

**Economic and Political Liberalisation in the Middle East; the Muslim  
Brotherhood and the Politics of Succession in Egypt**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the process of economic and political reform in Egypt, by taking into consideration the role of the Muslim Brotherhood and the politics of succession in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood is arguably the most important political actor in Egypt, and by looking at how the Muslim Brotherhood developed strength over the decades through a process of change in its shape and character, it will allow an understanding of how it was able to pose a challenge to the Egyptian government at a time of economic reform in 1991 and the consequences, which followed for the process of political change in Egypt. Also, a look at the process of political succession in Egypt, which has risen to the surface over the last 6 years, will allow an understanding into the actors and forces involved in the politics of succession and the consequences, which emerge for the future process of reform, in particular political reform in Egypt.



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## **Abbreviations**

ERSAP- Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programme

GCC- Gulf Co-operation Council

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

IFI's- International Financial Institutions

IMF- International Monetary Fund

IAF- Islamic Action Front

LFSS- Labour Force Sample Survey

MB- Muslim Brotherhood

NDP- National Democratic Party

NGO's – Non-Governmental Organisations

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAMSCAD- Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Consequences of Adjustment

PLO- Palestinian Liberation Organisation

SDR- Special Drawing Rights

SFD- Social Fund for Development

SOE's- State Owned Enterprises

WB- World Bank

YMMA- Young Men's Muslim Association



## **Chapter 1- Framing Economic and Political Reform in the Middle East**

### **1.1 Introduction**

A causal relationship has been hypothesised between economic and political liberalization, with economic liberalisation viewed as a key driver in the process of political change (Friedman, 1962; Hayek, 1960). Economic liberalisation is believed to roll back the state creating political space to exist, in which civil society can develop. As civil society groups proliferate, the argument runs, individuals become more assertive in demanding their political rights. Once these demands reach a certain pitch, authoritarian leaders are forced to make meaningful changes or risk being swept away (Cook, 2005). The policy implications of this casual relationship between economic and political liberalisation are simple; to encourage economic liberalisation to promote the growth of civil society. Thus this casual relationship has underpinned the work of IFI's and aid agencies, in the Middle East. However, it has been problematic to examine the link between economic and political liberalisation in the region, for 2 main factors. First, the level and extent of economic liberalisation has not been consistent, in most cases it has been restrictive and minimal. Second, regional crisis's, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and border clashes between countries (i.e. Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Iran and Iraq), have been continuously used by power elites to keep in place autocratic mechanisms and institutions. As a result, these 2 factors have, no doubt problematised an examination of the link between economic and political liberalisation in the region.

Thus, this research does not aim to address the relationship, if any between economic and political liberalization but does seek to examine the process of economic and political change in Egypt, with particular reference to the period, 1991-2006. In order

to do this, I focus especially on the role of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and its role in the process of political change by examining changes it has undergone in its shape and character, which has allowed it to become a key political actor in Egypt. In addition to this I look at the way in which the Egyptian state has sought to manage the politics of succession, by taking into consideration the actors and forces driving the politics of succession in Egypt. The Egyptian case is located within the broader context of the Middle East. In doing this, four important questions emerge.

These are the following: to what extent has there been a process of economic and political reform in Egypt? To what extent has this process of economic and political change allowed for the emergence of a functioning civil society? To what extent has this allowed political actors such as the MB to challenge state power? Finally, to what extent is the role of the MB symptomatic of challenge to the legitimacy of the existing state dispensation? To address these questions, this thesis will first examine the process of economic and political reform in the context of the Middle East. This will be done in Chapter 2, which in addition locates the questions in the context of regional and global developments such as US foreign policy post September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the subsequent 'war on terror'.

The case of Egypt and the MB is detailed in chapters 3-8. These chapters set out the economic and political changes in Egypt. In particular they provide an understanding into the process of political change by exploring the MB. This is done by examining the details of transformation of the MB from a religious movement into a central political actor in Egyptian politics. I will examine how the MB emerged as a strong political force and how internal reforms to the way in which the MB organises itself have contributed to its increasing strength in Egyptian political life. I also situate the

internal political and organisational transformations inside the MB alongside shifts in the spiritual and ideological discourse that the MB promotes. This is important, as by understanding these shifts, the process of change in the MB's shape and character and how it has come to relate to the Egyptian state can be more readily understood. This will allow an understanding of how the MB has become a key agent in Egyptian politics and how it has been able to challenge the authority and possibly the hegemony of the Egyptian government. A significant reason for the importance of the MB in Egyptian politics and the increased interest in their role relates to the post 9/11 debate concerning democratization in the Middle East and the role of US foreign policy identified as promoting democracy in the region. In this process of democratization, Egypt has come to be viewed as a key actor in spearheading the process of political change due to its close relationship with the United States and its key regional role in the Middle East. The MB is arguably the single largest political force in Egypt. Since 1991 it has become the main competitor against state power that has dramatically raised the profile of the MB. As a result the MB has become central to the process of economic and political change in Egypt.

A detailed examination of the MB will be followed by exploring the politics of succession in Egypt, which has risen to the surface of Egyptian politics over the last 6 years. This has been due to the increasing role and power of Gamal Mubarak in Egyptian politics. The rise of Gamal and his associates in the echelons of Egyptian politics has raised many questions pertaining to the future of economic and political change in Egypt. Therefore, as the talk of political succession is developing speed and strength, it is important to explore the discourse surrounding political succession, taking into consideration the actors involved, the grooming process and the forces driving the political succession in Egypt. In addition to this, it is important to examine



the role of key political actors, such as the MB, a key political weight, in order to determine their influence and impact on the political succession process. This discussion, will allow a basis from which to explore the future process of economic and political change in Egypt, in particular the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political change arising from a succession process in Egypt.

## **1.2 Methodology**

The methodology, which will be used for this study, is based on an intensive generic research design, which allows for an investigation of a single, interesting, critical incident or event to gain a deep understanding of the processes involved. This may be a case study of a person, organization or nation. The strengths of the intensive design are that it allows for investigation of one case. Therefore for this study this method is appropriate as it allows a focus to be made upon Egypt, in particular the process of economic and political reform in Egypt post 1991 and the wider debates concerning the MB and the politics of succession in Egypt.

The research will incorporate both primary and secondary data. The primary data is data that a researcher collects through observations and interviews. The secondary data is data that already exists (somebody else has created), such as archival and questionnaires; which are already in the public domain. The main advantage of using secondary data is the enormous savings in resources, particularly time and money. However, secondary data should be used carefully, as the data will have been collected for a specific purpose that differs from the set research questions. Consequently, the data that is being considered may be inappropriate to the research questions at hand.

For this study, primary data will be collected through the use of interviews, with leading academics, politicians and thinkers in Egypt. The interview methodology can be classed as being structured and unstructured. In a structured interview, such as survey interviews one uses a standardized set of interview procedures, questions are asked in the same order and often in the same interview setting. In contrast unstructured interviews are described as reflexive interviewing, where questions are not asked in an orderly manner but in response to the answers that are being provided by the interviewer. The interview methodology that was applied in this research is the structured method as it provides an opportunity to ask a fixed set of questions to the interviewees, thus allowing a comparison of answers to be made. The secondary data will be collected through the use books, journals and media sources. In particular there will be the use of a range of newspaper sources (i.e. Egyptian, US and British newspapers); this use of newspapers will contribute with the interviews to a new contribution to the research through original interpretation of the newspaper sources allowing answers to be sought in relation to the research questions.

### **1.3 Field Work**

The carrying out of fieldwork was an important aspect of my research. It entailed me visiting Egypt for approximately 5 months in 2004, between the months of April and August. I was located in the capital city of Cairo and had access to the resources available in the American University of Cairo and the University of Cairo. The objective behind the fieldwork was three fold. The first objective was to develop a comprehension into Egyptian society and politics by living in Egypt, which could not be attained through secondary sources of literature. The fieldwork in Egypt added a vital dimension of personal experience to my research, which would have been absent



without its conduct. The second objective was to collect information concerning Egyptian reform (i.e. economics and politics), state-society relations and political actors, such as the MB by accessing the resources available at the American University of Cairo and the University of Cairo. The information accessed was in the form of masters and doctorate theses, which provided an important understanding into the key themes of this research, such as Egyptian reform, the MB and the politics of succession. Finally, an important objective was to add a new contribution to the research by conducting personal interviews with leading academics, thinkers, commentators and politicians in Egypt. This exercise was of paramount importance as it provided me with the thoughts and opinions of those familiar with the economic and political dynamics in Egypt. In addition I was able to ask specific questions to the interviewees to obtain detailed answers, in relation to my research themes (i.e. Egyptian reform, the MB and the politics of succession). The interviews were conducted mainly in Cairo and lasted approximately for 1 1/2 hours. In some cases the interviews were shorter dependent upon the working schedule of the individuals interviewed. Notes were taken in the interview, which respondents found acceptable.

#### **1.4 Limitations and Difficulties Experienced in the Field Work**

The fieldwork in Egypt was made easier by the contacts I had received through my supervisor Professor Ray Bush, which immediately gave me, leads which I could pursue and develop into a more extensive contact list. Therefore I was relatively pleased in relation to the contact details I received and the individuals I interviewed. The individuals interviewed were more than happy to assist in providing the details of their friends and contacts, which could assist me in my research. As a result, the possible limitation and difficulty in accessing and meeting individuals that is usually

encountered by research students in their respective field works was not encountered by my self in Egypt.

Most of the interviewees spoke a good level of English, which was of great help in the interview process. In some instances I required an interpreter to comprehend what was being said but this was not a major difficulty or burden as English is widely spoken within Egyptian academic and political circles. A major difficulty encountered during the fieldwork-concerned entrance into a number of academic and research institutions in Egypt. The level of security throughout Cairo is extremely stringent and high, which was also the case at the academic and research institutions, which I visited. This level of security made it difficult to enter. For example, this problem was encountered at the University of Cairo and the Center for Criminological and Sociological Research. In some instances I was allowed to enter after consultation with the security personnel in the institutes and in other situations there was no leniency by the security personnel in relation to entrance. This did impact adversely on my research schedule.

Another major limitation and difficulty in the conduct of fieldwork was accessibility to Islamist figures. It would have been of great benefit if I could have met with leading figures from Islamist organizations such as the MB but unfortunately this did not materialize. This was due to personnel security, which took precedence over the arrangement of interviews with controversial figures. On entering Egypt I faced difficulty due to my Pakistani ethnic origin. After a grueling episode at Cairo Airport I took the option not to meet Islamist activists. In order to make up for this limitation in research, I accessed the email addresses of some Islamist activists and conducted

brief interviews over the internet. The questions were short and brief but I was able to extract the information that was needed for my research.

### **1.5 Contribution and Significance of the Study**

An evaluation of economic and political reform in the Middle East has received much consideration post September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in particular from the US to enact its policy of democracy promotion (Dalacoura, 2005; Nufrio, 2004). Given, that Egypt is a key actor in the region, there has been scrutiny on its process of economic and political reform. This study adds to this scrutiny by providing detailed examination of the process of economic and political change in Egypt, particularly relating it to the role of the MB through changes to its shape and character and the process of political succession. The importance of this study is twofold. First, this study contextualizes the subject of economic and political reform, by relating it to the role of the MB, through examining its changing shape and character and the politics of succession. Second, this study also takes into consideration the contemporary context and the wider war on terror, which resulted in US foreign policy directing itself towards promoting economic and political reform in the region. Therefore this study adds the importance of a new domestic, regional and international dimension to the subject of economic and political reform in Egypt and the Middle East, which has been a source of study over the decades.

### **1.6 Chapterisation**

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 examines authoritarianism and democratisation within the Middle East. It also examines the extent to which western constructs of civil society can be applied to understanding the role played by



organizations such as Islamist parties as actors able and willing to challenge the hegemony exercised by state elites. This chapter provides the backdrop to move onto the case study at hand, which is Egypt. Chapter 3 examines internal economic and political changes in Egypt since the beginning of economic reform in 1991. This is done in order to determine whether the process of change allowed political actors to challenge the Egyptian state's power and its structures. Chapter 4 examines the MB (1928-1975), by taking into consideration the evolution of the MB, through a study of its growth and development. Chapter 5 examines the changing shape and character of the MB, through documenting the rise of the new guard and its participation in parliamentary elections that set into process the MB's transition into a key political actor in Egypt. Chapter 6 examines further changes in the shape and character of the MB, through its participation in professional syndicates in the 1980s, which allowed the MB to construct a challenge to state power and its structures in the 1990s. Chapter 7 examines the discourse concerning political succession in Egypt and in particular, it explores the rise of Gamal Mubarak and the forces, which are driving the process of succession in Egypt. Also it looks at the role of key political actors, such as the MB in terms of their influence and impact on the politics of succession in Egypt. Chapter 8 examines the future process of economic and political change in Egypt, by taking into consideration the implications of a succession process for the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political change in Egypt. Chapter 9 provides a conclusion to the research.

## **Chapter 2- Shifting Sands- The Middle East in between Authoritarianism and Democratisation**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explore the process of economic and political change in the Middle East, taking into consideration the impact of any process of political change on state powers and structures. In doing this it is important to explore the following questions: to what extent has there been a process of economic and political reform in the Middle East? To what extent has this process of economic and political change allowed for the emergence of a functioning civil society? To what extent has this allowed political actors such as Islamists parties to challenge state power? Finally, to what extent is the role of the Islamist parties symptomatic of challenges to the legitimacy of the existing state dispensation? Also it is important to examine US foreign policy post 9/11, to determine the extent to which it has been inclusive of democracy promotion in the Middle East. This will allow a conclusion to be made on the prospect of political change in the region in the context of the on going war on terror.

### **2.2 Economic and Political Reform in the Middle East**

#### **2.2.1 Economic Reform**

The Middle East undertook economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, with the 'Washington Consensus' laying down the economic reform programme (Williams, 1990, 1996, 1997). The key targets of the 'Washington Consensus' included the introduction of government budgetary balances, low inflation, market determined prices and the liberalisation of economic sectors (Dhumale, 2000; Harik and Sullivan,



1992; Erian et al, 1996). To achieve, these targets economic reform was shaped by two key processes. The first process was the macroeconomic stabilisation of the economy through the use of tight fiscal and monetary policies. The second process was the structural adjustment of the economy through privatisation, the removal of price controls, liberalisation of trade, banking, agriculture and other economic sectors (Easterly, 2001; Killick, 1995; Bird, 1995). However, the Arab States were somewhat inconsistent in carrying out economic reforms. The Arab States showed commitment to the process of macroeconomic stabilisation but did not show as much dedication in the context of structural adjustment. They preferred a piecemeal approach to structural adjustment in contrast to the 'shock approach' advocated by the IFI's. Two main reasons can be presented for this:

1) A number of strikes and protests in the 1980s and 1990s, in response to economic policies, such as the removal of price controls and privatisation concerned the power elites. This led them to pursue a more cautious method to structural adjustment (Sadiki, 2000; Burke, 1987). For example, in August 1983, the Moroccan government reduced consumer subsidies by 20 percent, triggering urban unrest in the north and elsewhere. The abrupt way, in which the Jordanian government attempted to raise fuel prices in 1989, ignited riots in the southern city of Ma'an and resulted in the death of 11 people (Ryan, 1998). Similar protests and strikes took place in Tunis in 1984 and in Khartoum in 1982 and 1985 (Bayet, 2003).

2) In society powerful vested interests blocked economic reform. They blocked economic reform or ensured that specific reform is passed through that will ensure capital accumulation. Therefore the results were inconsistent, in which regimes embraced some, economic reforms relating to macro economic stabilisation yet

postponed or evaded more complex reforms related to structural adjustment such as privatisation, reform of regulatory rules and the development of the rule of law (Richards, 2001). For example, the Egyptian economic reform experience in the 1990s is indicative of powerful vested interests that blocked parts of economic reform that threatened their economic status. The top layers of the army-bureaucracy, the power elite created by Nasser in a similar manner to their former Russian allies responded negatively to the process of privatisation and the liberalisation of a number of key economic sectors such as, insurance, trade and banking. A symbiosis between governmental regulators and businessmen developed; in particular insider trading in the construction sector, where public land was sold cheaply to a friend, who would then re-sell the land at the market value (Hirst, 1999).

Therefore, as a result of these 2 reasons (i.e. political risk and the role of vested interests) power elites embraced economic reforms relating to macroeconomic stabilisation but often abandoned or evaded structural adjustment such as marketisation, privatisation, reform of institutions and regulatory practices (Richards, 2001). Thus, Arab States balanced a fine line between meeting economic reform demanded from the IFI's and internal demands (i.e. the public and vested interests). In particular, Arab States worked hard to minimise the socio-economic fallout by pursuing an inconsistent approach to economic reform. Despite this endeavour by Arab States, the social and economic changes in the region in the 1990s were worrying.

### **2.2.2 Social and Economic Changes**

The neo liberal economic reforms provoked a number of socio-economic changes. The market centric reforms made consumer commodities vastly more accessible and

enriched the upper socio-economic strata while also increasing income disparities and causing critical changes in labour markets. The size of informal and marginalized groups, such as the unemployed, casual workers, and street subsistence labourers, expanded rapidly (UNHDP, 2002; Economist, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002). The level of unemployment was worrying, which continued to increase in the 1990s (Richards, 2001). The average unemployment rate for the 6 largest non-oil or diversified economies in the region (Syria, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Morocco and Tunisia) rose from 12.7 per cent in 1990 to 15 per cent in 2000 (Gardner, 2003). In the 1990s, more than one-third of Morocco's youth were unemployed, while in Syria youth unemployment was at 73 percent (Heydeman, 2004). The women in the Middle East were unemployed at twice the rate of men. Vast segments of the workforce were in the informal sector, with no access to the benefits of formal employment (Heydeman, 2003). A WB study in 2002 of 16 Middle Eastern and North African countries, representing about 60 percent of the population in the entire region, showed that up to 47 million new jobs would need to be created between 2002 and 2012 merely to keep pace with new entrants into the labour market (Keller and Nabli, 2002). An additional 6.5 million jobs would be needed to reduce the unemployment rate to just below 10 percent. This study indicates the challenge of unemployment in the Middle East. The levels of unemployment within the Middle East can be seen from table 1 below;



**Table 1: Unemployment Rates in the Middle East**

Country	Unemployment Rates (%)	Remarks
Algeria	30	Data from 1999.
Egypt	12	2000. some estimates show 20 %
Iran	20-25	Data from 2001
Jordan	15	Official rate
Lebanon	18	Data from 1998
Libya	29	Data from 2000
Morocco	15-22	Data from 2000
Saudi Arabia	14-18	Higher among graduates
Syria	12-15	Data from 1999
Tunisia	16	Data from 1999
Yemen	35	Data from 1999

Sources: Saudi Arabia, US Embassy, Riyadh and New York Times 26/08/01; Iran, Le Monde Diplomatique 05/06/2001. All other MEDEA Institute and CIA World fact book, 2001.

In the 1990s, the socio-economic problems in the region were not helped, by the economic withdrawal of the state. Many social provisions were withdrawn, and the low-income groups largely had to rely on themselves to survive. For instance, in Egypt, state subsidies on certain basic foodstuffs such as rice, sugar, and cooking oil were removed, and subsidies on items such as fuel, power, and transportation were reduced. Rent control was reconsidered; a new land Law in 1992 ended tenant farmers' control over land; and public-sector reform and privatization continued, all with significant social costs. From as early as 1993, a United States Agency for

International Development report was warning of the “deteriorating social conditions in Egypt” (USAID, 1993). This was because the levels of unemployment, poverty, and income gaps reportedly increased in Egypt (Westley, 1998; Amin, 1998). Similar socio-economic changes took place in Jordan, which were escalated by events such as the Gulf War in 1991, which deepened the crisis there (Majdalani, 1999). In Iran, the government moved in between statism and free-market policies in the 1990s. The direction of economic liberalization in Iran was slow, due to the struggle among rival political factions for economic self-interest and the losers were the Iranian public, with Iran experiencing heightened social and economic crisis in the 1990s.

Therefore overall social and economic changes in the Middle East were negative- notably the increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. These socio-economic changes posed a danger to the survival and security of the Arab States in the 1990s. In response to growing internal socio-economic pressure, Arab States began to experiment with the process of political liberalisation- the strategic opening up of political space in society to allow limited political participation. This was a significant change in behaviour of the Arab State. Given this drastic change in behaviour, it is important to explore the process of political liberalisation in the Middle East during the 1990s, in particular to determine the extent to which this process allowed political space to political actors to contest state power and its structures.

### **2.2.3 The Shift from Authoritarianism to Political Liberalisation**

During the late 1980s and 1990s, the mixture of elite politics, patronage, selective repression, and patrimonialism came under pressure due to the growing socio-economic crisis in the Middle East (Brumberg, 2002; Bromley, 1994; Niblock and



Murphy, 1993). These changes resulted in the Arab States changing their behaviour resulting in reworking of the rules of the political game in the Middle East. This created the foundations for the process of political liberalisation in the region, which allowed political actors, secular and Islamic to enter the system. In Egypt parliamentary elections were held in 1990, Syria extended the number of seats in the legislature to include 60 independents, the Gulf monarchs created consultative chambers, Jordan held its first elections for a substantial period in 1989 and Yemen held elections in 1993 (Kechichian, 2004; Rumaihi, 1996; Nonneman, 2001; Bensahel and Byman, 2004; Ehteshami, 2003). Thus, a tide of political change was witnessed which brought enthusiasm for change in the Middle East (Ibrahim, 1995; Sadiki, 1997). However, this enthusiasm did not last long, as the reworking of the rules, did not weaken the state.

In countries ruled by single parties, such as in Syria, this process of political liberalisation did not lead to a weakening of state power and structures (Albrecht and Schlumberger, 2004). This dynamic of political liberalisation led to parties created from one faction or another of the ruling establishment, therefore the liberalization of party life did not create parties with strong grass root support and constituencies (Brumberg, 2002; Salame, 1994). Instead, this process by the Syrian regime largely prolonged the personal or familial networks that had long sustained the traditional Syrian elite institutions and structures, in the context of state-managed liberalization. As for the monarchies of Morocco, Jordan, and to some extent Kuwait, while they were not characterised by dominant ruling parties as in the case of Egypt and Syria, the close links between opposition party leaders and the king nevertheless ensured what was often a remarkable level of consensus (Brumberg, 2002). In addition, the power of the state continued, through the executive's dominance, which is enshrined

in the constitutions of the Arab world, which either explicitly give the monarch or president ultimate authority (as is the case in Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen), or implicitly do the same by not providing a decisive separation of powers that makes it possible for elected assemblies to represent the will of elected majorities. During the early and mid-1990s, this arrangement invited periodic conflicts between legislatures and executives on a range of issues such as party and press laws. However mainstream secular opposition parties were not strong enough to question and contest the basic rules of the game, which characterised liberalising Arab States. In fact, legislative-executive conflicts and crisis's worked in the favour of the executive. On various occasions leaders dissolved parliaments, as was the case in Jordan in 2001, or forced the resignation of an existing cabinet, as was the case in Kuwait in 2002 (Herb, 2002, 2005). Executives, who had mastered the art of political survival, in fact introduced a new set of political reforms, which effectively strengthened the powers of the executive at a time of liberalisation. This was often accomplished by creating an upper house whose appointed or indirectly elected members, had the authority to block the legislation of the lower house and thus can effectively defend the supremacy of the executive. Such was the case with Morocco's constitutional reforms in 1996, with those of Algeria in 1996, and those of Bahrain in 2002.

As a result, the process of political liberalisation witnessed in the 1990s did not weaken the state's powers and its structures. However, the secular opposition forces and even Islamists continued to accept and play by the rules of the game being introduced by the Arab States. A key reason for this acceptance to play by the rules of the game was pragmatism. For Islamists entrance into the political system was vital, in giving them an insider status, thus allowing them to contest state power at the national level. In Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen, reforms at different times have made it

possible for opposition parties (i.e. secular and Islamic) to participate in multi-party cabinets, and in Morocco, to form a government that during the mid-1990s was led by the opposition. Therefore the opposition has entered state managed power sharing arrangements, whether in parliament or government, which has meant coordinating themselves not only with the state but alternative political forces as well (Brumberg, 2002). For example, beginning in 1997, the Algerian regime and opposition parties adopted a system by which Islamists, liberal secularists, ethnic Berbers, and state apparatchiks shared seats in a parliament. While the latter had no real power, under its roof an aura of peaceful coexistence between different parties and identities emerged. This in fact assisted in survival of the Algerian state after 8 years of bitter civil war. In far away Kuwait, secularists and Islamists since 1992 have sat in a parliament that is probably the most vocal and obstructionist institution of its kind in the Arab world. Secular and Islamist parliamentarians occasionally have joined forces on issues such as foreign investment, and have attempted to challenge and contest the complex set of formal and informal mechanisms that allow the royal family to prevent any one faction from actually controlling the parliament or using an election victory to impose its cultural or social agenda on the rest of society (Brumberg, 2002; Crystal, 1990). Kuwait's relatively open society gives Islamists and secularists opportunities to express themselves in parliament and in a variety of newspapers and civil society institutions.

Like the case of Kuwait, secularists and Islamists found a niche for themselves inside the political system across the Middle East in the 1990s. However, the secular opposition lacked a strong social base, therefore existence outside the system, which would have allowed them to exert bottom up and top down pressure on the state. In contrast, Islamists would use their existence outside the system (i.e. social base) to



assist their agenda inside the political system. Also, the Islamists outside power would be facilitated by the proliferation of civil society organizations in the 1990s, which would allow Islamists to exert a greater degree of outside pressure on state power and its structures. Unable to cope with the manifold social, economic, and humanitarian challenges facing the state, governments let nongovernmental or quasi-nongovernmental groups initiate programmes in health, the environment, and education. Longstanding professional associations representing lawyers, journalists, businessmen, academics, doctors, and engineers also became more active and politicized as they attempted to become substitutes for weak political parties. In particular this opening up of space in civil society provided further room for Islamist parties and organisations to mobilise outside the system in order to contest and challenge state power, thus testing the liberalising credentials of Arab States by launching a challenge to state power from inside the system and also outside through civil society.

### **2.3 Islamists Politics, Civil Society and its Challenge to the Arab State.**

The western construct of civil society has for some time been at the centre of attention for both academics and policy-makers, in the light of its very close association with the democratic process (Cavatorta, 2006). In western societies, the existence of an autonomous space between the state, the market and the family is believed to sustain the democratic political system, due to its ability to bring citizens together without coercion. The voluntary nature of movements, which mobilise around very different and, at times, conflicting issues and interests allows society to develop ties and networks (Gellner, 1994). The existence of such an active civil society is presented as a positive development for democracy, because it promotes the interaction of people

in a voluntary setting, allowing differences of opinion to be taken into account because of the diverse interests of mobilising groups. The state does not interfere with this autonomous space where demands can develop, issues can be discussed and activities organised.

The positive implications that an active civil society has in western democratic countries have been transferred to authoritarian states. In this different political context, the ability of independent social actors to prise away an autonomous sphere of action from the state is perceived to be vital in undermining the authoritarianism that characterises political, economic, cultural and social relationships. This is because a sphere with no official state intervention is allowed to develop, and become an organic space within which political demands and pressures can be made on an authoritarian political system (Norton, 1994-1995). Following from this, the literature on transitions to democracy investigates the role of civil society in the demise of authoritarianism. The literature points out the fact that countries with a growing civil society were either democratic or getting there, while countries with a weak and passive civil society were deeply authoritarian and likely to remain so. In relation to the Middle East, early studies indicated that the absence of democracy in the region was partly explained through the absence of truly active and independent civil societies. This absence was blamed on Islam, which was believed to require passive citizens. The Muslim world is viewed as waiting for the 'just prince' to initiate political reforms and take control of societal development, rather than mobilising itself independently (Margin, 1995). However, Norton's (1995-96) extensive study on civil society in the region contradicted much of this previous scholarship. His study demonstrated that civil society activism in the Middle East had been largely ignored in the academic world, but was an important political reality. According to Nonneman,

‘Norton’s study demolished the myth that the region was uniquely lacking in such a category, while examining the varieties and variations within it’ (2001, p143). While this study by Norton, quickly became the conventional understanding, it still left open the problem of Middle Eastern authoritarianism. If one wanted to explain the absence of democracy in the region through the western construct of ‘civil society’, it could no longer be argued that Middle Eastern societies were passive and inactive, because there was now evidence to the contrary.

In response to the findings of Norton, some were led to explain the absence of democracy in the region by emphasising that the few associations and movements that were truly autonomous from the regime were far too vibrant and too politicised to foster the democratic process in the Middle East. The popularity of this explanation is due largely to the fact that the most active and popular civil society actors have been Islamists. Their activism is perceived to be uncivil rather than civil, and therefore more conducive to authoritarian political and social relationships than to democratic ones. Sami Zubaida gives an account of this: ‘many secularist writers have tried to exclude Islam and Islamism from definitions of civil society. This is partly on the grounds that Islam and Islamism are part of traditional and primordial formations, and partly on the perceived incompatibility of a religious-based society, sought by Islamism, with pluralist democracy’ (2001, p 239). Islamic movements such as the Egyptian MB have been presented as undermining the positive connotations which civil society holds (see Berman 2003). At a policymaking level, the US has been warned not to be so enthusiastic about civil society in the Middle East precisely because the most active actors are Islamists and the ‘Islamist sector does not constitute a pro-democracy force’ (Hawthorne, 2004, p12). To quote Berman, ‘a final important lesson that the Egyptian case teaches is that at least in certain contexts, the



civil society sceptics may have a clearer vision than its proponents. The growth of civil society should not be considered an undisputed good. but a politically neutral multiplier' (2003, p 266).

This explanation that authoritarianism in the Middle East remains robust because civil society is dominated by Islamists, thereby not allowing civil society to trigger a real process of democratic political change faces a number of shortcomings (Cavatorta, 2006; Brumberg, 2002). First of all, the labelling of all Islamists as being undemocratic does not reflect the reality. There are certain Islamists who indeed make a point of strongly emphasising their democratic beliefs and political behaviour, such as the Tunisian Nahda Party or the Algerian Movement for Society and Peace. In addition, Islamists also vary both in ideology and methods from one another, due to confessional differences, leadership style and external constraints. To assume that they are all the same because of a shared Islamic belief is misleading and incorrect (Norton, 1995; Schwedler, 1998-1999, 1998). The second shortcoming is the empirical focus on violent groups and their use of political violence. This fails to take into consideration, Islamists which represent large sectors of society that would otherwise lack any representation, such as the marginalised youth of the shantytowns, women from poor backgrounds and sectors of the disaffected middle classes. Their welfare work and their constant criticism of the incumbents are the pillars of their strategy. Thirdly, to argue that democracy is absent in the region because of the existence of Islamists in civil society underestimates the nature of the Arab states under examination, which are highly repressive and rely heavily on the 'coercive apparatus' (see Posusney 2004). Therefore, based on the above shortcomings it seems misguided to label civil society in the Arab world authoritarian simply because of the role of Islamists. They operate in a political context where competing views and ideas

are present and they have to come to terms with that. Therefore, it then becomes imperative to examine Islamists opposition and their contribution to the process of political reform, without utilising sweeping statements about the intrinsic illiberal nature of Islamists and their presumed 'totalitarian' social activism. This can be explored by examining 3 Islamist parties, which exist inside and outside the system in Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain.

#### **A) The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood- The Islamic Action Front**

The Jordanian MB has long been integrated into the political mainstream due to its acceptance of the legitimacy of the Hashemite monarchy. It has been tacitly recognized first as a charitable organization and later as a quasi-political organization, which has openly fielded candidates in parliamentary elections albeit under a different name (Islamic Action Front - IAF). The relationship between the MB and the Palace has been beneficial over the years for the MB, which has allowed it to expand its influence in Jordan. Successive Jordanian monarchs have found that the MB has been more useful politically as an ally than as an opponent as it secured Islamist support in countering Arab nationalist interference during the 1960s and secular Palestinian nationalism in the 1970s (Tamimi, 1999). Jordanian Islamists have been most effective at gaining control of Jordan's educational system. After the Brotherhood sided with King Hussein during the Black September crisis of 1970, in which the Palestinian Liberation Organization openly clashed with the Jordanian armed forces, King Hussein granted the MB control over the Education Ministry. Through its extensive charitable networks, the MB also established a number of Sunni Muslim schools (*Madhaheb*), in addition to institutions of higher education. The MB's educational, social, and health services have grown so extensive over the years that

some experts believe that the MB budget for services rivals that of the Jordanian government. In 1992, the MB's political wing, IAF was legally recognized as a political party in Jordan under a new political party's law, which allowed the MB to be represented at the national level. Three years before that, Jordanian Islamists running as independents gained almost 40% of the seats in parliament. The government responded by altering the electoral law, changing the system from a multiple/transferable vote system in which voters could cast as many ballots as there were seats in their constituency, to a one-person, one vote system, which led most voters to choose candidates from their extended families or tribes over ideological parties, such as the IAF (Clark, 2004). Those Jordanians who did vote for the IAF hailed predominately from urban areas dominated by middle class Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Government-IAF relations deteriorated after the 1994 peace agreement with Israel, which resulted in the government constraining IAF political activity in mosques and professional syndicates. In response the IAF boycotted the 1997 elections. The most recent parliamentary elections, held on June 17, 2003 gave 62 seats in the 110-member lower house to conservative, independent, and tribal allies of King Abdullah. However, the IAF won 22% of the vote, thereby gaining 18 seats in the lower house, plus 6 sympathizers. When asked about the IAF's prospects in future elections, one member reportedly remarked that "I am not optimistic that we can win a majority now, because the laws have still not been changed.... But we are not trying to take everything away. We just want to take part in a fair process". (New York Times, May, 2006). Therefore despite political engineering to undermine the representation of the IAF, it continues to work within the political system in order to have a voice at the national level, which has allowed it to address economic issues such as corruption, privatization, and poverty but also political issues such as political



freedom, transparency and even sensitive issues such as the peace agreement with Israel. The IAF is firmly embedded in Jordan through the MB and it is likely to pose more pressure on the state in the future, but the state has not remained idle and has fought back which can be seen from the breakdown in relations between the IAF and King Abdullah. Recently the state banned independent religious edicts to be given without the states approval, constraining the activity of the MB but at the same time has weakened the IAF by stripping the political immunity of 4 IAF MP's and imprisoning them. Therefore it is likely that this cyclical relationship is to continue but there is no doubt that the Jordanian Islamists have challenged the boundaries of economic and political reform in Jordan and are likely to continue to do so as their strength grows.

### **B) The Moroccan Muslim Brotherhood- The Party of Justice and Development (JDP)**

The JDP is one of a number of Islamic organisations in Morocco but is the only one, which is involved in the political system and has adopted a path of involvement rather than disengagement (Christian Monitor, November, 2005). The leadership of the JDP's wished to strike a balance between continuing its opposition to government corruption and nepotism while preparing the ground for participation in future government coalitions, perhaps after the 2007 parliamentary election. Reportedly, the JDP covets the influential Social Affairs and Education ministerial portfolios, where it could pursue its agenda of promoting Islamic morals and ethics in society. The JDP's aggressive campaigning among lower- and middle-class Moroccans has made the group more popular than many of Morocco's older and more established parties (Hamzawy et al, 2006). However, despite a growing support base the JDP has decided to remain limited in its demands to consolidate its position, with the hope of

launching a stronger challenge in the future against the government. For example, the JDP remains allied with the monarchy, even on issues that would appear to contravene Islamic law, such as their acceptance of King Muhammad's 2004 groundbreaking revision of the family code (*Mudawana*), which, among other things, raised the legal age of marriage for women from 15 to 18 and allowed women to divorce with a judge's approval. The JDP argued that because the family code revision was democratically enacted, its members should accept it, since the party is committed to both democratic and Islamic principles (Hamzawy et al, 2006). Despite this warming to the monarchy for reasons of political opportunism and pragmatism, the JDP has done more than existing oppositional actors by campaigns to bring more transparency to Moroccan politics and the JDP publishes the attendance record of all members at parliamentary sessions in order to highlight chronic absenteeism found in other parties. The JDP's party leaders require JDP parliamentarians to attend all legislative sessions and to be more productive than members from other parties. It is clear that the JDP has brought something different to the Moroccan political system. The JDP's time in the system has been short and it requires more time to develop as a political force and to really contest the state. Its behaviour resembles the IAF in Jordan, which bided its time before posing a challenge to the state on economic and political issues. It is likely this is the route that the JDP will follow in the near future and the coming elections in 2007 will indicate the progress, which the JDP has made over the years and its future ability to influence Moroccan politics.

