

# The Rise of the Military and the Prospects of Politico-Economic Developments in Egypt

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## Abstract

Although the 2011 uprisings in Egypt led to the fall of Hosni Mubarak, they have not yet been able to change the nature of the country's political system. A year after the country's first non-military president took office, Egypt's political situation became more or less similar to the way it had been before 2011. The structure of the relationship between the state and the society in Egypt, highly affected by vast military influence, could be explained through Guillermo O'Donnell's model of "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism". The Islamists' weakness in establishing a powerful government granted a proper excuse for the military to obtain direct rule over the country through a modern 21<sup>st</sup>-century coup d'état. The basis for legitimizing this move, in addition to the Islamists' weakness, was the claim that the 2011 coup d'état had the same public support as the 1952 coup d'état. Consequently, the military enacted legal mechanisms and introduced a presidential candidate who ultimately won the elections, giving back the military its previous position. It seems that the military authoritarian government in Egypt would enjoy relative legitimacy by focusing on providing economic and political stability, while paving the way for preserving its own long-term politico-economic interests. Therefore, it is likely that if the status quo— which relies upon widespread repression of the Islamists and the weakness and passivity of the liberal movements— is maintained, the authoritarian military rule over Egypt will continue.

**Keywords:** bureaucratic authoritarianism, Egypt, Guillermo O'Donnell, military, political economy, political system.

## Introduction

The uprisings of the past few years in the Middle East and North Africa affected Egypt in 2011 and led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak after 30 years. The military stepped in while the revolution was in progress. It tried to maintain the structure of the system, assumed the role of a mediator, and ultimately supported the revolutionaries to preserve its traditional position in the country. Its actions also served military's concerns regarding the issue of Gamal Mubarak succession to power and neoliberals supporting him who directly threatened the military's economic interests. After Mubarak's resignation, the military administered the transitional period and drew the future political perspective of the country. The perspective which ultimately led to the rise of the Islamists, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, was not favored by the military and, in the first anniversary of the organization's ruling over Egypt, the military took over with a coup d'état. The military's renewed control over the political system in Egypt and legitimizing this control through presidential elections has increased concerns regarding the revival of authoritarianism in the country.

## Main Question

The present study, which uses on Guillermo O'Donnell's model of "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism" on the current situation in Egypt, while outlining the short- and long-term disadvantages of this phenomenon, seeks to answer the following critical question: What is the perspective of Egypt's politico-economic development under the military's rule? The author's hypothesis is that Egypt will continue to develop economically according to the dependent capitalism standards. Politically, however, the dominant idea would be an effort to monopolize power. This is due to the lack of a domestic solidarity among the Egyptian public, which itself comes from the divergent nature of the society. The theoretical framework of the study, which aims at

analyzing the nature of the relationship between the State and the society in Egypt, will be based on Guillermo O'Donnell's model of "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism".

### **Literature Review**

This study focuses on the essential role and position of the military in Egypt's political changes, particularly their stance toward the uprisings in January 2011. Analyzing the position of the military in the Egyptian society makes it critical to review the previous literature regarding the relationship between the country's military-based rule and the society. Therefore, based on historical-analytical documents, the country's politico-economic future in light of the military's rise to power will first be discussed.

Yezid Sāyegh, in a paper titled "Above the State; The Officers' Republic in Egypt", analyzes the military intervention in Egypt's political economy and, discussing the politico-economic aspects of this intervention, concludes that what has formed the realities of the Egyptian society today is the formation of a power above the state in form of the officers' republic (2012). Another study, titled "Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes" analyzes and evaluates the roots and tools of stability and leadership in Arab regimes, especially Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The research concludes that while the military stability in these countries is apparent, this stability is rather fragile internally (Brooks & Sarvariān, 2000). Steven Cook (2007), in his book "The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey", published by John Hopkins University, studies the effects of independence and freedom of action by the military in Egypt, and analyzes the distinct cultural position of this group in the society in order to study the political development of the country.

In another study, “The Military in the New Egypt: Approaches and Analyses”, regarding Egypt’s uprisings and the importance of the country as a critical pole among Arab states, the effects of its changes on the other states in the region are analyzed and the responses to the military rise to power in this country are studied. The author focuses on some of the current challenges, including Hosni Mubarak’s heritage, economic dependence to the United States, and opposition groups and parties, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. The study concludes that the success of the Egyptian military in preserving stability and peace during the transitional period and its position in the future of the country’s political arena is largely related to its interactions with active groups inside the country and its ability to provide an equilibrium in its relations with foreign powers (Saqafi 'Ameri, 2011).

