# Civil Society in Egypt under the Mubarak Regime

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## ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that most of the structural changes that took place in Egypt since the 23rd July 1952 army-led coup were operated from the top of the political pyramid and not as an expression of a mass movement. The same holds true for the restricted political diversity in the Sadat period, or the controlled liberal policies in the Mubarak regime. The controlled mode of change from above, conforms with the Pharaonic Political system described by Gamal Hemdan. The ruler or head of state in Egypt always enjoyed unlimited authority that borders on deification, and the legal and constitutional framework of the Egyptian state endorses this situation from 1971. This study aims to present an informed vision of the development of civil society in Egypt under Mubarak. The growing number of the NGOs could be seen as a sign of democratization. However, in a case like Egypt, it is a move towards consolidating authoritarianism.

Introduction:

  It is to be noted that the ideological and theoretical debate concerning issues of social evolution and development in Egypt was generally state centered, and relied heavily on theoretical concepts such as bureaucratic authoritarianism, Oriental despotism and the Asiatic mode of production[1]. For some considerable time the state seemed formidable enough to have subdued society through its authoritarian mechanisms such as the military, the security institution and the centralized economy.[2]

 There is no doubt that most of the structural changes that took place in Egypt since the 23rd July 1952 army-led coup were operated from the top of the political pyramid and not as an expression of a mass movement. The same holds true for the restricted political diversity in the Sadat period, or the controlled liberal policies in the Mubarak regime. The controlled

mode of change from above, conforms with the Pharaonic Political system described by Gamal Hemdan. The ruler or head of state in Egypt always enjoyed unlimited authority that borders on deification, and the legal and constitutional framework of the Egyptian state endorses this situation from 1971.

No wonder then that political Pharaonism, should endorse the authority of the oppressive state over the weak and acquiescent society[3]. This makes it necessary to achieve a "second liberation" to accomplish the aims of the "first liberation" from colonialism. We note that the limited reforms introduced to the mode of bureaucratic authoritarianism in Egypt were carried out by the governing elite, under strict control. Thus the concept of power alternation is not consensual, and in Egypt it looks very ambiguous, especially after the introduction of the constitutional amendment in 1980, which practically perpetuated the period of the presidency to lifetime. The president could run for an unlimited number of terms, rather than one term as was initially stipulated in the 1971 constitution.

This study aims to present an informed vision of the development of civil society in Egypt under Mubarak. The growing number of the NGOs could be seen as a sign of democratization. However, in a case like Egypt, it is a move towards consolidating authoritarianism.

As a result, the study seeks to achieve two main objectives: First: present the political and ideological background of Contemporary Egyptian civil society. The Mubarak regime is able to follow a survival strategy by putting into place policies that could be considered liberal. Second: present a holistic perspective about the ineffectiveness of the civil society in Egypt's Mubarak and its repercussions on the future of political system in Egypt.

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**Political and Ideological Background**

It is possible to identify the most salient features of the Mubarak regime as an important prerequisite to understanding the status of the Egyptian civil society. A prominent Egyptian intellectual, Galal Amin, professor of economics at the American University in Cairo, provides us with a clear analysis of the case of the Egyptian state in the era of President Mubarak[4] . He focused on four perspectives:

**First: The Theory of the Soft State:**

We can understand the situation in Egypt by applying the theory of the famous Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal on the Soft State, which is considered to be a major cause for the persistence of poverty and underdevelopment.

It is a country where laws do not apply, not only because of the legal loopholes, but because nobody respects laws in a soft state. The privileged people have money and power to protect themselves when they break the law, and the unprivileged protectors of laws are obliged to receive bribes to turn a blind eye on breaching the law. In such a state, licenses and permits are for sale. Thus, corruption prevails everywhere. The Soft State encourages corruption, and the spread of corruption increases its softness.

Perhaps the most prominent example of such a case in Egypt is reflected on the aftermath of an earthquake in 1992, which did not last for more than forty seconds. All the Egyptian state functions were almost paralyzed and seemed to be out of control. The earthquake has exposed the Government's failure to deal adequately with Egypt's severe housing problem. While the Government was ineffective in responding to this natural disaster, the Muslim Brotherhood quickly filled the void in disaster relief, opening shelters and providing medical aid.