### **C) The Bahraini Shiite- Al Wefaq National Islamic Society**

Al Wefaq, is the largest Shiite Bloc, led by Sheikh Ali Salman and it has 1500 active members. It has based its appeal in Bahrain on the provision of social services and

mosque outreach programmes in both urban and rural areas. King Hamad's political reform process in 1999 provided a window of opportunity for Al Wefaq to enter the political system. King Hamad's unprovoked reform process, arguably, stemmed from a generational change fuelled by his realisation that a new post traditional Persian Gulf is emerging, in which tribal affiliations may no longer suffice to legitimize a ruling tribe (Wright, 2006). Therefore, since the start of his reign, King Hamad has promoted reforms characterised as liberalising by which he has maintained control of the pace and direction of political reform, thus avoiding the elite's loss of political and economic privileges. On the other hand, Bahrain's Shiite population led by Al Wefaq, has sought a more fundamental political re-orientation that, if allowed, would undermine the current centralised power base of King Hamad. The 2002 parliamentary elections provided the chance for Al Wefaq to enter the political system but it boycotted the elections. In 2002, there was widespread protest and political opposition by Al Wefaq to the legislative rights granted to the 40 royally appointed members forming the upper house that constituted a distinctly un-representative majority loyal to the King (Middle East International, February, 2004)

However, despite its boycott, Al Wefaq's challenged legislation passed by the 2002 parliament, and specifically mentioned the need to revoke the Law of Associations, Counter- Terrorism Law and the Law of Assembly. According to Bahraini and International Human Rights Groups, these laws have been misappropriated to rein in civil liberties and dissent in Bahrain (The Gulf Daily News, October, 2006). In addition, to this it called for constitutional reforms, which would weaken the monopolization of power by the Bahraini state. These demands and challenges by Al Wefaq exerted a lot of pressure on the Bahraini state, in particular due to Al Wefaq's strong social support base in Bahrain.



Al Wefaq in its challenge to the Bahraini state was willing to cross-ideological barriers and hold meetings with the secular opposition in Bahrain in order to achieve common goals. This led it to become a key political movement in Bahrain and put it in a prime position to make major inroads in the 2006 parliamentary elections. During the elections, Al Wefaq put forward 19 candidates for 40 seats in the parliament and it won 18 seats. Immediately after its victory, Al Wefaq outlined its political aims, such as redrawing the boundaries of constituencies, providing more independence of local councils and campaigning for constitutional reforms (The Gulf Daily News, November, 2006). In addition, it vowed to strengthen its relations with opposition actors to give the opposition the ability to challenge the Bahraini state in to the future.

The examined case studies have highlighted the key role Islamist parties have come to play in inside and outside the system in Jordanian, Moroccan and Bahraini politics. This is the trend in other Arab States as well, such as Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Algeria, Kuwait, Yemen and Egypt. Therefore, excluding non-violent Islamists from the political sphere only serves to weaken the chances of political transformation in the region. In fact Arab liberals have come to realize this reality and, in the past few years, have been gradually reaching out to Islamists parties and engaging them in reform campaigns. Secular-religious national alliances for democracy are instrumental in contesting authoritarian state power and articulating popular consensus over the need for political transformation (Hamzawy, 2005). Islamists, on their side, have seized the integration opportunity and positioned themselves at the heart of growing opposition movements across the region. In Morocco, Lebanon, and Egypt, differences between liberals and Islamists remain relevant, but the degree of convergence of liberals and Islamists over national priorities is systematically growing. These are steps in the right direction. Political

opposition platforms are far more effective with Islamist participation than without it. Therefore, it is likely that Islamist parties will continue to play a key role in the process of economic and political reform, which is assisted by the pressure, which they are able to pose due to their existence inside and outside the system. However, despite the positive contribution of Islamists to the process of change in the region, they face a number of obstacles. These obstacles are working to constrain the Islamists from driving the process of economic and political reform in the Middle East.

#### **2.4 Islamists and Obstacles to Change in the Middle East**

The Islamists, have evolved into key political actors but face a number of obstacles in their drive to change the rules of the game in the Middle East. The first obstacle is the growing convergence and interaction between the state and business sector (i.e. state and business relations). This is a process, by which individuals from the state and royal families (i.e. the Gulf) are active in economic and business ventures, therefore overlapping into the private sector. This involvement in the private sector has allowed the state to co-opt the business class through the provision of economic incentives and contracts. This co-optation has strengthened the political arm of the state, as the private sector has integrated itself into the state in return for opportunities to accumulate capital (Richards, 2001; Nonneman, 2001; Hinnebusch, 2001). This has resulted in the creation of a powerful bloc (i.e. state-business nexus), which has resisted economic and political change pushed by political actors, such as Islamists, which could potentially endanger its economic and political interests.

A state-business nexus and a relationship of such a nature was evident under Hafez Al Assad in Syria (Seale, 1990; Hinnebusch, 2001; Gambill, 2001; Washington Post,

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Breaking from Baath socialist traditions, Assad gave greater latitude to the private sector, dominated by the Sunni urban economic and commercial elite, particularly in Damascus. As a result, of this limited economic opening (*infitah*) and with the growth of collusive state-business relations, large Sunni entrepreneurs allied themselves with the regime in the 1980s, when Islamists challenged the state powers and its structures (Al Ahram, April 6-12<sup>th</sup>, 2006). This state and Sunni commercial class nexus continues to exist in Syria, as Bashar Al Assad persists in pursuing pragmatic economic policies, benefiting the Sunni commercial class. A comparable state-business nexus can be seen in Jordan and Egypt, which has like its Syrian counterpart constrained economic and political changes. Jordan is a case in point where politics since the inheritance of power by King Abdullah in 1999, has seen the overt introduction of the business class into Jordanian politics. The Jordanian state and the business class is more inter-twined than ever before, resulting in the creation of a powerful bloc, which has impeded economic and political changes demanded by the opposition, such as the Islamists. In Egypt the governmental party the NDP, is packed with individuals with business and commercial interests, which have blocked the reforms demands of the Islamists. This business class has been further buttressed with the rise of Gamal Mubarak. Real estate tycoon Ahmed Bahgat, steel and iron industry chief Ahmed Ezz (who also heads the People's Assembly's planning and budget committee), housing committee chief Mohammed Abul Enein, former head of the American Chamber of Commerce, Mohammed Sahfiq Gabr, the Sawiris family and Rami Lakah all have come to be known for their privileged relations with the powers that be and their ability to influence decisions related to privatisation and the process of economic liberalisation (Al Ahram, June 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2001; Ghobashy, 2003). The recent Egyptian parliamentary elections 2005 saw more



candidates with business links standing than ever before; indicating the rise of big business in Egyptian politics and the role of big business becoming more open than ever before (Al Jazeera, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

The second obstacle, facing Islamists is the military, which has played its part in blocking economic and political reform. The military leadership benefits and seeks to maintain the authoritarian political systems, in countries such Egypt. The institutional power of Egypt's military establishment is reflected in the pattern of relations between the presidency, its military-affiliated personnel, and the parliament (Abdalla, 2003). For example, the staff of the presidency has been composed almost exclusively of currently serving or retired military officers, who have a significant role in the administration of the Egyptian state (Cook, 2004). Accordingly, these officers are routinely deployed throughout the ministries and agencies to impress upon the vast Egyptian bureaucracy the priorities of the leadership. Furthermore, while the executive's power in areas related to armament allocation and procurement, particularly from foreign suppliers- is legally subject to parliamentary review, this has never occurred. Indeed, despite the wider ranging powers of oversight with which the People's Assembly is formally vested, there is no actual oversight. Egypt's minister of defence is formally required to make an annual presentation to the Assembly's standing committee on defense, national security, and mobilization and is obliged to answer parliamentarians' questions, but these queries are, in general, not forthcoming (Cook, 2004). Thus, the influence of the military over the executive and parliament, has preserved its power, and has allowed it to extend this power into the economic sector. For example, the government facilitated military expansion in the economic sector through the Administration of National Service Projects, created in January 1979 (Zohny, 1987). In the 1990s, the economic power of the military increased.

through its involvement in a number of development projects, such as canal and housing construction. It is because, of this political and economic power, which the Egyptian military has accumulated, that has led to it blocking reform that could weaken its power by changing the existing power and institutional relationships in Egypt.

The third obstacle, which Islamist parties face, is the political elite and its lack of desire to give up power. For example, the President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh the second longest serving president in the Middle East after Colonel Gaddafi of Libya announced in 2005 that he would not stand in the 2006 presidential elections clearing the way for new blood to enter the Yemeni political office (Phillips, 2006, 2005). However, this decision was reversed in 2006 with President Saleh announcing that he aimed to stand in the 2006 presidential elections for another term. There was little doubt that President Saleh would win the Presidential elections given his monopoly over politics in Yemen (Phillips, 2006). Importantly what this indicated was the lack of desire of the Yemeni political elite to relinquish power and its resistance to change being pushed by Islamists, such as the *Islah* party (the reform party) in Yemen.

Therefore, it is apparent that Islamists face a number of key obstacles, in their endeavours to rework the rules of the game in the region. However, the position of Islamists inside and outside the system, gives them the best opportunity and the leverage to weaken, these obstacles, in order to challenge the state's power and its structures. However, to facilitate the process of change in the region, there is a need for external actors to contribute to the process of economic and political change. Given, the central role of the US in the region, it is important to examine US foreign policy towards the region post 9/11.

## **2.5 The 'War on Terror' and US Foreign Policy towards the Middle East**

In the 1990s, President Clinton supported the strategic liberalisation of political systems in the Middle East. Clinton administration officials spoke of "improved governance," "political participation," "pluralism," and "greater openness" in the Middle East (Gause, 2005; Windsor, 2003; Regan, 2005). The US administration tried "to improve the climate for political liberalization in the region," according to a 1995 statement by then-Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert H. Pelletreau. However, pro-democracy initiatives remained at the level of "low policy," meaning that they were neglected or undermined at the more influential diplomatic level when they conflicted with core "high policy" interests such as the supply of oil and regional security. This was disclosed by then- Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, 'We did nudge at times, supporting Kuwaiti leaders in their initiative to give women the vote and encouraging the creation of representative bodies in Bahrain and Jordan. But we did not make it a priority. Arab public opinion after all can be rather scary' (Albright, 2003, p5). Therefore, despite numerous democracy aid programmes and lofty pro-reform rhetoric, nowhere in the Arab world was democracy promotion, a decisive force in U.S. policy. At no time did an Arab regime's restriction of civil liberties or the arbitrary detention of leading human rights figures prompt the Clinton administration to undertake any punitive measures. In contrast, President Clinton punished rulers in Latin America, Asia and Africa with sanctions in response to similar violations of liberty. At no time in the 1990s was democracy elevated to the level of other key US interests, or more crucially integrated with them (Koh, 2001). However, post 9/11 democracy promotion in the Middle East, has received more interest than ever before from the US administration. A key reason for this has been the sequence linking authoritarianism to terrorism (Gause, 2005). The sequence



follows the line that authoritarianism leads to political exclusion, which leads to angry young men joining terrorist organisations. As a result, by promoting democracy, it is argued that this sequence will be broken by allowing young men a greater say in how state and society functions (Gause, 2005). Thus, to combat terrorism and to heighten national security the US shifted democracy promotion from a low policy to a high policy priority. President Bush made this policy of democracy promotion clear, in a series of keynote speeches. In developing a case for removing Saddam Hussein from power, Bush stated: ‘The world has an interest in the spread of democratic values. A new regime in Iraq would, serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region’ (New York Times, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003). In a speech given by President Bush (09/05/2003), at the University of South Carolina, he outlined US commitment to democracy promotion in the Middle East,

‘We support the advance of freedom in the Middle East, because it is our founding principle...the hateful ideology of terrorism is shaped by oppressive regimes...free nations, in contrast, encourage creativity, tolerance, and enterprise....over time, the expansion of liberty throughout the world is the best guarantee of security throughout the world’ ([www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2003/05/20030509-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2003/05/20030509-11.html)).

President Bush once again presented this US commitment to democracy promotion, in his speech at the National Endowment for Democracy (06/11/2003). Bush in his speech stated,

‘Peoples of the Middle East, share a high civilisation, a religion of personal responsibility and a need for freedom as deep as our own. It is not realism to suppose that one-fifth of humanity is unsuited to liberty, it is pessimism and condescension and we should have none of it’ (National Endowment for Democracy, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003).

This US commitment to democracy promotion was given more drive when President Bush in his speech at the Royal Banquet House (19/11/2003), criticised previous US governments for not promoting democracy in the region;

‘Willing to make a bargain, to tolerate oppression for the sake of stability. long standing ties often led us to overlook local elites. Yet this bargain did not bring stability or make us safe. It merely bought time, while problems festered and ideologies of violence took hold’ (Royal Banquet House, London, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

President Bush’s agenda to promote democracy was backed by senior US officials. Dick Cheney stated, ‘Our forward strategy for freedom commits us to support those who work and sacrifice for reform across the greater Middle East. We call upon our democratic friends and allies everywhere and in Europe in particular, to join us in this effort’ (World Economic Forum, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004). Also, Colin Powell stated ‘Dictators and despots can build walls high enough to keep out armies, but not high enough to keep those winds from blowing in’ (Dawn, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003). Michael Ledeen, a neoconservative scholar close to President Bush, wrote in the Wall Street Journal ‘We should...be talking about using all our political, moral and military genius to support a vast democratic revolution to liberate all the people of the Middle East from tyranny,’ (Wall Street Journal, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004).

In his Second Inaugural Address on January 20, 2005, President Bush confirmed the notion that the "forward strategy of freedom" - democracy promotion - and American security are closely interrelated: "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands." (The Guardian, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005). Also the National Security Strategy of 2006 puts the spread of democracy abroad at the center of American security policy: "In the world today, the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them. The goal of our

statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the American people." (National Security Strategy, 2006, p1).

Therefore, a revision in US foreign policy is clear, directed towards democracy promotion in the Middle East. This revision in foreign policy, kick started a debate in the US foreign policy community on the extent to which democracy promotion should play a role in US foreign policy towards the Middle East (Neep, 2004). The classical realists in the US foreign policy community, who dismiss the internal situation of other countries as irrelevant to foreign policy, were critical of President Bush's democratic agenda (Speck, 2006). They argued that President Bush's democratic agenda resembled the idealism of the Clinton administration. To promote democracy in the Middle East would mean to destabilize these countries and therefore put American national interests at risk, such as energy security (Speck, 2006).

The fact that recent elections in Iraq, Egypt, and the Palestinian Territories saw the rise of Islamist parties reinforced the argument of the classical realists that autocratic regimes, such as those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia might be bad, but the popular forces in these countries are much worse for American interests (See, BBC News, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2006; The Guardian, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006; The Washington Post, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005; The Guardian, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Thus, a democratic transformation of the region bears such high risks that it is much more prudent to maintain the status quo - the lesser evil (Guazzone, 1995). This view of the classical realists was further strengthened by a report released by the National Security Council on the 13<sup>th</sup> of



January 2004, which predicted that by 2020 a 'global caliphate' would have been established in the Middle East (CIA, 2004).

The leftist critics, who have long been very critical of American foreign policy in the Middle East, charged the policy of democracy promotion being a new cover for the old US policy that was still interest-driven. Thus, behind the liberal rhetoric, lurked the old hypocrisy of American imperialism. The Bush administration's reluctance to press Saudi Arabia, its close ally and third-largest oil supplier, towards democratic reform seemed to make it all too clear that the US government was far from giving up its double standard. Other critics challenged the diagnosis that was at the center of the policy of democracy promotion (Speck, 2006). It came up after Islamist attacks on the European soil. These attacks, especially the London bombings in July 2005, seemed to give clear evidence that the breeding ground for terrorism is not necessarily the Middle East, but Europe itself with its large Muslim minorities, which it was argued had failed to integrate. Therefore, it is apparent that US policy of democracy promotion came under much scrutiny and criticism in the US. However, the biggest wound for the Bush administrations democratic agenda has been the Iraq war.

As no huge quantities of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were found in Iraq, making Iraq the beacon of democracy in the Middle East became a major argument for the war. This association with Iraq damaged the US democracy doctrine in two ways. First, it made Iraq the test case for American democracy promotion. The security failure in Iraq reinforced the view that outside forces cannot promote democracy, and that to put democracy on the top of U.S. foreign policy agenda is a dangerous thing. Second, the association with Iraq made the democracy agenda vulnerable to the charge that democracy promotion was only a code word for regime

change by military force - for war. Thus, the association of the Iraq war with democracy promotion has become one of a key obstacle for the US democratic agenda in the Middle East (Speck, 2006). It has diminished the support for American democracy initiatives at home and abroad, and it has made it easy to dismiss American democracy promotion for those who are hostile to it. To argue that the US could play a positive role in the promotion of democracy in the Middle East and North Africa has become much harder, given the ongoing security crisis in Iraq.

## **2.6 Arab Criticisms of US Foreign Policy Post 9/11**

The Bush administrations, democratic programme not only led to criticism in the US foreign policy circles, but led to criticism in the Arab world. All political quarters, from the right to the left, including the Islamists in the region were critical and showed defiance to the US democratic agenda in the region (Ottaway, 2003). A statement by Condoleezza Rice, provoked anger and a quick response from the Arab press which expressed discontent with the sudden concern of the US for the political situation in the Middle East. Condoleezza Rice declared that the United States was committed not only to the removal of Saddam Hussein but also to ‘the democratisation or the march of freedom in the Muslim world’ (Financial Times, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002). The Jordanian daily *Al-Dustour* replied that there are, ‘more than one and a half billion Muslims who suffer from American greed and oppression and from its cruel and visible war against Islam and Muslims’. The London based *Al-Hayat* lashed out against ‘Ayatollah Condoleezza and the Export of Democracy’ (The Middle East Media and Research Institute, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002). This statement by Condoleezza Rice, led Arab analysts to conclude that the US planned to remove what

it classed as “rogue states” in the Middle East, in order to enforce its vision of democracy on the region.

As a result, the promotion of democracy in the region by the US has become synonymous with imperial designs and ambitions in the region by various commentators. Husayn Abd-al-Wahid from the Egyptian newspaper *Akhbar al-Yawm* declared ‘within this framework, the only logical explanation for the so-called US programme for bolstering democracy in the Middle East is that it is merely a means of pressuring Arab and Islamic governments and regimes to become more co-operative with US policies on Palestine, Iraq and Sudan, Afghanistan and other areas where Washington is committing gross mistakes that worry everybody’ (*Akhbar al-Yawm*, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002). Islamic leaders within the Middle East have continuously used the imperial card to resist the US democracy initiative in the region. The Islamists are adamant on the point that the US would never permit the holding of truly free and fair elections because of the possibility of political parties coming to power that are adverse to US interests in the region. Azzam Huneidi, head of the MB political front, the IAF in Jordan stated,

‘America is calling for reform. But would America be happy with the results of free and clean elections? No, they would not be happy. They want the results they want. A recent public opinion survey in Jordan indicated that 99% of the people hate America. If there were truly free elections, the results would be a parliament that hated America. What the US wants is democracy according to American standards’ (Wickham, 2004, p 3).

Raheil Gharaybeh also a member of the IAF stated, ‘This is what the Arab people think. Real democracy will hurt American interests. Any real reforms will work against Israel and America’ (Wickham, 2004, p4). Muhammad Mahdi Akhef, the supreme guide of the MB in Egypt declared ‘The Muslim Brotherhood rejects all



shapes of foreign hegemony, and denounces foreign interference into the affairs of Egypt or any other Arab or Islamic country' (Islam Online, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004).

The Bush administrations lack of US credibility in the region has not helped in its democratic programme. The US is viewed to be championing the ideals of democracy and freedom but at the same time supporting the policies of the Israeli State, which occupies Palestinian Territories. 'This superpower, which protects and sponsors Sharon's mass killings and systematic destruction of Palestinian life, cannot emerge as an 'angel' in Lebanon, calling for virtuous work and looking after the seeds of democracy', argues Talal Salam a writer from Lebanon (*Al Safir*, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002). Fahd Fanek from the Jordan Times argued on the same lines when he stated '[A]nd what does Bush have to say about the so called Israeli democracy, which has produced the worst kind of far right extremist government...' (Jordanian Times, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002). A further dent in the Bush administrations credibility has been the small budget, which it has set aside for its policy of democracy promotion in the region. 'The US has set aside no more than \$30 million to support freedom and support democracy in the Arab region' commented the Al Quds al- Arabi newspaper (Middle East Mirror, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002). A writer in Qatar added 'Allocating \$29 million is not even enough to launch an advertising campaign in the United States for a local domestic product' (Middle East Mirror, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002). This small allocation of funds was seen by the Arab press as a clear indicator that the Bush administration had no real interest in promoting democracy in the Middle East.

Thus, it is clear that the US democratic programme has faced intense criticism in the Middle East. The US to win internal support for its programme needs to take a number of steps. For example, the US needs to remove double standards in its foreign

policy, develop a more balanced position in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and consult with internal political actors, both secular and Islamists in the context of democracy promotion. These basic steps are important for the US to win support in the region for its programme. However, it appears that US policy (i.e. US silence on human right abuses, and the war on terror), so far is not helping in its aim to promote democracy in the region (Bayet, 2003). There needs to be a revision in US behaviour for it to be able to win support to promote its democratic programme.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the process of economic and political change in the Middle East, taking into consideration the impact of any process of political change on state powers and its structures. In particular I explored the role of Islamist parties and the challenge, which they directed towards state powers and its structures. This challenge was facilitated by the presence of Islamists inside the system and their presence outside the system, through their existence in and engagement with civil society via involvement in trade unions, professional syndicates, student unions and teaching clubs which allowed Islamists, to position themselves in a strong position in order to launch a challenge to contest state power in the Middle East. This challenge has continued post 9/11, with Islamists becoming more central to politics in the region. This examination of Islamists provided a basis from which to look at the role of external actors in the process of political change. I examined US foreign policy post 9/11, to deduce the extent to which it has been inclusive of democracy promotion in the Middle East. This allowed a realisation into the prospect of political reform in the region in the context of the on going war on terror. This chapter has set the framework

in order to examine the process of economic and political change in Egypt, which proceeds in the following chapters.



## **Chapter 3- Economic and Political Reform in Egypt: Post 1991**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the process of economic and political reform in Egypt after 1991. I do this to examine the questions identified in chapter 1 to allow an understanding into the process of economic and political change in Egypt. In particular if the process of economic and political change had any substantial impact on the power and structure of the Egyptian state. I first provide an understanding into the economic situation in Egypt and the factors, which led to economic reform by the Egyptian government in 1991. This will provide a backdrop to exploring the process of economic and political change in Egypt.

### **3.2 Background: Economic Crisis to Economic Reform**

Egyptian modern history shows a cyclical transition of growth patterns post independence; in addition to several radical economic and political transformations (Al Sayid, 2003). Starting with the 1952 military *coup d'etat*, the new system overhauled the pre 1952 economy impacting the entire society. Adopting a planned economy approach, Egyptian officers established a public sector, extensive nationalisation, and a widespread process of income redistribution accompanied by a series of important social policies (Waterbury 1983; Woodward, 1992). The early stages following the 1952 revolution were characterised by challenges to Nasser's rule, which affected the levels of economic growth (Stephens, 1973; Ayubi, 1995). First, from 1952-1954, there was a challenge to Nasser from the political opposition, in particular from the MB (Al Ahram, June 27<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2002; Hopwood, 1993). Second, Nasser also faced challenges from inside the Free Officers. As a result, once

Nasser was able to deal with internal and external challenges. Egypt improved economically from the mid 1950s to the mid 1960s. From 1967 until approximately 1973 Egypt fell into economic crisis which was worsened by the heavy involvement of the Egyptian army in Northern Yemen between 1962-1967 and the heavy military loss in the 1967 six day war against Israel (O'Brien, 2002; Aboul Enien, January/February 2004; Dresch, 2000).

The 1973 conflict with Israel was a turning point for Egypt. The success in the war raised the legitimacy of Sadat, thus allowing him to step out of the shadow of Nasser. As a result Sadat introduced the '*Infitah*', a process of economic liberalisation, which led Egypt to undergo a change in its economic model- transition from a state led to a market economy. This transition would have severe socio-economic implications for Egypt (Aoude, 1994; Beattie, 2000; Sullivan, 1990; Ayubi, 1991, 1988). According to the WB, 'malnutrition increased between 1978 and 1986, particularly among school children', (World Bank 1991, p66). The poor of Egypt – often illiterate, with minimal job skills, and residing disproportionately in Upper Egypt – depended on education and health services, which the state had offered, but this changed with the '*Infitah*', as the state began to reduce its economic role (El- Laithy 1997, p147; see also Harik 1997, p21). The economic liberalisation of the '*Infitah*' widened the gap between the rich and the poor. 'While the lowest 20 per cent of the population held 6.6 per cent of national income in 1960 and had improved their share to 7.0 per cent in 1965, they dropped to 5.1 per cent by the late 1970s. By comparison, the income of the highest 5 per cent clipped slightly to 17.4 percent from 17.5 per cent between 1960 and 1965 but increased markedly to 22 per cent after several years of Sadat's policies' (McDermott 1988, p82). Thus, it appears that the *etatist* policies under Nasser

actually narrowed the gap between the rich and the poor, but the *Intifah* destroyed this advance.

Furthermore, the Egyptian economy began to weaken at the macroeconomic level. Egypt's total external debt in 1977 was over US\$ 5.7 billion, 42 percent of its Gross National Product (World Bank, 2000). In addition Egypt suffered weak economic growth, and a severe budget deficit of over US\$ 2.0 billion. Suffering from this micro and macro economic crisis, the Egyptian government began its first discussion with the IMF in 1976. The 1976 discussion between the Egyptian government and the IMF led to a US\$ 450 million loan, contingent upon Egypt's willingness to implement currency reforms and reduce government spending (Rivlin 1985, p179). As a result of these negotiations, Egyptian policymakers decided to reduce expenditures by cutting subsidies. However, when the government cut bread subsidies, the results were disastrous: the 1977 bread riots (Ahmed et al, 2001). These riots ultimately posed a major danger to Egypt's social and political stability (IMF, 1996; IMF, 2001). However, as Egypt's domestic problems worsened, the Egyptian government tried to solve them with short- and long-term loans. The Egyptian government found itself in November 1977 in negotiation for a US\$ 600 million loan from the IMF over a three-year period, instead of US\$ 450 million. The IMF allowed Egypt to withdraw only US\$ 105 million in 1977 because it was worried that excessive borrowing would lead Egypt to exceed its ability to repay. However, the United States was worried that a lack of available funds would lead Egypt into further domestic insecurity. Consequently, it pushed the IMF to allow Egypt to borrow more (Rivlin 1985, pp179-180).



However, the IMF's conditions in return for Egyptian borrowing ignored the socio-economic fallout from tightening fiscal and monetary policy. For the Egyptian government this socio-economic fallout was impossible to ignore. Therefore the Egyptian government's main objective was to compromise between external pressure and internal stability. As result, the Egyptian government continued to deal with the IMF and WB, seeking new loans and abiding by conditions but at the same time being aware of the socio-economic fallout and its impact on political stability (Harik 1997. p105; Clark 2000, p161).

### **3.3 The Egyptian Economy from 1980s to 1991**

At the core of Egypt's macroeconomic crisis in the 1980s were three main macro economic imbalances. There was 1) a gap between domestic savings and investment 2) imports exceeded exports 3) government spending exceeded sources of revenue. A number of factors contributed to these macroeconomic imbalances. First, the collapse of oil revenues and mounting losses of public sector companies undermined public savings (Richards, 1991, 2001; Richards and Waterbury, 1990, 1996; Handoussa and Potter, 1991). Second, private savings were limited as a result of uncertainty by private wealth holders as to the future direction and credibility of economic policy, resulting in capital flight from Egypt. Third, investment flowed into infrastructure rather than into traded goods productions and investment was inefficient, not leading to the creation of jobs to absorb the vast number of unemployed within Egyptian society (Richards and Waterbury, 1990; Handoussa and Potter, 1991).

Also at the macroeconomic level, because of excessive borrowing under Sadat and Mubarak Egypt's foreign debt became a nagging problem. It climbed from approximately US\$ 2 billion in 1970 to some US\$ 21 billion in 1980. This huge rise

was a direct result of state borrowing in order to plug the saving-investment gap within the economy. In 1988 total external debt was expected to reach US\$ 46 billion or about double the amount in 1980. As a result civilian debt came close to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1987 and was forecast to surpass it in 1988 (Richards, 1991, 2001). Most of Egypt's debt was owed to other governments or guaranteed by them, especially when military debt was taken into account. For example, in 1987 debt to private creditors was about 21 per cent of the civilian total and debt to multilateral organisations was about 17 per cent of the civilian total. Prior to the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the largest creditors were Arab countries. Since 1979 OECD members replaced Arabs. In 1987 Egypt owed US\$ 10.1 billion to the US (Richards, 1991, 2001). Of this about US\$ 4.6 billion or about 23 per cent of Egypt's combined debt was military debt. In Egypt itself, the largest debtor was the government and the public sector. For example, public debt not accounting military component made up about 78 per cent of the total; the rest was born by private enterprises. As new foreign lending dried up in the latter part of the 1980s, the deficit began to be financed by monetary expansion. Inflation as a result of an increase in the money supply rose, affecting living standards within Egypt. From 1976 to 1986, the consumer price index rose from 164.2 to 708.8 in urban areas and from 187.8 to 795.8 in rural areas (Oweiss, 1990). Over the same period, the national inflation rate itself generally increased, growing from 10.30 per cent in 1976 to 23.9 per cent in 1986 (World Guide, 2001/2002).

Egypt's economy began the 1990s with chronic macro and micro problems, including a growing fiscal deficit, escalating inflation rate, worsening balance of payment deficits and declining international reserves. For example, real GDP growth decreased from 3.9 per cent in fiscal year 1987/1988 to 2.3 per cent in 1990/1991; the Egyptian

pound was devalued from 1.761 to 3.009 per US dollar (Abdel Khalek 1992 and 1993; Kienle, Spring, 1998). At the micro level the quality of governmental services, such as in health, transportation and education had dropped, which directly impacted upon the state as the provision of such services underpinned the legitimacy of the post colonial Egyptian state.

The Gulf war in 1991 did not help Egypt's suffering economy. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the subsequent war (February, 1991) vastly reduced Egypt's economic resources. The war also forced the return of 700,000 workers from the Gulf countries and a severe decline in tourism. Adding to these problems, the heavy service of Egypt's debt, which totalled US\$ 46 billion, became an imminent threat to the economy (The Economist October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997; see also World Bank, 2000). In response to the growing economic problems, the Egyptian government turned to the IMF; like it had done in 1976, 1978 and 1987. The Egyptian government adopted a conventional stabilisation and structural adjustment package, endorsed by the IMF in exchange for massive debt relief (Bush, 1999 and 2004; Licari, 1997). Such a bargain was attractive to the Egyptian regime economically and politically. Economically the reduction of up to US\$ 20 billion of debt reduced annual interest payments by US\$ 12 billion for the next 10 years. Politically the deal was easier to sell domestically since the Egyptian government could argue that debt relief would help the ailing Egyptian economy greatly and that international creditors acknowledged part responsibility for past mistakes. Another incentive was that the IMF was ready to accept a somewhat more gradual approach to implementation of economic reform due to Egypt's key role in regional geo-politics (Shafiq, 1998).



The underpinning structure of the Egyptian economy in the 1980s and early 1990s was fragile. The adoption of economic reform in 1991 by the Egyptian government was a direct result of the ailing fortunes of the Egyptian economy. The adoption of economic reform was as a new dawn for the Egyptian state, making it important to acquire an understanding of the nature of the economic reform programme - in particular its rationale, objectives and impact. This will then allow a platform from which to explore the process of economic and political change in Egypt.

### **3.4 Economic reform 1991**

#### **3.4.1 The Economic Agreement – Objectives and Rationale**

Egypt has undertaken many agreements with the IMF to alleviate its economic problems (IMF, 2001). Egypt signed three stand-by agreements with the IMF, in 1976, 1978 and 1987, which followed the same line of policy recommendations as would be outlined in the 1991 agreement. All three agreements were discontinued for social, political and economic reasons (The Economist, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997). The development of inherent economic problems in Egypt, such as a huge debt, which reached US\$ 50 billion in June 1990, resulted in the opening of a new set of negotiations with the IMF (Abdel-Khalek, 1992; Lofgren, 1993). A stand-by agreement was concluded with the IMF in May 1991 and the implementation of the stabilisation programme started even earlier on January 1<sup>st</sup> in the same year (Korayem, 1997). Economic stabilisation to improve macroeconomic indicators was central to the programme. The restoration of internal and external balances would be achieved by the application of demand management policies, which included expenditure reduction and expenditure switching, using mainly monetary and fiscal policies. From the view of the IMF, macroeconomic stabilisation is urgently needed, particularly in

heavily indebted countries in order to achieve long-term growth. This process included the use of monetary and fiscal policies. Abdel Khalek explains this:

‘The fiscal adjustment lies at the heart of the stabilisation package and involves trimming off the fiscal deficit, both the overall and bank financed part. The target is to bring down the ratio of the overall budget deficit to GDP from an estimated high of 22 per cent for 1990/91 to a mere 1.5 per cent by 1995/96. It stipulates a slight reduction in the ratio of public expenditure to GDP and a substantial hike in the share of public revenue. But it is interesting to note that in relative terms, central government non tax revenue will provide most of the targeted adjustment; namely through price increases particularly in energy prices. The increase in tax revenue is mainly through greater reliance on indirect taxation’ (Abdel-Khalek, 1992, pp44-45)

The macroeconomic objectives were outlined by the economic reform programme, which the Egyptian state aimed to fulfil under the auspices of the IMF. The macroeconomic objectives of the programme were to reduce inflation gradually so as to reach 5 per cent by 1994/1995. The investment ratio was expected to rise from 19.5 per cent of GDP in 1990/91 to 24.6 per cent in 1995/1996 with an emphasis on the private sector. Public investment outlays were to fall from about 15 per cent of GDP in 1990/91 to less than 8.5 per cent in 1996/97. The saving rate was targeted to rise from an average of 9.4 per cent of GDP in 1990/1991 to 16.9 per cent in 1995/1996 (El Gafarawi, 1999). As a result of the economic reform programme real output growth was expected to gradually recover, reaching three per cent or more by 1994/1995. The second component of the reform programme was the process of structural adjustment, which included a set of economic changes and regulations in order to promote a fundamental change in the ownership structure of the Egyptian economy. It contained three main policy areas: price liberalisation, trade liberalisation and investment reform (El Gafarawi, 1999). Investment reform included public sector restructuring, privatisation and improving the investment environment for private activities.

The economic reform programme was planned to be implemented through various phases under the auspice of the IMF and the WB (Seddon, 1990). By the mid 1990s two phases of the reform programme had been completed, whilst a third was in progress. The first signing with the IMF was that of May 1991 under the stand by agreement for 18 months but this had to be extended to March 1993 with a US\$ 278 million SDR. The second was the Extended Fund Facility arrangement, in September 1993. The signing of the first stand by agreement with the IMF was shortly followed by a structural adjustment loan with the WB in June 1993. The WB also supported the second phase and the reform programme was also backed by other foreign creditors, such as the African Development Bank (Korayem, 1997). In the case of Egypt the use of cross conditionality was clear and the IMF put stricter conditionality on Egypt so that implementation of the agreement would proceed according to the plan. Both the IMF and the WB divided the disbursement of their credit into two tranches and related the release of each with the fulfilment of reform measures. Before each disbursement IMF or WB officials would visit Egypt to review with the Egyptian government the previous phase and to set the performance criteria for the following phase. The IMF and the WB to ensure performance criteria were met by Egypt conducted extensive monitoring.

The second tranche, which was due in November 1992, was not released until May 1993. The delay in releasing the tranche was as a result of the IMF's perception that the pace of reform was too slow and that some of the objectives that had been set could not be achieved within the scheduled time. There was dissatisfaction with the progress of the privatisation programme and the Egyptian government tried to correct this by announcing its first major privatisation programme in February 1993 (Korayem, 1997). The signing of the agreement, the nature of the agreement and the



actors involved can be deduced from the above but the impacts of economic reform are important to explore. It is the impacts of economic reform, which would have a key bearing on the process of political reform and the subsequent Egyptian government's political strategy, which one would witness during the 1990s.

### **3.4.2 Macroeconomic and Structural Impact of Economic Reform**

The Egyptian government took new steps toward achieving long-term macroeconomic stabilisation and strengthening the financial sector. The results were to unify exchange rates, raise interest rates, bring energy prices up to world levels over five years, raise taxes, eliminate most consumer subsidies over five years, pursue privatisation and to reduce the budget deficit (Clark, 2000). It is assumed in general that the Egyptian government managed to reduce the deficit in the state budget. Government investment as a percentage of GDP was reduced from 13.45 per cent in 1990/91 to only 5.5 per cent in 1995/1996 and the subsidy outlay as a percentage of GDP was reduced from 5.9 per cent to 1.9 per cent during the same period. Measures to increase revenues focused mainly on the increase in the level of taxation, which resulted in the imposition of a new sales tax instead of the consumption tax and a stamp tax in addition to a unified income tax. The reform programme reduced the level of inflation. The official figures indicate reduction from 21.1 per cent in 1991/1992 to 7.2 per cent in 1995/1996.