Yet, as already mentioned, most of the cited studies, as well as other similar studies not mentioned in this article, have mainly focused on the historical effects of the military on the domestic politics of Egypt, acknowledging the critical and powerful role of this institution in the country. Regarding the outlook of this institution’s role in the future of Egypt, however, adequate studies have not yet been produced. Accordingly, the present study, while historically and analytically probing the military’s role in Egypt’s political and social changes, studies the future of the country’s political and economic development in light of the military’s renewed control over Egypt.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Bureaucratic Authoritarian Government:** a regime which, upon rising to power, would centralize its political authority to further strengthen its base of power (2009, 1388: 143). Unlike totalitarian states, in which the political leader considers himself as an outstanding philosopher whose job is to educate the

desired human, the authoritarian model accepts humans as they are. Instead, it focuses on further strengthening its own power. The first and foremost characteristic of a bureaucratic authoritarian government is its desire to centralize political authority and power. In order to do this, the regime would block the non-member groups out of the leadership coalition. This blocking is done through severe control over policymaking processes in order to merely respond to the goals and interests of the coalition members. Unlike totalitarian regimes, however, authoritarian governments do not favor a control over all aspects of the social and public life.

The second characteristic of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism is the government's readiness to employ authority and, if and when necessary, force to achieve national objectives. Here, authority means a proficient and efficient reference, unlike the autocracies which practice force in favor of the dictators. The third characteristic of such governments is the regime's will to purge the country's political arena of emotional and frenzy visionaries. One way to do this is demassification in politics and economy.<sup>1</sup> The aspects of policymaking in bureaucratic authoritarian governments lead the way toward enacting economic programs in a way which enable interaction with global economy. This interaction may be moved toward complete dependency regarding the national power of the regime. In fact, bureaucratic authoritarian governments with modernist tendencies achieve their legitimacy through their efficiency. Authoritarian governments' elites usually promote the regime's objectives with national development mottos. Meanwhile, coalition leaders insist on advancing the message that the period of applying proficient force and authority- vis-à-vis legitimacy- is shaped according to the needs of the system.

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1. For more information on "demassification", see Āšuri, D. (1994). *mmmmmmhhmm mm mm*, p. 299.

They claim that, once the undesirable situation is lifted, regime would immediately free the society from authoritarian and controlling ties (Seyf Zādeh, 2009: 146). Economic, political, and social gaps would not have a considerable influence on shaping and maintaining authoritarian regimes up to the point that they would cause widespread discontent and the desire for change. An authoritarian regime tries to destroy the public will and hope for change and impose a sense of lassitude and disappointment over the society. O'Donnell recounts the fundamental characteristics of these governments as the ruling of bureaucrats, political monopoly, economic monopoly, depoliticization, and empowering dependent capitalism (Sā'i, 2010: 160).

Bureaucratic authoritarian government was proposed as a way for economic development during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in order to block communism in the third world countries. This model was born as a response to the politico-economic crises of dependent capitalism in Latin America after WWII. Brian Clive Smith argues that authoritarianism was proposed as a prerequisite for economic development in third world countries. He believes that a reason for this prerequisite was that democracy in countries which lack democratic culture causes political instability and this, itself, will block economic and social development because newborn democracies will face challenges on their way to provide stability for economic development (Smith, 2001: 374). Theories supporting the model of authoritarian governments argue that democracy and carrot and stick policies would cause dogmatic policies which destroy the efficiency of the whole economic system. Accordingly, the need to control the civil society is a fundamental prerequisite for shaping and maintaining authoritarian regimes. This claim is provided to justify the application of this political model in order to respond to some problems of the [third world countries] democracies (Muaseqi, 1999: 121-125).

Regarding the formation of bureaucratic authoritarian political systems, Guillermo O'Donnell believes that, in each stage of the industrialization process, a particular form of government is needed. Accordingly, the final stage of applying industrialization necessitates bureaucratic authoritarian governments. O'Donnell (1978) argues that while the countries join the industrialization process one after the other, various forms of government, such as traditional oligarchy, populist, and, totalitarian bureaucratic regimes, will be formed along with the process.