**Second: The Nature of the Ruling Elite:**

There is a clear case of the death of politics in Egypt. The elites surrounding President Mubarak differ from their peers who worked with Presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat. Specifically, the ruling elites in the Mubarak era did not have political experience before assuming power.

This is most likely due to the nature of the president himself, as he differs from his two predecessors, Nasser and Sadat. In the economic field he adopts neither open door nor closed doors policies. He does not fight Israel or sign new agreements with it. Indeed, President Mubarak employs a third type of man to carry out the required tasks. They have complete loyalty to the system like their predecessors, but they lack an interest in politics or public affairs, and they never pose any challenge to the real policy makers in Egypt.

**Third: Poor Distribution of Wealth:**

The poor class constitutes a major proportion of population in Egypt. According to the UNDP Annual Report 2008, at least 20 per cent of Egyptian citizens live below the poverty line, while 14.7 per cent of children do not go to school. Many scholars noted that over the past twenty years the ability of the poor to satisfy their basic needs (food, clothing, education,

health and transportation) has been in decline. At the same time, the wealth that was compiled during the early years of the open door economic policy has begun to draw public attention. Stories about the enormous wealth gained by the currency traders and contractors were widespread among the masses.

The people watch the increasing number of expensive wedding parties held in luxurious hotels just to prove outstanding success achieved by these traders and contractors in the accumulation of enormous wealth.

There is no doubt that the sudden wealth achieved by some people in the first years of adopting open doors policy adopted by Sadat did not cause the same frustrations among the poor that were raised due to illicit enrichment of some individuals that has occurred in the last twenty years under Mubarak's regime.

Wealth was associated with the previous capacity of many Egyptians to migrate. Those who did not migrate were merely living in the era where a general increase in income was usually associated with generous spending by the state, and a big increase in the wages of craftsmen because of migration itself.

Perhaps the most important manifestation of obscenity of wealth in the years of President Mubarak's rule is the source of this wealth. The sources of personal wealth in Egypt were no longer associated with mediation (such as trading, entrepreneurship and brokerage) as was the case at the early years of the open doors policy, but rather the seizure of state funds has become the most important sources for personal enrichment in Egypt.

In the light of low rates of growth and declining levels of spending by the government and people alike, there is nothing left for acquiring wealth except asset stripping, and the easiest prey of these assets in a soft state is the property of the state itself. Such property may be represented in state-owned land that was offered for sale, or funds deposited in state banks for loans or the property of public companies to be privatized.

 Personal enrichment without cause never ever stopped during the past twenty years. Outright corruption as well as deficiencies in the regulation of public and private- sector business practices provided great opportunities for enormous fortunes in a short time span. This has led to increased anger and frustration among the poor Egyptians.

**Four: Corruption from Politics to Culture:**

The Mubarak era has been marked by the emergence of some of the features that allowed new facets of corruption to flourish among the intelligentsia. The policy of the New Era has

proven that it does not differ from the policy adopted by Sadat. Many scholars argued that this stagnant situation would eventually lead to despair and loss of hope in any change, which constitutes a suitable milieu for the emergence of intellectual opportunists. Whereas they have relinquished hope for any change in the near future on the general level, they never give up their personal ambitions to achieve better status.

Some of the true reformers who are striving to make progress tend in such unfavorable conditions to withdraw out of frustration, if not because of death or old age. Some other talented intellectuals tend to change their perspectives, which may cause them to become confused and lose focus as they work on insignificant issues that do not allow them to express their real opinions.

On the other hand, a large number of untalented editors, columnists and editors in chief in some of the state owned journals have assumed sensitive positions in the media. The outcome has been unprofessional performance and irrelevant writing, unread or appreciated by the majority of Egyptian readers. In fact these writers do not care about readers as much as they care about assuring their loyalty to those who have the political power.