In regard to the exchange rate, the former multiple exchange rate system was replaced by a single rate, market orientated system with a managed floating of the Egyptian pound for all public and private transactions (Kamar and Bakardzhieva, 2003). Although the Egyptian pound depreciated during 1991, the exchange rate stabilised in the range between L.E 3.35-3.45 to US\$ 1 from the third quarter of 1991 until the

fourth quarter of 1998. The foreign reserves increased significantly from only US\$ 3.6 billion in 1990/1991 to US\$ 21.1 billion in 1997/1998, which meant an increase of more than 500 per cent was achieved. The real GDP growth rate declined sharply in the first two years of the economic reform programme period to 1.9 per cent from 2.5 per cent. However since 1993, the real GDP growth rate grew steadily reaching 5.7 per cent in 1997/1998 (El Mahdi, 1997).

The IMF itself praised the Egyptian government for its achievements in macroeconomic stabilisation (IMF, 1996). According to an IMF press release in 1996, Egypt improved public finances and made major advances in decentralizing its economy;

‘Real GDP growth accelerated to over 4 per cent in 1995/96 from virtual stagnation in 1991/92, while the rate of inflation declined to 7 per cent from over 21 per cent. The overall balance of payments remained in surplus, leading to a substantial accumulation of net international reserves. With limited external borrowing and further debt relief from the Paris Club, the ratio of external debt GDP fell to 47 per cent in mid 1996 from about 75 per cent in 1991/92, and the debt service ratio declined to about 11 per cent of current account receipts from 14 per cent in 1991/92’ (IMF, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1996, No 96/50).

To facilitate the process of structural adjustment of the Egyptian economy some important legislative measures were introduced in view of establishing a capital market in the country and removing price distortions in many sectors. In the agricultural sector Law 96 in 1992 was introduced, which ended fixed rents of cultivated land (Bush, 2002, 2004). Legislative measures aiming at providing the proper institutional framework for the new liberal economic policies were introduced. The most important of these legislative measures included the Law of the public sector (103 of 1991), which allowed privatisation of public sector companies, the Law

of capital market (92 of 1993), the Law of exchange (38 of 1994) and the law of lease financing (95 of 1995).

However, the structural adjustment phase of economic reform was criticised by the IMF. The IMF stated that Egypt failed to realise the level of economic reform that the IMF had expected (IMF, 1996). The IMF was in particular critical of the pace of privatisation. The pace of privatisation of the public sector slowed in the late 1990s. Despite, important steps taken by the Egyptian government in order to privatise small units in the state owned sector, the large industrial complexes, particularly in textiles, steel and capital good industries in general remained in government hands. Public enterprises continued to account for as much as 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Egypt's manufacturing sector, half of investment expenditure and about 15 per cent of total employment (IMF, 1996). Therefore it was evident, that the Egyptian state was unwilling to dissolve of its control over economic sectors, due to an economic and political logic. First, to the Egyptian state, the transfer of capital into private hands was viewed to weaken its economic power. Second, the shift of capital into private hands was perceived to weaken the state's co-optation ability, thus its political power. As a result of the importance of privatisation in understanding the subject of economic and political change, it is important to explore in more detail the privatisation experience in Egypt.

### **3.4.3 Privatisation of State Owned Enterprises and Reduction in the Public**

#### **Sector**

After 1991, the Egyptian government started an extensive programme for privatising SOEs. Economic reform since 1991 has aimed at starting an accelerated process for selling public sector companies. There are many reasons why the Egyptian state was



reforming and selling SOEs, including public deficits caused by the SOE sector; the severe problems, such as inflation and the obstruction of export growth (Waterbury, 1992, p183). Although the Egyptian government originally called this programme 'reform and privatisation' its main goal was to privatise, SOEs. The stated goal of this process was to reform many of these SOEs but the actual aim was to improve the financial situation of SOEs by decreasing and settling debts of SOEs to make them more attractive for private sector ownership. The Egyptian government adopted two main methods for privatising SOEs. The first focused on improving the management of SOEs by allowing the managers to act separately from their ministries. One of the main procedures in this regard is the 1991 SOE Law, which gave these enterprises more control over management, pricing, and the acquisition of funding. The only decisions still controlled by restrictive laws and regulations were those regarding employment and suspension (see, Waterbury 1992; Mohieldin and Nasr, 1996).

The second method went hand in hand with the selling process itself. It allowed the Egyptian government to offer most of the SOEs for sale according to a medium term schedule. This approach meant that these SOEs would move from the state's hands to the private sector. Therefore, the SOEs, which faced financial problems, were dealt with according to the first method and the more attractive ones were dealt with according to the second method. Despite these two methods outlined by the Egyptian government, the process of privatisation has not proceeded as quickly as the Egyptian government had planned (Martin, 2001). According to the United States Department of Commerce;

'In January 1997, the government announced its plan...to privatise 33 companies through anchor investor sales and 12 companies in Initial Public Offerings (IPOs). In the first five months of 1997, only six companies were privatised through Egypt's...LE 60.3 billion (\$17.8 billion) stock market. Only

one company was sold to an anchor investor in the same time period. At this rate, the government may not be able to meet its 1997 objectives for privatisation', (Galal and Tohamy 1994, p28; see also NTDB, 1997).

The noticeable point here is that the decision makers have not had a specific plan or strategy for privatization and economic reform. This has been particularly clear during the second batch of sales, which used three methods of selling (Mohieldin and Nasr, 1996, pp43-46). The first method was selling to an "anchor" investor who bought all of the company's shares. Under this method, the Egyptian government sold three companies: the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company, the El Nasr Coca Cola Bottling Company, and the El Nasr Steam Boilers Manufacturing Company. Although it sold these companies using this method, the Egyptian government prefers not to sell public companies to such anchor investors, as it wants to avoid creating monopolies (Mohieldin and Nasr, 1996, pp43-45).

To accelerate the process of privatisation, the cabinet privatisation committee headed by Prime Minister Atif Obeid, decided to privatise a number of profitable companies, including companies in tourism, maritime transport, cement, fertiliser and production in Tobacco. The general consensus is that stock in five star hotels and the Eastern Tobacco Company are the most attractive investments in the privatisation process (Al Ahram, December, 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2000). The Egyptian Maritime Transport Company was sold to Egyptian investors, and paved the way for the sale of the Alexandria Shipyard Company and the Egyptian Ship Repair Company (Al Ahram, December 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2000). After several years of a drive to speed up the process of privatisation, during which 180 firms with a value of £E 5.8 billion were sold, the pace of privatisation started to slow down once again. In 2001, only 13 transactions were made down from 23 in 2000 and 33 in 1999. This was mainly due to the fact that most of the well

performing companies had already been sold and the remainder were either heavily indebted, over staffed, using out dated machinery or in a need of radical restructuring. However, three major factors acted as key obstacles to the Egyptian state undergoing comprehensive privatisation of SOE's in the 1990s (Aoude, 1994). These obstacles were;

- 1) The capitalist bureaucratic sector wanted to maintain the public sector due to vested interests within this sector.
- 2) Private capital was reluctant to invest as a result of undeveloped legal infrastructures
- 3) Privatisation would heighten socio-economic problems that would inevitable spill over to the political arena. A large number of workers are employed in SOEs; any cutting of employment would lead to worker discontent. The selling of SOEs in Egypt has led to numerous riots and demonstrations. Reported strikes rose from 8 in 1990 to 26 in 1991, to 28 in 1992 and to 63 in 1993. In a major strike at *Kafr al Dawwar* in September 1994, three people were shot dead by the police and many others were subsequently injured. Developments of this kind were threatening to the political stability of the Egyptian government (Kienle, Spring, 1998).

These factors acted as obstacles to swift privatisation, thus structural adjustment in Egypt. The Egyptian state tried to find the right balance between macroeconomic stabilisation and structural adjustment to try to meet the pressures by the IFI's and internal economic demands. However, it was clear in the 1990s that the Egyptian state, despite its balancing act failed to meet internal economic demands, resulting in a



heightened socio-economic crisis. This crisis would have severe implications for the process of political change in Egypt.

#### **3.4.4 The Egyptian Socio-Economic Crisis in the 1990s**

The rate of unemployment rose throughout the 1980s. The unemployment rate was officially estimated in the 1986 population census to reach 10 per cent. The Labour Force Sample Survey (LFSS) estimated unemployment to be between 9 and 10 per cent. A correct estimation, which considered the phenomena of those who became discouraged from searching for work because of the high level of unemployment, raised the rate to 17 per cent. However, some studies put the level of unemployment to be higher at approximately 20 per cent (Fergany, 1998). According to the WB data, the unemployment rate of Egypt in 1994 was 17.4 per cent while more than 70 per cent of the unemployed belonged to the age group of less than 20 years old. It is rather a common experience from other countries that have applied economic reform that negative impacts on employment are frequent especially in the short term (Korayem, 1997). This was made even more severe in the case of Egypt as the Egyptian government abandoned its policy of guaranteeing state employment to fresh university graduates in 1986.

The contractive fiscal and monetary policies advocated by the economic reform, affected the socially weak by increasing their level of poverty. Through the abolition or reduction in the amount of subsidies on basic consumer commodities, the poor have had to pay substantial amount of more money on accessing vital basic food commodities. As the WB states, that as a percentage of the GDP, subsidy programmes dropped over 11 per cent, between 1982 and 1995 (World Bank, 1995). For example, 'the commodity coverage of food subsidies has been restricted to

popular bread, a limited quantity of edible oil and sugar' (Kheir El Din, 1996, p1). By 1995, government investment levels were reduced to one third of the level that occurred in the mid eighties (World Bank, 1996). For example, 'five basic commodities (sugar, rice, edible oil, tea and soap) were subsidized by £E1, 390 million in 1986/87. Ten million Egyptians held family coupons from the Ministry of Supply that entitled them to a fixed quota of these goods at subsidized prices' (Harik, 1997, p97).

This distributional system guaranteed to some extent, that these subsidized foods and commodities found their way to the most vulnerable people in Egypt. The central control of the state, represented by the Ministry of Supply secured these minimum staples for the poor. After the introduction of structural adjustment policies, 'the Ministry of Supply abolished the quota distribution system, except for ordinary and patent flour, which is consumed in the production of subsidized bread and edible oil and sugar, which were distributed through ration cards' (Nassar and Fawzy, July/October, 1993, p56). The level of education and health are two services that impact on human development. During the period of economic reform, funding for education and health was reduced considerably. In education one study estimated that government expenditure on education as a percentage of total expenditure fell from 16.7 per cent in 1970/1971 to 10 per cent in 1989/1990 (El Gafarawi, 1999). In relation to health, this sector also experienced the same bias in expenditure and deterioration in services and facilities. The percentage of expenditure on health to total expenditure declined from 4.8 per cent in 1970/1971 to 1.9 per cent, in 1989/1990.

The extent of poverty in Egypt had increased rapidly during the 1980s. The level of poverty continued to increase in the 1990s but at a slower rate up to the mid 1990s. The year 1996 showed that around 13.7 million Egyptians lived below the poverty line. The percentage of people living below the international poverty line of one US dollar remained very high, as more than 1/2 of the total population (52.7 per cent) fell in this category (Al Sayid, 2003). Egypt's poverty profile reveals that the poor are usually either occupied in marginal activities and low wage work or unemployed in urban and rural areas. Most of them are illiterate or of low educational level. Although there has been some progress, these improvements are not satisfactory, either because the pace of development is very slow or setbacks have emerged in some areas like the increase in malnourished children. Moreover, a large proportion of the rural population is still deprived of basic social services as result of the retraction of the state due to economic reform.

As a result, it is apparent that the Egyptian government failed to meet internal economic demands, with economic reform (i.e. macroeconomic stabilisation and structural adjustment) leading to heightened socio-economic crisis. The situation of the majority of Egyptians deteriorated rapidly during the period of economic reform in the 1990s. This rather uneven distributional impact resulted in the balance of power in society between rich and poor widening in scope, as the business class who championed the direction and extent of economic reform were able to benefit economically as a result of the limited privatisation and trade liberalisation which the Egyptian state underwent. Given the lack of socio-economic development, which resulted from economic reform and the inevitable heightened social dissent, what was required was a social safety net to deal with the socio-economic concerns and problems of the Egyptian people. The provision of basic needs such as access to



education and health had to be dealt with by the Egyptian government, with the market having excluded many. The idea of a social safety net came into the mind of the Egyptian government to deal with the heightened socio-economic crisis in Egypt. The key objective of a social safety net is to compensate the most vulnerable groups, particularly those that have been harmed by structural adjustment and the consequent shrinking of the subsidies system (Kheir el Din, 1996). The safety net became common with the idea of neo-liberal economic reforms in the 1980s to provide a 'human face' in the midst of social and economic crisis. Ghana was one of the first countries to put a 'human face' to structural adjustment. In 1987, on realizing the social costs that the structural adjustment programme was inflicting on the general populace, the Government of Ghana introduced the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Consequences of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) (ODI, July, 1996). Since then, a number of programmes and policies targeted at poverty reduction have been introduced; some with a limited mandate targeted at a specific vulnerable group (Sowa, 2002). The Egyptian government in order to provide a 'human face' established the Social Fund for Development (SFD) in 1991 to alleviate the harsh effects of economic reform policies on the poor, during the phases of macroeconomic stabilisation and structural adjustment. One of the mandates of the SFD when initially established was to support the Egyptian government's economic reform and structural adjustment programme and to work as a:

'Social safety nets to protect those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of the reform programme. Measures were to be developed to assist unemployed and displaced workers, all within the government's fiscal targets- either through the commitment of new funds, or through the reallocation of existing subsidies or transfer funds. The adverse effects of economic restructuring on workers were to be minimised through this social safety net' (Social Fund for Development, 1999, p12)

The Egyptian government promised \$1.1 billion to the SFD, but it failed to meet such a commitment, consequently the SFD did not have the financial resources to deal with the ensuing socio-economic crisis in Egypt. To compensate for this obvious short coming the Egyptian government turned to the NGO's and began to highlight the role of NGOs' in providing, socio-economic services, at a time of economic reform. The NGO's entered the limelight, thus making it important to explore this sector in the context of the process of economic and political change in Egypt. In particular, the impacts, if any of the process of economic reform, on NGO-state relations, therefore subsequently the process of political change in Egypt.

### **3.5 Economic Retraction- The Egyptian State and the Rise of Egyptian NGOs**

The rise of NGOs as economic service providers in Egypt in the 1990s can be traced to the market policies advocated by the IMF and WB. Both actors were instrumental in promoting the process of economic liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation in Egypt (Clark, 2000). These processes in due course meant the economic retraction of the Egyptian state in providing socio-economic services. This social contract (i.e. the provision of socio-economic services) has been slowly eroded under the successive regimes of Sadat and Mubarak, although it is fair to make the point that the erosion escalated under Mubarak due to the implementation of economic reform in 1991 (Bayat, 2003; Gutner, 1999). Thus the provision of socio-economic services in Egypt in the 1990s fell into the context of NGOs (Chiriboga, 2002; Michael, 2002).

The ability of NGOs to act as a good social safety net in Egypt varied from time to time and place to place- no generalisation can be made of their performance. In fact, the ability of NGOs to replace the Egyptian state as it withdrew from economic activity involved two interrelated factors (Clark, 2000). The first was the service

capacity and sustainability of the NGOs. The second was political, depending on whether NGOs, as service providers were given the political space in which to emerge, work and operate. Each of these factors need to be discussed, as they will allow an understanding into the impact of economic reform on NGO-state relations and the process of political change in Egypt.

First, in the face of the rising socio-economic problems in Egypt, NGOs did not, have either the service capacity, or the sustainability to address the needs of the increasing number of poor in society (Clark, 2000). Egyptian NGOs on many occasions did not have the financial means and personnel to intervene in order to provide much needed socio-economic services. Second, the work of the NGO sector in Egypt was obstructed by the fact that the Egyptian government did not retract politically. This meant that the NGOs, as service providers were not given the political space in which to move, operate and function. This is because; the Egyptian state post 1952 had become accustomed to comprehensive control and power, through, the introduction of restrictive laws and legislation, in particular corporatist structures and relationships. Corporatism reached its peak under Nasser, within the context of his larger programme of socialism and nationalisation (Pratt, 2004; Abdel Rahman, 2004). Nasser restructured group activity in each occupational group into new corporatist groups producing a political system under state control. Sadat and Mubarak reshaped the corporatist structures they inherited into more reliable instruments of control and co-optation. Therefore, the process of corporatism has been a source of control and inevitable power, preventing the existence of actors beyond the control of the state, in case they developed power to challenge the hegemony of the Egyptian state. Therefore, in this context of survival, power and hegemony, the Egyptian state post 1952, has checked and monitored the performance and behaviour of NGOs through



restrictive legislation and corporatism, in case they evolved into a force capable of challenging the economic policy and decision making process of the state (El Said, Interview, 2004; El Fattah, Interview, 2004). The need to have consensus is the first part of a state continuing with its hegemony. The capacity of NGOs to challenge this consensus, in particular economic policy resulted in the Egyptian state keeping a close eye on NGOs since 1952.

In Egypt, NGO-state relations and the process of political change at a time of economic reform in the 1990s needs to be viewed through the prism of corporatism, which has been exercised through Law 32 of 1964 (Clark, 2000). The existence of Law 32 had for decades restricted the NGO sector in Egypt and NGOs in Egypt had been calling for a long time for the Egyptian government to change Law 32. This law allowed state monopoly over NGOs. Law 32 required citizens wishing to form voluntary organisations of any type to obtain permission from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). This permission was often denied on vague grounds, including determinations that the NGO was not needed or was redundant. Once approved NGOs had to inform the Ministry of all activities notifying three government offices of the agenda and location of meetings. The law also closely regulated fundraising, allowing only membership dues and offerings given during religious services to be collected without MOSA permission. Permits for any other type of fundraising were frequently denied or significantly delayed, including permission for the receipt of foreign funding so central to NGOs (Posusney, 2005; Langhor, 2005). Unless changes were made the state would inevitable still continue to control the establishment, expansion, functioning and administration of NGOs. As a result this affected the ability of NGOs to provide services, and challenge the economic consensus surrounding economic policy, which the state was constructing.

In reaction to growing pressure at a time of socio-economic crisis and the inability of NGOs as service providers to act effectively. In May 1999, the government enacted Law 153, with the intention that it would replace the restrictive Law 32 of 1964. This change was driven by two key factors. The first factor was international donor discourse on the importance of NGOs to provide much needed socio-economic services at the time of economic reform. The second factor was that the Egyptian government hoped that this change would bring recognition to its intentions toward the process of political reform at a time of socio-economic crisis (Langhor, 2005). However, like the previous restrictive legislation the Law continued to restrict NGOs, which provided services and also criminalised the political work by advocacy NGOs. The restrictions imposed and the government's continuous interference in NGO funding resulted in Egypt's Constitutional Court abolishing Law 153, in June 2000. Law 153 was declared unconstitutional, primarily on the technical grounds that the necessary bodies prior to passage had not approved it. In response to the striking down of this Law and the obvious embarrassment to the Egyptian government, the People's Assembly passed Law 84 of 2002, the new NGO Law (Al Ahram, June, 6-12<sup>th</sup>, 2002; Al Ahram, November, 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2002). The Law was initiated in reaction to the repeal of the previous Law and like previous ones the political restrictions remained on NGOs. As a result, of this law access to foreign funding was further restricted. In previous laws NGOs had been allowed to accept money from foreign agencies already in the country without prior MOSA permission but now with the advent of this law all such funding required permission. The new law continued its predecessors insistence that MOSA, not the courts had the right to dissolve NGOs and it allowed the ministry to freeze the funds of NGOs that joined non-governmental association networks- including international networks, without MOSA permission.

Therefore, despite these changes in the Law regulating NGOs, the corporatist structure between NGOs and the state remained in tact, with the state continuing to regulate closely the work of NGOs and subsequently acting as an obstacle to the process of political change. However, restrictive laws and the process of corporatism have not been the only means through which NGOs have been controlled in Egypt (BBC News, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000; Abdel Rahman, 2002). Furthermore, ministers and bureaucrats have not been willing to relinquish power and its associated perks. In addition, despite the process of economic reform, Egypt's political elite remains fully intact, this has blocked any substantial progress towards the process of political reform. As a consequence avenues to greater political participation and policy advising have not opened up for NGOs. The process of economic reform leading to socio-economic crisis provided the opportunity for new actors (i.e. economic NGOs) to enter the social domain to deal with the failings of the state. However the NGO sector was looked upon suspiciously by the Egyptian state in case it disturbed the economic consensus of the state by challenging its economic policies and strategies. As a result the Egyptian state accepted the existence of the NGO sector but in an autocratic framework and context. This can be seen from the fact that the Egyptian government has continued to apply restrictive laws and continues with its corporatist structure, which remains firmly in place, preventing the NGOs from becoming independent from state control.

It is clear the political space for NGOs to provide services whilst economic reforms were on going in the 1990s was something of a misnomer in the context of Egypt. This lack of a defined space for NGO's has been an area of concern in Egypt. According to Mohammed El-Said Said, a human right activist and deputy director of the Al-Ahram centre for Political and Strategic Studies, the line between the Egyptian



government and NGOs is fuzzy at best. According to Said, there is no real civil space in which NGOs independent from the state can thrive in Egypt. He added that, civil institutions and organisations that enjoy full political and economic autonomy do not exist in Egypt, a problem which he attributed to the 'modernity trap' (Al Ahram, November 8-14<sup>th</sup>, 2001). As a result, of this lack of defined political space, modern civil organisations and associations such as political parties, trade unions and NGOs failed to check and balance the economic and political power of the Egyptian state. Nabil Abdel-Fattah, a researcher at the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, also believes that the official policy of the Egyptian state is tilted towards policing NGOs rather than promoting them (Al Ahram, November 8-14<sup>th</sup>, 2001). This has been a major obstacle to the process of political change in Egypt, with the Egyptian government increasing its policing of NGOs at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis when it felt most vulnerable to challenges, in particular criticism towards its economic reform strategy.

This fear of challenges to its economic policies led the Egyptian state to go beyond merely policing NGOs to begin exerting excessive political control over the whole of society, reversing the limited political openings witnessed during the 1980s. This process of rolling back political openings known as political de-liberalisation, coincided with growing socio-economic changes, which had not abated from the 1980s. This crisis exerted excessive socio-economic pressure on the power and structure of the Egyptian state leading to perceptions of great political risk and danger by the political elite. In response the political elite reacted by the introduction of a draconian political strategy, which would have far reaching consequences for the process of political reform in Egypt.

### **3.6 Economic Crisis, the Egyptian State and Political De-liberalisation-**

The process of political liberalisation began in the 1970s under Sadat but was quickly reversed after the signing of the Camp David Peace Accords with Israel in 1979 (Hinnebusch, 1985). However, this process of liberalisation resumed once again with the advent of President Hosni Mubarak in 1980. Mubarak spoke in the early years of his presidency of administering 'democracy in doses'. He allowed the freeing of political prisoners and press criticism of government ministers. The representation of political opposition rose to a high of 20 percent in the 1987 elections, NGO's grew in number, student unions became politically active and professional syndicates were given more room to function and operate (Kienle, 2001; Zaki, 1995). This allowance on behalf of Mubarak can be put into the context of Mubarak's search for legitimacy. On entering the presidency, Mubarak was not well known, thus to acquire legitimacy, he began to talk of political change. This was done by, showing his commitment to the rule of law and courting the political opposition. Mubarak continued in the 1980s, with this political ploy, in search for legitimacy (Shukrallah, 1989).

However, the prospect for political reform in the 1990s took a downturn, with the Egyptian state changing its political strategy, resulting in a movement towards political de-liberalisation, enforcing political control over society- in both urban and rural areas. The Egyptian government re-imposed constraints, on political parties, student unions and the media. In 1995/96, new legislation was introduced by the Egyptian government, which restricted the freedom of journalists, making it easier for the state to arrest them. However, in reaction to fierce backlash from the journalists and even pro governmental journalists the Egyptian government had to back track and overturn the legislation. From 1999 to 2002, civil society was exposed to restrictions

in new legislation. The arrest of Saad Eddin Ibrahim sent a clear message to all leading civil society activists to keep quiet or face the coercion of the Egyptian state. The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights that has operated in Egypt since 1985 was denied a license to operate officially in 1998 following the arrest of its founder Hafez Abu Saeda. As a result it was forced to turn down western funding and to scale back its activities (Sorenson, 2003). This political strategy by the Egyptian government diminished the level of political participation and pluralism in Egypt excessively during the 1990s, which culminated with increasing levels of state violence in the 1995 and 2000 parliamentary elections (Brownlee, 2002; Ryan, 2001; Mustafa, 1995; Rubin, 1990).

The extent of the draconian response of the Egyptian state in the 1990s can be understood in the context of the growing socio-economic crisis, resulting from economic reform and the political weight of the Islamist opposition, in particular the MB, which posed a challenge to the state's powers and its structures (Kienle, 2001, 2004). First, the level of socio-economic crisis- notably the increasing levels of poverty and unemployment had led to internal social and political dissent, which endangered the Egyptian states power and its structures. A fear of internal riots like the 1977 bread riots led to the Egyptian state introducing draconian policies in order to control society (Bayat, 1998). It was this fear of a social backlash and de-legitimisation, which facilitated the process of political de-liberalisation, which was introduced in society during the 1990s. Second the Egyptian state faced a challenge from the MB, which had evolved into a key political actor in the 1990s. The MB was working at all levels in Egypt. It was involved at the social level through providing social services, in student unions, teaching clubs, professional syndicates and the parliament. Therefore the MB was working inside and outside the system, posing a



major challenge to the Egyptian state in the context of growing socio-economic problems. As a result, the MB was a growing concern for the Egyptian government, resulting in it directly launching an attack on the MB, to weaken its ability to challenge the state's powers and its structures.

The Egyptian state used its coercive arm to launch an attack against the structure of the MB. The regime sent 54 MB members to prison in 1995 and detained thousands without charge (Brownlee, 2002). The 1995 elections are viewed as the worst of all the elections under the Mubarak regime, with approximately 60 people killed and hundreds injured as a result of excessive intimidation and violence conducted by the Egyptian police and security forces. The MB was severely intimidated and its members were detained in the run up to the 1995 elections. The Egyptian government perceived a direct challenge to its power by the MB; therefore it applied its coercive instruments towards the MB (Brownlee, 2002; Goodson and Radwan, 1997). The Egyptian government in its pursuit of weakening the MB resulted in it closing down *Hizb al Amal* (The Labour party) and its organ *Al Shaab* (Abdalla, 2003; Arab Reform Bulletin, December, 2004). It was able to do this by capitalising on the party's agitation against a novel accused of being heretic in mid 2000. However, it was clear that this agitation of the party against a novel was merely an excuse for the Egyptian government to suppress the party as it was active in society and was seen as a mouthpiece for the influential MB. The party activities to date remain suspended by the state and there is not much prospect of them being activated in the near future.

It is hard to dispute the fact that the 1990s saw the process of political de-liberalisation in Egypt. This resulted in the Egyptian government tightening its control over society, through the constriction of political space (Brownlee, 2002; Kienle,

1998). What emerged in the 1990s was an inter play of two main contending factors, which forced the hand of the Egyptian state- first the heightened socio-economic crisis and second the political weight of the MB. If one is to prioritize any of the two factors for the Egyptian governments policy of political de-liberalisation it must be the political weight of the MB. This is because it was able to exert pressure on the Egyptian government due to its existence inside and outside the political system, through its involvement in teaching faculty clubs, student unions, professional syndicates and the parliament. The MB's existence inside and outside the system contributed to its ability to survive state coercion and to continue with its challenge to state power and its structures. Therefore the MB emerged as a contender to state power in the 1990s, while the Egyptian government was pushing ahead with its economic reform programme and its process of political de-liberalisation.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the process of economic and political reform in Egypt since 1991, in particular its impact on the power and structure of the Egyptian state. In the 1990s, the Egyptian government pursued economic reform, resulting in the reduction of expenditure on much needed socio-economic services to the Egyptian people. This led to heightened socio-economic crisis, which threatened the legitimacy and survival of the Egyptian state. As a result the Egyptian state introduced a policy of political de-liberalisation to contain challenges to its power and its structures. The breathing space in civil society was severely restricted, resulting in the suffocation and paralysis of the political opposition. However, the MB was able to escape political extinction and to continue to challenge the Egyptian state, as a result of its broad involvement in civil society. Given the importance of the MB, in challenging the Egyptian state's powers

and its structures in the 1990s, it is important to explore the evolution of the MB, through examining its growth and development. This allowed the MB to contest state power. Its ability to do so was strengthened through a process of change in its shape and character resulting in its participation in parliament and professional syndicates. This changing shape and character allowed the MB to position itself to directly challenge the Egyptian government in the 1990s.



## **Chapter 4- The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt- Growth and Development, 1928-1975**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins the examination of the MB at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis from 1928 to the 1970s. I develop the case study of the MB because I view it as an important political actor at the time of economic reform in the 1990s, being able to challenge the state's power and its structures. Thus the examination of the MB is important, as it will allow an understanding into the evolution of a key political actor in Egypt, through a focus on its growth and development.

### **4.2 The Muslim Brotherhood- The Life and Experiences of Hassan Al Banna**

Hassan Al Banna had a modest conservative upbringing in rural Egypt. As result, Al Banna was secluded from Egyptian life in urban areas, such as in Cairo and Alexandria. His father, Shaykh Ahmad Abd al Rahman al Banna al Sa'ati (1881-1958) combined a trade as a watch repairman with religious scholarship. As was customary in Egyptian society, Al Banna followed in his fathers footsteps (Reflections Issue, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005). He learnt to repair watches and acquired an elementary religious education. At the age of twelve, he registered at a local state primary school but at the same time he continued to pursue a religious vocation by joining a number of Islamic groups, such as the 'Society for Moral Behaviour' and the 'Society for Preventing the Forbidden' (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998; Ikhwanweb, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006). These societies put pressure on fellow townsmen to observe Islamic teaching and sent letters to those they detected were violating Islamic standards. However, Al Banna would not remain with such societies long, as he would be attracted by the '*Hasafiya*' Sufi order, which

he joined when he was thirteen (Esposito, 1993, 2002). This Sufi order appealed to him because it strictly observed Islamic teachings and practices. Al Banna's attachment to this Sufi order made him appreciate the importance of a strong bond between teacher and student (Gilsenan, 1967, 1973, 1985). In his memoirs, Al Banna described how one of his first teachers taught him to value the emotional bond which can grow between a teacher and student.

In 1923 Al Banna moved to Cairo. This move to the capital city would open Al-Banna's eyes to the lifestyle in the urban areas (Dessouki, 1982). Al-Banna was shocked by the lifestyle, which was existent in Cairo. Al-Banna witnessed, gambling, materialism, the availability of alcohol, prostitution and promiscuity (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998; Aboul Enein, 2003; Husani Musa, 1956). To Al-Banna, all of this depicted an attack on Islamic values and norms. Al-Banna blamed the so called 'intellectual and social liberation movement' of Egypt, then the anti religious trend for facilitating the erosion of Islamic values in Egypt (Ikhwanweb, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Also, to Al-Banna, the atheists, the liberal organisations, magazines, books and newspapers worked hard to promote secular ideas which weakened the influence of religion in public life. As a result of these experiences in Cairo, Al Banna came to acknowledge the existence of two camps in Egypt, that of secularism and that of Islam, with the former seen by Al Banna to be harmful to the future of Egypt.

To combat the spread of secularism, Al Banna sought and found men who shared his concerns at Dar ul Loom, Al Azhar, the Law College and the Salafiya library in Cairo. Among his new acquaintances was an Azhari scholar, Shaykh Yusuf al Dijwi, who had founded a society devoted to Islamic reform (Lia, 1998; Bayyumi. 1979). Shaykh al Dijwi told Al Banna that salvation was through following Islam and there was a

need to promote individual Islamic reform in society. Al Banna disagreed with Shaykh al Dijwi and urged him to draw on the power of the Muslim world. As a result Al Banna's first idea for a programme of action involved the formation of societies under a singular religious leadership, which would inspire Islamic reform in Egypt. This resulted in the establishment of the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) (Aboul Enein, 2006). This religious association, formally established in November 1927, illustrates the type of reformist movement which Al Banna would emulate several months later when he founded the MB. The YMMA sought to revive Muslim society through a true Islam as it is found in the Qur'an. As a long term goal the YMMA wanted to revive the Islamic Caliphate (Ikhwanweb, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006).

After Al Banna graduated from *Dar ul Loom* in 1927, the Ministry of Education appointed him Arabic language teacher at a primary school in Ismailiya (Lia, 1998). The socio-economic problems, Al-Banna experienced in Cairo were evident in Ismailiya. This was compounded by foreign domination and exploitation in Ismailiya. European managers of the Suez Canal Company resided in luxurious accommodation while Egyptians lived in miserable huts. As a result, Al Banna wanted to awaken the people to the problems, which existed in Ismailiya to lead a process of reform, according to his vision of Islam. Al-Banna would visit the town's three main coffee houses, where he would regularly deliver brief talks. At the beginning Al Banna's ideas were welcomed rather cautiously by those who gathered in the coffee houses but after a while, he soon began to attract a regular audience. This led to some followers asking Al-Banna to lead discussions in a smaller, more private setting (Rahnema, 1994; Jameelah, 1980). Thus, Al Banna would lead private talks, and it was these talks, which would bring Al Banna into contact with like minded people, who shared Al Banna's vision for Ismailiya and the rest of Egypt (Ahmad, 1996). This led to Al



Banna. with six Egyptian labourers, in Ismailiya, in March, 1928 to establish the MB, with the purpose of promoting true Islam (Freedman, 2004; Mitchell, 1969; Ayubi, 1991; Bayyumi, 1979).

### **4.3 The Muslim Brotherhood- Factors and Causes behind Expansion and Growth**

From 1928, the MB, would establish branches in other Canal Zone towns in the Egyptian Delta. Between 1929 and 1932, the movement grew- it had five branch offices by 1930, fifteen by 1932 and three hundred by 1938. While exact membership figures are unknown, the three hundred branches probably represented between 50,000 and 150,000 members (Mitchell, 1969). Thus, in a short period of time, the MB increased the number of its branches and its membership size, which can be explained by 3 key factors.

The first factor, which was important in the growth and development of the MB, was that the MB provided services, to the people, such as education for boys and girls, cheap medical care, financial help and vocational training schemes. The provision of such services brought millions of Egyptians into contact with the MB and its vision regarding Egypt. Importantly, the provision of services allowed the MB to demonstrate its ability to deliver on social and economic promises to the Egyptian population (Munson, 2001). This led commentators to describe the MB as a state within a state (Al Ahram, July 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2005). This was important as it distanced them from the centric Sufistic (i.e., individual religious reform) approach to society which was a popular trend in Egypt during the early growth and development of the MB (Rahnema, 1994; Lia, 1998). At the time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1930s and 1940s, the ability of the MB to provide much needed services added to the

weight of the MB, thus the challenge it was able to construct to the Egyptian government.

The second factor, which was important in the growth and development of the MB, was the extensive use of the mosque (Yakran, 1998). Other than sporting events mosques were the only other forum in which the government would permit large congregations to gather. Mosques were also safe from raids or obvious government interference (Ikhwanweb, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006). Even the government had to abide by the rules of the mosque due to its sacred role in Islam. Despite formal government control over the mosques and preachers, mosques greatly protected the ability of the MB to recruit new members and publicize their views to a large mass of people. Mosques also gave the movement's preachers an aura of respectability, which they might not have otherwise attained if they spoke during rallies in the street. Speeches within the mosque tied their call to Islam and further legitimised the movement in society. Thus, mosques were critical to the successful birth, growth and development of the MB (Munson, 2001). While the MB's leaders used numerous styles such as, street demonstrations and public rallies to mobilise the Egyptian people, the mosque remained the primary source of mobilisation and recruitment throughout 1932-1954 (Al Ahram, January 22-28<sup>th</sup>, 2004).

The third factor which was important in the growth and development of the MB as a force in society was the charismatic qualities of Al Banna. He was able to attract huge gatherings of people to his seminars and talks mesmerising them by his fiery speeches and emotional rhetoric (Goldberg, 1986). Al Banna's personality would draw in hundreds of recruits to the MB. The magnetism of his personality, his ability to inspire and lead by example was important in the growth and development of the MB

into a nationwide movement with mass support (Hussain, 1988; Bari, 1995). As a result of this mass following which Al Banna would develop, at first many considered the MB as a new Sufi order as result of the central role that Al Banna played in MB recruitment, organisation and planning (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998). A comparison was made between Al Banna's followers and their utter devotion to him to that of believers in a Sufi saint. Al Banna devoted his energy to membership recruitment, private discussions of religion and moral reform, all of which was facilitated by his dynamic and charismatic personality. Al Banna's popularity allowed him to act as a religious advisor to the Egyptian Monarchy and Egyptian state. He wrote letters to the King on matters of national importance and he sent dozens of memorandums to Egypt's Prime Ministers and cabinet ministers to offer pressing advice. Al-Banna's memos stressed the need to enforce Islamic law, promote ties with the Islamic world in general and Arab countries in particular, support the Palestinian cause (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004). In publicised letters, Al Banna called for specifics, such as the banning of usury, the banning of alcohol, the expansion of hospitals and clinics, the improvement of working conditions, and a minimum wage (Mitchell, 1969; Bayyumi, 1979). Thus, Al Banna, through his religious role, was able to impart his reformist vision onto the Egyptian monarchy and the Egyptian government. The ability to do this was facilitated by the movement's involvement in politics in the late 1930s, which would herald a shift in the movement from its orthodox focus on spiritual elevation to political activism, which would be escalated in the 1980s and 1990s (Ikhwanweb, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006).



