

Unpacking Democratic Transitions: The Case of Egypt

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Executive Summary

Mazen Baddar

Egypt at the beginning of the Arab Spring was thought to have the greatest potential for a sustainable democracy. As the largest country in the Arab and Muslim world, Egypt holds a great deal of political influence in its region. After its initial move toward democracy, it was hoped that Egypt would act as a positive democratic example to its neighbours in North Africa. However, as the economy worsens, patience is wavering and unrest continues to build. The recent reversion of Egypt's political ideology back to that of a dictatorship causes a similar reversion in the region. It may also deter other populations from attempting to transition to a democracy via a popular revolt. As a result, Egypt's fate is crucial to the success of the Arab Spring. That is why an analysis of the current state of Egypt's progression toward democracy is needed. This report is designed to analyse the different but essential parts that dictate the direction in which Egypt's political climate will move.

Economy and Trade

Azra Chatur

Looking at Egypt from a purely objectified and absolute point of view, it is clear and easy to identify that Egypt's current economy is very weak. Tourism was a main source of Egypt's economy. The political instability that has been occurring over the last 5 years has taken its toll on the economy. Due to the violence occurring, Egypt's profits from tourism have lowered greatly. In 2011, tourism took a sharp hit due to the economic uprisings. Just as it began to recover in July and August, more violence occurred leading hotel occupancies to hit an all-time low.¹ This is not to say that Egypt's economy was ever in a good position. Before any of the uprising's occurred, Egypt's economy only grew about 7% which barely allowed them to sustain the youth that entered into the job market.² Furthermore, due to lack of resources and the lack of revenue from tourism, the Egyptian government cannot direct their resources towards investments. Inflation is currently at 9.3% which is up 6.5% from last year. A high inflation rate can devalue money as well as affect trade as producers and consumers constantly need to re-evaluate the price of a good. Egypt's unemployment rate has continued to rise and currently stands at a staggering 13.3%³. Gross domestic product or GDP is generally used in order to indicate the current state of health of a country's economy. GDP is often calculated by adding up all the incomes of citizens which also is known as "the income approach". In 2012, Egypt GDP was valued at 257.3 billion USD.⁴

Egypt's interim government is currently taking unrealistic steps in a desperate attempt to fix Egypt's ruined economy. The interim government launched an unrealistic plan called "Egypt 2022". According to the Ministry of Planning, this new plan main goal is to create a "sustainable and containment growth" in Egypt.⁵ The plan is very ambitious. It seems to be the government's lackluster attempt to calm the angered citizens of Egypt. Analysts question the legitimacy as well as the pragmatism behind this plan because it does not specify any real source of financing⁶. However, this plan does bring to light the fact that Egypt is very aware of the state of

¹ Elerie Jones, Sayed Hanna, and Abuelkassem A.A. Mohammad, "The Impact of the Egyptian Political Events during 2011 on Hotel Occupancy in Cairo," *SciTechnol*, <http://www.scitechnol.com/2324-8807/2324-8807-1-102.php> (accessed November 13, 2013).

² ("Planning minister expects 2% growth in second quarter - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/12/17/planning-minister-expects-2-growth-in-second-quarter/>

³ ("Egypt's jobless rate rises to 13.3% in Q2/2013: CAPMAS" 2013)

⁴ Egypt GDP," *Trading Economics* (blog), <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/gdp>.

⁵ ("Government launches 'Egypt 2022' economic development plan - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/02/government-launches-egypt-2022-economic-development-plan/>

⁶ ("Government launches 'Egypt 2022' economic development plan - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/02/government-launches-egypt-2022-economic-development-plan/>

their economy. The Economic 2022 states that “This long term plan focuses on building a strong and disciplined economy based on social justice, characterised by diversity and openness to the outside world, and enhancing work and competitiveness values, with a socially responsible private sector playing a major role.”⁷ A lot of Egypt's economic problems have occurred due to overpopulation and this new plan hopes to use the problem of overpopulation in order to create a solution. The document specifically states “The overpopulation issue can be converted from a ‘problem’ to a ‘path of development’ through boosting investments in human capital, especially in the fields of education, training and healthcare.”⁸ The government has a long term vision of to raise living standards and achieve social security, in doing this the government can use human capital to achieve social security.⁹ While, the plan attempts to address the growing unemployment rates and the extreme level of poverty occurring in Egypt, it is simply very unrealistic. In order to implement such an ambitious economic plan, Egypt has to have some sort of funding or source of finance for this however they very cleverly avoid doing so. Furthermore, they fail to specify exactly how they really plan to achieve their growth rates, rather just giving vague and broad answers. Egypt's interim government also decided on a 3.2 billion stimulus package which involves spending more. Egypt's government fails to acknowledge the fact that if they are to re-establish themselves as successful, they first need to make budget cuts and taxes are actually corrected properly. It seems that Egypt is only capable of identifying what their problems are but are unable to create realistic way to combat their economic problems.