It can be said that after a tenuous period of political opening in the 1980s and very early 1990s, the Mubarak regime has progressively limited opportunities for the dispersal of power beyond the president, let alone for an actual alternation in power[5].

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**Evolution of Civil Society in Egypt**

The development of civil society in Egypt, which extends over a period of almost two hundred years, gives a distinctly different picture from that of other Arab countries. The first inception of civil society in its modern form took place as early as the year 1821, and has since gone through five phases as follows[6]:

**1) First Inception (1821-1881)**

The first inception of civil society in Egypt came as a result of the changes that accompanied the modernization project at the beginning of the 19th century[7]. The increased number of students, under the rule of Mohammad Ali, as well as the emergence of a national bourgeoisie, created a working and middle classes of professionals. It was only natural for these classes to demand their right of association, and organizations were created to speak for the new middle class. However, this initial phase did not manifest any confrontation with the

state. Rather there was a sort of complementarity in the functions of both parties. Indeed some of the founders of civil society organizations were high functionaries or members of the Royal Family who had traveled to Europe and tried to transfer the European experience to Egypt.

**2) The Colonial Phase (1882-1922)**

During this phase, civil society organizations confronted the colonial state in defense of the interests of the Egyptian citizens. Thus there was a proliferation of modern, voluntary organizations including appeared the first trade unions (1898), the cooperatives (1908), political parties (1907), chambers of commerce (1910), professional associations (1912) and the feminist movement (1919).

**3) The Liberal Phase (1922- 1952):**

The liberal phase was marked by the adoption of the Constitution of 1923, which was, in view of the times, one of the most liberal constitutions, as it guaranteed a number of rights and basic freedoms, such as the right of association and expression. This prompted the colonial power and the throne to strive to get rid of this constitution by suspending it or abrogating it completely.

This phase witnessed a flourishing of civil society, with the publication of more than 80 daily newspapers, as well as weekly and monthly magazines in both Arabic and European languages. The main discourse of civil society during this phase sought transparency and accountability of government, free elections, and rights for working class unions. This phase came to an end on July 23rd 1952, when the Free Officers ushered a new phase of development of both state and civil society in Egypt.

**4) The Nasserist Phase (1952-1970)**

This phase was marked by a concentration of power in the hands of the state, which imposed its authority on organizations of civil society. During this phase, six constitutions or amendments were promulgated all by presidential decrees, with the exception of the constitution of 1956, which was approved by referendum. All these constitutions concentrated authority in the hands of a small governing elite led by Nasser. There was a marked lack of balance between the authorities, as the executive authority assumed tremendous power over both the judiciary and the parliament.

In short, the Nasserist State constrained the organizations of civil society by developing a corporatist populist regime[8]. The working class movement was subject to a number of

special policies and regulations, such as the abolition of trade unions and the imposition of one trade union for each trade. Also, a single Federation of Trade Unions was formed with the aim of controlling and dominating all working class activities. The State imposed its domination on all civil society activities through a law enacted in 1964 that gave the administrative authority the right to refuse the creation, dissolution, or amalgamation of any civil association without recourse to the judiciary. Student or feminist movements were subject to similar restrictions imposed by the populist state.

## 5) The second Inception (1974 - Present)

This phase arrived with the onset of open-door policies, which heralded the advent of a market economy and a multi party system of governance. Although the decision to create several parties was a decision from above, taken by President Sadat, it was nonetheless in response to the desire of many social forces. We may conclude that this phase saw the second fumbling inception of organized Egyptian civil society and the slow development of those organizations. Such organizations had a much wider scope of action, although the state continued to constrain them using various means [9].

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### The Proliferation of The Organization of Civil Society:
### Consolidating Democracy or Upgrading Autocracy

By the end of 2008, there were some 30,000 civil society organizations in Egypt, or approximately one for every 2,800 Egyptian residents. Only a minority of those, however, is active. Religious and development associations together represent more than half of all associations[10]. Other important groups include sports, youth and social clubs and cooperatives. There are 115 trade and industry chambers, 24 professional syndicates and 22 workers' unions organized under a common federation. Moreover, there are currently 24 legally registered political parties. Mere numbers, however, do not represent the true strength of civil society, especially as some organizations may be ineffective and exist on paper only, and because memberships may span multiple organizations. It is therefore necessary to study in greater detail the different characteristics of the various types of civil society organizations as well as their relationships with the state..