Bureaucratic Authoritarianism varies from traditional authoritarian and fascist regimes in the following characteristics (Collier, 1979: 19-30):

- a) Ruling of the bureaucrats, especially the presence of the military in the highest levels of the government, whose motive is economic development.
- b) Political monopoly and exerting power from the top through bureaucratic development and controlling public's and civil society institutions' - including labor syndicates and parties - access to politics.
- c) The bureaucratic authoritarian government's priority is economic, not political, development. Accordingly, the system would increasingly engage in "depoliticization" and focus on industrial and technological issues. Adrian Leftwich argues that the existence of an authoritarian regime would be necessary for economic development because the pace of economic development would make it difficult to maintain stability. This is, in itself, because of the emergence of new social groups in the process which create discontent and instability. It is even possible during the initial stages of development to see occasional drops in welfare. Here, expectations, which

outpace development, would create the “increasing expectations revolution”<sup>1</sup> phenomenon and cause instability (Leftwich, 1999: 285).

- d) “Strengthening dependent capitalism”: in third world countries, this takes place through the union between local, state, and international capitals.

Military authoritarian regime: The amount of military intervention in bureaucratic authoritarian governments is not always identical. In the military authoritarian regime model, a general or colonel would assume the role of the political leader. Although this would consolidate bureaucracy, institutionally it lacks adequate foundations. Relying on bureaucracy and military in authoritarian regimes will lead the government toward rejecting representative system and keeps away the opposition. This regime is totally against the participation of the masses and redefines the relationship between the public and the government in form of supportive and subordinate, not participatory and active. Therefore, it will lead away social classes and establishes a kind of up-to-down hierarchical system. Leaders of the [military] authoritarian regime believe that national greatness and grandeur depends on strengthening the authority of the leadership apparatus. Accordingly, any demand for [active] participation in political issues is seen as a threat for the government’s authority (Seyf Zādeh, 2009: 146-147).

Military intervention in politics, in addition to providing authoritarian nature for the political systems, would impose numerous negative effects on the specific operations and functions of this social force and occupies a large section of the armed forces in actions which are not part of their original

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1. The theory of “increasing expectations” was initially proposed by the French philosopher, Alexis De Tocqueville (1805-1859), to clarify the French Revolution. For further information, see Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Translated by Mohsen Solasi, Nashre No, Tehran, 1991.



functions. This phenomenon, technically and tactically, and especially regarding professional military trainings, will have numerous negative effects on this group. It will also directly manipulate defense policies and capabilities and military strategies in individual and collective respects. Accordingly, it will disrupt the symbolic role of the military as the protector of the country's homeland (Markaz Derāsāt Al-Šarq Al-Uṣat Al-Ordon, 2013).

Therefore, analyzing an authoritarian regime in which the military is the ultimate authority is important for two reasons; mutual effects of the military's authoritative nature on politics and the negative effects of the military's depoliticization on the true essence of this institution. The greater danger of the military intervention in politics is weakening and, even, corrupting the intellectual foundations of the military officers regarding their unity. The partisan nature of the political act leads this military institution toward political polarizations and numerous orientations which will ultimately have negative outcomes for a depoliticized military; as preserving interests and, sometimes, promoting one's interests over the others' are basic tools for obtaining political support.

Consequently, stating that analyzing the conformity of a particular situation with its pre-defined patterns is the basis for studying that situation, this article seeks to examine the realities of the relationship between the society's internal structure and the government, on the one hand, and the structure of military-nonmilitary relations, or the military's position in Egypt's society, on the other. Generally, studying the military-nonmilitary relations [in any society] constitutes the analysis of the management and application of violent government-controlled tools and the side against which these tools may be legitimately utilized. Therefore, the formation and nature of the military structure is associated with the structure of the system's

internal relations and the way that the (material and nonmaterial) resources are distributed (Sāyegh, 2014).

### **The Position of the Military in Egypt**

Egyptian military is the largest of its kind both in Africa and in the Arab World. It is constituted of the Egyptian Navy, Air Forces, and Defense Forces. The presence of the military in the country's political structure as a powerful institution began in the era of "Muhamad Ali Pasha" who launched the country's modernization initially by military modernization. Mahdist Revolution of 1881 against the British, the Free Officers Movement, Egyptian-Israeli Wars, and nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 are among the historical contributions of the Egyptian military. These anti-imperialistic credits and nationalist rhetoric, focusing on industrial development, attracted a significant amount of legitimacy for the military in the Egyptian society. In addition, the military's active contribution in the country's construction and production activities may be stated as another reason for this organization's increasing popularity among the Egyptian public. The military has dramatically increased its control over the society through its techno-officers (Harāti & Zafari, 2013). Egypt was the first country to experience the widespread process of bureaucracy. Since 1952, after the overthrow of the Monarchy in Egypt, the Free Officers under Gamal Abdel Nasser decided to form an authoritarian regime. Abdel Nasser's strategy as an authoritarian military elite was to obtain legitimacy through social reforms from the top of the social pyramid. He sought to rule over the people by directly seeking their support free of the intervention of the political parties. This trend gradually centralized the power in the hands of the ruling regime. The regime therefore abandoned its function as the service-provider since the 50s and, conversely, moved toward consolidating the bureaucratic apparatus. Bureaucracy, however, only served the ruling regime

and not the State. This shaped and supported the integrated interests of the military and nonmilitary individuals and institutions on top of the political apparatus (Al-Jazirat Lel-Derāsāt, 2014).