Despite the constant criticisms from citizens as well as other countries, Egypt continues to remain optimistic about their economy. This was one of the problems before the revolution and it continues to be a problem today. As of December 3rd 2013, Egypt's economic forecast remains at 3.5% for economic growth in the fiscal year ending in June 2014.¹⁰ On the other hand, Prime Holdings which is a regional investment bank looks to a significantly lower economic growth believing that it will not exceed 2.7%¹¹. The World Economic Outlook gives an even bleaker forecast of just 1.8%.¹² Prime holdings gives evidence to back up their low economic growth predication stating that private consumption has been significantly lowered going from 6.5% to 2.8%.¹³ The reason for the decrease in private consumption is a multitude of

⁷ ("Government launches 'Egypt 2022' economic development plan - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/02/government-launches-egypt-2022-economic-development-plan/>)

⁸ ("Government launches 'Egypt 2022' economic development plan - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/02/government-launches-egypt-2022-economic-development-plan/>)

⁹ ("Government launches 'Egypt 2022' economic development plan - See more at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/11/02/government-launches-egypt-2022-economic-development-plan/>)

¹⁰ ("Egypt's official growth forecast unrealistic, Prime Holding" 2013)

¹¹ ("Egypt's official growth forecast unrealistic, Prime Holding" 2013)

¹² ("Egypt's official growth forecast unrealistic, Prime Holding" 2013)

¹³ ("Egypt's official growth forecast unrealistic, Prime Holding" 2013)

reasons including increased unemployment and a high inflation rate. Egypt chose to cut their interest rates, putting their high inflation rate of 10.4% on the back burner. Mohamed Abu Basger, an economist at the Cairo-based investment bank EFG Hermes states that the government's view on economic activity is so weak that they believe "you can ease monetary policy further without risking inflation."¹⁴ Whether this is actually accurate is remained to be seen. Furthermore, Egypt continues to promise that their deficit will not change from 10% but Prime researchers disagree believing that the deficit will be closer to a 13.9%.¹⁵ The above information states that Egypt is attempting to take steps to aid and fix their economy. However, a major obstacle standing in the way of their success is their inability to take realistic statistics and projections into account. They choose rather to act based on their optimistic yet wholly unrealistic economic forecasts.

Steps have been taken in an attempt for Egypt's government to revive their country and restore it with stability. One of these steps has been the reform of the constitution. The current interim President Adly Mansour looked at the referendum on the constitution as more than just "ordinary legislative measures"¹⁶ but more so as "celebration and perseverance"¹⁷. This celebration means that Egypt is indeed moving forward with their plans of reform and is following through with their roadmap. The commitment and follow-through by the interim government allows for citizens of Egypt to gain confidence their government. Furthermore, citizens feel united. As stated in Al Arabiya, "The 50-member committee, others who represent the Egyptian political and social spectra and millions of Egyptians agree that what unites them is the conviction that this document is the way out of the current situation."¹⁸ The constitution is without a doubt one of the most important documents in a country. A constitution lays the framework for how the country will be governed, leadership and the rights and freedoms of citizens. Egypt's new constitution also directly applies to the economy. Of the 247 articles in the new constitution, 24 of them apply to the economy. CCTV states that the constitution says that "Egypt is a free market economy but with regulations that guarantee better living conditions for its citizens". The importance of the private sector in development is stressed specifically in Article 14, 17 and 21 as well the Egyptian Minister of Planning states that ""It's safe to say the constitution gives enough protection to the private sector to own and invest without fears of bureaucracy or nationalization of assets like before. The message is that there will be unprecedented support for the private sector in the future"¹⁹. The constitution marks an end to the shadow economy which takes away billions of dollars from the government every year.

¹⁴ (Nasralla 2013)

¹⁵ (Nasralla 2013)

¹⁶ ("Egypt's constitution, a step forward despite differences" 2013)

¹⁷ ("Egypt's constitution, a step forward despite differences" 2013)

¹⁸ ("Egypt's constitution, a step forward despite differences" 2013)

¹⁹ Hakim, Yasser. "Egypt's new constitution: What does it mean for the country's economy?." CCTV, January 1, 2014.

Furthermore, SME's will flourish. The constitution aims to spend 10% of its GDP on health, education and scientific research; a stark contrast to the current 0.002%.²⁰ The constitution also requires the minimum wage to be doubled.²¹ However, the question still remains are these measures Egypt is taking realistic or plausible. The government currently has a 14% budget deficit and \$300 billion in public debt²². Asharf Araby, Egyptian Minister of Planning states that "the new obligations will cost around 10 billion"²³ but they are planning to remove subsidies on energy and reduce government expenditure"²⁴. The Minister of planning also hopes to "increase revenue from taxes and services to cover these costs". Theoretically, it would seem that this new constitution would lead to positive outcomes for the economy. The constitution seems to have been constructed through careful thought. However, in order for the constitution to work, it is necessary that Egypt maintains its security as well as stability. Voting for the constitution is scheduled to commence on January 14th 2014.²⁵