#### 4.4 The Muslim Brotherhood- From Political Activism to Confrontation

The MB started off, in the late 1920s and early 1930s as a movement concerned with the spiritual elevation of Egyptian society. However, this would change in the late 1930s with the MB developing a more political outlook, in reaction to heightened socio-economic crisis and the continual spread of secularism. This would begin a process of change and shifts in the MB, although it was minimal compared to what the MB would undergo in the 1980s and 1990s. The MB's shift towards politics was recognised by Al Banna in the first issue of the MB weekly, *Al-Nadhir* in May 1938. The appearance of this weekly Al Banna said marked the beginning of the MB involvement in the internal and external political struggle. The external political struggle was the Palestinian crisis which had started in the region (Jankowski, 2001). The movement's conference in 1939 marked the beginning of the movement's effective political activity in Egypt and defined the movement, inter alia as a political organisation. This movement towards political activism seems to have been timed to coincide with the MB's growing sense of organizational and structural power in Egypt. Al Banna's political activism became evident. For example Al Banna co-operated with Ismail Siddiqi, the Prime Minister on a number of occasions concerning the state of affairs inside Egypt. In 1936, the MB participated in the coronation of King Farouq (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998). Al Banna was called to the palace in 1946 for consultation regarding the appointment of a new Prime Minister. The MB's relations with the palace was helped by the fact that Al Banna did not reject constitutional life in Egypt, however he aimed to reform it by working inside the political system. Therefore, Al Banna's political strategy was designed to introduce MB representatives to parliament in a symbolic way, through elections. However, the Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmad Maher insisted on excluding the group from the

elections. He falsified election results and excluded the MB's candidates. This was a knock back for the movement but it would nevertheless continue with its political activism. This was aided by the heightened socio-economic crisis in Egypt, which allowed the MB to expand its organisational and structural power. This concerned the Egyptian state, which felt vulnerable to a possible challenge to its powers and its structures from the MB. In reaction, the Egyptian government took drastic measures, leading to the banning of the MB, its members being arrested and its newspapers closed down. However, these measures by the Egyptian government against the MB did not last long, as the government was preoccupied with World War Two (Mitchell, 1969). The movement's meetings and forums resumed, its leadership was released from prison and the MB continued to expand rapidly. The movement, continued to involve itself in political activism, adding to its power, but its power would be weakened as a result of the violent situation, which would emerge in the 1940s in Egypt.

#### **4.5 The Muslim Brotherhood- The Turn to Political Violence and Assassination**

The British colonial presence in Egypt led to resistance, through the use of political violence and assassinations by various groups during the late 1930s and 1940s. Between 1937 and 1942 groups appeared in Egypt staging military operations against British camps. The Egyptian Zionist Organisation blew up the Antonias Palace in Cairo and assassinated the British Minister resident in the Middle East. Between 1946 and 1949, political violence in Egypt escalated to new heights. The assassinations of Ahmad Maher, Egypt's Prime Minister and the President of the *Hizb al Wafd* (The delegation Party) created a very unstable and turbulent political climate (Lia, 1998). In February 1945, the MB's special unit engaged in its first operation. Special Unit

head al Sanadi monopolised the movement's leadership and staged attacks against British troops and Egyptian Jewish groups for their perceived co-operation with the Zionist movement in Palestine (Al Ahram, November 6-12<sup>th</sup>, 2003). The special unit was also involved in the killing of a prominent magistrate, Ahmad al Khazendar who had sentenced a MB member to prison for attacking British soldiers (Lia, 1998: Rishwan, Interview, 2004). At this time, Al Banna felt there was an imbalance in the movement's leadership and moreover he did not want to involve his group in conflict with the Egyptian government. Al Sanadi had enough backing inside the special unit to have his own way. He unleashed the special unit's entire destructive power against the British and the Zionist entity in Palestine. The special unit's violence would undermine the political weight of the MB. This is because the violence acts gave the Egyptian government the justification to launch attacks on the organisation and structure of the MB. The Egyptian government banned the MB's branches in Ismailiyya and Port Said and arrested a large number of its members (Harris, 1964). The final nail in the coffin of the MB came when a vehicle was captured in an ambush set by the security forces and the special unit of the MB was exposed. In December 1948, the government of Prime Minister Mahmoud Naqrashi banned the MB, closed down its offices and confiscated its funds and properties. The Egyptian government justified this move by demonstrating the MB stocked arms, fabricated bombs and explosives, attacked commercial and security facilities and instigated riots. The Egyptian courts acquitted the MB of many of the accusations; according to the judiciary the Arab League had approved the use of weapons in the Palestinian war.

In the face of such a political crisis which had inundated the MB, Al Banna decided to change the name of the movement or merge it in the Muslim Youth Association. He submitted a proposal to King Farouq to turn the MB into a religious group which



would help the king and the throne resist communism. However, the king rejected this proposal. This rejection of the proposal submitted by Al Banna resulted in a comprehensive divorce and alienation between the MB and the Palace. This was the first time such closure of communication between the two had occurred since the emergence of the MB. This led to frustration inside the ranks of the MB, leading to the assassination of the Prime Minister Mahmoud Naqrashi by a MB member (Shia News, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). The member named Hassan Taleb claimed that the Prime Minister was a traitor, who had neglected the Palestinian cause, fought Islam and banned the MB. In retaliation the government arrested thousands of MB members, tortured them and forced the issuing of religious decrees condemning the movement and calling for its dissolution. Al Banna attempted to start a process of reconciliation with the government and the king. However, this was short lived as Al-Banna was assassinated by the secret police in February 1949. The assassination of Al Banna was a huge blow for the MB, as he had presided over its growth and development since the inception of the MB.

Hassan Hudaybi was the next elected leader of the MB, a former court judge and a well-respected member of the Egyptian elite. He adopted a policy based on the '*daawa*' (Islamic Call) with 'wisdom and good exhortation' and a less confrontational style, which had characterised the movement previously (Munson, 2001; Rishwan, Interview, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004). The shouting of slogans and emotional language which characterised MB demonstrations and public rallies were stopped by the new leader, as he wanted the movement to adopt a more professional outlook. This policy ultimately clashed with the MB's radical trend calling for political struggle with the Egyptian state. This internal conflict intensified so much that Hudaybi was accused of making peace agreements with King Farouq and preventing

the MB from fighting the British (Lia. 1998; Mitchell, 1969). The altercation within the MB was not surprising, as the MB had become accustomed to a certain manner of leadership and management, which was embodied in the charismatic and dynamic personality of Al Banna. Anyone succeeding him would have a difficult task to fulfil. While Hudaybi was not as charismatic, dynamic and did not have the same leadership style as Al Banna it would be naive to write Hudaybi off as an ineffective and incompetent leader (Daily Times, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004). Hudaybi kept the movement intact and functional in spite of, facing challenges over internal leadership, the detention of over four thousand of its members and its formal dissolution by the Egyptian government. This was even more impressive as Hudaybi's, leadership coincided with the surfacing of Sayed Qutb and his political discourse, which was diametrically opposed, to what he believed (Beinin, 2005).

In the context of this crisis and clash inside the MB, the existing regime was decaying. On July 23, 1952 a small cadre of military men known as the Free Officers overthrew the existing regime. This is a significant event in relation to the MB as various members of the movement had strong links inside the military and with the Free Officers which took power in Egypt. This provided the MB, with an opportunity to influence the political system, according to its Islamic vision. However, they would be disappointed as the Free Officers vision for Egypt would not coincide with that of the MB, thus bringing to the surface conflict between the two dominant actors in Egyptian politics at that period of time.

#### **4.6 The Muslim Brotherhood and the Free Officers**

Gamal Abdel Nasser, Abdel Monem Abdel Rauf, Khaled Muhiyeddine, Kamaledine Hussein and Hassan Ibrahim founded the Free Officer's first cell in July 1949. They

were all former members of the special unit between 1944 and 1945. Abdel Nasser sought the support of all political powers, relying heavily on the support of the MB. The movement's general leadership convened and declared its support for the revolution based on reforms founded on Islam. Despite approval and support for the revolution by the MB, difficulties between the factions would appear. In September 1952, the Major General Mohammed Naguib, who was named commander in chief by the Free Officers, formed a government and excluded the MB from participation, prompting the MB to position itself in opposition to the new Egyptian leadership (Al Ahram, June 27<sup>th</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2002). When the law regulating the activities of political parties was issued toward the end of 1952, Hudaybi realised that the Free Officers planned to ban political parties. He made every effort to prevent registering the MB as a political party, as a continuation of his policy to exclude the movement from involvement in conflicts. In November 1953, all parties were banned except the MB. The MB was pressured to join the Free Officers Freedom Committee as a political organisation but refused to do so. Hudaybi stated 'parties with principles cannot be established through the army and the police' (Al Ahram, June 27<sup>th</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2002).

By May 1953, tensions between the movement and the new regime began to intensify. Nasser issued a warning to Hudaybi demanding that the MB stop any membership or recruitment activity within the army and the police (Mitchell, 1969; Lia, 1998). He also demanded that the MB dissolve the movement's branches in the army and security forces, as well as the dissolution of the special unit. In a brave move, Hudaybi defied and rejected the demands from the regime and he began to attack dissidents from the movement who supported Nasser in their defiance of his leadership of the MB (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004).



As a result of non compliance by the movement and its stubbornness in bowing down to the demands of the regime, the regime decided to dissolve the MB in January 1954. The pretext for the dissolution was that the movement maintained contact with the British Embassy in Cairo; they were opposed to agricultural reform and attempted to overthrow the regime. In reaction the MB convened a conference in Damascus which condemned the leaders of the 1952 revolution and their decision to ban the MB in Egypt. The MB came to realise that it was virtually impossible to reach an agreement with Nasser who had begun to perceive the MB as a political danger to his rule. The deadlock resulted in frustration inside the ranks of the MB. This led to a member of the movement to try to assassinate Nasser, while he was delivering a speech in Alexandria in October 26, 1954. This failed, resulting in Nasser cracking down hard on the MB, to destroy its structure and organisation (Al Ahram, June 27<sup>th</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002; Al Jazeera, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005).

The Egyptian state detained over 4000 members of the movement and began dismantling the movement through the 'people's tribunal', which issued harsh sentences to those convicted. The MB called for a popular uprising to overthrow the regime and Hudaybi stated that the uprising was aimed at restoring political freedoms, parliamentary life, releasing prisoners and handing power to civilians. In reaction to this stir by the MB and the risk of political disturbances throughout the country, the 'people's tribunal' then issued death sentences against Hudaybi and many other MB leaders (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). Nasser refused the Syrian governments and the Syrian MB's call not to execute the brothers and also failed to listen to protests from Jordan, Pakistan and Sudan. This effectively eroded and weakened the power of the MB in Egypt with a large membership base detained and members executed.

After 1954 the MB stopped its open activities in Egypt and lost its power as the central leadership of the MB in the Middle East. The leadership consequently moved to Syria and established an 'executive bureau' for the MB in the Middle East. It was led by Issam Attar, the general supervisor of the MB in Syria. During this period of much turbulence for the MB when the Egyptian regime came down heavily upon the movement, the general MB maintained its structure through a committee known as the Executive Office of the MB, located in the Middle East (Rishwan, Interview, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004). The committee included Isaam Attar (the MB's leader in Syria), Mohammed Abdel Rahman Khalifah (the MB's leader in Jordan) Fathi Yakan (heads of *Al Jammaa al Islamiyya* in Lebanon) and leaders from other MB branches in the Middle East. At that time, the executive office formed a commando base under the flag of the Palestinian faction Fatah in Jordan. However conflicts arose within the executive office leading to its collapse in 1969.

By 1974 all detained MB were freed. Hudaybi aimed to reconstruct the MB after his release from prison. He took advantage of the pilgrimage season in Mecca in 1972 and 1973 to hold a meeting in Saudi Arabia of the group's leaders in an effort to unify the MB leadership across the Middle East. During the pilgrimage of 1975, the MB convened a meeting for the Founding Committee (later called the International Shura Council) to complete their organisational structure amid a climate of division. Therefore through the initiative of Hudaybi, the MB was able to overcome another hurdle which Hudaybi had come accustomed to since taking leadership of the MB. However, this hurdle was of vast importance as would revive the ailing organisation, allowing it to operate in a co-ordinated manner in the Middle East and re-directing leadership back to Egypt. Importantly, this would set the basis for the MB to develop,

once again into a key political actor in Egypt, being able to challenge the state's powers and its structures.

#### **4.7 The Muslim Brotherhood, Sadat and His Search for Legitimacy**

The fortunes of the MB in the 1970s would be assisted through Sadat's pursuit of legitimacy. Sadat realized the importance of religion in constructing much needed legitimacy. Even, Nasser was aware of the powerful role of religion in constructing legitimacy; which led to the co-optation of religious institutions into the state, such as Al Azhar. Religious verdicts from Al Azhar were used to ensure domestic control and promote his foreign policy objectives. Subordinating Al Azhar to the state would also allow Nasser to balance the influence of the MB, which threatened to challenge the state's powers and its structures (Barraclough, 1998). Moreover, Nasser understood that Al Azhar's influence extended well beyond the borders of Egypt and that government control over the most respected and influential institution of Islamic scholarship would be an important tool in furthering Egypt's leadership of Arab and Islamic nations. As Islam is the dominant religion in Egypt and the wider Middle East, it was politically expedient and shrewd by Nasser to use Islam in order to develop legitimacy to persist in power. Like Nasser, for Sadat the use of religion through Al Azhar was politically shrewd given the rise of Islamic consciousness in Egyptian society in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab defeat at the hands of Israel. Sadat in the 1970s initiated a debate in his semi official press through the Al Azhar over what was described as the 'Islamic economy' and its compatibility with capitalist ethos and values (Moustafa, 2000). In addition, Islam was used by Sadat to project an image of religious piety towards the public. Sadat promoted himself as the "believing president" and was constantly seen at prayer; more and more. The 1971 constitution



stipulated that 'Islam is the religion of the state; Arabic is the official language and principles of the Islamic *Shariah* are a principal source of legislation'. Even more significant than the inclusion of this article into the constitution was the Egyptian states relationship with the MB. The MB had gone underground in response to their outlawing by Nasser and the campaign of persecution that followed, resulting in thousands of MB members being jailed and a similar number fleeing to surrounding Arab countries to escape persecution from Nasser. Sadat's perception toward the MB was somewhat different compared to Nasser. Sadat realised the importance of the MB in boosting the Islamic image of the state and acting as a counter balancing force to the leftist opposition in society (Kodmani, 2005). As a result, Sadat in the early 1970s developed a policy to accommodate the MB, in society. The Egyptian state released detained members of the MB, and allowed exiled members to return to Egypt, like Yusuf Al Qaradawi, Ahmad al Asaf and Salim Nijm (Al Awadi, 2004). Also, the MB was allowed to reclaim its headquarters in Cairo, reconvene its regular meetings inside the mosques, activities on university campuses and recruitment of new members to the movement (Kodmani, 2005). Thus, the MB was allowed to re-enter society by the Egyptian state, which would start a new phase in the life of the movement. This new phase would result in the MB undergoing changes to its shape and character, leading to its participation in parliament, professional syndicates and the forming of party alliances- thus allowing the MB to construct a challenge to the state's powers and its structures at a time of economic reform in the 1990s.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the evolution of the MB, through an examination of its growth and development from 1928 to the 1970s. This allowed the MB, to become a key

political actor in Egypt. However, from the 1970s onwards, the political weight of the MB was extended through extensive changes it would undergo in its shape and character. This would lead to its transition from the spirit to politics, through its involvement in the parliament, professional syndicates and the construction of party alliances. This would allow the MB to construct political power to challenge the Egyptian government at a time of socio-economic crisis, resulting from economic reform in the 1990s.

## **Chapter 5-The Muslim Brotherhood- its Transition from the Spirit to Politics**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter continues to explore the changing shape and character of the MB from spiritual piety to political activism. This is done by examining the introduction of the MB into formal politics in the 1980s, through its participation in parliamentary elections. This represented a key change in the shape and character of the MB, which allowed it to construct political weight to challenge the Egyptian state's powers and its structures at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1990s.

### **5.2 Changing Political Discourse- From Hassan Al Banna to Sayed Qutb**

During the 1930s, the MB was viewed to be a social movement with its activities predominately devoted towards the moral and spiritual reformation of society (Mitchell, 1969; Abd al Monein and Wenner, 1982). However, the movements transition to politics in the late 1930s, led Al-Banna to set forth more specific political and executive goals for governance. The first objective was to bring an end to the party-system and point the political community into one direction (Hassan, 2005; See Al-Banna, *Majmu'atu Rasa'el al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna.*). According to some Islamic interpretations by scholars, such as former Egyptian Grand Mufti Sheikh Sayyid Sabiq, the party-system is considered "destructive" in the sense that certain political parties coalesce with segments of the population to represent groups which alienate themselves from the Islamic *Shari'ah* which divides the *Umma* (Muslim community) and places groups at odds with one another further causing some form of sectarianism rather than cohesion (Hassan, 2005). Another objective Al-Banna declared was to strengthen the ties between the Islamic circles internationally,



especially in the entire Arab region to revive the idea of the Islamic Caliphate. Also Al Banna stressed the need for Muslims to show concern for each other's suffering, through highlighting the concept of belonging to the Islamic *Umma*. Al Banna practically showed what it meant to belong to the Islamic *Umma* in reaction to the Palestinian crisis, which developed in the 1930s and 1940s (Hassan, 2005). He instructed the movement to address the Palestinian crisis, through the distribution of leaflets, mosque speeches and the holding of demonstrations to rally the Egyptian people. Therefore in the midst of Al Banna's social and economic thought, there was an expression of politics. However, this political discourse of Al Banna would be challenged during the 1950s and 1960s. This was due to the rise of Sayed Qutb, and the development of his political discourse.

During his early career, Sayed Qutb devoted himself to literature as an author and critic, writing novels such as *Ashwak* (Thorns) and even elevating Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz from obscurity. After his graduation from *Dar al- Loom* in 1933, Qutb began his teaching career and eventually became involved in Egypt's Ministry of Education (Khatab, 2006; Shepard, 1996). The Ministry sent him abroad to the United States to research western methods of teaching. He spent a total of two years in the United States from 1948 to 1950. During that time, Qutb studied at Wilson's Teachers' College on the east coast before moving west and earning a M.A. in education at the University of Northern Colorado (Abdel Malek, 2000, p10). In "The America I Have Seen", a personal account of his experiences in the United States, Qutb expresses his admiration for the great economic and scientific achievements of America, yet he is deeply dismayed that such prosperity could exist in a society that remained 'abysmally primitive in the world of the senses, feelings, and behaviour' (Qutb, 2000, p11). By this, Qutb was alluding to values, such as freedom,

individualism and materialism, which formed the functional basis of American society (Shepard, 1996; Haddad, 1983; Mousalli, 1992; Khan, 1998). He believed that these values had led to the social problems, which America was facing, such as high levels of consumerism, sexual discrimination and promiscuity (Henzel, 2005; Al Ahram, March, 11-17<sup>th</sup>, 1999). As a result Qutb believed that America was in a state of '*jahiliyyah*' (state of ignorance) (Qutb, 2002; Shepard, 1996; Rahnema, 1994; McGregor, 2003; Al Ahram, December 9-15<sup>th</sup>, 1999). As a devout Muslim, Qutb believed that the prophet Muhammad was sent as a messenger of God's divine guidance, which was to be found in Muhammad's transcription of the Qur'an. Qutb believed that, the Qur'an is God's final guide for man to live a full and harmonious life that is in accordance with his nature. Therefore, for Qutb those who ignore it are guilty of '*jahiliyyah*' just as Adam was when he ignored God's message not to eat from the tree. Qutb believed that throughout human history men have disobeyed God; as a result God has sent man help whenever he falls into '*jahiliyyah*':

'When this state of affairs is reached (*jahiliyyah*), God sends a messenger to human beings explaining to them the very same truth they had had before sinking into '*jahiliyyah*'. Some of them write their own destruction, while others are able to spare themselves by returning to the truth of the faith. These are the ones...who listen to their messenger as he says to them: 'My people, worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him' (Abdel Haleem Translation- Qur'an 7, p59).

Therefore, '*jahiliyyah*' results whenever man ignores the divine commands giving by God's messengers. Qutb used Surah 7 in the Qur'an as an extensive example of how truth (Islam) and falsity (*jahiliyyah*) have battled throughout human history. He believed that this Surah 'portrays how those in the procession of faith try to rescue man every time he strays far away from the right path' (Qutb, 2002, p122). Like the American society, to Qutb, the Nasserist regime had also strayed far away from the



right path, which led him to reject the ideology, values and practices of the Nasser regime, classifying them as *'jahiliyyah'* as they contradicted the Islamic message (Khatab, 1996, 2006; Qutb, 1991). Also, Qutb believed that Al Azhar had also strayed away from the right path by being pressed into the service of Nasserism (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). As a result, according to Qutb, Egyptian society had to be brought back to the straight path and the beginning point was to remove Nasser's regime to wash Egypt of his blend, of socialism and nationalism. This would also, according to Qutb allow Al-Azhar to break away from the shackles of Nasser's regime and to act in the service of Islam. Qutb, through his work, *Ma`alim fi al-tariq* (Signposts or Milestones), centering on key concepts such as, *'jahiliyyah'*, *'haq'* (truth) vs. *'batil'* (falsity), *'kufar'* (non-belief) and *'Al-Adala al-Ijtima'iyya'* (social justice) was able to create considerable zeal in the ranks of the MB. It also gave them the hope that they would be the vanguard to successfully challenge the dominant ideology of Nasserism and lay the foundations for a truly Islamic community in Egypt. Shukri Mustafa led those who adopted Qutb's view that Egypt was a state of unbelief and that the Brothers should prepare for an active struggle to establish a proper Islamic state. After his release from prison, Mustafa established the Society of Muslims (Jama`at al-Muslimin), better known as the *Takfir wa'l-Hijra group* – meaning roughly to retreat from a society of unbelief (Kepel, 2002; Kramer, 1996; Fuller, 2003). According to Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon,

'In a century in which some of the most important writing came out of prisons, Qutb, for better or for worse, is the Islamic world's answer to Solzhenitsyn, Sartre, and Havel, and he easily ranks with all of them in influence. It was Sayyid Qutb 'who fused together the core elements of modern Islamism.... Qutb concluded that the unity of God and His sovereignty meant that human rule – government legislates its own behavior – is illegitimate- Muslims must answer to God alone' (Simon and Benjamin, 2002, p62).



The old guard leadership of the Muslim Brothers rejected the concepts expressed in *Ma`alim fi al-tariq* and affirmed their historic position that through preaching (*da`wa*) Muslims could be brought to a higher state of commitment and practice. In 1969 the society's second General Guide, Hasan al-Hudaybi, wrote a strong riposte to Qutb: *Du`a, la quda* (Preachers not judges). Al-Hudaybi repudiated the violence employed by the Brothers' Rovers in 1947-49 and in 1954. `Umar al-Tilemensani, who became General Guide in 1973, shared these views with the old guard leadership (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Al Ahram, March 11-17<sup>th</sup>, 1999). However, unlike the old guard leadership, Umar al-Tilemensani, was pragmatic, a visionary and would want to lead the MB to new ground, by shifting it from its traditional focus on spiritual piety to political activism. This shift would be indicative of the changing shape and character of the MB, which would be stepped up in the 1980s and 1990s.

### **5.3 Umar Al Tilemensani and Shifts in the Muslim Brotherhood**

In the 1970s, the MB experienced a new lease of life, as thousands of its members were released from prison, exiled members were allowed back into Egypt and the movement was allowed to recommence its activities. As a result of this, the movement began to actively pursue two simultaneous objectives. The first objective, for the MB was to secure a legal status from the Egyptian government, which they had lost since 1954. The second objective was to rebuild the organisation, which had been destroyed by Nasser (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). Achieving the first objective would be an arduous task but nonetheless an important objective, for the MB to have a secure future in Egypt.

Thus, to acquire a legal status for the MB, in October 1977, Tilemensani filed a court case against Nasser's decision to disband the organisation in 1954 (Baker, 1990). Tilemensani's argument was based on the premise that the revolutionary council lacked any real legislative or constitutional rights. Consequently the decision of the Nasserist regime to outlaw the MB was invalid. This decision to contest the outlawing of the MB was strengthened by Sadat's political reforms, such as the political party's law of 1976 (Al Awadi, 2004). The transition from a one party system to a multi party system gave the MB hope that their illegal status would be overturned soon. However, the hope that encircled the MB was short lived, as Tilemensani's case was not settled by court. The MB realised that even Sadat's judicial system, however independent it appeared to be on the surface, was in reality part of the state apparatus without any real independence. The relentless delay in the courts reaching a verdict upon the future of the MB, led to frustration inside the ranks of the MB. Tilemensani could not understand why the court was taking forever in reaching a decision upon overturning the ban on the MB. Given this delay in outcome, Tilemensani was realistic that a decision may never arise or the ban may not be overturned (Al Awadi, 2004). Also Tilemensani was aware of the fact that the Egyptian government's rather tolerant policy towards the movement could change with the government possibly reverting to a policy of coercion as seen under Nasser. Thus, having examined all possible scenarios, which were not positive, Tilemensani realised that the movement had to change to force the overturning of the ban and to avoid possible coercion from the Egyptian government. Tilemensani, believed, the change that was needed was a shift in the work of the movement, from its traditional focus on spiritual piety to political activism. This transition from spiritual piety to political activism would indicate a change in the shape and character of the movement, which would allow the MB to

become once again a key political actor in Egypt; able to challenge the state's power and its structure in the 1990s at a time of failing economic reforms (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004).

However, this change, which Tilemensani wanted to commence, faced resistance and opposition from the old guard leadership in the movement, who were conservative in their thinking and approach. The old guard were formed by the harsh experience of the MB's repression under Nasser. For example, the present '*Murshid*', Mohammed Akhef, was already a member before Al-Banna's assassination in 1949 and was sentenced to death after the failed 1954 assassination challenge on Nasser and was imprisoned until 1974. He and others of his generation, who form the core of the old guard are generally more zealous, conservative, and committed primarily to long-term spiritual work and to preserving the movement's unity (Altman, 2006). The old guard was and continues to be deeply suspicious of other groups and unforgiving toward former political rivals such as the Nasserists, Arab-Nationalists and Marxists due to ideological differences and bitter past confrontations. The old guard followed the religious teachings of Al Banna, who although later in his life involved himself in politics, remained sceptical of the nature of politics, especially party politics in Egypt. To Al Banna party politics represented a key source of conflict, and division, inside society (Mitchell, 1969). This perception of Al Banna towards politics was shaped through his stay in Cairo between 1923-1927, when party politics was inundated by corruption, conflict and rivalry. As a result politics was viewed to have had done much more harm than good to society. Therefore, according to Al Banna, there was a need to distance oneself away from party politics to prevent the movement from falling into the vicious trap of party politics that involved corruption, conflict and rivalry. Instead, Al Banna stressed the need to give advice to the Egyptian Monarchy



and government, to allow the MB to discharge its religious duty to the political order. without getting dragged into the dirty life of party politics. Al Banna's political thinking shaped the way of thinking of the old guard leadership. As a result they were uncomfortable with a transition of the MB from the spirit to politics (Lia, 1998). Given the fact that the old guard leadership played a key role in decision making and was institutionalised inside the chain of command of the MB, Tilemensani knew he would have a difficult time in convincing this faction to support the change in the shape and character of the movement, from its traditional work on spiritual piety to political activism. As, Tilemensani, saw this changing shape and character of the movement, as being vital for its future, he was willing to take on the dominant old guard leadership to present his vision and to drive the change in the movement.

A process of change was evident, when Tilemensani began to speak about the prospect of the MB participating in Sadat's parliament. In reaction, there was a strong objection from the old guard who saw this move as being out of line with the MB's orthodox role of spiritual guidance. Tilemensani did not object to the old guard raising their concerns, in fact he welcomed the concerns to begin internal discussion on the changing shape and character of the MB. He continued to stress the transition of the MB from spirit to politics, to force the overturning of the ban and to avoid possible coercion from the Egyptian government. Despite, the on going clash in the MB, Tilemensani hoped that Sadat would agree to admit the MB into the parliament on the basis of it representing an independent socio-economic political trend in Egyptian society. This hope by Tilemensani could be seen as compromise with the old guard, as Tilemensani did not demand the movement to be admitted into the parliament on the platform of a political party (Al Awadi, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). However, Sadat had major concerns, in case the MB evolved into an effective political

opposition to the Egyptian government, thus was disinclined to allow the MB this independent representation in parliament. Instead, Sadat gave the MB the option to participate in parliament through a coalition with any of the three existing political parties, which had emerged after the dissolution of the ASU in 1976. However, Tilemensani refused such an offer from Sadat. For Tilemensani, any form of coalition with the secular political opposition was perceived as damaging to the public image of the movement as an Islamic actor in Egyptian society (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). As a result the MB rejected this option presented by Sadat. However, this knock back would not deter Tilemensani; as he was convinced that the Egyptian state would be forced to accept the MB, if it continued to shift its shape and character, leading to its transition from the spirit to politics. As a result, Tilemensani wanted to see more changes in the movement and this would be facilitated by the rise of the new guard in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which would introduce a new culture of politics into the MB. The new guard would drive the process of change and the contestation of political power, resulting in the movement developing into a key political weight at the time of economic reform in the 1990s. Thus, allowing the MB to challenge the Egyptian state's power and its structures.

#### **5.4 The Rise of the New Guard in the Muslim Brotherhood**

Since the time of Al Banna, the old guard leadership have focused on maintaining their own power, neglected the need to educate new leaders and have worked to maintain the character of the MB (Al Jazeera, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002). This focus by the old guard meant that they were seen to care more about the internal structure to maintain their position and power than about the process of change to allow the MB to construct a challenge to the state's powers and its structure (Altman, 2006).

However, the old guard after decades of domination within the MB would eventually be challenged with the emergence of a new guard in the MB. This new guard had different ideas to the old guard leadership upon key issues of how internal decisions should be made, the election of a leader, the state, the west, and the function of the movement. Therefore, this new guard, with its blend of Islamic politics and pragmatism, would facilitate the changing shape and character of the movement.

The new guard entered the scene during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Choubaky, 2004). The new guard's experiences were different from the old guard, which influenced their thinking and approach. For example, the new guard did not experience the oppression of Nasser, which the old guard experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. The new guard had become familiar to limited political openness and participation in student politics through the *Jama'at Islamiyya* (Islamic student movement) in the 1970s (Olav Utvik, 2005; Baker, 2003; Brown et al, 2006). Through student politics, which entailed daily interaction with students of different ideologies, rapprochement with different student groups and standing for student union elections, the new guard was able to acquire a greater taste for politics. This can be deduced from the fact that the new guard assigned greater importance to politics than to the spirit, saw Egypt rather than the Muslim world as the MB's real frame of reference, and showed interest in building alliances with secular political organizations to deal with pressing socio-economic issues. This new guard included people like, Essam El-Eryian, assistant secretary-general of the Doctors Syndicate, Ibrahim El-Zaafarani, secretary-general of the Alexandria chapter of the same syndicate, Mohamed Habib, an Asiut University professor and Abu Al Futuh from the Guidance Bureau Council (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). When these individuals joined the MB, they were followed by a large section of the



rank-and-file members of the Islamic student movement, which had been led in the 1970s by new guard activists such as Essam El Eyrian, Abu Ella Madi and Abu Al Futuh (Olav Utvik, 2005). As a result the new guard would have a loyal support base, which would support the changes it was pushing for, leading to inevitable clashes with the old guard leadership. These clashes were evident in the 1980s but escalated in the 1990s, as the new guard with its pragmatism speeded up the process of change in the MB.

In the mid 1990s the new guards drive to change the shape and character of the MB, led to the formation of a party manifesto for the '*Hizb al Wasat*' (centrist party) (Stacher, 2001, 2002; Olav Utvik, 2005; Rumaihi, 1997). This was a clear endeavour by the new guard to form a legal arm through which they could operate in society. However, the political parties committee rejected '*Hizb al Wasat's*' application for legal status. This rejection caused problems inside the ranks of the MB over how to proceed next. New guard members such as Abu Ella Madi and Salah Abdul Karim wanted to continue with the party initiative to push further the change in the shape and character of the MB (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004; Stacher, 2001; Olav Utvik, 2005). Thus, they wanted to adapt the party manifesto to make it more palatable to the Egyptian government. However, the old guard did not see the benefit in continuing with this party initiative. They believed it would be rejected by the Egyptian government regardless of the number of amendments which were made to the manifesto (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). As a result of this deadlock and disagreement, Abu Madi, Abdul Karim and other well seasoned new guard members left the movement in order to proceed with the '*al Wasat*' group. The '*Hizb al Wasat*' represents certain elements of the new guard inside the movement which became tired of the dogmatic approach of the old guard leadership and decided to branch out, in

order to try their own luck in Egyptian politics (Stacher, 2002). For example, in a January 1995 editorial in the magazine of the Engineers Union, editor Salah Abd al-Karim, later a central member of the *al-Wasat* group, indirectly criticized the domination of the old guard and pointed out the necessity of a proper division of work among the two generations, a division whereby the party elders should restrict themselves to the role of advisors (Olav Utvik, 2005). Much more explicit criticism was expressed in a speech, '*Al-infisah al-nafsi wal-'amal-al-'amm*' (Psychological openness and public work), given at an internal meeting for Brothers active in the unions. As the title suggests, the old guard was criticized for being too narrow minded and inward looking when there was a need for openness toward social and political forces other than the Muslim Brothers (Olav Utvik, 2005; Rumaih, 1997).

The central founders of '*Hizb al Wasat*', Abu Madi and Abdul Karim have pursued a liberal approach and professed it to be an 'civilisational' party for all Egyptians without excluding anyone based upon race, religion or ethnicity (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004). Abu Madi and Abdul Karim have argued that '*Hizb al Wasat*' has a clear position on key issues, such as human rights, Coptic's, democracy and women (Olav Utvik, 2005; Stacher, 2001, 2002). To some '*Hizb al Wasat*' could be viewed more to the left of the political spectrum, as it promotes, social work, trade unionism and is critical of economic policies, such as privatisation and reduction of state subsidies (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004). The intellectual elite in Egypt is supportive of Abu Madi and Abdul Karim, as they view '*Hizb al Wasat*' as providing an counter balance to the sole religious trend represented by the MB (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). The intellectual class is supportive of the new guard in the movement, but remains suspicious of the old guard leadership, which continues to hold a dominant position in the movement. Diaa Rishwan, an expert on Political Islam

at the Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, predicts two potential scenarios, if the Egyptian government decides to allow '*Hizb al Wasat*' to function in society (Rishwan, Interview, 2004);

1) Waves of MB members, especially the new guard defect to the '*Hizb al Wasat*' to control it and change it to follow their political thinking, approach and outlook towards Islam.

2) The MB does not co-operate at all with the '*Hizb al Wasat*' but attack it. As a result the '*Hizb al Wasat*' will find it difficult to make any impact in Egyptian society.

The possible scenarios can be predicted but one will have to wait and see what develops if '*Hizb al Wasat*' is given permission to be legal in Egypt. It is clear, that the case of '*Hizb al Wasat*' indicated a cultural clash between the old guard and the new guard. In particular to the old guard leadership, it indicated the need to keep the new guard content otherwise risk endangering their positions of power inside the movement. This was a key factor behind the old guards appointment of Mohammed Akhef, as the new General Guide in 2003. Although Akhef was from the old guard, his appointment by the conservative faction was indicative of the need to recognise the growing role of the new guard inside the movement. This is because Akhef, although from the old school in thinking and approach, he was willing to listen and to take into consideration the ideas and views presented by the new guard from the likes of Abu Futuh and Essam El Eyrian. However, the present leader Mohammed Akhef is also viewed by the old guard leadership as the actor able to check and control the rise of the new guard to secure their positions inside the movement. The old guard will continue to play a key role in the MB, but there is no doubt that the new guard has risen to prominence in the MB. This can be seen from the fact that the new guard



dominates the public face of the MB, through its participation in the People's Assembly, professional syndicates and the media over the last 25 years. In fact it was the new guard's participation in the 1983 parliamentary elections, which set into process the rise of the new guard and its drive to change the shape and character of the MB. This would set the basis to allow the MB to become a key political actor at the time of economic reform in the 1990s.

