> To read the complete article please visit : Walsh Declan, and Yee Vivian .” Egypt’s New Administrative Capital Rises, but at What Price? .” - The New York Times. Web.

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