²⁰ (Hakim 2014)

²¹ (Hakim 2014)

²² (Hakim 2014)

²³ (Hakim 2014)

²⁴ (Hakim 2014)

²⁵ (Hakim 2014)

Civil-Military Relations

Cierra Chong

Under President Mubarak, three major military bodies were engaged in profitable non-military manufacturing and services: the National Service Products Organization (NSPO), the Ministry of Military Production (MOMP), and the Arab Organization for Industrialization (AOI). This meant that the military was economically beneficial. The military-industrial complex helped Egypt maintain close ties with the United States, allowing them great leverage in politics. The US also agreed to provide \$1.3 billion dollars in aid as part of the 1979 peace agreement with Israel.²⁶

The current unrest in Egypt began with the Arab spring of 2011 and the demand to overthrow President Mubarak. In February 2011, Mubarak was removed from power and the Supreme Court of the Armed Forces (SCAF) entrenched its control over state institutions such as media, bureaucracy, security, and the judiciary.²⁷ While in power, the SCAF placed many retired military officers in government positions, expanded military business, and established close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist organizations. From February 2011 until June 2012, the SCAF held presidential and legislative authority.²⁸

In June 2012, Mohammed Morsi won the presidential election. He was part of the Muslim Brotherhood and had strong military ties. One year later, in June 2013, Morsi was removed from power and the constitution was suspended due to protest about his increasingly authoritarian leadership and lack of regard for secular opinion or rule of law. This led to huge protests both by Morsi supporters and those wanting him to step down. As the situation escalated, Morsi refused to step down and was adamant about his legitimacy as elected ruler. The army threatened to take over if civilian politicians could not resolve the issue, and on July 3rd, 2013, the military ousted Morsi from power. Morsi was put under house arrest and many leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested for inciting violence. It is debated whether this should be called a coup d'état or a revolution.²⁹

The interim government is largely enforced by the military, which is currently trying to keep protest and public harm to a minimum. Unfortunately, there is still ongoing conflict between those who ousted Morsi and his supporters, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood and other anti-coup alliances. Since Morsi's ousting, nearly 300 people have died in these clashes.³⁰

²⁶ Zeinab, Abul-Magd. *The Egyptian Military in Politics and Economy*. October 2013, <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/4935-the-egyptian-military-in-politics-and-the-economy.pdf>.

²⁷ Emilie, Noel. *The Military and the Egyptian Revolution: Resistance to Reform*. February 12, 2013. McGill University academic file.

²⁸ Zeinab, *The Egyptian Military in Politics and Economy*

²⁹ David, Kirkpatrick. *Army Ousts Egypt's President; Morsi Is Taken into Military Custody*. July 3, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/04/world/middleeast/egypt.html?pagewanted=all>

³⁰ Times of Israel. *US warns Egypt to step back as death toll nears 300*. August 14, 2013,

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/us-warns-egypt-to-step-back-from-brink-as-death-toll-nears-200/>

It has been announced that a new election will be called in the summer of 2014 after a referendum on a new constitution.³¹

This month, Egypt has lifted the three month state of emergency that began after the ousting of President Morsi. Originally, the state of emergency was to only last one month, but was extended for two more months by the government. The Muslim Brotherhood claims that the state of emergency allowed security forces to perform strict and violent crackdowns which lead to the deaths of hundreds of Morsi supporters and the arrest of thousands more. With the end of the state of emergency, comes the end of strict curfews and hopefully the ongoing violence.³²

Even with the lifted state of emergency, it is still clear that little to no progress has been made by way of democracy. The huge divide between Morsi supporters and supporters of the military-backed government continues. Between the police using deadly force against protestors and the ongoing criminalization of the Muslim Brotherhood, the opposing sides seem to be getting further apart, rather than coming together to reconcile the situation.³³ According to the Egypt Democracy Compass, all eight indicators of democracy showed that progress is stalled.³⁴

The only chance for progress seems to be in the upcoming elections. While current interim leader, Adly Mansour, does not wish to run for presidency, the current head of the military may be a candidate. General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is the current army chief. He has emerged as a popular figure and it is assumed that if he were to run, he would win.³⁵ This would mean that the military would once again dominate state affairs. Sisi is widely demonized by the Muslim Brotherhood because he led the coup that ousted Morsi. If he were president, this could lead to more widespread conflict between the military, supporters of Morsi and any civilians against a military-backed government.³⁶

³¹ CNN. *What's new in Egypt's draft constitution?* December 3, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25204313>

³² BBC News Middle East. *Egypt lifting state of emergency and curfew.* November 12, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24914121>

³³ Channel News Asia. *At least one dead as Egyptian police storm Tahrir protest.* November 20, 2013, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/at-least-one-dead-as/892910.html>

³⁴ Freedom House. *Egypt Democracy Compass.* November 2013, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Egypt%20Democracy%20Compass%20-%20November%202013.pdf>