### **5.5 The New Guard, Politics and Party Alliances**

Hosni Mubarak faced his first parliamentary elections in 1993. To ensure a comfortable 2/3rds majority for the NDP, the electoral law was changed. The 1983 electoral law confined political activism only to legal political parties, thus excluded independent candidates from standing in the parliamentary elections (Hassan, 2005; Ibrahim, 1988). Also according to this electoral law participating political parties needed to obtain a threshold of 8 per cent to acquire seats inside the People's Assembly. The threshold was extremely high, which reduced the chances of political parties acquiring seats in the parliament (Tripp and Owen, 1991; Wickham, 2002; Abdel Kotob, 1995). In reality it was a mammoth task given the autocratic control which the Egyptian government had over society, through the use of its coercive arm and the state of emergency. This electoral law would lead the new guard and Tilemensani to consider changing the shape and character of the movement to allow it to participate in the 1983 parliamentary elections. As, in 1983, there was no possibility for the movement to overturn its ban, the only way for it to compete in the elections, was through constructing an alliance with the secular opposition (Al Awadi, 2004). In addition, to competing in the elections, the new guard and Tilemensani believed, that an alliance with the secular opposition, would benefit the movement in

other ways as well (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004). For example, they believed that the construction of an alliance would allow the movement to develop a public platform in society, through which the movement could demonstrate its shift from the spirit to politics. Also, they believed that a political alliance would give the movement essential political experience which it lacked in comparison to the secular opposition. This political experience and exposure, was important for the new guard to change the shape and character of the MB, allowing it to challenge the power of the Egyptian government (Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004).

After long deliberation, the MB decided to build a political alliance, with the *al Wafd* party. This political alliance was a daring move, given the stark ideological differences and historical confrontation between the MB and the *al Wafd* party. The new guard was conscious of the obvious criticism which would emerge from the old guard leadership, which from the beginning was not comfortable with the changing shape and character of the MB (Choubaky, Interview, 2004). However, this criticism was something the new guard was willing to risk to allow the MB to enter the parliamentary elections, which would be a major step in the transition of the movement from the spirit to politics. The political alliance between the MB and the *al Wafd* party in the 1983 parliamentary elections was successful. They secured 58 seats in the People's Assembly, with 8 of the seats belonging to the MB (Maye, 2004; Wickham, 2002; Langhor, 2001). The conduct of the brothers in parliament surprised many from the political opposition. The political opposition expected the MB to use overt religious polemics and slogans in parliament. However this did not materialise, in contrast the MB's behaviour was viewed to be very competent and professional. The MB articulated its opinions without overtly religious connotations, which the

secular opposition had feared. Also, the MB's presence in parliament indicated the possible challenge it could pose to the Egyptian government. However, the Egyptian government failed to act as Mubarak sought legitimacy. This failure to act by the Egyptian government would backfire as the MB would undergo further changes, thus allowing it to construct a key political role for itself to challenge the Egyptian government at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1990s.

The success in the 1983 parliamentary elections and the new guard's political competency indicated to the new guard and Tilemensani that the movement had the capacity to survive in the political system to challenge the Egyptian government. However they believed that further changes in its shape and character were necessary for this to occur. In response, Tilemensani began to contemplate the creation of an independent political party to act as a legal cover for the MB. In the minds of the old guard leadership, the acceptance of an independent political party was not easy but it was much easier for them than the transformation of the '*tanzim*' (Movement) into a political force, which was the point of discussion during the late 1970s (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004). Therefore, a compromise had been reached were the '*tanzim*' could effectively co-exist alongside a legal political cover for the MB. The plan was that the '*tanzim*' could continue working at the horizontal level in doing spiritual work, whereas the independent political party would make inroads politically, speeding up the process of change in the shape and character of the movement led by the new guard (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). Despite, this apparent compromise, there was a need by the new guard to convince the old guard, that a political arm would not endanger their positions and power in the movement. By, the below statement Tilemensani was able to distinguish between the roles of the '*tanzim*' and the visualized political organ of the MB:



'The Ikhwan is an international organisation and their concerns encompass the entire world and continents. This is different from political parties, which have domestic concerns. The (ruling) democratic party does not have branches in England or America, while the Ikhwan has branches all over the world' (Al Awadi, 2004, p83)

As a result, Tilemensani not only dealt with the concerns of the old guard leadership by emphasizing the importance of the *'tanzim'* but also dealt with the growing demands of the new guard, by directing the preparation of a party manifesto which would act as the platform for a potential political arm of the MB. In response to this directive by Tilemensani, two separate drafts of a party manifesto were prepared by the brothers led by the new guard. One draft of a manifesto was for the *'Hizb al Islam al Misri'* (Egyptian reform party) and the second draft was for the *'Hizb al Shura'* (consultation party) (Al Awadi, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004). Despite the preparation of the drafts which would act as party manifesto's neither draft was submitted to the Egyptian state, for fear of outright rejection by the state. The belief of the new guard was that the movement had to undergo more changes to its shape and character, before the Egyptian government would allow it to proceed in creating a political arm (Al Awadi, 2004).

The 1987 parliamentary elections provided the new guard with another opportunity to demonstrate further the changing shape and character of the MB. In these elections the MB formed another political alliance but this time the MB moved to form an alliance with the *al Amal* party and *'Hizb al Ahrar'* (Liberal party); which was further evidence of the MB's changing shape and character, as it was willing to cross more ideological barriers and differences to add to its growing political weight in Egyptian politics (Al Ahram, October 26<sup>th</sup> -1<sup>st</sup> November, 1995). Despite sharply divergent ideologies and political programmes, these opposition parties united with the MB to

support programmes of democratic reforms aimed at breaking the electoral stranglehold of the NDP. The MB obtained 36 seats which was a massive increase from the 8 seats it won in the 1983 elections. The MB by this impressive showing had created a concerted political oppositional bloc inside the legislative body. This posed a challenge to the dominance of the NDP inside the People's Assembly given that the 36 members of the movement in the 1987 People's Assembly were from the new guard. As a result, they were young, educated, professional, politically aware and responsive to the needs of the constituents that they represented through addressing broader issues such as criticism of the government's policies in health, and education. Also they were critical of the Egyptian government's attitude to economic problems such as growing unemployment, corruption, inflation, debt and massive consumption (Al Awadi, 2004). As a result of this political outlook, the new guard in the People's Assembly could not be distinguished from other secular opposition in their thinking, behaviour and conduct marking a clear shift in its shape and character away from spiritualism to politics (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004).

The 1990 parliamentary election was boycotted by the MB along with the other secular opposition (except the *al Tagammu* party). This boycott was due to a number of reasons, such as corruption and continuation of the state of emergency (Maye, 2004). However, the decision to boycott the 1990 elections was not a move which was accepted by all in the movement, in particular the new guard (Maye, 2004). The new guard wanted to take the opportunity to strengthen further the political position of the movement and to win over the skeptics by demonstrating further changes to its shape and character. Thus, frustration was apparent inside the MB. However, this boycott did not indicate an end to the changing shape and character of the movement nor did it indicate a victory of the old guard over the new guard. This is because the MB would



participate in the 1995 People Assembly elections. There was much enthusiasm surrounding the 1995 elections, as the elections witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of independent candidates standing for elections. The official estimates indicated that more than 4,000 candidates contested the People Assembly's 444 seats, 439 were from the NDP, 181 from the *al Wafd* party, 107 from the *al Amal* party, 170 from the MB, while the rest belonged either to smaller parties or were independents (Al Ahram, November, 2-8<sup>th</sup>, 1995). However, this enthusiasm, would end as the 1995 elections were marked by an unprecedented level of violence and intimidation by state security forces, including coercive interference to prevent the political opposition from succeeding in the elections, in particular the MB (Kienle, Spring 1998). Hundreds of political activists and voters were harassed by the police and the security forces. Approximately 60 people were killed during the voting process and as many as 878 were severely injured as a result of the violence and disturbances outside voting stations (Maye, 2004; Al Ahram, December, 14-20<sup>th</sup>, 1995).

In reaction to the violence seen at the 1995 elections, the Egyptian government began to provide a number of justifications for the coercive response which was enacted by the police and security forces during the elections (Campagna, 1996). The Egyptian electorate was portrayed as the culprits and instigators of violence with the police and security forces merely responding to the ensuing crisis. Despite the Egyptian government's justification for its brutality, there is no doubt that the key reason behind the brutality of the Egyptian government was a result of the MB's decision to put forward 170 candidates in the elections (Brownlee, 2002; Al Awadi, 2004). The Egyptian government realised that if the MB was left to participate in a free and fair election, an overwhelming proportion of the movement's candidates would acquire seats within the People's Assembly. This scenario of a MB bloc in the People's



Assembly was a fearful one for the Egyptian government. For example if 140 out of 170 MB candidates gained seats this number would pose a direct challenge to the NDP domination of the People's Assembly. This prospect of a counter hegemonic bloc shaped by the MB in the People's Assembly posed many dilemmas to the Egyptian government, which was made even more difficult as it would be led by the new guard who were skilled in politics and aware of social and economic realities in Egypt. In addition, the People's Assembly was to nominate Mubarak for a fourth term as president in 1995, and a powerful presence of the movement could inevitably obstruct the nomination process in the People's Assembly (Al Awadi, 2004; Brownlee, 2002). Thus, the fear of a strong MB presence in the People's Assembly, at a time of socio-economic crisis, determined the political strategy of the Egyptian government, leading to the Interior Ministry to interfere in the 1995 elections excessively. The impact of this interference by the Interior Ministry can be seen through the outcome of the 1995 elections as out of 170 MB candidates only one MB candidate succeeded in gaining a seat (Al Awadi, 2004). However, even the single MB representative, Essam El Eyrian's stay in the People's Assembly was short lived. He was immediately accused of belonging to an outlawed religious movement and as a result his membership to the People's Assembly was revoked (Maye, 2004; Choubaky, Interview, 2004). The Egyptian government's policy of accommodation towards the MB as witnessed during the 1980s ended, with the state adopting a more coercive and confrontational policy towards the MB. This was because the movement during the 1990s was a different entity compared to the 1980s, as the movement had built its '*tanzim*', increased its membership and had shifted more from the spirit to politics. All of this allowed the movement to pose a political challenge to the Egyptian government at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in Egypt.

The Egyptian government's coercive policy towards the movement, in the 1995 elections raised concerns in the old guard. The old guard believed that the Egyptian government was genuinely autocratic and it did not contemplate the existence of a contender to its power and its structures in society. As a result, according to the old guard the possibility of the movement evolving into a political power was minimal indeed and changes in the movement's shape and character was doing it more harm than good (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004; Rishwan, Interview, 2004). The old guard began to emphasise the need for the MB to revert back to focusing upon its traditional spiritual work in order to build society according to religious virtues and principles, rather than changing the shape and character of the movement to challenge the Egyptian government. The old guard began to assert its influence over the MB but the new guard would not be de-motivated by this incident but continued to push for change in the movement in order for it to become more political. This further politicization was exciting to the new guard, as they were fully conscious of the fact that the Egyptian government was vulnerable in the context of heightened socio-economic crisis which had developed in Egypt in the 1990s.

As a result, the new guard participated in the 2000 parliamentary elections. The MB's performance in the 2000 elections was much better compared to the 1995 elections, which were marred by violence and excessive security clampdowns. The MB acquired 17 seats in the People's Assembly. This meant that it would be the largest oppositional force in parliament after the ruling party. The MB's victory took everybody including the group itself, by surprise (Choubaky, Interview, 2004). The result was not predicted by the Egyptian government as it believed that the MB was too weak given the clampdown on the movement since 1995. This moral boosting victory against the autocratic state indicated the resilient nature of the movement, in

particular the new guard. It also indicated that reprisals by the Egyptian government were not going to deter the new guard from changing the shape and character of the movement, leading to its transition from spiritual piety to political activism.

Therefore, through participation in parliamentary elections since 1983, the new guard was able to change the shape and character of the MB, allowing it to challenge the Egyptian government. This challenge was a source of concern for the Egyptian government in the 1990s. This was complicated by heightened socio-economic crisis, resulting from economic reform and also the participation of the new guard in professional syndicates. The new guard was making use of all possible spaces in society to challenge the hegemony of the Egyptian government, which was made even more enticing at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in Egypt.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the transition of the MB from spiritual piety to political activism. This was done by studying the new guard and their contribution to the movements changing shape and character, resulting in it entering parliamentary politics and forming party alliances. This allowed the movement to become a more viable source of political opposition and to challenge the Egyptian government in the 1990s, at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis. As a result of this, opposition and challenge from the MB, the Egyptian government used its coercive apparatuses to contain and weaken the MB. A clear example of this was the violence which surrounded the 1995 and 2000 parliamentary elections and the large scale detention of the movements members from 1995-2000. A further problem for the Egyptian government was the ability of the MB to challenge its hegemony through alternative institutions in civil society, such as professional syndicates. The syndicates would



become central to the movement, in its challenge to the hegemony of the Egyptian government at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis. This makes it important to explore the role of the MB in civil society, in particular in the syndicates to determine how it was able to construct a challenge through the syndicates to the Egyptian government at time of economic reform in the 1990s.

## **Chapter 6- The Art of Politics- The New Guard, Syndicates and Power**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explore the MB's involvement in professional syndicates in Egypt. In particular it examines how the MB's new guard used such institutions in order to build up its power base in order to challenge the position of the Egyptian state at the time of socio-economic crisis in the 1990s. This will be done by exploring the entry of the MB into professional syndicates during the 1980s and how the MB was able to develop a political platform in the syndicates, allowing it to build support and mobilise syndicate members in opposing and challenging the Egyptian government.

### **6.2 The Egyptian State and Professional Syndicates**

There are approximately 24 professional syndicates in Egypt with a total of 3.5 million members (Fahmy, 1998, 2002). The objective of professional syndicates is to protect the professional interests of its members, including salaries, pensions, conditions of work and regulation of entry into the profession. According to Dr Qandil, an expert on MB involvement in syndicates, 'the syndicates also provide an avenue within which less influential and less prestigious subgroups of various professions may attempt to further their socio- economic and political causes' (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). For example, doctors, teachers and lawyers employed by the Egyptian state have all attempted to increase their economic status and rewards through syndicate activities in the past (Wickham, 2002).

Besides providing social settings through which personal contacts and relations can be made, syndicates have performed an important political role and function as well. The syndicates have pressed the Egyptian government for demands which go beyond the

traditional remit of syndicate work and activity. The syndicate of physicians successfully resisted the introduction of fully socialised medicine in the early 1960s and the journalists syndicate since the 1950s has been the most vocal advocate of the relaxing of media censorship in Egypt (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). The lawyers syndicate during its heyday in the 1970s challenged the Egyptian state on domestic and foreign policy issues, such as economic liberalisation, privatization and the Camp David Peace Accords (Al Ahram, July, 14-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Ahmed El-Khawaga, a Nasserist, pursued highly publicised and often ferocious battles against the Egyptian government in the 1970s through the lawyers syndicate, challenging the government on economic and political issues (Al Ahram, July, 14-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005). In addition other syndicates have also sponsored debates and published commentaries in their magazines with political overtones, such as land ownership (the agricultural engineers syndicate), the SUMED pipeline (the engineers syndicate) and educational curricula (the teachers syndicate) (Al-Ahram, July, 14-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B).

The real political significance of syndicates lies in their role as vehicles through which they can mobilise the support of the professional class in Egypt (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). According to Dr Choubaky, a leading commentator on the MB, 'the Journalists, doctors, engineers, lawyers and other professionals represent Egypt's articulate sector and if mobilised could represent a real challenge to the Egyptian state's power' (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). As a result the syndicates have since 1952 been an arena of concern and intervention from the Egyptian state (Bianchi, 1989, p106). The Egyptian state has dissolved syndicate boards, co-opted syndicate chairmen, infiltrated syndicates through the use of its security apparatus and relied upon the compliance of state



employees within syndicates (Fahmy, 2002). Nasser and Sadat kept a close eye and check on syndicates in order to keep the professional class under their rule and preempt any challenges to their rule. However, Nasser and Sadat both resorted to a major crack down on syndicates when they felt threatened by them. For example, between, 1964-1967 Nasser launched a massive campaign to weaken and discredit syndicates (Al Ahram, July, 14-20<sup>th</sup>, 2005; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). This action was taken by Nasser to deal with the perceived political danger of syndicates and to present the ASU as the principal organization of popular mobilisation in Egypt. In addition, Sadat turned against the syndicates, in particular the lawyers syndicate after it criticised the peace agreement with Israel (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). This led to the development of conflict and struggle between the Egyptian state and the lawyers syndicate.

However, the fortunes of syndicates in Egypt changed after the assassination of Sadat, when Hosni Mubarak came to power in 1980. President Mubarak began a process of limited political liberalisation, where the Egyptian state began to allow limited political space to emerge and exist in society (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). Political space began to open up for student activity on university campuses once again and the political opposition was encouraged by Mubarak's promises of political reform and constitutional change. In relation to syndicates, Mubarak's position towards them was to loosen state restrictions on them and allow a degree of independence but without giving them absolute autonomy from the regulation of the Egyptian government (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). The lawyers syndicate was allowed to resume activity after it was disbanded under Sadat as a result of its criticism of

Egypt's peace agreement with Israel. The fact that Egypt's diplomatic relations with Israel and America 'had deteriorated' in the early 1980s, made Mubarak's decision in allowing the lawyers syndicate to resurface much more easier. As a result Mubarak did not take any action as Sadat had done against the lawyers syndicate when it resumed its criticism of the Camp David peace accords with Israel in the 1980s (Bianchi, 1989). According to Abu Ella Madi a former leading figure in the MB, 'it was quite clear that Mubarak in his quest for legitimacy did not foresee syndicates becoming a major sphere of MB activity and source of mobilisation, which would contest state power and hegemony in Egypt' (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). President Mubarak assumed that the 'corporatist' links between the Egyptian state and the syndicates offered sufficient guarantees and protection from political forces which aimed to challenge the power and hegemony of the Egyptian state (Fahmy, 2002).

This line of thinking by Mubarak was based on the evidence from the tenure of Nasser and Sadat. However, the 1980s was a different reality altogether as the MB was undergoing a process of change in its shape and character adding to its political weight in Egypt. This would lead the MB to enter the game of syndicate politics in Egypt (Al-Ahram, February, 7-14<sup>th</sup>, 2007). The MB use of syndicates in the 1980s and 1990s would become central to the political agenda of the MB and its development into a key political actor in Egypt (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix, B; Hasan, 2000, p235). In fact, MB involvement in syndicates gave the MB the opportunity to appeal to all sectors of Egyptian society. According to Dr Amr Hamzawy, a leading expert on the MB, 'the MB, through political alliances with political parties was able to appeal to the political elite, through the provision of social services it was able to appeal to the

grassroots, strengthening its social base and its participation in the syndicates gave the MB direct access to the professional class, an important sector in any potential challenge to the power of the Egyptian government, which the MB would launch in the 1990s' (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). Also, according to Abu Ella Madi, 'the MB decided to participate in all democratic institutions which included professional syndicates in the 1980s, so that the MB's ideology could reach a far more larger and important faction of society – middle class professionals and also to demonstrate the efficiency of the MB in civil activities' (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). In other words, the MB's influence over syndicates provided important political and social sites for experimentation in which leadership skills were demonstrated, an Islamic sub-culture was enhanced and the access to the important middle class became much easier (Wickham, 1996, 2002, p179).

### **6.3 The New Guard, Syndicates and the Egyptian State**

The professional syndicates in Egypt in the 1980s had a number of problems such as a political in-fighting between rival political factions, a lack of transparency, corruption and financial mismanagement (Al-Ahram, December, 23-29<sup>th</sup>, 1999; Fahmy, 2002, pp 137-142). According to Dr Choubaky, 'the professional class had become dissatisfied with the performance of the syndicate boards in dealing with their economic, social and political concerns' (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). It was in this failing political and socio-economic context, that the MB pragmatic new guard would enter the syndicates and participate in syndicate elections. The MB candidates to the executive boards of the medical and engineering syndicates ran on an Islamic programme, pushing the slogans of '*al-Islam Huwa al-Hal*' and '*Na'm Nuriduha Islamiya*' ('Islam is the solution' and 'Yes, we want it to be Islamic') (Choubaky,



Interview, 2004, See Appendix B: Ella Madi. Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). The syndicate elections featured candidates such Dr. Essam El Eyrian and Dr. Abu Futuh, whom would become key new guard activists in the future. The elections of the mid-1980s in the medical (1984) and engineering syndicates (1987) brought the first victories of the Islamist camp (Al Ahram, December, 18-25<sup>th</sup>, 1999). The gradual takeover of the syndicates was accompanied by a mobilization of members in favour of Islamist politics (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). According to Dr Choubaky and Abu Ella Madi, these two syndicates constituted fertile ground for such activities, given the preponderance of engineering and medical students in the membership of the Islamic Student Movement in the 1970s (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). In a short period of time the MB was making inroads in a host of other syndicates, such as the pharmacists, journalists, dentists, scientists, agronomists and commercial employees (Al Ahram, December, 18-25<sup>th</sup>, 1999). In order to demonstrate the inroads the MB made and its rise in the syndicates, I will examine the cases of the doctors and the engineering syndicates.

### **6.3.1 The Doctors Syndicate**

This syndicate was established in 1920, and is the second oldest syndicate in Egypt after the lawyers' syndicate. The syndicate is of a medium size in terms of registered members, with it having approximately between 100,000-150,000 registered members. This is a small membership size in comparison to the large teachers and commercial professions syndicate which represents 700,000 and 350,000 members according to figures of 1994 (Qandil, 1996, p16). According to informal statistics, about 40% of the members of the syndicate are younger than 35 years which was mainly due to the

increasing number of medical school graduates in the past few decades. As for the constituency of the members, they can be divided into four main groups according to their professional status:

- 1) Doctors of the Ministry of Health, who are considered more or less the constituency of the Egyptian government and the NDP especially in elections.
- 2) The doctors of the military establishment who represent with the former group the majority of members and is also strongly affiliated with the Egyptian government
- 3) University faculty, who usually work outside the Egyptian government circles either in private hospitals or their owned clinics
- 4) The final group is the doctors working in the area of special health services (Qandil, 1996, p17-18).

The internal structure and organization of the syndicate is composed of the chairman and a council of 24 members. The council is elected for a 4 year term and half of the council's members are elected every 2 years (Qandil, 1996, p23). According to Dr Qandil, 'the syndicate council is responsible for setting strategies, implementing the decisions made by the general assembly, making yearly budgets and several other functions' (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A).

The year 1984 was a turning point for the doctor's syndicate as the MB member's secured 3 seats in the council. This presence of the MB was followed in 1986 elections with a more sweeping victory and the politicization of the syndicate role (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). Despite the political role the

syndicate played during the 1970s especially against the Camp David peace process. the Islamic touch by the MB was clearly present after the success in the 1986 council elections (Qandil, 1996, p33). According to Dr Qandil, 'this role was manifested in the heightened political confrontation with the regime on internal issues such as the emergency law, the political parties' law and political participation' (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). Also the syndicate had a very active law on international issues such as the Israeli- Palestinian conflict.

The doctor's syndicate's political dynamics can be clearly observed through the internal practices of the syndicate. The syndicate members were mainly divided into an Islamist constituency, a pro-government, national and leftist constituencies (Qandil, 1996, p72). This healthy political atmosphere encouraged political and voting participation among the members which is manifested in the doubling of the percentage of voters who participated in elections from 1982 to 1992 – in 1982 only 22% of eligible voters participated while in 1992 it was nearly doubled to 43% (Qandil, 1996, p69). Moreover, democratic practices and transparency was evident in several aspects such as the regular meetings of the general assembly, composed of all members, which oversaw the performance of the council, publicly representing financial and technical reports to the members and the unbiased treatment of members by providing services or assigning in committees members regardless of their political or religious affiliation (Qandil, 1996, p43). The MB was highly involved in this political dynamics and would demonstrate its political skills and proficiency not only to the professional class but also to rival political factions, which previously had viewed the MB as being mainly a religious movement without political views and solutions to common problems.



### 6.3.2 The Engineers Syndicate

The Engineer's syndicate is famous for being the first victim of Law 100 in 1993 as the Egyptian government placed it under judicial control in the same year where it still remains (Al-Ahram, October, 21-27<sup>th</sup>, 1999). The syndicate was established in 1946 and it represents almost 200,000 engineers, larger than the doctor's syndicate but smaller than the teachers and commercial professional syndicates (Arafa, July, 2001). The syndicate is managed by a 61 seat council including the chairman which is elected every 4 years (Arafa, September, 2001).

The engineers syndicate was co-opted by the Egyptian state to a very large extent as it was headed during the 1970s by the construction tycoon Osman Ahmed Osman who was also Sadat's friend and related to Sadat through marriage (Wickham, 2002, p186). However, the MB gained presence for the first time during his term as chairman in 1985, but did not actually secure a victory until 1987 when they won 45 seats from the 61 seats of the executive board followed by another victory in 1991 by securing 46 seats (Wickham, 1996, 2002; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). As in other syndicates, the MB began to provide a wide range of services mainly targeting youth members who accounted around 35 % of the syndicate's members.

According to Dr Hamzawy, 'under the MB influence and control, the syndicate became more politically oriented and concerned with domestic, pan-Arabic and Islamic issues' (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). This was manifested in the change in position regarding the peace treaty with Israel which was previously accepted by the syndicate and the position on the Palestinian intifada and the Gulf War (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See

Appendix A; Arafa, September, 2001). However, with the assistance of liberal and leftist factions in the syndicate who were concerned with the domination of the MB, the Egyptian government succeeded in placing the syndicate under judicial management and control supposedly for financial mismanagement within the syndicate (Al Ahram, July, 11-18<sup>th</sup>, 2005); Abdul Hafiz, 2003, p173). The engineers syndicate remains under judicial control in a clear violation in its affairs by the Egyptian state (Al-Ahram, April, 13-19<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

#### **6.4 The Consolidation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syndicate Politics in the 1980s**

The MB's rapid rise in professional syndicates in the 1980s was followed by a policy of consolidation by which the MB aimed to tighten their influence over the professional class in the syndicates. As a result of their positions on syndicate boards, the MB tackled head on socio-economic problems such as corruption, and financial mismanagement in the syndicates. The leading MB activists such Essam El Eyrian, Abu Futuh and Abu Ella Madi would tackle corruption in a direct manner with no concern for upsetting, personalities, political figures or political parties in the syndicates (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). This was done by the launching of big and impressive campaigns against '*fasad*' (corruption) in the syndicates (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). According to Dr Choubaky, 'the challenge in dealing with corruption and improving the financial performance of syndicates was assisted by the experience of the new guard, such as individuals like Abu Ella Madi and Essam El Eyrian from their time on university campuses and involvement in student politics during the 1970s' (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). In addition the

Islamic Student Movement experience provided this generation of new guard activists a vast array of political skills ranging from being experienced in providing services, calling for the Islamic ideology, challenging different political groups and negotiating with the regime (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Wickham, 1996, 2002, p117). These skills were instrumental behind the MB in successfully dealing with corruption and allowing the provision of social services to their constituents within the syndicates. In the engineer's syndicate, which included almost 200,000 members, the number of beneficiaries of the health scheme initiated by the MB had increased by 36 per cent since 1989 (Al Ahram, July, 11-18<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The same was true in the medical syndicate. In addition the MB worked hard to extend medical insurance to syndicate members and their families, establish social and recreational clubs and not just in large cities but rural areas, increase the stock of housing available to members at lower prices, and assist the families of those members arrested or otherwise detained by the Egyptian regime (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A; Fahmy, 1998). According to Dr Hamzawy, by such actions, 'the MB syndicate activists renewed the legacy of social Islam, pioneered by the pragmatic new guard and allowed the MB to deal with socio-economic problems being faced by the professional class in the syndicates' (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). As a result the MB was able to consolidate its position in the syndicates, through securing the support of the professional class. This was reflected through a rise in turnout for syndicate elections, which indicated the MB's growing popularity in the syndicates. Table 2 demonstrates the rise in registered voters for the Physician syndicate;



**Table 2: Trends in Voting Patterns and Number of Candidates  
In Physicians Syndicate (1982-1992)**

Year	Registered voters	Fee paying members	Percentage of Total	Actual number of voters	Percentage of Total	Number of candidates
1982	50,000	20,000	40	2,000	4	34
1984	60,000	30,000	50	6,000	10	85
1986	75,000	40,000	53	11,000	15	59
1988	90,000	50,000	56	12,000	13	62
1990	100,000	65,000	65	21,000	21	130
1992	110,000	70,000	64	30,000	27	180

Sources: Qandil, Amany. "Occupational Groups and Political Participation" in The Reality of Political Pluralism In Egypt, Ed. Mustafa El Sayid, Cairo: Madbouli, 1996.

In addition to the dealing with, corruption, financial mismanagement and the provision of social services, there are a number of other reasons which can be used to explain the consolidation of the MB in the syndicates during the 1980s (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). The MB's effective organization and efficient management of syndicate affairs was central to the movement's success in the syndicates. The decentralized structure in the movement and coordination among different branches enhanced the efficiency of managing the syndicates through the exchange of experiences and ideas between different controlled MB syndicates (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A; Al Awadi, 2004, p67). According to Dr Choubaky and Abu Ella Madi, another key reason that can not be ignored is the Islamic appeal the movement had (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). Many members of the professional class supported the Islamist bloc, as they were considered respectable figures, anti-corrupt and of high moral and ethical values which were characteristics lacking in their

competitors and rival political factions in the syndicates (Wickham, 1996, 2002, p199).

As a result of a combination and inter play of the above reasons the MB was able to rise and consolidate quickly its position in syndicate politics in Egypt during the 1980s. The MB created a niche for themselves in the syndicates, and a series of episodes in the 1990s, would raise further the profile of the movement in the syndicates. According to Abu Ella Madi, ‘these episodes provided the MB with the opportunity to demonstrate their power, through the further politicisation of syndicates and to mobilise the professional class to challenge the Egyptian state at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1990s’ (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). These episodes included the 1991 Gulf War, the MB’s victory in the lawyers syndicate in 1992 and the Egyptian earthquake in 1992 (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). Each of these episodes needs explaining, as they allowed the movement to further politicise the syndicates and to directly challenge the power and structure of the Egyptian state.

### **6.5 The 1991 Gulf War**

The MB was quick to condemn Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and it asked Saddam Hussein to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait in order to end the conflict. This was the same position taken by the Egyptian government. However, western involvement in the crisis, leading to the bombing of Iraq, led to a break in relations between the MB and the Egyptian government (Al Awadi, 2004). The MB used their control over student unions and syndicates in order to challenge the Egyptian

governments' policies in support of the war with Iraq and with it toeing US policy in relation to Iraq.

In response, the syndicates under the control of the MB began to form coalitions to co-ordinate their actions and for the first time in the syndicate's history, a Committee for Coordinating the Action of Syndicates was established in 1990 (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Al Awadi, 2004). The idea behind the Committee was not new having been thought of in the late 1980s but it was a daring move and a provocative statement by the MB. The Committee, in an important statement condemned the Western military presence in the Gulf and held the Egyptian government responsible for the safety of Egyptians working in Kuwait and Iraq (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Al Awadi, 2004). The Egyptian government responded quickly and forced the chairmen of the syndicates not under the control of the MB to withdraw from the Committee and to comply with the Egyptian government's official policy towards the Iraq war. Despite, this setback, the MB continued with its political challenge against the Egyptian government through the Committee. The Committee went further and in a second statement harshly condemned Egyptian involvement in the war and demanded the return of Egyptian troops. This had a powerful impact on the Egyptian government's populist legitimacy and it forced the NDP to declare that Egypt was not a secular state but an Islamic state in order to combat the religious discourse of the MB. In addition the Egyptian government employed the Al-Azhar religious institution in order to combat the religious rhetoric of the MB (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). At the same time, the MB became victims of a smear campaign led by the media and powerful NDP individuals such as Yusuf Wali and Kamal al-Shadhili, who accused the MB of disloyalty and treason to the Egyptian



nation (Al Awadi, 2004). The syndicates became a concern for the Egyptian government and the level of concern would be heightened by the victory of the MB in the influential and politically active lawyers syndicate and its strong presence in other politically active syndicates.

### **6.6 The Muslim Brotherhoods Success in the Lawyers Syndicate**

The lawyers syndicate was established in 1912, being the first professional syndicate in Egypt (Abdul Hafiz, 2003, p24). The syndicate assumed a political role ever since it was established. The syndicate has a long history of political stands against the British occupation, the Nasserite coercive policies, the open door policy in the 1970s and the restricted liberties under Mubarak (Abdul Hafiz, 2003). The main political factions of the syndicate were the Wafdists, the leftists and Nasserites and the Islamists. It is noteworthy that the Wafdist lawyers had a very important role in politicizing the syndicate as they controlled it for several decades (Abdul Hafiz, 2003, p75).

In the 1980s, intense political and legal disputes between rival political cliques diluted the lawyer's syndicate's performance in defending liberal and national causes for which it had become known. By the early 1990s, chronic political infighting between political rivals paralysed the executive board in the lawyers syndicate. The MB's new guard, who had gained exposure and credibility through their work in the lawyer's syndicates committees on civil liberties and Islamic law, took advantage of the internal political crisis in the elections of 1992 (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D; Choubaky, Interview, See Appendix B 2004). The new guard's superior election campaign, organisation, financing, and tactics allowed them to win the support of the lawyers in the syndicate.

The new guard organised its candidates on a single national list under the leadership of Sayf al Islam al Banna, the son of the MB founder Hassan al Banna. The MB won 18 seats on the executive board and this was echoed by its strong presence on other politically known syndicates (Wickham, 1996). Table 3 below shows the presence of MB members on key syndicate boards in 1992:

**Table 3: Muslim Brotherhood in Boards of Professional Syndicates  
1992**

<b>Syndicate</b>	<b>Total number of members of board</b>	<b>Number of Islamists on board</b>
Physicians	25	20
Engineers	61	45
Lawyers	25	18
Pharmacists	25	17

Source: Qandil, Amany. "Occupational Groups and Political Participation" in The Reality of Political Pluralism In Egypt, Ed. Mustafa El Sayid, Cairo: Madbouli, 1996. Qandil, Amany. The Process of Democratization in Egypt (1981-1993), Cairo: Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, 1995

The success of the MB in these politically known syndicates, in particular the lawyers syndicate indicated the growing political power and stature of the MB (Asharq al Awasat, February, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001; Mattoon, 1992, p16). According to Dr Choubaky, 'the MB began to use its presence in these syndicates in order to address wider economic and political issues in Egypt' (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). The MB organised seminars, in which political actors from other political parties were invited to participate. Essam El Eyrian, the head of the Medical Association, had been instrumental in making the association a national platform for dialogue and discussion for all key economic and political issues that Egypt faced. The seminars held in the syndicate addressed key issues such as Islam and secularism, economic reforms and pressing political concerns, such as the Egyptian role in the Gulf war (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A; El

Diwani, 2003). In addition the MB held several seminars in which they addressed issues such as housing, development, terrorism, freedom, poverty, unemployment and relations with Israel (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Olav Utvik, 2005). This politicisation of the syndicates in the 1990s by the new guard was reflective of the changes in the MB, showing the developing political outlook and confidence of the MB. In the process, the new guard had significantly transformed the syndicates themselves, making them the vehicle to extend the message of social Islam, to define its larger vision of centrist Islam and to challenge the hegemony of the Egyptian government, which was coming under severe pressure due to heightened socio-economic crisis resulting from economic reform in the 1990s (Asharq al Awsat, February, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001; Olav Utvik, 2005).

### **6.7 The Egyptian Earthquake**

The Egyptian earthquake, in October, 1992 was another episode which indicated to the Egyptian government the political weight of the MB and this would have political implications for the MB. In response to the earthquake the new guard employed their resources in the syndicates, as well as the *'tanzim'* and the new guard in the syndicates ensured a rapid and efficient transfer of resources towards rescuing the victims of the earthquake (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Al Awadi, 2004). This quick response by the new guard outstripped the performance of the Egyptian government and embarrassed it in the eyes of the Egyptian public.

In addition, the performance of the MB during the earthquake was praised in Egypt and abroad as well, which concerned the Egyptian government. The western media noted the contrast between the MB's success and the Egyptian government's failure in rescuing and providing adequate help to the victims of the earthquake (Al Awadi,



2004). President Mubarak at the time of the earthquake was on a visit to China and he returned immediately not only to coordinate efforts in dealing with the earthquake but was also concerned with the politicisation of the syndicates and how the MB was using the earthquake to expand its social base in Egypt.

The MB used the increased publicity resulting from its relief efforts in the earthquake in order to promote its Islamic ideology and to mobilise support in syndicates and wider society (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A; Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). In the midst of its relief efforts, the MB displayed banners on tents and in front of the relief headquarters situated at the syndicates under their control that carried slogans such as 'Islam is the Solution' (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). This use of political slogans would lead to confrontation with the security services, which would instruct the MB to remove the slogans. The medical syndicate complied with the instructions and removed the slogans but other syndicates continued to use political slogans, which continued to concern the Egyptian government.