### The State and Political Parties:

Although the multiparty law was promulgated in 1976, its statute was not issued until July of the next year. This law, and its many amendments, instituted many restrictions and

limitations on political parties functioning in Egypt. According to the ballot on March 26, 2007, Article (5) was amended to prohibit the establishment of any religious party. "The political system of the Arab Republic of Egypt is a multiparty system, within the framework of the basic elements and principles of the Egyptian society as stipulated in the Constitution. Political parties are regulated by law. Citizens have the right to establish political parties according to the law and no political activity shall be exercised nor political parties established on a religious referential authority, on a religious basis or on discrimination on grounds of gender or origin". Although many new parties were created on paper, bringing the total number to 24 Parties, a true multiparty system does not yet exist. [11]

Here we would point out to the following:

1. The Political Party Affairs Committee, a semi-governmental organization headed by the president of the Shura Assembly (Advisory Council) and hosting as members three government ministers and three judges, all appointed by Government, has hampered the emergence of serious parties. It accepted only two applications, the first being Al-Umma Party in 1983, and the second being the National Conciliation (Al-Wifak) Party in 2000. All other parties had to revert to the courts to obtain the license to undertake political activity, and this highlights the role of the Judiciary in establishing the system of political parties in Egypt.

2. The governing National Democratic Party (NDP) is the State Party in Egypt, being the Party of the President of the Republic, and reflects the inter mingling between state and party. Many studies refer to it as a "smothering party." [12]

3. The opposition parties are very weak, and only a handful exercise a limited political influence. The remaining parties are simply hollow structures devoid of any content, some of which may have as little as 100-400 members in a Country of 80 millions.

4. Many opposition parties rely on government subsidies or on their newspapers advertisements. These newspapers do not make their revenue from street sales due to low circulation. Instead, they rely mostly on the state's public sector companies' advertisements. These practices may undermine their credibility, or even their independence vis-à-vis the state.

5. The dialogue between opposition parties and government revolves around demands for political reform through amending the constitution; abrogation of the Law of Exception and

other freedom restricting laws; the relinquishing of the head of state of his membership of the NDP.

## The Syndicates, Trade Unions and Interest Groups

Civil society in Egypt hosts a proliferation of interest groups such as professional syndicates, workers' trade unions, businessmen associations and some civil enterprises representing specific private interests. There are 89 such organizations, with an aggregate membership of some 7 million. However, the relation between the state and these bodies is rather ambiguous. In the case of trade unions it amounts to a relation of patron/client, as the General Trade Union is simply a state-run organization. Although the right to strike is recognized in democratic regimes, the Egyptian state adopts security measures to oppose any attempt to exercise this right by the workers who suffered due to the Structural Adjustment Policies pursued by the Egyptian Government.

In the case of professional syndicates, the state had to face a serious challenge from the Islamic currents, which grew strongly in the Syndicates of Engineers, the medical profession and lawyers. The state resorted to the legislature to counter this growing threat by promulgating Law 100 in 1993, a law which was prepared and issued in just three days![13]

The limited number of businessmen associations and their scant membership did not hamper them from acquiring significant influence starting from the late seventies, as the Egyptian state reverted to liberal privatization policies. One notable such organization is the Egyptian American Council created by Presidential Decree in 1975. Other such prominent organizations include the Egyptian Businessmen Association created in 1977, the Economic Committee for Alexandria Businessmen in 1983, the Association of Investors of 10th Ramadan City in 1986, and the Association of Investors of 6th October City in 1986. The powerful influence of these Businessmen's Associations could be attributed to the following:

- There is no opposition between these organizations and the state because they share the same political and ideological tendencies concerned with the liberalization of state and society

- The small number and membership of businessmen associations allows them to better coordinate in defense of their common interests.. Their main role is to support businesses and economic growth. Thus, the similarity of their interests has meant a greater degree of cooperation rather than conflict and antagonism.