³⁵ Abdallah Dalsh. *Egypt's interim leader says won't run for presidency.* November 19, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/19/us-egypt-mansour-idUSBRE9AI07K20131119>

³⁶ Tom Perry. *Egyptian army chief Sisi does not rule out presidential bid.* November 21, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/21/us-egypt-sisi-idUSBRE9AK0DV20131121>

Internal Politics

Remy Caruso

The trial for former President Mohammed Morsi, along with fourteen co-defendants, began Monday November 4, 2013, where he is accused of inciting violence. According to the Constitution, which was revised under President Morsi's leadership requires that two-thirds of parliament must approve of taking the president to court. The constitution may still be in effect in court even though the military suspended the use of the constitution during the coup d'état in July 2013. If not, it is deemed unconstitutional. In reality, the constitution most likely will not be in use, as the military is not required to reinstate it. Deputy Prime Minister Ziad Bahaa el-Din blames Morsi for the state of affairs, because it was under his leadership that the constitution was no longer upheld.

Throughout the trial, Morsi declared that this trial is unconstitutional, and that he remains the president. He believes that this coup is a crime and that it is treason. His defense team is arguing that the court does not have jurisdiction to try him, as the constitution is still in effect. He also declared that this trial was a cover for a military coup. In the end, the judge adjourned the trial, with this case resuming on January 8, 2014. The court hopes to establish a new government and restore stability within Egypt before continuing the trial. Additionally, there were many outbursts and interruptions during the trial, as well as marches and demonstrations in support and in opposition of Morsi as a result of this trial. This raises the question of whether the court has jurisdiction to try former President Morsi and whether or not the constitution is still in effect.

Although Egypt has been without a lower house of parliament, what they call the 'People's Assembly', since it was dissolved during the summer of 2012 when President Morsi was ousted, there are plans for both parliamentary and presidential elections to be held in 2014. Parliamentary elections should be taking place in February and March of that year, with presidential elections taking place sometime in the summer.³⁷ The new elections bring hope that the new government enacted by the army will be replaced, returning to their path towards a democratic government.

In addition to the upcoming elections, interim President Mansour had previously announced his hopes for a rewritten constitution, which should be finished soon, with a referendum occurring soon after.³⁸ While many think this is a step towards the direction that Egypt has been hoping to move towards, it also has the potential to undo some of the damage that Morsi caused during his presidency. However, the entire concept of a written constitution is

³⁷ Kingsley, Patrick. "Egyptian foreign minister sets out timetable for elections." *The Guardian*. November 8, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/08/egypt-timetable-elections-foreign-minister-fahmy> (accessed November 28, 2013)

³⁸ Ibid.,

that it guides all governmental practices, and furthermore, it should not be so easily written and rewritten. When considering the state of the Egyptian constitution, it seems to be contrary to that of other democratic nations. As a result, it does not bring hope that their government is on the right path to a democracy.

It is also interesting to note that the Freedom and Justice Party (the political wing of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood) has not yet been excluded from participation. The Egyptian minister, Nabil Fahmy, has said they are free to participate in the parliamentary election, as they are still legal in Egypt.³⁹ This is interesting because they had been previously banned from partaking in activities by an Egyptian court. Is the court's ruling no longer valid? This is a prime example of a clash between the legislative and the judicial branches. Many questions arise, such as who has more power? and who gave them this authority? Furthermore, it has been suggested that candidates will have to compete as individuals, rather than as representatives of political parties.

Another side to this is from a lawyer who specializes in Egypt's democratic process, Hafsa Halawa. He doubts whether parliamentary elections could be in practice as early as February.⁴⁰ He asserts that, realistically, the process of arranging parliamentary elections would be slowed by technical and legislative problems. Additionally, the process of calling a parliamentary election would be complicated by the existence of competing decrees issued in the days before and after Morsi's overthrow. With this in mind, parliamentary elections might not happen until May 2014. This delay in elections is another setback in Egypt's hope for a democratic government.

Even if these elections are pushed to later in 2014, these elections alone will not be able to change the direction of Egypt's government. Additionally, the state of the Egypt's constitution does not bring optimism for a stable government. Although the revision of the constitution and the hopes of both parliamentary and presidential elections can be considered a step towards the democracy that Egypt has been hoping for, a democracy will not be in place within the coming years.

Recently, in the beginning of January, a referendum for a rewritten Egyptian Constitution has taken place. This referendum showed a high voter turnout, increasing the likelihood that a new constitution will be introduced to the Egyptian population, with their support. The new stipulations within the new constitution would include greater protection for religious freedom, and more leniencies for Islamic law, and a slight increase in women's rights. The greatest change includes an increase in the power of the military, the police, and the judiciary, which are the three governmental institutions that helped oust former President Morsi.

During this referendum, it is interesting to note that the government has shown intolerance towards the opposition. They have been treating any form of opposition to this

³⁹ Ibid.,

⁴⁰ Ibid.,

rewritten constitution as a crime. Many members of the former Muslim Brotherhood have been arrested for posting signs criticizing the new text and urging the population to vote “no” and are planning on boycotting this referendum. This intolerance to the opposition shows that Egypt is still not on the path towards a democratic system of government.