### **6.8 The Egyptian State and its Confrontation with the Muslim Brotherhood**

In response to the political weight of the MB in the syndicates which was strengthened as a result of the Gulf War, victory in the lawyer's syndicates and its relief efforts in the earthquake, the Egyptian government began to try to understand how the MB was influencing syndicates. According to Dr Qandil 'the Egyptian government commissioned her to prepare a report looking into the strategies and policies used by the MB to influence and succeed in syndicates' (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). The findings by Dr Qandil indicated that the MB was able to address the real concerns of the professional class and did this in an organised and

professional manner (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). Soon after this report had been presented to the Egyptian government, it issued the Associations Law 100, February 16 in 1993, 'the law concerning the insurance of democracy within the syndicates', which was a direct attempt by the Egyptian government to reduce the growing influence of the MB within the syndicates (Al-Ahram, October, 21-27<sup>th</sup>, 1999; Al Awadi, 2004). The Egyptian government defended the law on the basis of its attempts to increase voter participation and democracy within the syndicates. However, the true objective behind the introduction of this law was clear for all to see. The Law could be seen as a direct response to the growing role of the MB in the syndicates and their politicisation by the MB, as result of the Gulf War, victory in the lawyers syndicate (as well its control of 19 branches of the lawyer's syndicate in other provinces) and the Egyptian earthquake (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). The Law specified that for the elections to be valid there must be at least a 50 per cent turn out in the elections. However, if this mark was not reached, the elections could be re-run twice in which case if a turnout of 33 per cent was not reached in the second re-run, the syndicate would fall under the administration of officials appointed by the Egyptian government until new elections were held (Kienle, Spring, 1998; Al Awadi, 2004). In reaction, the MB organised demonstrations and work stoppages, drafted petitions to the speaker of parliament and sponsored special plenary sessions and joint conferences to mobilise the professional class against Law 100 (Wickham, 1996, 2002). This failed in forcing the Egyptian government to remove Law 100, however, it did make the government realise the need to further tighten its control over the syndicates. In February, 1995, the Egyptian government introduced new amendments to Law 100. This gave extra powers to the judges to supervise syndicate

elections, as well as the right to disqualify candidates. When the new amendments also failed to do their intended job, the Interior Ministry, which had been assigned to enforce the powers of the judges, intervened and halted the syndicate elections. on the basis that the Islamists candidates belonged to an outlawed movement. This happened to Essam El Eyrian in the medical syndicate in 1995 and to Sayf al Islam al Banna in the lawyers syndicate in 1996 (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). In addition to this, following a court case to do with financial irregularities, the engineers syndicate was also placed under the supervision of judges until another date had been set for the elections (Al-Ahram, October, 21-27<sup>th</sup>, 1999). The new guard saw the timing of the case as an orchestrated campaign to stop them winning seats in the elections, and as a result the new guard refused to comply with the courts ruling. When the security forces broke into the syndicate to enforce the ruling and suspended the board of council, the council which was dominated by the MB, filed a court against the Egyptian government for the suspension. The arrests and trials of members of the medical, lawyers and engineers syndicates confirmed that the Egyptian government was overtly concerned with the use of syndicates as political platforms by the MB in order to challenge the power of the Egyptian state (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C). Furthermore, what occurred in the engineers syndicate showed that the new guard would not easily give up what they had worked towards and achieved in the syndicates. According to Dr Hamzawy, 'this reflected the broader spirit in the new guard which emphasised the fact that the MB should not be deterred from their progress in influencing syndicates and politics but it should aim to expand that influence further to weaken the hegemony of the Egyptian state' (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). Therefore, despite, this crackdown directed towards MB involvement in the



syndicates, the new guard stepped up their demands for political and constitutional reforms in Egypt. Importantly the new guard continued to use syndicates as venues for meetings and seminars, maintaining the political significance of the syndicates (Ella Madi, Interview, 2004, See Appendix C).

For example, according to Dr Qandil, ‘the MB’s new guard continued to use their skills as organizers and alliance builders to develop support for their political demands in the syndicates not only amongst the professional class but also with political activists with varying political affiliations’ (Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A). A two-day Conference on Freedoms and Civil Society was held in October 1994 at the medical association and organized by Dr. Essam El-Eyrian and Abu al-Ella Madi, bringing together hundreds of prominent activists and intellectuals, including government figures, to hammer out a consensus on basic rights (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). A delegation from the conference that included the two co-organizers visited the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz in hospital to express high-profile support and condemnation of his stabbing by militant Islamists. At the same time, the MB were issuing communiqués condemning every attack by militant Islamists on Egyptian government figures and tourists, and even brokered a cease-fire deal between the radical Islamists and the Egyptian government during the United Nations’ Cairo Population Conference (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Qandil, Interview, 2004, See Appendix A).

These moves by the MB to build support for its demands and to remove the restrictions on the syndicates, led to pressure being imposed on the Egyptian government. In response in 2001 the Egyptian government lifted the judicial control over the lawyers syndicate and allowed for free elections (Al-Ahram, March, 10-16<sup>th</sup>,

2005). The MB had a sweeping victory in the 2001 elections by securing 23 from the 24 council seats (Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B; Asharq al Awasat, February, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001; Arafa, September, 2001). The chairman position was won by the Nasserite Sameh Ashour who is a famous opponent to the MB. This situation between the council and the chairman created tension in their relations which was unfortunately reflected on the efficiency in carrying out syndicate affairs. Earlier in 2005, new elections took place and Ashour won his seat again while the MB secured 15 seats (Al-Ahram, March, 24-30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The MB accused the Egyptian government in interfering in the election process and rigging the results for the benefit of their ally Ashour, and filed a law suit contesting the results of the elections (Al-Ahram, March, 24-30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Therefore, despite allowing syndicate elections to take place, the Egyptian government has continued with its policy of interference in syndicate affairs in order to curb the power of the MB. This was explained by Dr. Essam El Eyrian who, believes that the paralysis of the syndicates is a result of the MB's political challenge to the Egyptian government;

They want to stop [us] from presenting an example of effectuality and from reaching a strong podium to air our political views in the absence of political life. But our success was obvious from 1984 and 1985 when we first appeared. The syndicate here was nothing but two rooms where very little work was done. Today our activities have reached all corners of the globe. Wherever we go, from Afghanistan to Iraq, we show the true face of Egypt. They fear our success, and they don't want us to show our abilities. The Brotherhood was able to gain the trust of a broad section of the Egyptian people. Despite the campaign against, Islam and against Islamic movements, the Brotherhood continues to win any elections because of this trust. (Egypt Today, June, 2006).

In addition Essam El Eyrian believes that the Egyptian state has done much more harm to itself than the MB through its control of syndicates in Egypt. 'This is going to make [the government's] image even worse in front of the rest of the world,' explained Essam El-Eyrian:



‘All reform initiatives talk about civil society and the importance of encouraging civil work. Professional and labour syndicates are the backbone of civil society. And what has the government done? It has nationalized labour syndicates, frozen professional syndicates and paralyzed the actions of NGOs. It looks very bad,’ he said. ‘Now the government wants to beautify itself with nominal changes. It’s ridiculous. Our stance as professionals is clear: Law 100 must be cancelled and syndicates should be left to their members, to be run according to their own internal laws,’ he said (Egypt Today, June, 2006).

According to Dr Hamzawy ‘the Egyptian government is unlikely to change its policy towards professional syndicates any time soon, given the rise of the MB in the Egyptian parliament, and its increased social base in Egypt’ (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D). The movement through the syndicates has been able to demonstrate its political weight to the Egyptian government and demonstrated its ability to address pressing socio-economic issues, which put pressure on the Egyptian government at a time of economic crisis in Egypt (Hamzawy, Interview, 2004, See Appendix D; Choubaky, Interview, 2004, See Appendix B). The MB continues to exist and work in the syndicates; however the syndicate’s effectiveness to challenge the state’s power has been weakened, as a result of coercive legislation introduced by the Egyptian government. In reaction, to this the movement, in particular the pragmatic new guard has searched for new avenues through which they can continue to challenge the Egyptian government through undergoing more changes to its shape and character. A new phenomenon in the portfolio of the new guard has been its willingness to form alliances with civil groups and organisations, which is an indication of its desire to drive further changes in the shape and character of the movement. This came to the forefront leading up to and after the 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections, which has increased further the political weight of the MB in Egypt; giving it the ability to extend its social base to make it more diverse and more political in nature and outlook.



## 6.9 The New Guard- From Syndicates to Civilian Alliances

‘We simply have no choice but to reform,’ the MB’s Second Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat El-Shater wrote in a commentary titled ‘No Need to be Afraid of Us’ in the Guardian newspaper in response to the MB’s bolstering success in the 2005 parliamentary election runoffs (Al Ahram, November, 24-30<sup>th</sup>, 2005; Al Ahram, December, 15-21<sup>st</sup>, 2005). Khairat El- Shater went further to define the MB’s goal as to ‘end the monopoly of government by a single party and boost popular engagement in political activity’ (Al Ahram, November 24-30<sup>th</sup>, 2005) At only halfway through the second stage of the parliamentary election in 2005, the MB had already secured 24.6 percent of the seats contested with a target to achieve one fourth or 100 of the total 444 seats in the Egyptian parliament. However, unlike the 1983 and 1987 elections where alliances were in context of the party-system, nearly two decades later, coalitions involving the MB would move beyond the framework of political parties and more along the lines of civilian activism. This has been a move by the new guard to find new avenues of opposition to the Egyptian state in reaction to civil institutions, such as the syndicates being weakened by state intervention. As a result the new guard formed a strong alliance with the ‘*Kefayah*’ movement leading up to and post the 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections. ‘*Kefayah*’ is a movement, which has risen to be a powerful voice of Egyptian civilians of different political backgrounds and persuasions who have come to a consensus on the need of economic and political change in Egypt. The strength of the MB alliance with ‘*Kefayah*’ is reflected by the fact that ‘*Kefayah*’s’ manifesto is reflective of the political demands which are being made by the MB. Similar to the MB, is ‘*Kefayah*’s’ understanding of political reform which is the ‘termination of the current monopoly of power at all levels, starting with the seat of the President of the Republic’ (See *Kefayah al*

*Harakah al-Masriyyah min Agl al-Taghieer*, available from <http://harakamasria.org/about>; Internet). Furthermore 'Kefayah' like the MB further aims to break the hold of the ruling party on power and all its instruments; cessation of the Emergency Law; cessation of all laws which are constraining public and individual freedoms; and constitutional reforms that allow for direct elections of the president and vice presidents from within several candidates as well as limit their period in office to two terms, in addition to parliamentary election reforms and freedom of association and press. Therefore 'Kefayah' and the MB undeniably share a common foe and therefore a common cause. As Wael Khalil – a socialist and a 'Kefayah' activist – articulated to *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 'The Muslim Brotherhood is, without question, my ally [in the battle for reform]... [Government] thugs attacked voters and innocent citizens and we're pontificating about the Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to a civil state' (Al Ahram, November 24-30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The MB's alliance with 'Kefayah' is indicative of the new guard's willingness to cross ideological barriers in order to boost the social and political power of the MB. The pragmatic new guard is comfortable with this alliance, given its past experience of making alliances with political parties and organisations of different political persuasions. It is this shifting of the MB, from one place to another, which has been difficult for the Egyptian state to deal with. The flexibility of the MB has been a key factor which has allowed it to build political power and weight, which has made life difficult for the Egyptian government. Given the clear political role which the MB has been able to develop for itself in Egypt, through participation in the parliament, syndicates and forming of alliances (i.e. political and civil), it has put the Egyptian government on the back foot, which is even more dangerous for the Egyptian government as it aims to manage the process of political succession in Egypt.

## 6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the role of professional syndicates in the quest of the pragmatic new guard to construct power in order to challenge the hegemony of the Egyptian government at a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1990s. This was done by exploring the entrance of the MB into syndicates in the 1980s and how the MB was able to rise quickly in the syndicates resulting in their domination of syndicate boards. This success provided the MB with the opportunity to use the syndicates as tools in their challenge to the Egyptian government. This materialised in the 1990s due to the Gulf war, victory in the lawyers syndicate and its relief efforts in the 1992 Egyptian earthquake. These episodes allowed the MB to politicise the syndicates and to use them for political ends. This politicisation of syndicates resulted in a crackdown on syndicates by the Egyptian government. Therefore the political strategy of the Egyptian government began to evolve around the political threats and challenges which they perceived from the MB. The MB continues to have a bearing on the Egyptian government's political strategy today, especially given the political succession process which is underway in Egypt. Therefore it is important to explore the politics of succession, taking into consideration the processes and actors involved in the politics of succession. Also it is important to examine key political actors, such as the MB, in the context of their influence and impact on the succession process in Egypt.



## **Chapter 7- The Politics of Succession in Egypt**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This thesis so far has examined the process of economic and political reform in Egypt and the overall impact of reform on the MB, which allowed it to develop into a key political actor, and pose a challenge to the Egyptian government in the 1990s. Central to this challenge was the MB's changing shape and character, which allowed it to contest state power through its presence in parliament and professional syndicates. This led to repressive action by the Egyptian state. However the MB was able to survive this offensive owing to its presence inside and outside the system, making it difficult for the Egyptian state to deal with the challenge which they posed. In reaction to the MB's political weight the Egyptian state has had to pursue a careful process of managing socio-economic and political demands in order to survive. Since 2000, the Egyptian state has had to be shrewd in the way it has handled and managed the process of political succession in Egypt. This is a major political development in Egypt over the last 6 years, which requires exploring and unpacking as it is closely related to the key themes of the thesis, such as reform (i.e. economic and political) and the MB. This chapter examines how the Egyptian government has managed the process of political succession, through introducing controlled economic and political reform. This will allow an understanding into the process of grooming, actors and forces involved in the politics of succession in Egypt. In addition, this will allow an examination of key political actors, such as the military and the MB in terms of their influence and impact on the state managed process of political succession in Egypt.

## 7.2 The Economic and Political Grooming of Gamal Mubarak

Gamal worked as a banker and investor in London until his return to Cairo in 1996. His banking and financial skills gave him the much needed credentials of being a potential manager and reformer of the ailing Egyptian economy. Also his liberal economic outlooks inspired confidence and support from the influential business community within and beyond the confinements of Egypt (Washington Post, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003; Al Jazeera, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Gamal's first significant appointment was in 1997 to the US- Egypt's president's council. At that time it was a prominent body that brought together business persons from the two countries. The mixing and interaction with various leading Egyptian businessmen began and the network of contacts he made within this important business sector began to expand over time. For example, presentations and attendance at various business associations, including at the influential American-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce as well as affiliation with economic think tanks, most visible of which is the USAID funded by the Egyptian centre for economic studies have contributed to his expanding networking into the business class (Zenati, 2004).

His political packaging has been handled in an equally strategic fashion. The initial step was to present Gamal Mubarak as a champion of youth, a category of citizens who have suffered disproportionately from poverty and unemployment (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). If ignored the unemployed youth could pose the most serious threat to the prospect of economic and political stability in Egypt. In response, the Future Generation Foundation was created by the Egyptian government in order to provide a vehicle through which the disaffected youth could be addressed (Ghobashy, 2003). The growth of the foundation raised suspicion

amongst the political opposition that it would be used by Gamal as a platform in order to run for the presidency. By 2000 it was clear that the foundation was not to be used by Gamal in order to mount a challenge for the presidency. In January 2000, he joined the NDP's General Secretariat. At the September 2002 party conference he was elected as head of the policy secretariat which quickly became the NDP's key decision making body (BBC News, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003). The policy secretariat was charged with the task of formulating NDP policy, modernising the NDP and its mandate extended to reviewing legislation before it was submitted to parliament. The policy secretariat had 200 members, but it was apparent that the process of decision making lied in the hands of a small group associated closely with Gamal (Al Ahram, September 23-29<sup>th</sup>, 2004). For example, Gamal as head of the policy secretariat seeded the NDP with his entourage. Among them are his spin doctor, political scientist Aly Eldin Helal; Ahmed Ezz, a multi millionaire businessman known as the 'emperor of iron'; Rachid Mohammed Rachid, the Minister of foreign trade and industry and Mahmoud Mohieddin, the Minister of Investment and who would lead the process of privatisation.

Gamal's appointment to the new policy secretariat coincided with a spate of corruption cases against former ministers and high ranking officials. This was done cunningly by Gamal to project his own image of a reformer and moderniser but was also a political move to marginalise the powerful old guard, who had dominated the NDP for decades (Al Ahram, October 20-26<sup>th</sup>, 2005). For example, the right-hand man to old-guard NDP powerhouse Youssef Wali was charged with accepting bribes to import carcinogenic French pesticides into Egypt. At the party congress, the NDP veteran Youssef Wali was shoved out of his post as NDP secretary-general to make room for Information Minister Safwat al-Sherif (Ghobashy, 2003). Gamal became



substantially more influential over policy issues than the Prime Minister, within a short space of a few months. The ambiguity surrounding the exact role and powers of the policy secretariat triggered a wave of criticism, particularly within opposition circles. Some considered it to be tantamount to a secret society within the party while others described it as a centre of power that operated behind closed doors. Political pundits agreed upon the fact that the policy secretariat has become the NDP's political backbone. According to Hussein Abdel-Razeq, the leftist *al Tagammu* party's assistant secretary-general, the 2002 September NDP congress was mandated to place Gamal Mubarak at the helm of power. 'It is now clear,' said Abdel-Razeq, 'that the Policy Secretariat was created especially for Mubarak to lead, and has been transformed into Egypt's supreme policy-making body' (Al Ahram, May, 15-21<sup>st</sup>, 2003). Nabil Abdel Fattah, an expert in civil society and Islamic movements at the Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies believes the NDP has effectively been reduced to the policy secretariat. He believes the danger lies in the fact that the policy secretariat members wield power without legitimacy. They have not been elected and they do not owe their position to any clear demonstration of political expertise (el Fattah, Interview, 2004). Neither does Abdel Fattah believe the policy secretariat made progress in its mission of modernising the NDP. In addition he believes the policy secretariat has failed to develop the party's internal infrastructure. Nor has it challenged conservative and dogmatic ideas long dominant within the party. The endgame was not so much about modernising the party but creating a launch pad for the president's son to enter the political scene, from where he could present his economic and political strategy for the future of Egypt (el Fattah, Interview, 2004).

Gamal has also vested his energy in harnessing support for the intended succession from Washington. Gamal was put in charge of high level delegations to the US capital

on two occasions in 2003. During such excursions Gamal met with senior US officials, such as Dick Cheney and others (Ghobashy, 2003; Middle East Media and Research Institute, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003). He was also chosen as the source to reveal news that Washington was pressing the Egyptian government to announce political reform or the news was timed to coincide with his visits. For example the release of the American University of Cairo professor Saad Eddin Ibrahim immediately preceded Gamal's first Washington visit of the year, as did a statement of willingness to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The abolition of the penal code's hard labour penalty and the creation of a national council for human rights, were all handed out by Gamal through the NDP policy secretariat (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). The clear message intended by these steps was to show that Gamal would be willing to make concessions with the US in the areas of foreign policy, human rights and liberal economic reform. As a result this picture of Gamal willing to make concessions boosted the image in Egypt and in the US of Gamal being a reformer and moderniser in the context of economic and political reform.

This has helped in packaging Gamal to appeal to the Egyptian desire for much needed economic and political reform (Middle East Media and Research Institute, July 24 & 25, 2000). He has spoken frequently of the need for reform especially of the ruling party. The NDP in Egypt has a bad image amongst the Egyptian people; it is viewed as an ageing and an out of date organisation run by an autocratic leadership that is concerned with the maintenance of self interest rather than pushing for genuine and serious economic and political reform. Gamal's repeated calls for 'new faces' especially young ones to enter the party, parliament and political elite more generally, reinforced by his visible association with a relatively young circle (45-60 years old) of technocrats and business men has promoted the perception that with Gamal a new

generation of Egyptian's will take power (Al Ahram, August 5-11<sup>th</sup>, 2004). A new generation interested in pushing forward real economic and political reforms in Egypt.

The vital constituency of devout Muslims has not been left off Gamal's agenda. The run up to the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 saw the NDP co-ordinating anti-war demonstration with the Al-Azhar religious institution and the influential MB. The objective was to develop religious legitimacy through Al-Azhar and the MB, even though the state has consistently been fearful of Al-Azhar and MB developing strength and posing a challenge to the Egyptian state and the succession process in Egypt (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). Therefore what becomes apparent is that no constituency of society which is seen as being vital has been missed in the economic and political grooming of Gamal. The business men, the technocrats and the Egyptian people have all been addressed directly or indirectly by Gamal. However, the military, the principal arbitrator in Egypt and the guarantor of regime stability has not been over looked. The courting of this institution has been an on going process since Gamal's return to Egypt in 1996. Every president since the July 1952 revolution has come from the military establishment. Therefore the support and consent of the military, a backbone to the Egyptian state is important for the Egyptian government to manage the process of political succession in Egypt (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004).

Even though what seems to be a clear grooming process, the NDP has been quick to dismiss the rumours that have been circulating around Egypt concerning Gamal and political succession. In September 2002, presidential adviser Osama El Baz told Newsweek that 'Gamal Mubarak is not running for any official office. He is interested in public issues, like any young man interested in the future of his country but he is



not going to pursue any official position' (Schanzer, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002). In May 2003, Gamal himself told an audience of 600 at his old university the American University in Cairo:

'There are rumours that I am being groomed for the post, but they are baseless and have nothing to do with reality. Scaling down my activities is not an option; I want to encourage the youth to be active and I will not alter the role I believe in' (Al Ahram, May, 8-14<sup>th</sup>, 2003).

Gamal was asked in the US, the following month whether he would be Egypt's president one day, he told the interviewer on US television;

'The issue is not to try and personalise the process of change; the issue is to focus on the process and to shed light on the reality of Egypt today. A lot of young Egyptians are stepping forward to play a leading role in shaping the future' (World Talk, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2003).

In spite of of the denials expressed in the statements by senior NDP officials and Gamal himself, the Egyptian opposition is not persuaded. They see these emphatic denials as effectively signalling the road that is being paved for the political succession of Gamal after his father. The political developments post 2004, have further persuaded the opposition that Gamal is being prepared to succeed his father at some point in the near future.

### **7.3 The Economic and Political Strengthening of Gamal Mubarak- The 2004**

#### **Cabinet Reshuffle and the 2005 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections**

To many political analysts, the evidence of this growing power of Gamal has increased since the cabinet re-shuffle in July 2004 (BBC News, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004). The critics to the inheritance of power believe that Hosni Mubarak has smoothed Gamal's path to presidency by placing his son's colleagues in key positions; through the

cabinet re-shuffle in July 2004 (el Fattah, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). One opposition newspaper ran the headline ‘Gamal Mubarak’s Government’ (Al Ahram, July 15-21<sup>st</sup>, 2004). The cabinet, largely composed of diehard NDP members, began to be embedded with young western educated individuals who shared the same liberal vision in economic reform embraced by Gamal (Al Ahram, August 5-11<sup>th</sup>, 2004; Al Ahram, July 15-21<sup>st</sup>, 2004; Al Ahram, September 23-29<sup>th</sup>, 2004). Seven of the new Ministers appointed in the cabinet re-shuffle, also serve on Gamal’s influential policy secretariat, which formulates policy for the NDP. Three of the new Ministers have been referred to as his ‘lieutenants’ in the media. Many reflect his ethos; they are young, savvy, economic reform minded, technocrats from academia or business, who have worked or studied abroad (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). For example, Mahmoud Mohieddin, the Minister for Investment, got his doctorate from Warwick University and Mohammed Rachid, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Investment, credentials include advanced management studies at Stanford, MIT and Harvard. Hani Shukrallah, the former editor of Al-Ahram weekly, described Gamal and his reformists when he stated;

‘They are modernists, more fluent in English and other languages, educated abroad, belonging to the younger generation. They are more open to western management techniques, more exposed to Western culture and definitely economic liberals’. (NBC News, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004)

The re-shuffling has been evident not only at the governmental level but within other sectors, such as banking, finance and the media. For example, it has been noticeable in Cairo since 2004 that the three economic Ministries and the Central Bank, have been recruiting a large number of young, western educated staff members to drive the process of economic reform, in particular the process of privatisation (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004; Cunningham, 2005). It is these new appointments,

which have tightened Gamal's grip on power in Egypt. This power has been enhanced through the Egyptian presidential and parliamentary elections in 2005.

Gamal was a guiding force behind his father's campaign for Egypt's first ever multi candidate presidential elections in September, 2005 ([www.arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com), September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). He was ever present behind the scenes at the presidential events but did not address the audiences or the media himself. The presidential campaign team was put together by Gamal and his reformists, assembling in the process a 103 strong team of politicians and media advisors to secure victory for his father. For example, the team included Lamees al Hadidi, 38, a charismatic former NBC and New York Times reporter and Dina al Imam, a reader in political science at UCLA Berkeley (Telegraph, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The polished campaign tactics, including US gimmicks and US style presidential advertisements all emphasised the influence of Gamal on his fathers presidential strategy and campaign. After the presidential elections Gamal further stamped his authority on Egypt at the annual NDP conference in September 2005. He declared his camps victory over the old guard in the NDP. In a keynote speech to members of the NDP, Gamal took much of the credit for his father's election landslide and set the tone for the parliamentary elections that followed in November:

'During the presidential elections, the party proved its ability to modernise, proved its worth of the ideas it has been promoting since the party took a new orientation in 2002' (Arab News, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

The conference had been billed as a watershed in the party; with Gamal gaining new prominence after masterminding his father's 2005 presidential victory. The conference did not only consolidate the position of the reformers within the party but saw them push the old guard to the side. Gamal through the presidential elections and the NDP conference had built up momentum; which he would use leading into the



parliamentary elections. Gamal launched the NDP's parliamentary election campaign in Cairo on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2005 at a gathering in front of the Abideen presidential palace in Cairo for the presentation of the NDP's Cairo candidates. The NDP candidate list for the parliamentary elections included 176 newcomers. This reflected the influence of Gamal to introduce fresh new faces to parliament. This introduction of fresh new faces in the parliamentary elections was made clear by Mohammed Kamal, a key associate of Gamal and a member of Gamal's presidential campaign team (Al Ahram, October, 20-26<sup>th</sup>, 2005; Al Ahram, September 29<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> October, 2005). This dominant role of Gamal in the presidential and parliamentary elections has not escaped the attention of the Egyptian opposition. Ayman Nour of the *al Ghad* party contends that the Egyptian government is preparing Gamal's succession by making the NDP, with its hold on patronage and government bureaucracy, Gamal's personal vehicle to power. Nour believes that the influence and power of Gamal has become so extensive over the last year that Gamal is effectively running the country by proxy (Washington Post, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

Therefore it is clear that the economic and political strengthening of Gamal since 2004 has put Gamal in a strong position to succeed his father. Despite, the rise of Gamal through this process of economic and political packaging, it is important to take into consideration whether there are any real political competitors (i.e. military or civilian) to Gamal, which have constructed a similar economic and political profile, allowing them to compete with Gamal for the position of president in Egypt.

#### **7.4 Challengers and Competitors to the Politics of Succession in Egypt**

Gamal Mubarak has been singled out as the only real contender to replace his father, which is understandable given the continuous process of economic and political grooming which he has undergone since 1996. Despite this ever increasing focus upon Gamal, the most widely mentioned name as a competitor to Gamal is that of Umar Sulaiman, the head of Egyptian General Intelligence (BBC News, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004). Prior to 2002 to well informed people concerning the Egyptian security scene, his name would be common knowledge but to the rest of society he would have been an unknown actor in Egypt (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). Therefore publicity and visibility was a key to build Umar Sulaiman's profile and to familiarise him with the Egyptian public. Beginning in 2002, Umar Sulaiman began to be brought out of the closet which he had occupied for so long. From a state of dormancy, he was catapulted into the limelight allowing him to build the platform to launch his challenge for presidency. His photos were visible in the newspapers and previously 'hush hush' diplomatic missions to Palestine were publicised, emphasising his role in dealing with the Palestinian conflict. The Americans had come to realise that in the context of Egyptian and regional security, the one who pulled the strings in Egypt was Umar Sulaiman. He already had a following among American diplomatic, military and security personnel, as he was considered to be politically competent and shrewd (El Said, Interview, 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004).

Umar Sulaiman can be seen to have a broad appeal and influence over key institutions in Egypt. Umar Sulaiman has been a central figure in dealing with Islamists in Egypt; therefore he would be an ideal person to deal with this important constituency rather than someone new without any exposure or without experience in dealing with the

Islamists (El Said, Interview, 2004). Similar to the Defence Minister Tantawi, Umar Sulaiman participated in the 1967 and 1973 wars, which would do him no harm in courting the high ranking military officers whom would also have been involved in the wars of the past. A major problem that might materialise is of Umar Sulaiman's current role as head of the Egyptian intelligence service, a bureaucracy that has traditionally been in conflict with the military. The rivalry and hostility between the military and the security services could potentially obstruct his chances and he must be aware of the fact that support of the military is much more important than the security forces given the power base and backbone that it represents in Egyptian politics (el Fattah, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). Therefore Umar Sulaiman must inevitable be cautious in striking a balance between the two, without alienating or undermining the military.

In fact, parallels have been drawn between Umar Sulaiman and Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia. Putin took over the presidency in Russia after pursuing a career in the KGB, the Russian intelligence service. However, comparatively the strength of the intelligence service within Russia vis a vis the military is much greater than in Egypt. Although a similarity maybe drawn between the careers of Sulaiman and Putin, institutionally the power is much more excessive within the Egyptian Military than the intelligence service (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). In addition the current Russian trend towards increasing centralisation of power, nationalization and the conviction of powerful businessmen will not enhance Sulaiman's portfolio amongst the powerful business sector domestically and internationally. The fear of centralisation of the economy under the Egyptian state without doubt will create many reservations within the business community and the international community but one could argue that it is too simplistic to draw parallels from the experience of Russia



under Putin, as Egypt has stronger relations with international donors such as the IMF and WB, making a reversal of the liberal economic reform, which Egypt has adopted a somewhat unrealistic prospect compared to Russia (El Said, Interview, 2004).

The sudden emergence of Umar Sulaiman into Egyptian political life is viewed by some as a strategy by Hosni Mubarak to prevent moves by another military officer to compete with Gamal rather than seriously viewing him as a potential contender for the presidency. His age and reported illness in 2003 have strengthened this suspicion that Umar Sulaiman is effectively being used as a diversion to prevent the military from putting forward their candidate and an attempt by Hosni Mubarak to appease the military by pushing Umar Sulaiman forward as a potential vice president under Gamal (El Said, Interview, 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004). The appeasement of the military is a crucial factor, in response a name being touted, although not as prominent as that of Umar Sulaiman has been of Magdi Hatata. He is chief of staff of the Egyptian armed forces and perhaps the next Minister of Defence (Sobelman, 2001). However, given his lack of public profile may indicate that Magdi Hatata is not running to become president of Egypt at this moment in time, although it is clear that he would be a contender in the future. At the moment in time, there are more dynamic high ranking officers with greater popularity than Magdi Hatata in the military but all of them face the same obstacle, which is that none has a clear constitutional path to the presidency.

In terms of a possible civilian challenge to the politics of succession, the Egyptian state has been shrewd in the way it has sidelined any civilian competition to Gamal. The Egyptian state has used its power to re-shuffle the political elite; remove popular individuals and keep in place highly disliked personalities. Also, the Egyptian state

has created constitutional barriers for civilian candidates, thus removing possible challengers and competitors to the succession process (El Said, Interview, 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004). The two most popular members of the cabinet in the past decade, Ahmad al Guwalli and Amr Mussa have both been transferred into the Arab League, where they have no direct access to the Egyptian public or political elite (Shehata, 2002). This process of removing popular personalities from public life is similar to what Hosni Mubarak did to the highly popular field marshal Abdel al Halim Abu Ghazzala in the 1990s, who has been under house arrest for more than a decade. The popularity of Abu Ghazzala was a constant strain on the legitimacy Mubarak, which resulted in Abu Ghazzala being sidelined and removed far away from the public eye (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). The position of Minister of Interior has been frequently rotated and the present incumbent Habib al Adli is a rather dour technocrat with a background in state security, not a career which will bring public admiration towards him. His public rapport has been further weakened through demands of resignation after the assault on women journalists by security officials as they were demonstrating against the May 25<sup>th</sup> referendum in 2005 concerning the amendment of Article 76 in the constitution. The speaker of parliament Fathi Surur and the previous Prime Minister Atif Obeid are not held in high esteem by the public. Atif Obeid overlooked the controversial economic reforms in the 1990s, which worsened the socio-economic plight of the Egyptian people. The Minister of Defence, General Tantawi, is relatively anonymous, which is a serious weakness. The 65 year old general and the veteran of the Arab Israeli wars (1956, 1967, 1973) is frequently at Mubarak's side and on occasions standing in for Mubarak, representing him at various official events, like the 30 year old anniversary of the death of Nasser that took place in September 2000. (Al Hayat, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000).

However, it appears that Tantawi is in poor health, has no substantial popular following and is widely rumoured to be without much needed support from within the ranks of the military (Sobelman, 2001).

In addition, to this process of political re-shuffling and keeping in place disliked personalities, the Egyptian state has created constitutional barriers for civilian competitors. For example, the constitutional revision of Article 76 put forward a major constitutional barrier in the path of civilian candidates. According to this constitutional revision independent candidates need the support of a minimum of 250 members in governmental institutions such as the Shura Council, People's Assembly and Local Councils (BBC News, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005). This is a difficult task as such institutions are dominated by pro governmental individuals and NDP members. As a result people such as the human rights activists, Saad Eddin Ibrahim were deterred from entering the presidential race in 2005 and this will also be the case in the 2011 presidential elections unless another constitutional revision takes places.

It appears that the Egyptian state, which is managing the politics of succession, has pursued a number of tactics in order to sideline possible challengers or competitors to the politics of succession. The jailing of the charismatic Ayman Nour, ruling him out to compete with Gamal is a clear example of this (Arab News, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

However, despite the Egyptian state carefully managing the succession process, it is apparent that there are political actors, such as the military and the MB in Egypt which have an interest in influencing and having an impact on the process of succession. These two actors have posed dilemmas to the Egyptian government, as it manages the succession process. This is because the military is a key institution and the MB is a key political weight in Egypt, which means that the Egyptian states



management of the succession process is unlikely to sideline these two actors from wanting to have a say in the politics of succession in Egypt.

### **7.5 The Role of the Egyptian Military in the Succession of Gamal Mubarak**

The question of the military has always lingered around the issue of succession given the prominent role this institution has played in Egyptian political life since the 1952 revolution. It is fair to say that Gamal has constructed a relatively comfortable niche for himself but it is not comprehensively secure without the consent and approval of the military, which will be a decisive actor in deciding whether Gamal succeeds his father or not (el Fattah, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). The fact that Gamal is not a military officer and has no experience within the military would pose certain dilemmas to the military hierarchy, in particular whether Gamal would secure the interests of the military. This was not a problem under Nasser, Sadat or Hosni Mubarak, as they were all from within the confinements of the military. Although one saw a more civilian cabinet emerge under Sadat and Mubarak, both of them continued to secure the economic and political interests of the military (Harb, 2003). In return the military would act as a guarantor of security for the Egyptian government. For example, the Egyptian government turned to the military on several occasions during the 1970s and 1980s to deal with internal political instability. For example the military had to be relied upon to deal with the bread riots in 1977 and Islamic radicalism in the 1980s (Sid Ahmed, 1987-1988). Therefore, in essence, there was an element of trust and understanding between the previous Egyptian governments and the military, where the military would guarantee state security and in return their interests would be taken care of by the Egyptian government.

This trust factor is crucial if the military are to back Gamal's succession process and the Egyptian government has been fully aware of this. In fact the Egyptian government has managed the succession process in a way that it does not raise any eyebrows or concerns in the confinements of the military hierarchy (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). For example, initially the Egyptian government began to package Gamal as a champion of the youth in Egypt through the establishment of the Future Generation Foundation. However, this process of pushing Gamal into the public domain did not receive the backing of high ranking military officers. They saw this tactic by the Egyptian government and Gamal as an attempt to side step the military, subsequently undermining the role of the military by not approaching them in the first place. Therefore, when this came to the attention of the Egyptian government a new path to present Gamal to the public was sought and since this episode and the rumours of displeasure within the military Gamal has been careful in courting support within the military circles, especially among younger officers with prominent positions within the military circles (Sobelman, 2001).

The influence and impact of the military can be seen from the way the succession process has been managed by the Egyptian government and the relentless attempts by Gamal and his entourage to build contacts and support within the military to establish much needed trust and credibility. This is vital to Gamal in securing the consent of the military. However a key factor which could help Gamal in his quest to succeed his father is the US, which is seen to have already approved of Gamal. The US is a key ally to Egypt and a major donor of aid, therefore it has a key level of influence in Egyptian politics and this influence could be an important factor in determining the succession process (Al Dostur, August, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006; Sobelman, 2001). The former US ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk has pointed out that the political succession

process common among Arab regimes is in line with a US policy of political continuity, as reflected by the successful transmission of power in Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain and by the close ties that have linked late ruler's sons with US institutions (Al Ahram, October 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 1999). Given this US policy, it is inevitable that the US will work to amend any fences between Gamal and the military to help the Egyptian government in securing a smooth succession process. Gamal has been well marketed to the Americans as the energetic young civilian of the nouveau entrepreneurial class with global views and business interests in the US itself. This is very appealing to policy makers in Washington and there is no doubt that politicking in Washington will be important in swinging the sceptics in the Egyptian military towards supporting Gamal in his drive to succeed his father as president in Egypt (Al Dostur, August, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

It is clear that the military is a backbone of the Egyptian power elite and its influence and impact has been evident on the succession process in Egypt. This influence and impact has been exerted behind closed doors and inside the strategic power elite in Egypt. However, there have been other political actors which have been exerting influence and impact on the succession process from in Egyptian society. There has been vocal criticism of the Egyptian government's succession process by the political opposition, in particular from the MB. Given the fact that the MB is a key political weight in Egyptian politics it is important to explore what influence and impact it has been able to have, if any on the succession process in Egypt.