In addition to the Egyptian society, national Military is also a key force and fundamental pillar in other Arab regimes. Accordingly, maintaining military's loyalty is crucial for these regimes. There are various methods and tools to ensure this loyalty, among which are: increasing nonmilitary support, attracting religious, social, and economic groups, attracting the ranking commanders' and officers' support through individual and collective grants and rewards, appointing members of particular groups and elite minorities in key military offices, preventing officers from gaining too much power by cleansing the institution from potential dissidents, providing special observations, routinely replacing the commanders, and establishing independent security services who are directly in contact with the president or the king (Brooks & Sarvariān, 2000).

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Military contribution in military and nonmilitary construction projects in Egypt has turned the country's current situation into a desirable and profitable one. Egyptian military partakes in economic, industrial, agricultural, touristic, and construction activities and gains substantial profits through these participations. Egyptian weaponry industry, unique among Arab states, is a necessary component of the military's economic activities. Approximately, 30 companies and factories and 100 thousand workers contribute in manufacturing the ammunitions and military equipment (Brooks & Sarvariān, 2000).

These economic interests play an important role in the formation of politico-economic relations in Egypt. The first

Egyptian military factories were established in 1820 to produce military uniforms and small armors. Beginning in the 50s, these industries were merged into the governmental economy and then, affected by the Camp David Accords and the decrease in the number of the armed forces, they were developed by employing hundreds of thousand soldiers in manufacturing factories related to the military.

Currently, the Egyptian military is on the top of an unclear parallel economy whose size is not clearly known. Some experts estimate the military's share in the Egyptian political economy as 40 percent, while military supporters believe it to be 18 percent at the most (Šahvāni, 2009). Egyptian military, in addition to being the largest military in the region, is a hegemonic economic power in the country. This institution enjoys an immunity which makes it a special entity as the gray section of the country's political economy. It is active in producing nearly everything, including weaponry, scissors, sewing machines, cosmetics, underwear, etc. As the German newspaper *Handelsblatt* writes, even the balloting boxes of the 2012 presidential elections whose winner was Mohamed Morsi were made by a military factory.<sup>1</sup>

Sadat's peace agreement with Israel in the late 70s played an important role in the military contribution in economic activities. This trend continued as the population of the one-million-soldiers military was decreased by 50 percent who were reassigned as workers in economic industries. Today, the military is active in all economic areas in Egypt, while its main function is normally protecting the country's homeland and security. Many of the military generals are shareholders in 5-star hotels. Many garrisons in Sinai have been turned into tourist sites. These activities have made a fortune for many of the military commanders. One of the most important privileges of

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1. For further readings, see <http://afkarnews.ir/vdebfab5zrhbsfp.uiur.html>.

these industries is their labor force; soldiers constitute a significant part of the country's labor force, thereby decreasing the country's production expenses in order to dramatically increase their chances of profit. According to the 2005 census, Egyptian military has 450 thousand forces. Most of these forces are soldiers who are drafted to serve in the military when they turn 18 years old, regardless of their education. According to the official statistics, the country's military budget in 2009 was 5.58 billion dollars, plus the annual 1.3 billion dollars given to the country by the United States (Al-Jazirat net, 2012). Egypt's defense budget in 2010 was more than that of its African neighbors, but less than the budget of its Middle East neighbors, Israel and Saudi Arabia. In addition, the military enjoys a special cultural base in Egypt and the political system often promotes its desired ideology (Cook, 2007).

“Egypt is structured in a way in which military intervention is institutionalized. Many years must pass before this intervention can be stopped. This is what can be seen in other countries such as Pakistan and Nigeria: the military left the power for a short time, but soon, it regained its original position. This control by the military was originally established by the British and we now see the same situation in Egypt. In fact, there has not been a turn to cultural views which shape an independent political system. Egyptian military cannot imagine Egypt without its military; it will take time” (Qanād Bāši, 2013).