Additionally, after this referendum, there were plans to call for parliamentary elections soon after the rewritten constitution, with presidential elections one week after the parliament’s first session. However, President Mansour has discussed the possibility of switching the parliamentary and presidential elections. During this presidential election, General Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi may make a bid for the presidency. He is the defense minister who removed President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Internal Politics

Nancy Zagabe

It is a common assumption that the Egyptian political structure pre-revolution fell into the category of a traditional dictatorship headed by Hosni Mubarak. However, after analyzing the several actors involved in Egyptian politics one can come to the decisive conclusion that the structure is much more complex. Fittingly, most simply a pyramid explains the relationship between the actors in Egypt. Although ironic, the pyramid is the perfect shape to understand the complex triangle, which dictated Egyptian politics. The first actor in this triangle, and arguable the strongest is the state itself. Another side of this triangle, which recently has grown, is the several Islamic factions. The most notable actor in this group is the Muslim Brotherhood, whom have been notoriously involved in political violence. The final part of this triangle is an 'other' category of sorts, however is more formerly known as civic Egypt. This side involves a broad spectrum of non-state and non-Islamist actors.

The Arab Spring brought about considerable shifts in power. First, during the election civic Egypt was unable to make any progress. This is attributed to the fact that the category is not cohesive and therefore weakens them especially in elections. . However, it is not without mentioning that civic Egypt is often accredited with the start of the revolution. Conversely, a member of the former Mubarak regime was quite successful however lost in a close election. The Muslim brotherhood came out as victors in the 2010 presidential election as their candidate Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's first democratically elected President. It is clear then, that although the parts of the triangle are autonomous, they have shown to have an extensive influence on the demographic they represent and hence the Egyptian political structure.

Egypt has experienced several critical changes in the past years. From a revolution, to Mohammed Morsi being elected as Egypt's first civilian and Islamist president, to being ousted by the army only one year later.⁴¹ Before looking at the current political state of Egypt, it is important to look at the turbulent past, in order to understand the implications of the upcoming elections. Moreover in looking at the past Egyptian state one can come to the conclusion that it is unlikely for Egypt to move towards a democracy in the near future. To many, it may have seemed that Egypt conducting an election would be the end all to the political issues in the country, and would move them towards a more democratic society. However, this was far from accurate. Several critics complained that Morsi's turbulent term was a failure.⁴² These critics believed that Morsi failed to deliver on several of his campaign promises; they also claimed that he mishandled the economy and accused Morsi of allowing Islamist to monopolize the political scene.⁴³ The result of these combined factors was a growing political and public opposition,

⁴¹ "Profile: Egypt's Mohammed Morsi." *BBC News*, Middle-East edition December 18, 2013.

⁴² *Ibid.*,

⁴³ *Ibid.*,

which ended in Morsi's eventual removal. A turbulent political history makes the likelihood for Egypt to move towards what the western world general accepts as a traditional democracy.

To add the current uncertainty over Egypt's democratic transition, a concrete schedule for parliamentary and presidential election has yet to be set. Although Egypt's foreign minister Nabil Fahmy said parliamentary polls would take place between February and March 2014, with a president elected by early next summer.⁴⁴ However, there are several roadblocks, which are making the process more difficult. One of them being that since the summer of 2012, Egypt has been without a lower house of parliament as the country's Supreme Court dissolved it.⁴⁵ Likewise, another roadblock is Egypt's constitution has yet to be rewritten and an election cannot be held without this being done. Therefore it is apparent that the roadblocks are not only diminishing the hopes of a speedy election, they are adding the political uncertainty surrounding the election

In the midst of a referendum of their constitution, one can only wonder what this new constitution will bring to Egypt. This proposed draft would replace the controversial constitution introduced by the Morsi regime.⁴⁶ Many see this new constitution as a sign that Egypt is moving away from their traditional non-secularist ways. However, this so-called 'new and improved' constitution, fails even in its early stages to shuts down this notion. The proposed changes are very ambiguous in nature, likely to have powerful dissenters and most importantly are not as progressive as they are perceived. Firstly, in this proposed draft, Islam is to remain the official religion of the state.⁴⁷ With a 95% of the Egyptian population identifying as Islamic this fact was unlikely to change. A notable change addresses the need for legal protection of religious minorities in Egypt. As it currently stands, the constitution only acknowledges Abrahamic religious. Conversely, this new constitution very ambiguously claims that it will allot some protection to minorities.⁴⁸ At first sight it seems as though Egypt is taking one step forward, but after reading the fine print one can see they are taking two steps back.