## **7.6 The Muslim Brotherhood- Its Influence and Impact on the Succession Process in Egypt**

There is no doubt that the politics of succession has become a major talking point in Egypt over the last 6 years and has generated much criticism and opposition in Egyptian society. In particular, the process of political succession is something the MB has strongly opposed. The reasons behind the MB opposition to the succession process have not been consistent, with a divergence of reasoning between the orthodox old guard and pragmatic new guard (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). For example, the new guard of MB activists have opposed the succession process as in their view the politics of succession would represent a manipulation of the political system and be a major setback to the process of political change and inevitably democracy in Egypt (Al Hayat, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000). Therefore purely political reasoning has underpinned the new guard's resistance to the succession process in Egypt. On the other hand, the old guard, who are more orthodox in their understanding of Islam, have opposed the succession process on the basis of Islamic legitimacy. According to Sunni orthodox Islam, a leader without the consent of the people is illegitimate and the inheritance of power in Egypt would make Gamal Mubarak an illegitimate ruler (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004). In response to ideological reasons the succession process has been resisted by the old guard, who see it as contradicting a fundamental principle in Islamic governance. Despite, this dichotomy in ideological and political reasoning, it is clear that overall the MB has been in opposition to the succession process and this has been made clear by senior leaders of the MB, representing both the old and new guard in the movement. The supreme leader of the MB, Mohammed Akhef at a Ramadan fast breaking meal in Cairo, 2005 stated:

‘We categorically reject inheritance of rule in any form. We believe the constitutional amendment aims to enshrine inheritance, but God willing this wont happen and we will fight it relentlessly’ (Haaretz, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

In addition Mohammed Akhef recently declared that his organization completely rejects the possibility of Gamal “inheriting” the presidency. In a May 2006 statement, the MB highlighted Gamal's elitist image, saying that the younger Mubarak “has nothing to do with the people and knows nothing about the people” (Shehata, 2006). Deputy Supreme Guide Mohammad Habib, representative of the new guard has made similar remarks. The voice of the MB has been strengthened by its success in the 2005 parliamentary elections, with it acquiring 88 seats. This has provided the MB with a large oppositional bloc in parliament in order to raise its voice in opposition to Gamal Mubarak succeeding his father. Despite this obvious platform which the MB has developed in Egyptian politics, the extent of its influence and impact has depended on three factors. These include its willingness to join hands with alternative opposition actors, its ability to mobilise its social base in opposition to the succession process and its readiness to enter a new phase of mobilised opposition to the Egyptian state, through street protests and demonstrations (El Said, Interview, 2004). The evidence so far indicates that the MB is willing to do all the above in order to exert influence and impact on the succession process, allowing it to make life as difficult as possible for the Egyptian government as it manages the succession process.

The MB has used its position in the Egyptian parliament and syndicates in order to oppose and criticise the succession process. The lawyer’s syndicate has been a key syndicate in the MB’s opposition to the succession process. This has allowed the MB to further politicise this professional class in opposition to Gamal succeeding his father (El Said, Interview, 2004). However, the MB has been aware of the fact that the

level of its influence and impact will also depend on its ability to create new mediums of opposition to the Egyptian state. This has resulted in the MB, going beyond criticism via the parliament and syndicates to involvement in political dissent through a series of street protests and demonstrations. This dynamism of the MB heightened the concerns of the Egyptian state, in fear of opposition to the succession process developing inside and outside the system, in particular the concern of a popular movement emerging led by the MB developing against the politics of succession in Egypt. The MB with other social forces such as the 20 March Movement for Change, the outlawed Communist Party, the would-be Al-Karama Movement Party and the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (HMLC) launched the 'Popular Movement for Change' with the slogan "no to renewal, no to hereditary succession, yes to electing the president of the republic" (Al Ahram, 23-29 June, 2005). This represented the first oppositional alliance movement against the politics of succession and its impact has been significant in galvanising the Egyptian public, building public opinion and raising awareness against the inheritance of power in Egypt. In addition, the MB has participated regularly with '*Kefayah*' in holding demonstrations against the inheritance of power. The MB was involved in the first ever anti Gamal Mubarak demonstration to be held in December 2004. This was significant as it was held in the run up to the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2005. In March 2005, the MB took to the streets in Egypt, with a number of demonstrations held throughout the various districts in Cairo. The objective of the demonstrations was to demand political reform and protests in opposition to the inheritance of power were once again raised by the MB (Al Ahram, 23-29 June, 2005). In May, 2005, the MB held a number of pro reform protests in Cairo and other towns in Egypt. This regular taking to the streets by the MB, its mobilisation of the Egyptian public and its willingness to cross



ideological lines by embracing the '*Kefayah*' movement and the communist party, has been indicative of the MB's desire to put as much pressure possible on the Egyptian government leading up to the elections in 2005. This was in the hope of forcing political reform and obstructing the managed process of political succession in Egypt (Al Ahram, 16-22 September, 2004).

This pursuance of a cycle of political dissent through regular taking to the streets has been a new addition to the MB's portfolio in its struggle with the Egyptian government. The MB's growing influence and impact on the succession process through its ability to mobilise the Egyptian people, its joining of forces with alternative political actors, such as the popular '*Kefayah*', its presence inside syndicates and its 88 seats in parliament has been a dangerous dynamic for the Egyptian government. In response the Egyptian government began to take measures to limit further political space for mobilisation and launched a major offensive directed towards the MB and other political actors, which were also viewed to be vocal and mobilising against the succession process in Egypt.

Post elections 2005 the Egyptian government has renewed the State of Emergency Law and suspended municipal elections for 2 years. The MB criticised this and viewed it as the Egyptian states attempt to limit the influence of the MB in order to usher in the succession process. Mohammed Habib stated 'I see the main goal of delaying the elections by 2 years as laying the foundations for the inheritance of power and opening the door wide open for Gamal Mubarak to be the candidate for the presidency' (The Daily Star, June, 2006). He added 'there is a view that during these two years it is possible to put Gamal Mubarak forward as a candidate. There was a

step taken with his appointment as an assistant Secretary General in the NDP' (The Daily Star, June, 2006).

In addition, to this the Egyptian government launched a major security offensive against the MB. Hundreds of MB activists have been detained by the police and security forces. In fact the Egyptian government has been dealing with the MB in a different way compared to the 1990s. This time MB activists have and are being arrested during daylight, in restaurants, coffee houses and whilst picking up children from school. This is a new tactic of the Egyptian state to hit the MB whenever and wherever in Egypt. This has led to deterioration in relations between the MB and Egyptian government. In particular, the Egyptian government has directed its offensive towards the pragmatic new guard of MB activists, which have been instrumental in the changing shape and character of the MB, and have been the face of the MB in its opposition to the succession process in Egypt. Therefore leading new guard individuals like Essam El Eyrian, Ibrahim al Zafrani, Kharait al Shater, Mohammed Morsi and Hassan al Hayawan have all been detained on a number of occasion post elections 2005. This has been done strategically by the Egyptian state in order to take the wind out of the sails of the MB in its quest to challenge the political succession process in Egypt.

The intense level of political oppression post elections 2005 has led the MB, to predict that President Mubarak, who is 78 years old, will transfer power to Gamal over a period of a year. Mohammed Habib stated 'The matter will not go on for more than a year'. The MB expects an increase in restrictions on democracy, free speech as well as thousands of arrests of political opponents of the regime, in order to enable Gamal, to become the new ruler of Egypt. 'The government or the regime, is trying to

send a message to the brotherhood so that they reduce their activities, tone down their statements....This requires more restrictions, persecutions, jailing and perhaps military tribunals, so that the atmosphere is prepared and the stage is set for the inheritance of scenario' Habib added (The Daily Star, June, 2006). In fact, this has been the policy of the Egyptian government, with the political situation in Egypt reminiscent of the dark days under Hosni Mubarak during the mid 1990s. The MB has entered a new phase in its struggle with the Egyptian government and this struggle has had an impact on opinion in the MB. In particular in relation to whether, it is in the best interests of the MB to continue with its political dissent, which has led to it facing a new phase of oppression from the Egyptian government.

The clampdown on the MB by the Egyptian state, in response to its growing political weight and its anti-Gamal position has led to a divergence of opinion in the MB in relation to MB policy towards the succession process. Mohammed Akhef and the old guard see the need for the MB to continue with its campaign of dissent against the succession process or else the MB would be sacrificing its ideology (i.e. Islamic legitimacy of the ruler) and lose credibility with its social base. However, the pragmatic new guard who has faced the brunt of the clampdown have begun to show a different opinion to that expressed by the old guard. The new guard believes that the MB focusing primarily on the succession process would affect the MB's long term interests in Egypt, such as political reform and legality (Altman, 2006). Instead, rather than continuing to oppose the succession process, the MB should change its stance and try to exploit the Egyptian governments difficulties with securing a smooth succession in order to end the State of Emergency and change Article 76 of the constitution. This position has been pushed by a leading new guard activist Mohammed Al Shatir, who heads the MB parliamentary bloc. In response to this



toning down of the MB position, in particular from the new guard, representing the political face of the MB, there has been talk that the MB might strike a deal with the Egyptian government, therefore reducing its difficulties in managing the succession process of Gamal. In fact, there has been evidence to indicate that members of Gamal's Policy Secretariat have met with the new guard of MB leaders to secure the MB's neutrality and non-participation in opposition activities against the succession process, although this has been denied by the MB (Altman, 2006). Given, this development, Muntasar al Zayyat, a lawyer and leading expert on Islamist movements, has suggested that the MB will covertly co-operate with the Egyptian government to help it pass Gamal's succession (Altman, 2006). The Egyptian state is aware of the ideological divergence in the MB, between the orthodox old guard and pragmatic new guard. This has provided the Egyptian state with the opportunity to try to co-opt the MB, in particular the new guard in order to defuse the MB opposition to the succession process. The Egyptian states direction of violence towards the new guard has led to a reaction on behalf of the new guard leading it to change its views towards the succession process and move closer towards the Egyptian state to secure the MB interests. The Egyptian state sees the new guard as more willing to play by its rules of the game and therefore is willing to discuss with them, but the Egyptian states concern remains with the old guard which is less receptive to get entangled with the Egyptian state. However, this division in the MB provides the Egyptian state with the opportunity to try to manipulate the MB in order to weaken it and neutralise its opposition to the succession process. This would remove a major obstacle in ushering forward the transference of power from Hosni Mubarak to Gamal.

Overall, it is apparent that the MB has had and is having an influence and impact on the succession process, which has allowed it to demonstrate its political weight once again in Egypt. This led to the Egyptian government resorting to its usual policy of directing oppression towards the MB but this has failed to severely undermine and weaken the MB. At the same time, the Egyptian government has realised the danger of an oppressive policy towards the MB in terms of its implications for future regime stability and survival. Therefore in response the Egyptian government has been forced into private meetings with the MB in order to secure its support and to neutralise the MB. This has been facilitated by the new guards change in views on the succession process and its willingness to entertain discussion with the Egyptian state. This neutralisation of the MB is likely to remove a key social and political obstacle to the Egyptian government and to push forward the succession bid of Gamal Mubarak. However for the MB, in particular the new guard the political weight of the MB has finally been acknowledged by the Egyptian government through its attempts of reconciliation and pacification of the MB to secure and manage the process of political succession of Gamal in Egypt.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the process of political succession, taking into consideration, the actors involved, the process of grooming and those driving the politics of succession in Egypt. In addition, to this I have explored the role of political actors such as the military and the MB in terms of their influence and impact on the politics of succession in Egypt. Both actors have had an influence and impact on the succession process and have been a source of concern for the Egyptian government. In order to deal with the military the Egyptian government has adopted a policy of

courting the military officials in order to win over their confidence to the succession process. Also the Egyptian government has relied upon support from the US, which has approved of Gamal's succession bid. Therefore although the military has had reservations over Gamal, this is likely to be overcome by US influence and the appointment of a vice president from in the ranks of the military or with close links to the military. On the other hand dealing with the MB has been much more difficult due to its political weight in Egypt. Despite the use of oppression by Egyptian government, it has not been able to deal with the power of the MB. In response, this has pushed the Egyptian government in pursuing a policy of negotiating with the MB in order to secure the succession process. The MB's new guard are likely to discuss and to accept concessions made by the Egyptian government, which will benefit the MB into the future, as a result clearing the way for the succession of Gamal. Given, the fact that the succession process of Gamal Mubarak is likely to proceed through the Egyptian government's careful process of management and policy of neutralising obstacles, it is important to explore the future process of economic and political change. In particular, it is important to take into consideration the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of reform and the likely Egyptian state-MB relations arising from a succession process in Egypt.



## **Chapter 8- Continuity and Discontinuity, in Economic and Political Reform in Egypt**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter will begin by exploring the future process of economic and political change in Egypt, in particular the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political change arising from a succession process in Egypt. This will be done by looking at the electoral promises which were made by Hosni Mubarak in the 2005 presidential elections and the progress to date in the context of economic and political change. Then, I will take into consideration the process of economic and political change which is expected with Gamal Mubarak succeeding his father. This will allow an understanding into any continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political change. This will be followed by looking at the future relations between Gamal Mubarak and the MB, taking into consideration the implications of these relations for the future process of political reform in Egypt.

### **8.2 Mubarak's Electoral Promises: Economic and Political Transformation or Stagnation?**

Given wide socio-economic and political demands in Egypt, it was only natural for promises of economic and political reform to encompass Hosni Mubarak's presidential campaign in September 2005 (Al Ahram, August 4-10<sup>th</sup>, 2005; The Arabist, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005). President Mubarak set out his economic and political reform agenda by a speech he made in Menoufiya, his home town on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2005. The following three excerpts from his speech indicate his emphasis on economic and political reforms,

‘Together we will work towards greater democratisation, liberating our economy in such a way as to protect the interests of peasants and workers and with an eye on the welfare of the economically disadvantaged.’ (Al Ahram, August 4-10<sup>th</sup>, 2005)

‘The emergency laws have aided us in our fight against terrorism. Indeed, a great many nations are now enacting comprehensive anti-terrorist legislation. The time has come for us, too, within the next period to formulate legislation capable of undermining and uprooting terrorism so our nation can be spared the evils terror brings. We are [aiming] for an anti-terror law that can provide a legislative substitute for the emergency laws.’ (Al Ahram, August 4-10<sup>th</sup>, 2005)

‘I promise to work towards implementing economic and social policies that will increase job opportunities, improve living standards, guarantee decent conditions for the retired and allow the state to improve public education, health care, housing and transport. Together we will build a tomorrow where the middle class can strive for better living standards, where the disadvantaged have adequate social security provision and where the rights of women receive the attention they deserve.’ (Al Ahram, August 4-10<sup>th</sup>, 2005)

A strong emphasis was placed by Mubarak on economic and political reforms, during his now 2005 Presidential campaign. However, it later became clear that Mubarak began to shift the focus of his campaign to primarily focusing on popular economic issues, such as poverty and unemployment. This was in comparison to his Presidential rivals, Ayman Nour of *al Ghad* and Nouman Gomma of the *al Wafd* party, both of which focused on political reforms connected to lifting of the state of emergency, removal of restrictions on political parties and the expansion of civil political freedoms (open Democracy, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005; VoaNews, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005; The Economist, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Mubarak pledged to carry out economic policies designed to promote industry, to tackle employment (proposed a programme to create 4.5 million jobs for youth in the coming six years), and to encourage farm produce export and boost Egyptian farm competitiveness. Mubarak described farmers as the main pillar of the Egyptian society, noting that any plans for future development could not be implemented without the involvement of the agriculture sector and farmers. In addition, Mubarak outlined his commitment to improving the salaries of

5.2 million civil servants in government and doubling the number of families receiving social security benefits from 650,000 to 1.3 million (English Peoples Daily, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Economic reforms became a cornerstone of Mubarak's presidential bid but his proposals came under criticism due to questions marks hanging over the feasibility of the economic policies which he had outlined. There appeared to be a feeling that popular economic rhetoric underlined Mubarak's speeches and pledges rather than a firm belief in being able to deliver on what he was promising.

While economic growth for the fiscal year 2004-2005 soared to a record five percent and most other economic indicators were on the rise, the economic measures promised by Mubarak were criticised as they would require slashing subsidies, raising public debt and risk sending inflation skyrocketing. As a result Mubarak's economic promises were quickly dismissed as unrealistic by some of his election rivals. 'Why hasn't Mubarak created all these jobs during the 24 years he already spent in power?' asked *al Wafd* party leader Nouman Gomma (Iran Daily, September 4th, 2005). Several analysts pointed out that the ultra-liberal policies pushed by Mubarak's son Gamal were hardly compatible with the campaign's social commitments. Ahmad Nagger an Egyptian economist stated, 'The job creation programme is simply not realistic. In 24 years, 291,000 jobs were created every year. How can we expect to see this figure double in only six years?' (Iran Daily, September 4th, 2005). The WB also estimates that unemployment in Egypt is running at around 20 per cent, a figure that makes it difficult for Nazif's government to fulfil President Mubarak's election promise to create 4.5 million jobs in the next six years (Al Ahram, March 16-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006). Nor was the WB optimistic about the chances of achieving other economic targets, pointing out that 'the deficit in the trade balance grew last year to more than



\$7 billion, with imports increasing by 30 per cent annually. Balancing the budget and reducing public indebtedness were urgent requirements, while the budget deficit had skyrocketed from 0.6 per cent of GDP in 1996/1997 to nine per cent in 2005/2006, public debts now stood at more than 60 per cent of GDP' (Al Ahram, March. 16-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006). 'What is clear at this point,' says Nabil Abdel-Fattah of the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, 'is that the NDP has shown itself to be lacking both the imagination, and the will, to address the fundamental problems besetting Egypt's political and economic life. While it has referred to some of the chronic problems Egypt faces during its campaign it has failed to acknowledge that these very problems are a result of the failed policies of the past 24 years' (Al Ahram, August 25-31<sup>st</sup>, 2005). The campaign, however, failed to tackle what many argue is the chronic corruption plaguing Egypt's economic performance. In his campaign pledges,' says *al Tagammu* MP Abul-Ezz Al-Hariri, 'the NDP candidate has not once referred to the corruption which has become a mode of governance. Nor is it clear how he can pledge to establish 1,000 factories over a six-year period when the government's understanding of economic reform seems not to extend beyond privatising the public sector' (Al Ahram, August 25-31<sup>st</sup>, 2005). Therefore criticism, of Mubarak's economic pledges was, clearly apparent, with concern of economic and social crisis stemming from the economic reforms he promised. Mubarak was further criticised when the new cabinet was introduced after the parliamentary elections in November 2005. The composition of the new cabinet indicated the direction of the Egyptian government in economic reforms, which raised concerns about future socio-economic conditions in Egypt.

In this new cabinet, post parliamentary elections 2005, the number of ministers with business connection rose to six; this led the opposition press to charge that Prime

Minister Dr Nazif's cabinet looked more like the executive board of a private company (Al Ahram, December 29<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> January, 2006). For example, prominent businessman Mohamed Mansour, the new transportation minister, is a former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt. Ali El-Moselhi, who heads the new Social Solidarity Ministry, also comes from a private sector background, but was most recently the head of the Egyptian postal service, where he implemented a wide-ranging modernisation project.

In reply to the growing concern as a result of the increasing role of business men in the cabinet, Nazif argued that the inclusion of pragmatic and business-minded ministers had boosted the government's financial and economic success. He stated that the concept of businessmen becoming cabinet ministers should no longer be seen as a bad thing. 'Businessmen have the privilege of mixing administrative experience with a forward-looking and global mentality.' To prove his argument, Nazif highlighted the rise in GDP from LE485 to LE537 billion (\$93 billion), the vast increase in foreign exchange reserves, from \$14.8 to \$22 billion, the fall in external debt from \$30 to \$28.9 billion, and the drop in inflation from 16.7 per cent of GDP to 3.1 per cent -- all of which he argued had taken place in one year (Al Ahram, February, 2-8<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Despite this attempt to deal with the concerns of the political opposition, it seems to have been in vain as the cabinet's key economic portfolios remained in the same hands indicating that the government will continue to pursue the same liberal economic policies as witnessed in Nazif's first term. These economic policies have yet to win the confidence of the public. The cutting of subsidies and the pursuance of privatisation are two areas where Nazif's cabinet has faced its harshest criticism since July 2004. Critics have argued that Nazif is merely following the orders of the IFI's which are pushing for liberalising and globalisation of the Egyptian

economy. To aid this process, critics have argued that ministers with a private sector background have been drafted into the new cabinet. This pursuance of liberalisation and privatisation seems to indicate a lack of commitment of the cabinet and Mubarak to social development due to the ensuing consequences of unemployment, cutting of subsidies and inflation. Economically, the Egyptian people are unlikely to see a socio-economic improvement with the Egyptian government continuing with the same economic strategy as implemented in the past. The experience of the Egyptian people with liberal economic policies has not been good and it is unlikely that policies of this nature will bring a drastic change in their daily living. Therefore there is likely to be a continuation in past economic reform agenda by Mubarak, heralding no break away from past economic reform policies.

As a result of the subsequent socio-economic crisis expected from the economic strategy outline by Mubarak in his 2005 presidential campaign, it is likely that the Egyptian government's political strategy will be determined by the extent of the socio-economic crisis and challenges that it faces from political actors, such as the MB. Therefore, Mubarak's pledges of political reform and change carried little weight with the political opposition and the Egyptian people given that pledges of this nature have been evident in the past, such as in his 1999 Presidential referendum. Mubarak's agenda in 1999 included economic as well as political pledges, such as promises of constitutional reform stimulating political party activity, bringing new and more youthful elements into leadership positions, developing the electoral system, deregulating the media, supporting the rule of law, fighting corruption and enhancing the freedom of civil society institutions (Al Ahram, September 30<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> October, 1999; International Crisis Group, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003). In his address to university students in Alexandria on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1999, Mubarak stated that the NDP must



work 'to effect that change or reform that will enrich the process of popular participation in public life in a manner that will not prejudice the nation's higher interests' (Al Ahram, September 30<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> October, 1999). He also emphasised the idea that Egypt's revival does not depend on the government's efforts alone. Rather, 'it must be borne collectively by the institutions of government and the organisations of civil society, from the political parties to the syndicates, unions and community associations' (Al Ahram, September 30<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> October, 1999). Despite these pledges made, little progress in political reform was made by Mubarak since 1999, with the NDP continuing with its hegemony over society. Cosmetic changes were introduced which provided an image of reform but they did little to enhance political life in Egypt. The political reforms were piecemeal, which were introduced to deal with growing internal pressure and to create the context for the politics of succession rather than a real desire to facilitate reform in Egypt. The real political issues such as constitutional reform, independence of the judiciary, separation of powers and empowerment of civil society did not enter the mindset of the Egyptian government. Given the hollow pledges made in 1999, the political pledges in 2005 could be seen as an old story repeating itself, especially if one takes into consideration the composition of the new cabinet, liberal economic strategy, the role of the MB and the process of political succession, which is likely to be speeded up in the coming year. Therefore, the process of economic change is likely to be consistent with past policy and the political strategy will be dependent upon regime survival, in particular the succession process and the political weight of the MB. This can be seen from the process of political de-liberalisation, which has been witnessed in Egypt post elections 2005.

Since Mubarak's re-election for a fifth six-year term in office September 2005, the government has gone back on promises of political reform and introduced further restrictions. This political strategy can be understood in the context of the politics of succession and the political weight of the MB. For example, to contain the MB, the Egyptian government postponed local elections for 2 years, which were scheduled to take place in spring 2006 (Al Ahram, February 16-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006). This meant that, the Egyptian government blocked the possibility of the MB acquiring the 250 seats, required for it to contest the presidential elections in 2011 (The Mercury News, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006; The Arabist, June, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Also, in December 2005, opposition *al Ghad* party leader Ayman Nour was jailed for 5 years on forgery charges. Nour claimed the charges were false and the Egyptian state was punishing him for challenging Hosni Mubarak and criticising his son Gamal (Daily Times, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005; [www.arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com), December, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Thus, in the context of the political succession, the Egyptian state pre-empted any obstacles to the transition of power by the postponement of the local elections and the jailing of Ayman Nour. Also, in its policy of pre-empting obstacles, the Egyptian government post election 2005, has directed its coercive arm towards weakening the judicial reform movement in Egypt, which is viewed by the state as being a possible problem to the succession process in Egypt.

In February 2006 the Supreme Judicial Council stripped four judges of their judicial immunity, to allow State Security prosecutors to question them. The government has since charged the four - al-Bastawisi, Mahmoud Makki, his brother Ahmad Makki, and Mahmoud al-Khodairi, president of the Alexandria Judges' Club - with 'defaming the state' (Ikhwanweb, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Two of the four pro-reform judges, Mahmud Makki and Hisham al-Bastawisi have been summoned to a disciplinary board for

alleging that certain judges from within the judiciary helped rig last year's parliamentary polls that saw the ruling party retain a firm grip on power (BBC News, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006, ). The judge's syndicate has become one of the most potent symbols of the drive for reform in Egypt over the last year and Dr Amr Hamzawy, from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the regime's message was clear. 'It's a lesson to everyone who dares to cross the red lines,' said the Washington-based analyst (Middle East Online, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Human Rights organizations have expressed grave concern about a police attack against peaceful demonstrators outside the Judges Club in the early hours of Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> 2006. An eyewitness told Human Rights Watch that a large number of men, apparently plainclothes police, attacked around 40 persons who had been holding a round-the-clock vigil in support of the two judges threatened with dismissal. They beat 15 demonstrators and Judge Mahmud `Abd al-Latif Hamza, who came out from the club (Ikhwanweb, May 4<sup>th</sup> 2006; The Daily Star, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006; Al Ahram April 27<sup>th</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup>, May 2006). The Egyptian government detained 12 demonstrators for 15 days for investigation on charges of destroying public property. The oppressive attitude of the Egyptian government towards the reform judges shows the importance of state institutions to the government and its bid to secure the succession in Egypt (Middle East Online, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006). The judiciary continues with its challenge to the Egyptian government and the judges are contributing to the demand for political change in Egypt. However, the Egyptian state continues to resist any demands for change. This resistance is proven through the extension of the state of emergency law by another 2 years and is indicative of the slide of Egypt into deeper authoritarianism. The Egyptian government justified this extension, through the terrorist attacks on the holiday resort of Dahab in April 2006 (Ikhwanweb, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006; Al Jazeera, April



30<sup>th</sup>, 2006; Reuters, April 30<sup>th</sup>: 2006). The state of emergency has failed to boost Egyptian security, as Egypt has experienced a number of terror attacks in the past. In fact the state of emergency has been used by the Egyptian government to restrict political activism in society which could weaken the state's powers and its structures.

President Mubarak's economic and political reform agenda seems to have been derailed even before it actually began. The experience of the 1990s indicates political de-liberalisation at a time of economic reform and this seems to be the picture today, as the political weight of the MB increases and the politics of succession speeds up. Politically there has been a slide back to political de-liberalisation after the glimmer of hope leading up to the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2005 (Ikhwanweb, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Economically, Mubarak's economic pledges have been criticised for not being well thought out and being unfeasible given the severity of problems which already exist in Egypt. In addition the nature of the new cabinet does not inspire much confidence that it will be able to deliver on socio-economic commitments, such as decreasing the level of poverty and creating employment for the Egyptian people. Therefore the continuity in past economic and political strategy by Mubarak does not bode well for the future of economic and political change in Egypt. As a result, this raises the question of political succession, in particular whether one is expected to see a change and shift in economic and political strategy under Gamal Mubarak.

### **8.3 Political Succession- Economic and Political Implications**

Post elections 2005, Gamal Mubarak and his close associates have moved into key political positions. Gamal Mubarak has risen in the hierarchy of the governing NDP and was named one of three NDP deputy secretaries general's, and 20 of his

associates took other high-ranking posts in the party. Ahmed Ezz, a steel magnate and close associate of Gamal, was also appointed to the NDP secretariat in the reshuffle. Gamal and his supporters displaced some, but not all, of the veteran NDP activists. Political observers saw in the move a gradual shift toward putting the NDP at the service of the president's son (allbusiness.com, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006; Egypt Today, March, 2006). As a result of these political developments post elections 2005, the succession process is proceeding at a fast pace. Thus, it is important to explore Gamal's level of continuity or discontinuity in economic and political reform from that seen under his father.

A political succession, from father to son would effectively represent an intra regime political change. This would inevitably have no substantial bearings upon the autocratic power structures which are embedded within the NDP and the state. It would not lead to a change in the political status in a profound manner but reinforce the present political situation, with a younger face at the apex of the political system. This political succession of Gamal is likely to result in a reshuffle in the political elite, bringing to the forefront likeminded individuals in terms of economic and political strategy. However, Gamal's rapid rise to influence in the NDP has not been without support from the political directives, within the NDP. Therefore, despite a reshuffle of the political elite inevitably Gamal would remain dependent upon them for political support (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004). This dependency would constrain and restrict the political manoeuvring of Gamal to that which is approved by the political organs. Therefore, this dependency will restrict the ability of Gamal and his political elite to introduce a new political strategy based upon wholesome political liberalisation. Despite the obvious setback of this dependency for political reform, this dependency could give Gamal much needed

political support amongst the elite. However, this will depend upon to what extent Gamal is able to manage the various political organs effectively, neutralising their political threat and building constructive and positive relations with the various political organs. This skill of managing various political organs and incumbents is an extremely difficult task as the short tenure of Basher al Assad in Syria clearly demonstrates (Zisser, 2000, 2003; Gambill, 2000, 2003; Leverett, 2005). Basher al Assad has been unsuccessful in dealing with the various political organs, which has led to competition and conflict between the various political organs (Gambill, 2004). This has consequentially undermined his rule and brought the Baath regime near to collapse in Syria. Therefore when Gamal succeeds and if he is not able to handle the political organs shrewdly, then a similar situation to that in Syria could inevitably materialise, throwing Egypt into political crisis and turmoil (El Said, Interview, 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004).

Therefore in terms of political strategy Gamal is likely to be pressured by the same forces in the political elite, to that experienced by his father. This will severely limit the scope of political reforms which will be introduced by Gamal and his political elite. There is no doubt that forces opposed to political reform will act as an obstacle to Gamal but there is also the question of to what extent Gamal and his liberal minded associates are driven by a desire to introduce bold political reforms and to take on the forces, which are opposed to political reform. At the present moment in time, pro-Gamal figures in the Egyptian cabinet are highly focused on pushing ahead a liberal economic strategy than introducing bold political reforms. Their record to date is indicative of speeding up the process of economic liberalisation and privatisation than the process of political liberalisation. Therefore it seems that under Gamal, there will be a focus on economic strategy than political strategy. As a result, no real drive



internally in the political elite to bring about political change. For example to demonstrate this point further, the rise of liberal politicians within Jordanian politics has been substantial under King Abdullah since 1999, resulting in a central discourse upon economic liberalisation; with discussion on political reform being effectively sidelined. Politically there has been increasing centralisation of political power in the hands of King Abdullah, resulting in the liberal politicians being referred to as 'liberal authoritarians' (Ryan, June, 2005; Schwedler, 2002). The role of the security forces has increased under King Abdullah; leaving no doubt that even liberal minded politicians have their role which is determined by the power brokers in the Jordanian case the Monarchy. This has also been a discussion in Egypt that advocates of economic reform do not necessarily drive or push for political reform (El Said, Interview, 2004; Nafa, Interview, 2004).

Therefore under Gamal what is expected is a greater emphasis upon economic strategy centering on economic liberalisation, privatisation and opening up Egypt to regional and international capital markets (Democracy Digest, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004). There is concern that the ones that will benefit excessively from the market reforms would be the capitalistic class with the Egyptian people being hurt by the destructive nature of market forces. This focus upon economic strategy would inevitably distract attention from crucial questions pertaining to political reform (El Said, Interview, 2004; el Fattah, Interview, 2004). The economic strategy of Gamal could inevitably bring about social legitimacy if the economic reforms deliver and improve the economic situation of the Egyptian people. There has been talk of a revitalisation in the Egyptian economy as a result of a 5 per cent growth rate for the year 2004-2005 but the question remains to what extent the growth has benefited the average Egyptian citizen (Cunningham, 2005). There does not seem to be a change in the levels of

unemployment and poverty. If Mubarak's election economic pledges of creating 4 million jobs in 6 years and raising living standards are going to be fulfilled by the Egyptian state in the future, economists are predicting a worsening of the socio-economic situation in Egypt for the short term (Al Ahram, August 25-31<sup>st</sup>, 2005). If vast promises are made by Gamal and the results do not materialise a gap of trust would inevitable develop between the Egyptian people and Gamal. The previous Prime Minister Atif Obeid suffered from an immense lack of public trust for the failure of his government to deliver an improvement in the life of ordinary Egyptians. Promises would be made and economic success would be pronounced by Atif Obeid but the so called economic successes would not be experienced by the every day Egyptian. As a result a substantial trust deficit characterised Atif Obeid as Prime Minister during his time in office. Therefore the expected economic strategy by Gamal if and when he succeeds his father could have positive or negative consequences depending upon the manner in which economic reform is handled. The outcome of economic reform and how the benefits of economic reform are actually distributed to the people in society will have a decisive impact upon the public support base for the Gamal regime in the future. A wide public support base is crucial for Gamal in order to deal with potential problems, which stem from economic and political failure. A potential shift in the position of the NDP is a possible way of broadening appeal but this strategy is beset by a number of problems.

#### **8.4 Shifting of the National Democratic Party under Gamal Mubarak?**

The NDP occupies the centre ground in Egyptian politics, with the left and right spectrum within the political sphere occupied by various other political actors. There has been talk of a potential movement or shift in the political position of the NDP in

order to broaden its appeal amongst the Egyptian people (El Said, Interview, 2004). The NDP exists in Egypt surrounded by various political polarities which have characterised Egypt since the 1952 revolution (International Crisis Group, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The alternative polarities include the religious versus the secular, the neo liberal attitude towards the Egyptian economy versus the centralisation view towards the economy. These political polarities have occupied their political positions within the political spectrum for some time now and a potential shift in political position of the NDP could be difficult to engineer as it would necessitate building a new political coalition. This is unrealistic given that the present political coalition (i.e. old guard, military and security actors) would not want to exclude or adopt a political and economic position which could inevitable hinder their interests. In addition the attempt to build coalitions with the influential Islamist bloc would bring accusations of the NDP exploiting the use of religion for political purposes; the exact accusations the NDP directed towards the MB in the midst of the 2005 parliamentary elections. It seems that Gamal would remain dependent upon the political coalition of different interests, making it near to impossible to change the composition of the political coalition, in order to clear the path for a movement in the political position of the NDP (el Fattah, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). In addition opposition political parties would not view a potential movement of the NDP from the centre too favourably as would inevitable imply taking up their political ground, which would further harm their political role given the dominance of the NDP due to its close association and proximity with the state. Therefore in addition to potential opposition from actors within the ruling coalition inevitable opposition would be from political parties which would suffer as a result of the re-adjustment of the NDP to a different political position. Therefore relations with political actors inside and outside the



political elite will have to be taken into consideration by Gamal. Relations with internal actors are important but also are relations with external actors. in particular the US.

### **8.5 Egypt-US Relations**

Gamal would have to take into consideration numerous relationships such as that with the business community, political elite, security services, military and political opposition in order to ensure political stability. An important international relationship which would provide important support for Gamal would be one with Washington. This relationship has been important to Egypt under Hosni Mubarak and is likely to remain a central fixture of Egypt's foreign policy into the foreseeable future. Gamal is viewed to have had his presidential candidacy backed by Washington, which seems to be important in a time when US hegemony is stronger than ever within the Middle East and the US is pushing for change in the region; although the extent of political change desired by the US is debatable. As Egypt is an important strategic state to the US, this backing of Gamal by Washington carries further weight and importance, as the US would only support those that they could trust in the presidential hot seat within Egypt (Nafa, Interview, 2004; El Said, Interview, 2004). The military as emphasised previously plays a fundamental role within Egyptian politics and this is comprehended by the US, therefore there is no doubt that the US would need the approval from the military in order to ensure the smooth transition of Gamal to the position of president in Egypt. The relationship inevitably will provide much needed support to Gamal but alternatively could backfire due to his close proximity to the US administration. His father on becoming president decided to pursue a populist foreign policy in order to build his own legitimacy, which included

the public distancing from the US in order to appease the strong anti US sentiments amongst the Egyptian masses (Al Awadi, 2004). This political manoeuvre could be an option for Gamal, who already is viewed publicly as being liberal minded and pro American. The war in Iraq, the US backing to Israeli military action in Lebanon and the threatening position of the US towards Syria and Iran has heightened the levels of anti Americanism in the Middle East; therefore a close relationship with the US could undermine the search for legitimacy by Gamal amongst the Egyptian people. However, despite the potential negative connotations of this relationship, the support this relationship provides gives Gamal the platform to drive his claim for presidency. The drive for presidency has not been comfortable for Gamal as he continues to face stiff resistance from political actors in Egypt, such as the MB. This has led to the Egyptian government trying to neutralise the influence and impact of the MB (see chapter 7). Given, the fact that the MB is a key political actor in Egypt, it is important to take into consideration the position of the Egyptian government towards the MB post elections 2005. In particular if there has been any change in the position of the Egyptian government and the prospective position of Gamal Mubarak towards the MB. This is important as it will provide not only indications and implications for future Egyptian state and MB relations but also indications and implications for the future process of political reform in Egypt.