Therefore, any analysis of Egypt's internal affairs must be based on the assumption that the military holds a specific socioeconomic position in this country. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and after the coup d'état by the Free Officers, the military has gradually gained more influence in the country. This group is active in all political, security, and economic eras. In addition, the Egyptian public memory and their symbolic perception of the military give them the relative legitimacy to

intervene in and profit from the country's uprisings. Accordingly, the military's important role in Egypt and their position on top of the political system is a fact which seems largely accepted by the people.

Since 1991, the Egyptian military increased its presence in all aspects of Mubarak's regime. His discriminatory regime, in order to ensure military loyalty, provided the opportunity for the ranking officers to assume high offices in ministries and governmental institutions and companies after retirement. This would have helped them gain a larger income while enjoying great investment opportunities. This trend of merging the military in the politico-economic system formed a powerful political group of retired army officers who are called "officers' republic" today (Sāyegh, *Above the State; The Officers' Republic in Egypt*, 2012).

Since Gamal Abdel Nasser's era, the concept of "national security" is turned into a critical variable in the country's administration and, consequently, a powerful tool to strengthen the military. This concept is often utilized by the military in domestic and foreign affairs. Domestically, "Egyptian national security standard" constitutes a large variety of political, economic, and social aspects. Economically, stability in the country's development and improving the poor's living conditions are considered as national security priorities. Politically, providing domestic security and stability is turned into a tool for repressing the opposition. More importantly, the country's national security under the military's influence is highly affected by the "conspiracy theory"<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the regime has many times used this concept to justify repressing domestic

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1. Conspiracy theory comes from a firm, extreme, and dogmatic belief in a particular form of conspiracy and, unlike other beliefs, is not analyzed scientifically; therefore, it is not possible for it to be proved or rejected. For further information, see Ashraf, Ahmad. *Conspiracy Theory*, Translated by Mohamad Ebrahim Fatahi, Ordibehesht 27, 2014, Rasekhoon.net: <https://rasekhoon.net/article/print/899831/%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A6%D9%87>.

oppositions. Between 2006 and 2008, the opposition wave against the succession of Gamal Mubarak was treated as conspiracies to topple the regime. Kefaya and April 6 Youth Movements were convicted as the main leaders of the opposition and faced convictions and tortures by the security forces. One of the most important accusations made against these movements was receiving foreign aid and support in order to overthrow the regime. Therefore, the importance of national security was decreased to the level of the security of the political system (Montadā Al-Badā'el Al-'Arabi Lel-Derāsāt).

In foreign affairs, considering the geopolitical location of Egypt and the need for the country to have a powerful military in order to preserve the security of its borders, the concept of national security has been directly connected to strengthening the military's power in the country. Therefore, any action which is considered as a threat for the military's position in Egypt is seen as a threat for the national security and is repressed aggressively. Accordingly, the increase in the military's power in Egypt is, firstly, influenced by economic and social factors and, secondly, by political-security elements (Al-mašāt, 2012: 12).

Therefore, since 2011, the military, which is now a key player in political and economic eras, has sought to preserve the internal structure of the society and government relations and, in the meantime, maintain its traditional position in the country. During the 2011 uprisings, there was not even a report of the clashes between the people and the military; people even shouted "the military and the people are one". This projected the idea that the military is still the protector of the interests of the people according to its traditional position. Military, on the other hand, also announced that it considers the people's requests as legitimate and would not use force against them (Harāti & Zafari, 2013).

### **The Military and the 2011 Uprisings in Egypt**

After the initial victories by the people in Egypt and Tunisia, the military considered itself as the successor for the overthrown regimes. Therefore, it tried to promote the idea that it was the protector of people's requests. The military tried to disconnect itself from Mubarak and his partisan supporters to play a new role in domestic and regional affairs. On the other hand, the perception that the military sought to hold the power for a longer time during the transitional period caused more insecurity and again called for the revolutionaries to go on the streets (Vā'ezī, 2013: 330). Finally, after the elections were won by nonmilitary candidates, this perception was largely weakened. But in Egypt, short after the elections, the military performed a coup d'état against the legally elected president and further clarified the fact that, while the January 2011 uprisings had overthrown Mubarak's authoritarian regime, they had not been able to change the ruling structures of the imperial Egyptian society. In this respect, considering Fernando H. Cardoso's categorization of bureaucratic authoritarian governments, it could be argued that the 2011 uprisings in Egypt only put an end to Mubarak's nonmilitary bureaucratic authoritarian regime to pave the way for El-Sisi's military authoritarian regime without making any changes in the internal structure of social relations and the nature of the State in the country (Cardoso, 1979:3-42). What is clear is that the general who overthrew Morsi on July 3, 2013 and considered himself as the savior of Egypt is expected to execute his activities in his own special way. These activities signal the rise to power by true Egyptian leaders and the revival of the security regime whose founder was Mubarak (Sāyegh, *Rebuilding "State Security" in Egypt*, 2013).