The new constitution is also likely to have many powerful adversaries. One of the most notable proposed changes focuses on political parties. The revised constitution seeks to disallow a party from being formed on bases such as geography, race, and of course, religion.⁴⁹ One can see this change as problematic for several reasons. Firstly, logically speaking the terms they have proposed are what political parties are founded upon. It is unlikely that with 95% of

⁴⁴ Kingsley , Patrick . "Egyptian foreign minister sets out timetable for elections." *The Guardian*, World News edition November 08, 2013.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,

⁴⁶ Connolly, Kevin. "Egypt Awaits Results of Constitution Referendum." *BBC News*. BBC, 16 Jan. 2014. Web. 16 Jan. 2014

⁴⁷ Ibid.,

⁴⁸ Ibid.,

⁴⁹ Ibid.,

their population being Islamic, that religion would not play a role in politics. Moreover, this does not address the fact that it is Egyptian law that no new laws can go against the Muslim religion. To add to the problems facing this new constitution, the Muslim Brotherhood has shown considerable concern with this specific change.⁵⁰ Finally with a new election on the horizon, it is unlikely that religion will not play an integral role in both the candidates and their supporters. Once again the referendum seems to be setting itself up for failure.

In sum, although one may acknowledge the efforts of this referendum one cannot deny the obstacles that lie ahead. With ambiguous changes and powerful dissenters, it is unlikely that Egypt will see changes as quickly as they would like.

⁵⁰ Ibid.,

External Influences

Sabrina Elejel

On October 9th, 2013, the United States stated that they would withhold foreign aid to Egypt, along with halting the deliveries of fighter aircrafts, helicopters and tanks. This suspension on aid was due to the lack of progression on democracy and human rights in Egypt.⁵¹ The US feels that their consistent advise to the authorities of Egypt have been ignored and felt the need to take action in order to gain Egypt's attention to heed their advice.⁵² However, the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, expresses the United States' commitment to continue their cooperation with the Egypt's provisional government, as well as trying to make it clear to the Egyptian people that the US is a friend to them and the Egyptian country.⁵³

Although the United States suspended foreign aid to Egypt, a group of US politicians disagree with this decision because they feel that it could have long-term negative consequences and the potential to undo decades of cooperation with an important regional ally.⁵⁴ They want to resume aid to Egypt because they feel it would have a more positive effect on the US influencing Egypt's behaviour in the future.⁵⁵ If the US feels that the provisional government is on a sincere path towards a strong and peaceful democracy, then they will resume with aiding Egypt.⁵⁶

Amnesty International is accusing Egypt of unlawfully detaining Syrians.⁵⁷ After a shipwreck that occurred on October 11th, 2013, killed at least twelve Syrian refugees, Amnesty International felt that this tragic incident highlights the conditions in which the Syrians are being treated in Egypt.⁵⁸ The Egyptian authorities are unlawfully arresting, detaining and deporting the Syrian refugees.⁵⁹ Amnesty International feels that Egypt is breaking human rights standards and stated, "hundreds of refugees who fled Syria, including scores of children, face either deportation or ongoing detention in poor conditions."⁶⁰ The

⁵¹ "Kerry says Egypt 'vital partner' of US," *Al-Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/us-secretary-state-arrives-egypt-2013113842622915.html> (accessed November 5, 2013).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "US politicians want to resume Egypt aid," *Al-Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/10/us-politicians-want-resume-egypt-aid-2013103021347332581.html> (accessed November 5, 2013).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Egypt: Boat sinking underlines wider tragedy for refugees from Syria," *Amnesty International*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-boat-sinking-underlines-wider-tragedy-refugees-syria-2013-10-11> (accessed November 5, 2013).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

organization is presently on the grounds researching the situation, and has begun a briefing on the dilemma of Syrian refugees in Egypt.⁶¹

Russia is becoming a more appealing and reliable ally to Egypt, given that the US-Egyptian relations have been tense lately.⁶² Russia's foreign and defense ministers visited Cairo where they discussed strengthening their military ties with Egypt.⁶³ This visit was a success because the head of Russia's state industrial holding confirmed that they had reached an agreement to deliver air defense systems to the Egyptian army.⁶⁴ Both Russia and Egypt are making an effort to assert themselves as growing powers in the Middle East.⁶⁵ This is not Egypt trying to replace the United States with Russia, but trying to expand and strengthen their foreign policy.⁶⁶ However, Egypt does feel that the US abandoned them when they supported the Muslim Brotherhood and so, Egypt does want this visit to send a message to the US that they do have alternative choices and ties with other states, and hopes this will help the US change their mind on the decision they made on suspending military aid to Egypt and the conditions attached to it, such as committing to further their progress on democracy and human rights.⁶⁷ Furthermore, there have been questions on how Egypt will pay Russia for the new arms.⁶⁸ United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have promised financial aid to the new Egyptian government, however Egyptian officials are seeking financial support from an unidentified Gulf country.⁶⁹ The pursuit for strengthening Russian and Egyptian ties is not out of the ordinary because Russia was Egypt's closest

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Erin Cunningham, "Egypt hosts top Russian officials, a sign it is turning further away from alliance with U.S.," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-hosts-top-russian-officials-a-sign-it-is-turning-further-away-from-alliance-with-us/2013/11/14/192c605c-4d35-11e3-9890-a1e0997fb0c0_story.html (accessed November 14, 2013).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Agency Staff, "Russia confirms Egypt military deal," *Business Day Live*, <http://www.bdlive.co.za/africa/africanbusiness/2013/11/19/russia-confirms-egypt-military-deal> (accessed November 19, 2013).