These associations enjoy a great degree of independence from the state, and enjoy financial security, due to the affluence of their members .In addition, the Egyptian government is using the businessmen as a diplomatic tool in many regional and international conferences such as "MENA" for the North Africa and the Middle East and the South –South cooperation to resist the negative pressures of globalization.

Perhaps the strong influence of these associations on the economic policies of government is due to the fact that they do not make demands for political reforms or other such contentious issues. Instead, they believe in the government policy towards economic liberalism and integration in the global market.

**The State and Civil Associations**

The first voluntary private associations appeared in Egypt on the eve of the 19th century, but their number grew considerably during the last two decades of the 20th century. In 1998, there were 14,600 such associations, and their activities cover the economic, social, cultural and development spheres. There are two important issues that need to be studied regarding the relationship between the state and these associations:

First, the state has striven since 1964 to dominate these associations through the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs (which became Ministry of social Solidarity). The law of association gives the Ministry with the right to refuse to register any new association and to dissolve any existing one, and thus the state maintains full control over associational activity.i should be grateful

Second, the associations belonging to the Islamic trend, or dominated by Islamists, are more effective and active compared to the rest of civil associations. Because Egyptian Islamic movements are banned by law from political activities, they try to infiltrate civil associations as a means of influencing public opinion and mobilizing mass support.

One reason for the recourse of the State to confrontation with civil associations and the use of legal action to suppress them may be the apprehension of the domination of such associations by the Islamist. The Islamic trend has long exploited the religious fervor of Egyptian society to mobilize the people in the name of religion. It also relies heavily on the financial means at its disposal. Yet, without outside aid, the Islamist organization enjoy greater efficiency and a stronger social base.

**The State and Human Rights Organizations, and Social Movements:**

The 1980's saw a steady increase in the number of human rights organizations and social movements in Egypt due to expanded democracy during the regime of President Mubarak. Approximately 138 association or social movements are presently active in Egypt, and their activities range from the defense of human rights to the environment, gender issues, and cultural and educational initiatives. [14]These associations and movements demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Many of the organizations that defend human rights are elitist in nature, and do not reflect the mass opinion in Egyptian society. As proof of this, most of these organizations are located in Cairo and Giza. They are still incapable of yielding any real societal consensus because of engaging themselves in empty and fruitless ideological disputes.

- Some of these organizations have secured strong financial status, which gives them independence in relation to the state but also casts doubts about their independence vis-à-vis their foreign donors.

- The relationship with the state varies according to the type of activity. Those engaged in activities encouraged by the state such as protection of the environment or economic and social development enjoy a high degree of independence and freedom of action.

- However, those defending human rights and arguing for political reform are confronted by the full force of the state through its security mechanisms. Such organizations are prone to surveillance and dissolution or, at best, routine security incursions and harassment. Their effectiveness is hence reduced.

**Activities of Civil Society Organizations :**

As we mentioned above, civil society sector in Egypt has a rich history. But with the decline of Egypt's economy since 1990, there has been a gradual reassertion of NGOs and "self-help" in Egypt. Such private initiatives are aimed at needy and impoverished communities. Most of these NGOs have been actively working throughout the country to provide economic, social and political services to a largely poor population. However, the main concern of these NGOs includes:

 -Increased attention to the situation of marginalized groups such as the rights of street children

-Human rights issues of a political nature, such as cases of torture , the issues of political prisoners and the prosecution of journalists .

-Calls for reducing unemployment by, for example, the establishment of the Association for the Unemployed in Egypt .

Over the past twenty years a number of issues come to constitute the core agenda of NGOs in Egypt :First, anti-corruption. Egypt has attempted many times to educate citizens and to establish information centers and networks. Several local NGOs such as Egyptians Against Corruption, the Egyptian Transparency Organization and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, have been working on fighting corruption but complain that they face a lot of legal and administrative obstacles[15].