It seems that 'Abd Al-fatāh El-Sisi seeks to use the power of the security forces and his supporting financial oligarchy to promote a democratic and progressive perception of the military in order to introduce himself as a new Nasser to be loved by the



Egyptians. But, how much is this progressive character in line with the democratic tendencies of the revolutionary forces? El-Sisi, in 2006, when he was a student in United States Army War College, wrote an article titled “Democracy in the Middle East”. The article attracted a significant amount of attention. In most of the text, El-Sisi writes about Mubarak’s intellectual justification that the Middle East societies are not yet ready to embrace democracy. He writes, “Changing a political culture is always hard. It is one thing to say that a democracy is a preferred form of government, but quite another to adjust to its requirements and accept some [of] the risks that go along with it.”<sup>1</sup> He shows himself as an Islamist figure and claims that for the Middle Eastern societies, democracy “is viewed as a positive endeavor so long as it builds up the country and sustains the religious base versus devaluing religion and creating instability.” Accordingly, the Middle East democracy “is not necessarily going to evolve upon a Western template” (El-Sisi, 2006). This is exactly the same rhetoric used by the Egyptian officials against the West during Mubarak’s period. El-Sisi’s main concerns in this dissertation are stability and development. He tries to redefine the particular patterns of democracy for each country based on these two concepts (Springborg, 2013).

In his graduation speech in June 2013, El-Sisi asks the people, for the first time, to go on the streets and support him in what he called a war against the seditious elements of the Muslim Brotherhood. This speech showed that El-Sisi was thinking of something bigger than a defense ministry or administering a transitional period after the coup d’état. It also indicated that, looking back at the one-year experience of the nonmilitary rule in the country, he was not inclined to reestablish democracy according to the 2012 patterns (Jaridah Alqabas, 2013). As this speech was a reminder of the Nasserist

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1. For more information, see [www.foreignpolicy.com/files/war-college-paper.pdf](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/war-college-paper.pdf) and [http://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/1878\\_001.pdf](http://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/1878_001.pdf).

discourse in this country, Gamal Abdel Nasser's son's support of El-Sisi largely asserted this idea (Spiegel Online, 2013).

In a speech in one of the recent summits of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Hazem Al Beblawi, then Prime Minister of Egypt rejected the idea of calling General 'Abd Al-fatāh El-Sisi a dictator and asserted that his election as the new Egyptian president is not a repetition of Hosni Mubarak's period. He believed that the presidency of General 'Abd Al-fatāh El-Sisi in Egypt was much like the presidency of General Charles de Gaulle in France and General Dwight David Eisenhower in the United States; two WWII heroes in their respective countries, who became presidents after the war. The Egyptian Prime Minister also pointed out that General 'Abd Al-fatāh El-Sisi, much like General Charles de Gaulle and General Dwight David Eisenhower, has been under pressure by the people for his candidacy in the upcoming presidential elections so that he can save the country and the people from the crises and tensions which have overshadowed the lives of the public ('Abd Al-fatāh, 2013).

Military's actions in support of Morsi's opposition and moving along with the Tamarod Movement indicate its good understanding of the situation and shows how the Egyptian military institution is merged into politics. Generals think both in terms of their economic interests and their political positions and, therefore, try to benefit from the situation and get a hold of the politico-economic tools of the country in the midst of the chaos. The traditional position of the military in Egypt, like the classic armies of Pakistan and Turkey, is defined as the protector of the country's homeland, security and constitution. This group, amid the activities of the Tamarod Movement, persuaded the public that there is an imminent threat against the country's stability and that they are obligated to enter politics in order to maintain the country's national security and stability. This

definition made the military intervention into a historical prophecy.