⁶⁵ Gregg Caristrom, "Egypt warms to Russia as US ties cool," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/russians-visit-promises-closer-egypt-links-2013111410202636645.html> (accessed November 15, 2013).

⁶⁶ Erin Cunningham, "Egypt hosts top Russian officials, a sign it is turning further away from alliance with U.S.," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-hosts-top-russian-officials-a-sign-it-is-turning-further-away-from-alliance-with-us/2013/11/14/192c605c-4d35-11e3-9890-a1e0997fb0c0_story.html (accessed November 14, 2013).

⁶⁷ Agency Staff, "Russia confirms Egypt military deal," *Business Day Live*, <http://www.bdlive.co.za/africa/africanbusiness/2013/11/19/russia-confirms-egypt-military-deal> (accessed November 19, 2013).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

ally during the time when Gamal Abdul Nasser was president (1950s-70), and was the main supplier of weaponry during that time.⁷⁰

Egypt's interim government as well as the country's military are being accused of crimes against humanity by lawyers in the UK.⁷¹ These lawyers have accused the military of many human rights abuses and war crimes.⁷² These accusations come from the result of the clashes since Mohamed Morsi was ousted.⁷³ They do have key suspects, such as high-ranking army officers and soldiers.⁷⁴ It is likely that this case will result in being brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the International Criminal Court (ICC) in order to try and find some way to turn this into an actual prosecution.⁷⁵ Furthermore, 12 pro-Morsi students of Al-Azhar University have been sentenced, by the Egyptian court, to 17 years in prison for participating in a violent student-led protest.⁷⁶ The men sentenced will be allowed to post bail at 64,000 Egyptian pounds (\$9,300) while they appeal their sentence.⁷⁷ This can be seen as an example of how Egypt is violating human rights and committing war crimes, where there is unlawful imprisonment as well as murder and other inhumane acts. For example, more than 1,000 pro-Morsi supporters have been killed since he was removed, as well as thousands being falsely arrested.⁷⁸

These war crimes that Egypt is being accused of should be brought to the attention of the ICJ or ICC, regardless if any serious prosecution occurs, because Egypt's military and interim government need to see the potential consequences that could arise if they continue their behaviour and inhumane acts, in order for them to change their actions and conduct, as well as showing recognition for human rights.

⁷⁰ Gregg Caristrom, "Egypt warms to Russia as US ties cool," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/russians-visit-promises-closer-egypt-links-2013111410202636645.html> (accessed November 15, 2013).

⁷¹ "Egyptian army accused of war crimes," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/egyptian-army-accused-war-crimes-2013111616409318660.html> (accessed November 17, 2013).

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ "Pro-Morsi protesters sentenced to 17 years," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/pro-morsi-protesters-sentenced-17-years-2013111321443348797.html> (accessed November 13, 2013).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

External Influences

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Moving forward, Egypt has many international factors that have heavy influence globally and will need to balance to create a stable future. Among these are the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China, Russia, and the United States. For the past couple decades, the United States has supported Egypt extensively to maintain a democratic presence within the Middle East as a result of helping former President Hosni Mubarak gain power. Because of this, billions of dollars have been invested into Egypt to keep Egypt away from Russian and Chinese being able to strengthen relations⁷⁹. After the Arab Spring of 2011 that overthrew the Mubarak administration, the United States has steadily reduced funding to the region. Now, after a successful coup d'état by the Egyptian military that stripped the power from President Mohammad Morsi, multiple countries have been trying to gain power and influence and push out the Western ties within Egypt⁸⁰. This will result in Egypt failing to create a democratic system in the near future, as countries will be pushing their positions and interests into Egypt, leaving the Egyptian people without a voice.

Although Egypt has joined multiple treaties to further their status in the region since the Arab Spring of 2011, many believe that they are still in an economic crisis. This backtracked a lot of economic reforms that lead big economic hits to the tourism, construction, and manufacturing sectors⁸¹. In addition, due to recent troubles, the International Monetary Fund had tried to aid Egypt by giving them a multi-billion dollar loan to help stabilize the country but Egyptian leaders have rejected this aid. As of 2012, the unemployment rates are hovering around 13.5% and 20% of the population is below the poverty line. From the 1980s to present day, Egypt has had four economic programs supported financially by the IMF, totaling around 1.1558 billion dollars. The last program ended in 1998 and the total amounts outstanding have been paid back. Since then, the IMF has tried to push new economic programs into Egypt, especially 2011 after an economic crisis^{82, 83}. The repetition of IMF involvement in Egyptian affairs have pushed the Egyptian government and people away from Western institutions and Western ideals to more suitable conditions with relations between Egypt, Russia, and China.