Second, the value of citizenship emerged as an input to promote a culture of tolerance and rejection of intolerance through the activities of civil society. There is a rejection of the discrimination between the Egyptians on the basis of religion and citizenship .We could refer to the efforts of the Citizenship Committee of the National Council for Human Rights .Third, the issue of reform. There are repeated calls by civil society organizations to form a united front in the face of corruption and tyranny, and to establish a union for all professional syndicates in Egypt.

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**Limits and Challenges**

The most prominent problems and obstacles that confront the development of a viable and effective Civil Society in Egypt are:

**The Islamist Organizations Dilemma:**

It is widely believed that civil society is secular in ideology, civil in behavior, legally recognized, and supportive of democratic values. In recent years Egypt has experienced the sprawling growth of religious (Islamic and Coptic) associations enjoying wide grassroots support and firmly grounded on religious ideology and beliefs.

According to some estimates, religious associations represent more than 35% of all associations in Egypt[16]. In addition to promoting their religious agendas, many religious associations provide basic social services where the state fails to do so.  As a result, this religious sector of the Egyptian civil society has become more diverse and includes a wide variety of charity organizations, health and social services providers, social clubs and human rights groups.

### The Emergency Law

Egypt has been governed under a state of emergency since 1981. The Emergency Law has been successfully renewed by parliament every three years. In addition, the Anti-Terror Law 97 of 1992, and a number of related military decrees, give the authorities extensive powers to limit basic freedoms, and to arbitrarily and systematically[17]curb human rights in the name of national security. There are a number of serious concerns pertaining to these laws and the permanent state of emergency that have affected civil society. First, arresting suspects and detaining them without trial for prolonged periods; Second, referring civilians to military or exceptional state security courts whose procedures fall far short of international standards for fair trial; Third prohibiting strikes, demonstrations and public meetings. Fourth, censoring or closing down newspapers in the name of national security.

### The internal democracy of civil society organizations .

If we were to design indicators to measure the internal democracy of civil society organizations such as the accountability of its leaders, oversight mechanisms, and functions, assess the election forms within the organizations and the degree of representation of women in the structures of organizations, we would find ourselves facing another case of political tyranny practiced by non-state actors[18]. Sullivan has put it rightly when he argued that NGOs in Egypt and many Arab countries are limited by: weak organizational set-up, lack of routine external audits, absence of strict internal rules and regulations and administrative inefficiency. Civil society in Egypt is not able to produce real discourse about democracy in the country. Thus, the real challenges in this case lies in the ability of civil society organizations to mobilize people and to have direct contact with the networks of public users.

### Legal Obstacles,

Civil society organizations in Egypt are facing many laws that restrict their ability to work to promote freedom and democracy. In addition to the emergency law that allows the government to intervene in the affairs of civil society organizations, there is the association law No. 84 of 2002 which is regarded as one of the most restrictive in the Arab World and has been widely criticized for providing a framework for governmental control over civil society. The vague nature of the association law allows the executive power to dissolve NGOs if its activities interfere with public morals or public order. The Ministry of Social Solidarity also has the right to appoint board of directors of these associations in order to ensure full control of them.

The Association law "is an accumulation of restrictive regulations, administrative barriers and procedures that represent an unreasonable burden on NGOs and substantially reduce, if not eradicate, their room to operate, and offer wide space for arbitrary practices"[19].

  We could say that apart from the Emergency Law , a large set of restrictive laws and provisions, as well as the general political framework, put severe restrictions on Egyptian civil society organization. Among these legal provisions that affect freedom of association are the Associations Law of 2002, the Political Parties Law of 2005 and the Press Law of 2006, as well as some provisions of the Penal Code.

## Economic obstacles

Civil society organizations need funding to achieve their desired goals, but the law No. 84 of 2002 on non-governmental organizations prohibits these association from accessing local or foreign financing without government authorization. Article 17 of the Associations Law states: "The association has the right to receive funds; fundraising is permissible by natural or legal persons after the administrative entity's consent and abiding by the executive regulations of the law[20]. It is not permissible for associations to receive funds from abroad either from an Egyptian or foreign persons or a foreign body or its representative. None of the aforementioned should be sent to the individuals or organizations above until it is authorized by the Minister of Social Solidarity.