However, it seems that Egypt, instead of following the path of the second presidency, is rather going toward the creation of the country's first republic. The anew rise of the nationalist and populist discourse of the past century can be seen in the January 27, 2014 statement by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, in which the candidacy of El-Sisi was endorsed as requested by the masses. Using the term "masses" showed that the regime sought to remove the strong slogan "the people want", which was the dominant slogan during the January 25, 2011 uprisings, and instead of focusing on the concept of the rule of the national will, promote the weak and inhomogeneous term "the masses" which is largely advocated by populist dictators. It seems that this act by the military is a conscious stance in order to go back to the era of Abdel Nasser; these slogans resemble Muammar Gaddafi's slogans in 1977. In both cases, the leaders claimed that they are in direct connection with the people through charismatic emotional relations. This claim leaves the hands of the leaders free to use state institutions to strengthen their individual authority and remove the independent elements of the society. However, the result of this trend in both countries was the weakening of the political life and civil society without improving the government's bureaucratic or economic function (Sāyegh, Taking Egypt Back to the First Republic, 2014).

These realities of the Egyptian government further consolidate the theory that the domestic structure of Egypt is formed in way that a nonmilitary personality cannot gain access to political power in this country; this happens when we accept that the military has direct influence over military, political, cultural, and economic issues of Egypt. On the other hand, it is widely accepted in the society that the military is not easily

willing to give the power to the civil society representatives. This is not strange, however. The political history indicates that since Abdel Nasser's period and the Free Officers Coup D'état until the recent Egyptian Revolution, the country has been governed by the military rulers (Irāni, 2012). This should not translate into ignoring the central role of the Egyptian military in wars defending the homeland. This institution is still considered as the Egyptians' nationalist institution. In fact, the military enjoys a large popularity among the Egyptian public's minds. It was because of this that amid the political fights between the supporters and dissidents of Mubarak, the military chose to support the dissidents and increase its centrality and popularity. Since then, and during the transitional period, the military has tried to prevent its reputation from being scratched.

The military is now in the middle of a critical period in Egypt's history; both for its own interests— and its efforts to preserve these interests— and for its historical position as a controlling institution in contact with regional and international powers in order to stabilize its role in the future of Egypt. In other words, the military both for its own good and for its role as an external institution seeks to maintain its historical position in the structure of the country. Therefore, it tries to preserve its supreme position in both the individual and corporate structures (especially the new constitution) which are being formed. This means a key role which is able to control the trends while not allowing the changes in the domestic and foreign politics of Egypt to pass a particular threshold (Jāber Ansāri, 2012).

After the overthrow of Morsi, the Egyptian government declared an “emergency situation” in the country. This situation allowed the security forces and the military to arrest civilians and widely censor the media under the pretext of maintaining national security. However, this is not new in Egypt. The country was in emergency situation for more than 30 years

before the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak. Human Rights Watch, however, saw this act as a step backward and interpreted it in the context of the long history of misusing power by Egyptian security institutions. This organization writes in its last report on Egypt that: security services consider the emergency situation as a green light for applying severe and illegal violence (Mende, 2013). This situation was intensified after an assassination attempt on Mohamed Ibrahim Moustafa, the Minister of Interior, on September 5, 2013.

Atef Botros Al-'Atār, an Egyptian analyst, believes that, the project of war against terrorism which is pursued by the military is not merely aimed at the Muslim Brotherhood; rather, it is a tool for repressing the opposition which is directed, behind the scenes, by the military. In this respect, the regime seeks to exaggerate the threat of terrorism in Egypt in order to promote the idea that because of national security, the priority at the moment is war against terrorism, not establishing democracy and freedom. In addition, the regime tries to propagate the thought that the 2011 revolution was a conspiracy cooperated by the Muslim Brotherhood and foreign enemies of the regime, while the true Egyptian Revolution took place on June 30, 2013. Consequently, the political system and its arm, the military, could regain their long-lost position (Al-'Atār, 2014).

Gamal 'Eyd, the director of The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information in Egypt and the editor-in-chief of the Al Wasleh Newspaper, which was closed because of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, rejects the accusations as insulting and absurd, calling them another one of El-Sisi's actions in order to create a repressive authoritarian regime. This regime, according to Gamal 'Eyd, will shut the voice of freedom advocates and will repress the opponents of pluralism; it will respect neither human rights nor women rights ('Eyd, 2014).

The most optimistic interpretation of the military actions may

lead us to believe that the internal structure of Egypt's political system over the course of history, military's nationalist spirit, and domestic and regional situations have made this group believe that they are the only [or, at least, the best] actor who owns the necessary experience, maturity, insight, and knowledge to defend the country against internal and external threats. In addition, the military considers the country's political parties and forces as subordinates who have selfish and dogmatic demands. But, as the military completely believes that it is the only institution capable of protecting Egypt, it tries to mutually follow and coordinate its own interests with national interests. The military and on top of that, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces currently argue that, considering the domestic instability, the fragile state of Sinai, and the instability in Libya and Sudan, it is not a proper time for the nonmilitary, inexperienced to govern the country.