## **8.6 Gamal Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood and Implications for the Future**

### **Process of Political Reform in Egypt.**

The position of the Egyptian government and the NDP remains unchanged towards providing the MB with a legal platform in Egyptian politics. However, despite this rigid position of the NDP towards the legality of the MB, a statement made by Kamal

el Shazli, a leading member of the old guard within the NDP to the London based *Al Hayat* newspaper on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2005 is reflective of a slight change in the Egyptian governments position towards the MB. He stated that the 'Muslim Brotherhood had established a prominent presence on the political scene....they have their supporters' (Al Ahram, November 10-16<sup>th</sup>, 2005). It was the first time a senior government official has publicly acknowledged the MB's influence and role in Egyptian politics. El Shazli continued to say 'We have ourselves developed as a ruling party and as a government and things have changed. The Brotherhood has a street presence and wants to engage in political work. We don't mind', (Al Ahram, November 10-16<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

A clear sign of a policy shift of the NDP towards the MB was seen during the 2005 parliamentary elections campaign. The MB was allowed to use their traditional slogan 'Islam is the Solution' in the constituencies in which they contested. In addition MB candidates were allowed to present themselves as '*Ikhwan*' (Brotherhood) candidates which, was not allowed in the past. Also, this time the MB was allowed to actively engage in society without state intimidation and harassment, which indicated a shift in policy by the Egyptian state. However, despite, this change in policy the NDP does not see a contradiction in recognising and acknowledging the MB's influence and political role in society but at the same time denying its legitimacy as a political party. In the same interview with *Al Hayat*, el Shazli suggested that 'if they want to engage in politics as the MB then they are free to do so. A political party though is not an option', (Al Ahram, November 10-16<sup>th</sup>, 2005). In reality the Egyptian government is not in actuality giving new ground to the MB, as it stops at the crucial question of legality which the MB has been seeking for the last 25 years in Egypt.



The politics of succession is looming in Egypt and indications so far do not provide a positive picture regarding the position of Gamal Mubarak towards the MB. Gamal Mubarak has called on illegal parties not to be allowed to participate in formal politics. Although Gamal has not directly referred to the MB it was clear in an interview with *Al Jazeera*, that he was directing his comments towards the MB (*Al Jazeera*, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

In May, 2006 there was strong rhetoric from the Egyptian government about barring individual candidates from the MB running in future elections in Egypt. Pro Gamalist Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif described the MB members of parliament as a 'secret cell' threatening he 'will not allow them to form a parliamentary bloc in the future nor to assume any role in the political arena' (*Al Mesryoon*, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006). In addition to Dr Nazif's statement, there has also been severe criticism by other government officials including Dr. Mufid Shihab, minister for Parliamentary Affairs; Dr Hatim Al Gabali, minister of health; Mr. Ahmed Darwish, minister of Administrative Development. These criticisms are in line with the Egyptian governments and Gamal Mubarak's firm stance against the MB post parliamentary elections 2005. Dr Nazif has gone further and suggested ways in which the government could reduce the representation of the MB in future parliaments. Dr Nazif has stated one proposal was to introduce an electoral voting system which combines voting for individuals and voting for party lists, but this would require constitutional change. 'If we amended the constitution to allow that, then we could obtain better representation for the parties in parliament, even if so far I don't know whether that would happen or not,' he told the independent newspaper *Al Masry Al Youm* in the interview (*Arab Online*, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006). Dr Nazif was answering a question on how the Egyptian government might put

into practice Nazif's wish to prevent the MB from forming a parliamentary bloc in the next parliament.

However, some elements of the NDP's reformist wing seem to recognise that if they do not allow the oppositional parties enough room in society to maneuver, they will be forced to legalise the MB. Even Gamals' political advisor Mohammed Kamal stated in an interview to the International Crisis Group;

'In the future, definitely, the issue of the relation of religion with the state will have to be resolved. There is a definite need to integrate (the Brothers) into the political system. Personally, I am against legalising them as a political party. I think the solution is to enhance and strengthen the secular political parties in order to fill the vacuum in the political system that is being filled by the Islamists'. (Crisis Group Interview, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, p28).

At the moment in time, there is no guarantee that a strong political alternative to the NDP will emerge in Egypt as a direct result of vested interests within the NDP who are resistant to the process of political change in Egypt. The Egyptian government, Gamal Mubarak and the NDP do not appear to have a positive position upon providing legal space for the MB and this will remain a stumbling block in the MB's quest for legitimacy. Gamals' position on the MB is something the Egyptian government will find difficult to uphold given the pressure that has been created within, Egyptian, British and US commentary upon the process of political reform and the changing perceptions of the political opposition towards the MB in Egypt (Al Ahram, December 15-21<sup>st</sup>, 2005; Hamzawy and Brown, 2005; Al Jazeera, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005).

In response to the MB's growing political weight and its participation in Egyptian political life through its involvement in the parliament and professional syndicates, the political opposition have changed their perceptions and attitudes towards the MB.

Newcomers into the Egyptian political scene such as the '*Kefayah*' movement and the *al Ghad* party have adopted rather clear positions in relation to the MB. Ayman Nour told the International Crisis Group, 'we respect them and the fact that they are a political current for nearly 80 years now. We are in favour of them being legal' (International Crisis Group Interview, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, p25). The *al Ghad* party's recognition of the MB being a political actor within Egyptian society can be further proved from the meeting of Ayman Nour with the MB leadership in the run up to the 2005 presidential elections. This was done in order to gain the support of the MB in relation to his candidacy in the presidential elections. George Ishak, from '*Kefayah*' has commented;

'I appreciate that they will be a political party; let them show themselves. I believe that if they were able to compete in an election, they would win 10 to 15 per cent. But for as long as they are forced to remain in hiding, people think there are three or four million of them; this is not true; there are 30, 000 to 40,000 of them no more' ( International Crisis Group, Interview, October 4th, 2005, p25).

The older parties in Egypt such as the *al Nasseriyya* and the *al Tagammu* parties are more ambivalent towards the MB, but nevertheless their position towards the MB has changed. The *al Nasseriyya* party favours involving the MB and the Islamic current in the political process and supports a legal party for the Islamists. This position is not clear but at the same time it has not closed the door on the MB if certain conditions are met. On the other hand the *al Tagammu* party is split; Rifat al Saeed from *al Tagammu* is well known for his opposition to the Islamic trend within Egypt in general and in particular the MB. His opposition to Political Islam marks much of his academic and scholarly output. He devotes a weekly column in *Al-Ahali* under the title 'A page from Egypt's history' to debunking the MB's role in Egyptian society. He coined the term '*muta'aslimin*', and carries a multitude of negative connotations



including the cynical use of religion to attain political power (Al Ahram, July 7-13<sup>th</sup>, 2005). However, this view of Rifat al Saeed is not consistent throughout the *al Tagammu* party, with other members being more receptive to the idea of MB and its quest for legitimacy. They have in fact advocated the MB's development into a '*Hiizb al Madani* (civil party) with an Islamic background (Kish, Interview, 2004). In relation to the *al Wafd* party the oldest liberal party in Egypt its position towards the MB has been of working and co-operating with the MB. For example, the former leader of the *al Wafd* party Nouman Gomma visited the MB prior to the presidential elections 2005 to seek the support of the MB, but has not been as direct in calling for the recognition of the MB as a legal political force. This is in direct contrast to his political rival Ayman Nour.

The support for the MB's quest for legitimacy appears to have grown within the circles of the intelligentsia within Egypt. Dr Amr Choubaky, a leading analyst on the MB has stated;

'It is possible to integrate them. But this requires, first a serious democratic process which integrates political activists generally, and then, on the Brothers side, they have to decide to choose between al-dawa (the religious movement) and al haraka al siyassa (the political movement)' (International Crisis Group, Interview, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, p26).

Al Choubaky is impressed by the new guard of MB members who have developed a discourse away from the traditional religiousness of the MB but believes that the MB needs to undergo further changes in its shape and character to allow the new guard to have a greater role in decision making and for the MB to form a programme for a civil political party (Choubaky, Interview, 2004). The same view has been presented by Mohammed El Said Said, deputy director of the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, who has insisted that it was important for the MB to become a civil

party, instead of a religious movement in order to minimise the risk of sectarian violence in Egypt (El Said, Interview, 2004). The likelihood of the MB transforming itself comprehensively into a political movement is minimal due to the role of the old guard and the central role of religious missionary work at the core of its broader social activism at the grass root levels. The formation of a political organ is a more likely option for the MB as it would allow them to continue with their religious work at the grass root level but also to present itself as a political movement detached from the spirit. This is a crucial debate in the MB between the old guard and new guard and will determine the path which the MB will proceed on into the future.

Overall, it is evident that the MB has been able to win over opposition actors in its quest for legitimacy. This support will make it difficult for Gamal Mubarak to sustain its present position on the MB. The MB is showing its political weight through its influence and impact on the succession process (See chapter 7). This has been acknowledged by Gamal through his attempts to neutralise the MB new generation but has been unwilling to go the extra yard and contemplate a legal platform for the MB in Egypt. Gamal not solving the status of the MB in Egypt will make his life difficult as a result of the growing political stature of the MB and inevitably have negative implications for the future process of political reform in Egypt.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the debates and pressures for economic and political reform in contemporary Egypt. This was done by looking at the electoral promises that were made by Hosni Mubarak and analysing progress which has been made to date in relation to his promises. Egypt is retracting into further authoritarianism, at time of growing demand for economic and political reform. Economically, Mubarak's

economic pledges of raising living standards and creating employment have come under criticism due to the prospect of further economic liberalisation and privatisation under the new cabinet. In terms of the economic and political implications of a political succession, it is likely that the economic programme adopted in 1991 will continue to be pursued, with economic liberalisation and privatisation being pursued but still in a cautious manner. Politically, little change is expected as Gamal has been in the hierarchy of power since 2000 and no real political change has taken place. In particular there is not likely to be a drastic break from past political position towards the MB. As a result, no major change in relations between the Egyptian government and the MB is expected. The future of Egypt under Gamal is not going to mark a radical change from the economic and political agenda, which Egypt has experienced under his father in the past or at the present moment in time.



## Chapter 9- Conclusion

This research has explored the process of economic and political change in Egypt, with particular reference to the period, 1991-2006. This was done by examining the MB and the politics of succession in Egypt. The case of Egypt was located in the context of broader economic and political changes in the Middle East. In doing this, four important questions were addressed. These were as follows. First, what was the extent that there had been a process of economic and political reform in Egypt? Second, to what extent has the process of economic and political change allowed for the emergence of a functioning civil society? Third to what extent has this allowed political actors such as the MB to challenge state power? And finally, to what extent might the role of the MB be symptomatic of a challenge to the legitimacy of the existing state dispensation?

In order to address these research questions, I relied on the use of primary and secondary data. The primary data in the form of interviews provided access to leading academics, politicians and thinkers in Egypt. The interviewees were able to provide answers to my questions, which evolved around my research themes (i.e. Egyptian reform, the MB, and the politics of succession). This was important, as it provided me with the thoughts and opinions of leading experts on my research themes, thus allowing me to make a new contribution to my research. The use of primary data was complemented by the use of secondary data. This provided another means through which to collect data in relation to my research themes. In particular the use of a range of newspapers (i.e. Egyptian, British and US), and the interpretation of these sources, allowed me to make an additional new contribution to my research. Therefore the

primary and secondary data provided the basis on which to construct and begin the research.

The thesis first explored economic and political reform in the context of the wider Middle East. This was done in Chapter 2, which in addition located the discussion in the context of regional and global developments such as US foreign policy post September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terror'. Chapter 2 demonstrated that the process of limited political liberalisation which was evident in the region in the 1990s was reflective of a desire of power elites to survive in the context of internal socio-economic pressures. Thus, the process of limited political change was not enough alone to allow oppositional actors to challenge the power and hegemony of the state. This was due to the fact that oppositional actors were outmanoeuvred by states accustomed to survival and lacked a strong social support base in order to launch a challenge to state power. On the other hand, this process of limited political change driven by state survival and the need for legitimacy provided room for Islamist parties to enter the political system, and to have a role inside the political system. This role of Islamists inside the system and their presence outside of it through their existence in civil society via their involvement in trade unions, professional syndicates, student unions and teaching clubs allowed Islamists to position themselves with strength in order to launch a challenge to contest state power. The Islamists took advantage of internal poor socio-economic conditions to contest state power and their strength was boosted by regional crisis', such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Gulf War in 1991 and the Algerian military coup in the early 1990s. Post 9/11 US foreign policy and the war on terror resulting in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq allowed Islamists further to use regional crisis' to strengthen their positions and to launch further direct challenges to state power. In addition, the

Israeli bombardment of Lebanon in 2006, the Israeli incursions in the Gaza strip and US pressures on Iran and Syria have added to the strength of Islamist parties, which continue to act as counter weights to state power in the region. This discussion in chapter 2 helped provide a comprehension into the processes of economic and political change at the state and regional level. Therefore the discussion provided a platform to examine the case of Egypt in chapters 3-8.

Chapter 3 explored the process of economic and political reform in Egypt since 1991, in particular its impact on the power and structure of the Egyptian state. The process of economic reform coincided with a process of political de-liberalisation. In response most political actors, in particular the political opposition suffocated and were paralysed as a result of state intrusion into political life. However, despite this political intrusion by the Egyptian government, the MB was able to escape political extinction and to grow and challenge the Egyptian government for a number of reasons such as its structure, social base, changing shape and character and its broad involvement in Egyptian society. Given the important role the MB came to play in challenging the Egyptian government and its power in the 1990s, chapters 4-6 examined how the MB was able to become a key political actor in Egypt and to challenge its hegemony. This was done by examining the details of transformation of the MB from a religious movement into a central political actor in Egyptian politics. I explored how the MB emerged as a strong political force and how internal reforms to the way in which the MB organised itself contributed to its increasing strength and power in Egyptian political life. It also situated the internal political and organisational transformations inside the MB alongside shifts in the spiritual and ideological discourse that the MB promoted. This is important as by understanding these shifts, the process of change in the MB's shape and character and how it has



come to relate to the Egyptian state can be more readily understood. The thesis demonstrated this by examining the role of the MB in 2 key Egyptian institutions: the Egyptian parliament and professional syndicates.

In particular, the MB used the professional syndicates to challenge the power and hegemony of the Egyptian state. At a time of heightened socio-economic crisis in the 1990s, this was a dangerous situation for the Egyptian state as historically professional syndicates have played an important role in challenging state power and holding it to account. In response the Egyptian state intervened in order to paralyze the syndicates but importantly to weaken the growing influence and power of the MB. This was done initially by introducing Law 100 in 1993. However after the failure of this law to hinder the progress of the MB, it was amended by the Egyptian state in 1995 but this also failed. In response the Egyptian state intervened to take control of many syndicate boards such as the Medical and Engineer syndicates. Despite this attempt to weaken the MB, the MB was able to continue with its challenge to the Egyptian state due to its large social support base and its wide presence in civil society. In fact, the ability of the MB to contest state power and to contribute to the process of political reform has been facilitated by its willingness to cross ideological barriers. It has tried to construct alliances (i.e. political and civilian) and to add diversity to its social base. This can be seen clearly post 2000 as the MB has exerted itself in trying to have an influence and impact on the process of political succession in Egypt.

A detailed understanding of the MB was followed by examining the politics of succession in chapters 7 and 8. The politics of succession became important since 2000. It has been dominated by the increasing role and power of Gamal Mubarak in

Egyptian politics. The rise of Gamal and his acquaintances in the echelons of Egyptian politics raised many questions concerning the future of economic and political change in Egypt. Therefore it was important to demonstrate the discourse surrounding political succession, taking into consideration the actors involved and the forces driving the succession process in Egypt. In addition it was important to examine key political actors, such as the MB, to determine the extent of their influence and impact on the political succession process. For example, since 2000, the MB has been vocal in its criticism of the political succession process and its impact has been strengthened through its willingness to join forces with new social protest movements such as '*Kefayah*' and the communist party. This alliance between the MB and other social forces heightened the concern of the Egyptian state. This concern was escalated when the MB began to take to the streets in order to galvanise public support in opposition to the succession process. In reaction to these developments the Egyptian state resorted to coercion in order to safeguard the succession process. However, the existence of the MB inside and outside the system resulted in the failure of coercion by the Egyptian government to weaken the MB in its agenda to undermine the succession process. As a result, the Egyptian government shifted its policy and began to pursue a strategy of trying to neutralise the MB to halt the MB's challenge to the succession process in Egypt. Therefore, the struggle between the Egyptian government and MB falls in to the context of the succession process, which is likely to have a key impact on reform process in Egypt. This examination of the politics of succession was important as it allowed an understanding into the forces involved and the power struggle unfolding in Egypt. In addition it provided a platform from which to examine the future process of economic and political change in Egypt, in particular

the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political change emerging from a succession process.

This research has allowed a number of important contributions to be made to scholarly work, through the examination of economic and political reform in Egypt, by relating it to the political weight of the MB and the politics of succession. First, it has allowed an understanding into the process of economic and political change in Egypt and its impact on the MB, which led it to challenge state power and its structures in the 1990s. Post 2000 the MB has continued to confront the Egyptian government, through its ability to have an influence and impact upon the political succession process in Egypt. Second, this focus on the MB, through examining its changing shape and character, has allowed an understanding into the transition of Islamism in Egypt and the wider Middle East. This is because the MB is a leading Islamic movement, with its internal changes and transformations having an impact on Islamist parties in the region, such as the IAF in Jordan, JDP in Morocco or even Hamas in the Palestinian Territories. Third, the focus on the politics of succession, has allowed an understanding into the level of continuity and discontinuity in the process of economic and political reform arising from a succession process in Egypt. The process of economic reform in Egypt continues to be market dominated, with the rise of Gamal Mubarak speeding up the process of economic liberalisation, in particular the linking of Egypt to wider markets. As a result in Egypt, there is a lot of emphasis on developing the stock and capital markets, in order to improve their competence, to attract regional and international investors. The process of economic reform remains market centric; however Gamal has extended this to include regional and global markets as well. On the other hand the process of political reform indicates continuity and discontinuity. This refers to shifts between the process of political liberalisation



and de-liberalisation. This will continue to be the basis of the Egyptian government's political strategy into the near future, both in order to balance the political weight of the MB and to manage the process of political succession.

The overall argument in this thesis has been that Egypt in the 1990s underwent a process of economic and political change. This period of change coincided with heightened socio-economic crisis, which was worsened by economic reforms carried out by the Egyptian government under the influence of the IMF and WB. This led to the development of internal socio-economic pressures, which threatened the power and legitimacy of the Egyptian government. In order to survive and persist, the Egyptian government sustained a process of political de-liberalisation. This process was aimed at weakening the growing political power and influence of the MB. The state was mindful of the growing strength of the MB in civil society through its presence in student unions, teaching clubs, and professional syndicates. This existence of the MB inside and outside the system, allowed the MB to pressure the Egyptian government, which led to coercive action by the Egyptian government that was concerned about challenges to its power and legitimacy.

This concern of the political weight of the MB, in combination with the growing socio-economic demands of the Egyptian people has posed survival dilemmas to the Egyptian government. This can be clearly seen in the context of the politics of succession, as the Egyptian government has sought to manage this process carefully in order to deal with the MB and rising socio-economic demands. Despite the careful management and planning by the Egyptian government, there has been wide spread opposition to the political succession process in Egypt, which was seen in the run up to and post elections in 2005. This opposition has resulted in the Egyptian government

further tightening its control over Egyptian society in order to safeguard the succession process. Given this political reality post elections 2005, it is likely that the future process of economic and political change in Egypt will be dictated by 3 main factors. These include the internal socio-economic demands, the political weight of the MB and the politics of succession. The latter no doubt is a key factor behind the recent economic and political developments in Egypt and the politics of succession is likely to be an important factor in determining the future relations not only between the Egyptian state and the MB, but by its very nature the future of political reform in Egypt itself.

## Appendices

### Interviews

This appendix contains extracts relating to the MB's role in professional syndicates, from 4 interviews which I did with 4 leading experts on the MB. The information provided is based on notes taken during the interview process, which the interviewees were comfortable with. This information was used for chapter 6, which focused on the MB and its use of syndicates to challenge the Egyptian state's powers and its structures. The information (extracts) below supplements the interview material used in chapter 6.

### Interviewee Details

Dr Amany Qandil- is a leading civil society and human rights activist in Egypt. She is well known for writing on professional syndicates in Egypt and the role of the MB in the syndicates.

Dr Amr Choubaky- is a research at the Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. He did his doctorate on the MB and writes frequently in the Egyptian press on the MB in Egypt.

Abu Ella Madi- is a former senior member of the MB and was part of the new guard which entered the syndicates in the 1980s. Now he is the leader of the Hizb al Wasat party.

Dr Amr Hamzawy- is an academic and research at the Carnegie Endowment Centre for International Peace. At the time of the interview he was a lecturer at the University of Cairo and is a leading expert on the MB in Egypt.



**Appendix A- Interview with Dr Amany Qandil (extracts) Cairo, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

1. What role have syndicates played in the past? And how significant have they been in contesting state power?

Qandil: Syndicates have played an important role in providing a sphere of mobilisation at times of socio-economic and political crisis in Egypt. One saw this in the 1960s and 1970s under Nasser and Sadat.

Also the syndicates provide an avenue within which less influential and less prestigious sub groups of various professions may attempt to further their socio-economic and political causes.

2. What was the relationship like between the state and syndicates under Nasser and Sadat?

Qandil: Nasser had real concern over the role of the syndicates and applied a policy of co-optation and coercion. In the mid 1960s, Nasser launched a campaign against the syndicates in order to weaken and undermine them. Like wise Sadat had a similar policy to that of Nasser but preferred the carrot approach to that of the stick.

3. Turning now to the 1980s, why did Mubarak relax state control over the syndicates?

Qandil: Hosni Mubarak was new and required legitimacy. Therefore he removed restrictions on the activities of the syndicates.

4. What was the relationship like between Mubarak and the MB in the early 1980s?

Qandil: Mubarak in his search for legitimacy formed a close relationship with the MB. This aided his quest for religious legitimacy and appeal to the Egyptian public.

5. Did Mubarak not foresee syndicates becoming a major source of activity for the MB?

Qandil: Mubarak was pragmatic and did not look into the future. He just wanted to survive and the MB provided legitimacy, therefore he sought it from the MB.

6. How important would the syndicates be in the 1980s to the MB and its political work?

Qandil: The syndicates would be a vehicle in the MB's work to extend its message and develop power to challenge the government. The involvement in syndicates represented a change in the MB and state relations.

7. What factors accounted for the rise and consolidation of the MB in the syndicates during the 1980s?

Qandil: A number of factors were responsible for the rise of the MB in the syndicates

- 1) The new guard 2) corruption 3) political fighting 4) poor services 5) good structure and management.

8. How important were the new guard in the early success of the MB in syndicates?

Qandil: The new guard were crucial in the success of the MB. Their pragmatism and political mindset allowed the MB to take advantage of the situation that came across their way.

9. How significant was the MB takeover of the medical (1984) and engineering syndicates (1987)?

Qandil: The success in these 2 syndicates was important for the MB as they are 2 key syndicates. In addition these syndicates are known to be politically active. The success of the MB would lead such syndicates to evolve around Islamic politics instead of secular politics.

10. In to the 1990s- what factors brought the Islamist takeover of the syndicates to the attention of the Egyptian government? in particular the mobilisation to challenge state power?

Qandil: A number of key developments would lead to the state becoming concerned with the MB influence over the syndicates- 1) the 1991 gulf war, the MB would resist Egypt's support for the war through the syndicates 2) success in the influential lawyers syndicate 3) the 1992 Egyptian earthquake and the MB's relief efforts which would undermine the state and its use of syndicates in the relief efforts.

11. To what extent was the MB's victory in the lawyers syndicate responsible for confrontation with the state?

Qandil: The MB's success in the lawyers syndicate awakened the state to the threat and power of the MB. This was a major turning point in relations with the MB, in particular under Mubarak.

12. What was the response of the MB to the introduction of Law 100 in 1993?

Qandil: Law 100 was in direct response to the power of the MB in the syndicates- In particular, due to the syndicates politicisation and mobilisation by the MB. The MB reacted by organising seminars and dialoguing with oppositional actors in order to overturn the legislation. Sustained pressure by the MB led to its amendment in 1995 but had no impact on the independence of the syndicates.

13. To what extent has such a law constrained the political work of the MB in syndicates? And has the MB found new avenues of political expression in Egypt?

Qandil: The law has constricted the activities of the MB, although the MB has continued to exist and use the syndicates as political platforms. The MB has searched for new political space in civil society by joining hands in social movements to broaden its appeal in order to challenge the state.



**Appendix- B- Interview with Dr Amr Choubaky (extracts) Cairo, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.**

- 1) What role have syndicates played in the past? And how significant have they been in contesting state power?

Choubaky: Syndicates are key components of Egyptian civil society and act as a check and balance on state powers. They were highly active during the mid 1970s, especially at the time leading up to the peace agreement with Israel.

The Physician and Journalist syndicates in the past have been extremely resistant to the state on a range of socio-economic and political issues. If mobilised they could represent a real challenge to the Egyptian states power and its institutions.

- 2) What was the relationship like between the state and syndicates under Nasser and Sadat?

Choubaky: Nasser wanted complete control and wanted to bring the syndicated under his control as well. Sadat allowed space for the syndicates but closed this space after they became powerful and began to contest state power and its legitimacy.

- 3) Turning now to the 1980s, why did Mubarak relax state control over the syndicates?

Choubaky: Hosni Mubarak needed legitimacy and began to undergo limited political liberalisation. In particular loosened controls over civil society and syndicates but not totally.

- 4) What was the relationship like between Mubarak and the MB in the early 1980s?

Choubaky: Mubarak courted the MB and allowed the MB to participate in elections; this boosted his religious outlook in Egyptian society and provided him with legitimacy.

- 5) Did Mubarak not foresee syndicates becoming a major source of activity for the MB?

Choubaky: Mubarak assumed the MB was too weak to challenge the state and believed that the MB could be out manoeuvred by the state.

- 6) How important would the syndicates be in the 1980s to the MB and its political work?

Choubaky: The use of syndicates would become central to the political agenda of the MB and its development into a key political actor in Egypt.

- 7) What factors accounted for the rise and consolidation of the MB in the syndicates during the 1980s?

Choubaky: The professional class had become dissatisfied with the performance of the syndicate's boards in dealing with the economic, social and political concerns. This provided impetus for the success of the MB. The MB would address all such issues head on and this would lead to growing support in the syndicates. In particular the MB had strong support in the medical and engineering syndicates due to their work and due to the involvement of the Student Islamic movement in these syndicates.

- 8) How important were the new guard in the early success of the MB in syndicates?

Choubaky: The new guard have been central in the change of the MB and were key behind the involvement of the MB in the syndicates and its success. Their blend of religion and politics was central in the rise of the MB.

- 9) How significant was the MB takeover of the medical (1984) and engineering syndicates (1987)?

Choubaky: This success indicated the pragmatism of the MB and flexibility of the new guard. Also their success represented the take over of 2 key political syndicates and would have implications for relations with the state.

- 10) In to the 1990s- what factors brought the Islamist takeover of the syndicates to the attention of the Egyptian government?, in particular the mobilisation to challenge state power/

Choubaky: The success in the lawyers syndicate, the gulf war and the 1992 earthquake increased the profile and power of the MB and heightened the concern of the role of the MB in the syndicates. Therefore it would only be a matter of time before the state took action to weaken the MB and the syndicates.

11) To what extent was the MB's victory in the lawyers syndicate responsible for confrontation with the state?

Choubaky: The take over of the lawyers syndicate meant another powerful syndicate was under the control of the MB. This frightened the state and as a result it began to take drastic measures to deal with the challenge of the MB.

12) What was the response of the MB to the introduction of Law 100 in 1993?

Choubaky: The 1993 legislation was directed to the MB and its growing power. The MB in response organised demonstrations and petitions to overturn the legislation. This represented a souring in relations with the state and changing fortunes of the MB in the 1990s.

13) To what extent has such a law constrained the political work of the MB in syndicates? And has the MB found new avenues of political expression in Egypt?

Choubaky: The MB has continued to use syndicates despite Law 100 to challenge the state. In addition the new guard has been instrumental in building relations with opposing forces in the syndicates to create pressure on the state to stop its interference in the syndicates.



### Appendix- C- Interview with Abu Ella Madi (extracts) Cairo, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004

- 1) What role have syndicates played in the past? And how significant have they been in contesting state power?

Ella Madi: The syndicates played an important role prior to the 1952 revolution in Egypt. They acted as an accounting mechanism on the abuse of power by the monarchy and government. After 1952, the role of syndicates was subordinated to the power of the state. This existed till the 1970s but Sadat closed the political space he allowed to syndicates after the signing of the peace agreement with Israel. This was because syndicates were central in challenging and contesting state power through their mobilisation capabilities.

- 2) What was the relationship like between the state and syndicates under Nasser and Sadat?

Ella Madi: Civil society was manipulated and controlled by Nasser and Sadat. Different styles between the two, however their policy towards the syndicates did not change- a policy to weaken and subordinate the syndicates to the power of the state.

- 3) Turning now to the 1980s, why did Mubarak relax state control over the syndicates?

Ella Madi: Hosni Mubarak needed legitimacy and support; therefore he adopted a policy of allowing limited political space to exist in society, which meant more space for syndicates and its activities.

- 4) What was the relationship like between Mubarak and the MB in the early 1980s?

Ella Madi: The MB was happy to co-operate with Mubarak and Mubarak benefited through the MB's religious credentials in society.

- 5) Did Mubarak not foresee syndicates becoming a major source of activity for the MB?

Ella Madi: It was quite clear that Mubarak in his quest for legitimacy did not foresee syndicates becoming a major sphere of MB activity and source of mobilisation, which would allow the MB to contest state power in Egypt.

- 6) How important would the syndicates be in the 1980s to the MB and its political work?

Ella Madi: The MB would use syndicates in order to create new space in order to develop support amongst the professional class to challenge the state on a range of socio-economic issues.

- 7) What factors accounted for the rise and consolidation of the MB in the syndicates during the 1980s?

Ella Madi: The syndicates were in a poor state and there was much discontent amongst the professional class. The MB would use this to build support. Also the MB's Islamic appeal and good management skills helped in their rise and consolidation. The MB had good experience in dealing with financial issues based on experience from university campuses. This allowed the MB to provide much needed social services to the members of the syndicates.

- 8) How important were the new guard in the early success of the MB in syndicates?

Ella Madi: The new guard allowed the MB to shift and change. Also they allowed the MB to rise in the syndicates through pragmatism and continuous flexibility.

- 9) How significant was the MB takeover of the medical (1984) and engineering syndicates (1987)?

Ella Madi: The medical and engineering syndicates are important in Egypt. They both have a large size and are political. Therefore the MB had access to a large base, which was already political, which was good for the new guard and their quest to challenge the state.

- 10) In to the 1990s- what factors brought the Islamist takeover of the syndicates to the attention of the Egyptian government?, in particular the mobilisation to challenge state power/

Ella Madi: The success in the lawyers syndicate, the 1991 gulf war and the 1992 earthquake were key events that would raise the profile and image of the MB. The MB began to co-ordinate the activities of other syndicates in response to the states support in the gulf war. The take over of the lawyers syndicate due to internal political crisis allowed the MB to further politicise the syndicates. A number of seminars and conferences were held in the syndicates addressing socio-economic issues. The 1992

earthquake saw the MB respond quickly, assisted by its large tanzim and resources, which embarrassed the state, which was slow to respond.

11) To what extent was the MB's victory in the lawyers syndicate responsible for confrontation with the state?

Ella Madi: The state was worried with the success of the MB in the lawyers syndicate and would invest time in undermining the rise of the MB in all syndicates in Egypt.

12) What was the response of the MB to the introduction of Law 100 in 1993?

Ella Madi: The MB reacted by attempting to create pressure on the state by petitions, seminars, meetings and demonstrations. But failed to overturn the legislation, however indicated the desperate nature of the state to weaken the MB in the syndicates.

13) To what extent has such a law constrained the political work of the MB in syndicates? And has the MB found new avenues of political expression in Egypt?

Ella Madi: The MB has continued to exist in the syndicates and to use them. No doubt flexibility and pragmatism of the new guard has allowed the MB to search for new political space to challenge the state via its involvement in protest movements and alternative political spaces.



## Appendix D- Interview with Dr Amr Hamzawy (extracts) Cairo, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004

- 1) What role have syndicates played in the past? And how significant have they been in contesting state power?

Hamzawy: Syndicates have played an important role in Egypt and continue to do so. They are vehicles through which the state power can be challenged through an educated and professional class.

- 2) What was the relationship like between the state and syndicates under Nasser and Sadat?

Hamzawy: The syndicates were dealt with harshly by Nasser and Sadat. For example Sadat turned against the lawyers syndicate after it criticised the peace agreement with Israel in 1979. Conflict developed between the syndicates and the state.

- 3) Turning now to the 1980s, why did Mubarak relax state control over the syndicates?

Hamzawy: Hosni Mubarak allowed limited political reforms for the purpose of political legitimacy, which he needed as he was an unknown political quantity in the early 1980s.

- 4) What was the relationship like between Mubarak and the MB in the early 1980s?

Hamzawy: The Egyptian government allowed space for the MB, in order to acquire much needed religious legitimacy in society. Mubarak used the MB for this purpose but this relationship would change later.

- 5) Did Mubarak not foresee syndicates becoming a major source of activity for the MB?

Hamzawy: Mubarak believed that the syndicates had been weakened and could be controlled but failed to take into consideration the change in the MB, in particular its ideas and discourse.

- 6) How important would the syndicates be in the 1980s to the MB and its political work?

Hamzawy: The MB use of the syndicates was part of a comprehensive policy to appeal to all sectors in society to challenge the state.

- 7) What factors accounted for the rise and consolidation of the MB in the syndicates during the 1980s?

Hamzawy: A number of factors led to the rise of the MB in the syndicates and their growing popularity- 1) corruption 2) mismanagement 3) political bickering 4) poor services. The MB addressed these issues and by providing much needed services renewed the legacy of social Islam and social justice.

- 8) How important were the new guard in the early success of the MB in syndicates?

Hamzawy: The new guard such as Abu Futuh and Essam El Eyrian were central behind the rise of the MB and push new pragmatic ideas into the MB to encourage change, which led to its domination over the syndicates in Egypt.

- 9) How significant was the MB takeover of the medical (1984) and engineering syndicates (1987)?

Hamzawy: The new guard's success in the medical and engineering syndicates was the 1<sup>st</sup> step in the rise of the MB and its political challenge to the state. The new guard would push its blend of religion and politics in the syndicates. The state would become concerned with this success of the MB.

- 10) In to the 1990s- what factors brought the Islamist takeover of the syndicates to the attention of the Egyptian government?, in particular the mobilisation to challenge state power/

Hamzawy: The 1991 gulf war, 1992 earthquake and lawyers syndicate victory put the MB on a course of collision with the state. These events not only allowed the MB to use the syndicates to further politicise them to challenge the state but also raised the profile of the MB not only in Egypt but the wider Middle East. This was a major concern for the state, which felt weakened and needed to take action to restore its strength in Egypt.

11) To what extent was the MB's victory in the lawyers syndicate responsible for confrontation with the state?

Hamzawy: The MB showed its power with the success in the 1992 lawyers syndicate. This raised the concern of the state. As a result it reacted by taking action to stop the rise of the MB and a possible threat to its power in Egypt.

12) What was the response of the MB to the introduction of Law 100 in 1993?

Hamzawy: The MB organised seminars and talks to create pressure on the state. This failed as the syndicates were placed under judicial supervision, such as the engineers syndicate. The new guard refused to comply and there was conflict with the security forces. This reflected the broader spirit in the new guard, which emphasised the fact that the MB should not be deterred by the state from influencing syndicate politics in general.

13) To what extent has such a law constrained the political work of the MB in syndicates? And has the MB found new avenues of political expression in Egypt?

Hamzawy: Law 100 represented the state's coercion not only towards the MB but to civil society in general. The MB was weakened but responded quickly like it has done in the past. This indicates the resilient nature of the MB and it continues to challenge the state through different means in civil society.



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