⁷⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Africa: Egypt." Last modified 02 11, 2014. Accessed February 13, 2014. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/theworld-factbook/geos/eg.html>.

⁸⁰ Andrew Burns. World Bank, "Global Outlook and Risks." Last modified October 21st, 2013. Accessed January 28th, 2014.

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca//media/Files/Programs-and Areas/RIIB/LinkNY2012/03.pdf>.

⁸¹ Andrew Burns, "Global Outlook and Risks," accessed January 28th, 2014.

⁸² Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Africa: Egypt," accessed February 13th, 2014.

⁸³ International Monetary Fund, "Egypt: Fast Facts." Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/countryfacts/egy/>.

After President Morsi was overthrown and sentenced to trial new candidates have emerged to obtain the presidency with General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi the frontrunner⁸⁴. General Sisi has taken it upon himself to meet with Russian Vladimir Putin and strike a military defense cooperation agreement, strengthening ties with the Russians. This comes at no surprise as stability and security is a main threat and concern of the majority of Egyptian people. This renewal of Russian-Egyptian relations should be a concern to the United States as these two countries were very united in the 1970's before the Americans began to fund Egypt extensively to gain an ally in a region where communist upheaval was a reality and fear to the United States⁸⁵. As long as the United States continues to hold back funding to Egypt on democratic and human rights violations that are outlined by the United Nations coalition, Egypt will alleviate the Western pressures by pursuing other trading partners⁸⁶.

Furthermore, Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy has met with Chinese Vice President Li Yuanchao to discuss recent Chinese investments in Egypt. Fahmy was very supportive of Chinese non-refundable grant worth 24.7 million dollars (USD) that will help connect Chinese and Egyptian companies in the region. Relying solely on one international pole (which is the United States) no longer serves the best interests for the Egyptian people⁸⁷. Moreover, the desires for upgrade in economic and commercial ties are very beneficial for the Egyptians. Unlike the United States, both the Chinese and Egyptians share common principles of regarding domestic and international issues such as: non-intervention in domestic affairs, respecting international laws and norms, and rejecting the use of force outside the auspices of the United Nations^{88,89}. These values shared by China and Russia does not represent idealistic democratic systems. Most Western nations portray democracy to encompass freedom of

⁸⁴ Al Jazeera, "Egypt's Sisi to run for President." Last modified February 6, 2014. Accessed February 6, 2014.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/02/egypt-army-chief-confirmspresidential-bid-201425225057233402.html>

⁸⁵ Fick, Maggie, and Perry, Tom, Reuters, " Egypt's Sisi sees new defense cooperation with Russia." Last modified 11 14, 2013. Accessed February 10, 2014.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/14/us-egypt-russia idUSBRE9AD0JM20131114>.

⁸⁶ United Nations, "Egypt: UN human rights office voices concern at growing clampdown, attacks on media." Last modified 01 31, 2014. Accessed February 2, 2014.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/story.asp?NewsID=47050&Cr=Egypt&1=>

⁸⁷ Rana Muhammad, Taha. Daily News Egypt, "China gives Egypt USD 24.7 million dollar grant." Last modified 12 16, 2013. Accessed February 3, 2014.

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/12/16/china-gives-egypt-usd-24-7-million-non-refundable-grant/>.

⁸⁸ Mahmoud, Fouly. Shanghai Daily, "News Analysis: Sisi's visit to Russia signals Egypt" heading East" amid Western pressures." Last modified 02 14, 2014. Accessed February 15, 2014.

http://www.shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua.aspx?id=200588.

⁸⁹ Rana Muhammad, Taha. "China gives Egypt USD 24.7 million dollar grant" accessed February 3, 2014.

speech, religion, and civil liberties. If Egypt follows the path to democracy under Russian and Chinese influence, it will most certainly fail in the future.

The United States has noticed this Egyptian trend and the US Chamber of Commerce has taken action. In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, 50 American countries will be lead to Cairo in the next couple weeks⁹⁰. This should allow for the employment of younger generations of Egyptians and create a more stable population. The United States believes that the budget cuts to Egypt do not benefit them in the future as Egypt has sought out help from China and Russia. However, it seems under this new rule under General Sisi that the pressure of Western institutions and countries will not influence the Egyptian government in the future⁹¹. Therefore, the chances of a democratic Egypt in the near future do not correlate with the recent trends after the successful coup d'état and General Sisi.

⁹⁰ Roy, Avik. Forbes, "Egypt is critical, so let's invest in the new Egypt." Last modified 2014. Accessed February 6, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2012/09/06/egypt-is-critical-so-lets-investin-the-new-egypt/>

⁹¹ Allo K, Awol. Al Jazeera, "The politics of Mohammed Morsi's trial." Last modified February 2, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/politics-mohammed-morsitrial-201413113951329363.html>

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