The military made great efforts after 2011 to maintain its privileges through establishing legal apparatus and influencing unofficial channels. Currently, it does not view the status quo as a proper time for its position or privileges to be challenged or threatened. Some of these privileges include the confidentiality of the military budget, the immunity from being sued by civil courts, and the industrial and business projects which affect the key components of economy (Middle East/North Africa Report, April 24, 2012). According to the transition theory, the military, as a high-level high-ranking institution which has the largest amount of power in the socio-political fights during the political crises, owns the ability to consider itself in the position of the country's stabilizer, who can characterize the new frameworks of the political system. Therefore, it seems that in the current status, the military will make use of the pattern used by authoritarian regimes to focus on the issues of domestic security, stability and economy. Through this, the government will gain relative legitimacy and divert the public mind from thinking

about the amount of the privileges that the military has achieved. However, El-Sisi is trying to convince the public mind that the military's presence is in order to preserve the achievements made on January 25, 2011, not for "governing" the country. He believes that it is wrong to suppose that the military acts as a "parallel government" in Egypt, as the constitution defines the military's position as the "protector of national security" and not the leader of the country (Middle East Monitor, May 19, 2014).

This process, which mainly resulted from the wrong actions taken by the Muslim Brotherhood, and led, again, to the rise of the military to power, will definitely slow down the revolutionary acts of the other Arab societies. It is not clear how long it would take for these acts to rise again. On the other hand, the region will be controlled by the military again and this will affect the future of Arab uprisings. The first sign of these effects was seen in Libya by the rise of General Khalifa Haftar. This Libyan retired general is moving completely in line with El-Sisi and it seems that he is going to establish the same military regime in Libya. It is interesting that he began the process even before his counterpart in Egypt took office. Haftar, in a completely coordinated action with El-Sisi, arrested the members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had escaped to Libya and returned them to the Egyptian government. In another instance, Haftar praised El-Sisi's action in overthrowing Morsi and stated his willingness to repeat Egypt's experience in Libya.

### **Conclusions**

The anew presence of the military on top of the political power in Egypt and legitimizing the process by using semi-democratic tools has raised domestic and foreign concerns regarding the return of the authoritarian state of the pre-January 2011 to this country. As the structure of the internal political, social, and especially economic relations in Egypt have largely prepared the

environment for the military's dominance, these concerns seem completely justified. The military has extended its vast intervention to all domestic and foreign politico-economic aspects to the point that in many cases the national interests are merged into the military's own interests. Therefore, since the January 2011 uprisings, this group's main concerns were maintaining its own interests and position. The military administered a transitional period and forged a coalition with the powerful Islamist Muslim Brotherhood to further stabilize its traditional position by merging its interests into nonmilitary interests of the other side of the coalition. In other words, it tried to assume the role of the behind-the-scene actor to preserve its influential role in the future decision-making and planning processes of the country. In addition, the military tried to prevent being attacked by the criticisms aimed at its cooperation with Mubarak's regime.

However, ideological disagreements on the one hand, and Morsi's efforts to politically marginalize the military on the other, directly threatened the institutions' interests. Therefore, General El-Sisi, who Morsi had selected to replace Muhammad Sayyid Tantawy because of his family and his intellectual tendencies toward the Muslim Brotherhood, designed and executed a coup d'état to overthrow the legally elected president and finally legitimized these actions by designing an engineered elections. In other words, the military who had entered the scene amid the January 2011 uprisings and had tried to maintain the national security amid administering the transitional period, saw the threat as Morsi took office, trying to limit the military's role and interests in the government. This threat was to the extent that after the 2013 coup d'état, this institution decided to stop relying upon nonmilitary actors and itself took the office.

Therefore, regarding Guillermo O'Donnell's Bureaucratic Authoritarianism Model, and considering the military's lack of



confidence in nonmilitary actors in governing Egypt, the authoritarian nature of the political regimes in this country, the widespread economic interests of the military, the dependency of the country's political economy on the military-controlled areas, and El-Sisi's foreign policy tendencies, it could be argued that, at least, in the medium-term, the model of "(military) Bureaucratic Authoritarianism" in domestic policy would be preserved, and in economy, the model of "developing dependent capitalism" with relying on foreign aids, especially from the United States and Arab States (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, etc.) will continue in Egypt.

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