## Conclusion: Prospects for the Future:

 New Collective Protest Movements

Egypt has witnessed over the past five years three types of collective protest movements. The first is directly connected to the establishment of the Egyptian Movement for Change (Kefaya) at the end of December 2004[21]. This wave of protest  raised the slogan "No to extension or to inheritance or corruption" and enough of the continuing conditions in Egypt since 1981 . Kefaya represented a new phenomenon not before known to Egypt . It has been able to raise the ceiling of protest by criticizing the president, his family, his son and all the ministers.

The second wave of protest movements in Egypt took a new economic approach as protesters raised wage-related demands and asked for improved  working conditions in the light of the high prices that keep pace with the policies of privatization. These movements have no political demands, rather their main focus is to improve living  conditions. Protests expressed

by textile workers in Egypt's various factories in Kafr el-Dawar, and Mahalla, workers and drivers of subway trains are clear examples.. The third wave was launched on April 6, 2008 by the new young heroes who exhibited a new political and social force. This new force turned to the internet as a new protest group. As a political Facebook group with the most dynamic debates, it was able to mobilize more than 70,000 members. Members' main concerns include free speech, nepotism in government and the country's stagnant economy. They share their ideas for reform in Egypt[22].

What is significant here is that the political system in all its official institutions seemed unable to contain these young people, and the question here is: Can this new force to be the impetus for political change in Egypt? Is it possible to relying on them to pressure the regime to change its politics dramatically?. The future of Egypt is highly unpredictable. However, what can be deduced with a high degree of certainty is that, as long as the Mubarak regime remains determined to cling on the martial law and the use the security apparatus to manipulate the political process, the prospects for democratization and human rights in Egypt will remain bleak.

In sum, the Mubarak regime is still controlling and containing civil society in Egypt. Thus, the main political trends in the country namely, Islamist, liberal, leftist and nationalist, sought to create some kind of civil and social movements. However, the clash of interests and agendas between these various groups has weakened their alliance. The Kifaya (Enough) movement which is trying to put an end to the rule of President Hosni Mubarak did not achieve its goal. This limited effectiveness of civil society in Egypt could be explained by the fact that civil society organizations are elitist in nature and have lost touch with its social base.

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[1] For several excellent discussions of this phenomenon see: Ninette S. Fahmy, The Politics of Egypt: State-Society Relationship. London: Routledge, 2002.and Hamdy A.Hassan,. (Ed.), Democratic Transformation in Egypt (in Arabic), in Democratic Transformation in the Arab World during the Nineties, Al-Mafraq, Al Albeit University, 2000.pp 3-6.

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[2] Since the 1950s,the nature of personal authoritarian rule in Egypt has remained virtually unchanged. See: Maye Kassem, Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers,2004.

[3] Jamāl Ḥamdān,. Gamal Hamdan: Collected Works. Cairo: Ministry of Culture, Egypt, Foreign Cultural Relations, 2000.

[4] Galal A. Amin,. Egypt and Egyptians in Mubarak's Era1981-2008,. Cairo: Dār Mīrīt, 2009.

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[7] Muhammad Ali Pasha, who ruled Egypt from 1805 until 1848 is the founding of the modern Egyptian state. He launched several reform programs aiming at creating a modern Egyptian society after the European model. In order to meet the needs of the modernized society, Muhammad Ali built schools that started for educating engineers, doctors and other specialists.

[8] ibid, pp. 160-165.

[9]Hamdy A. Hassan,. "The state and civil society in Africa: A North African Perspective." African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, 2009,Vol.3No. 2:66-76.

[10] Nadine H  Abdalla ,. Civil Society in Egypt: A Catalyst for Democratization? The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law Vol. 10, No. 4, August 2008. Available at :

http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol10iss4/special_2.htm

[11] Nasr Mohammad Arif , *The Crisis of Political Parties in Egypt: A Study on Problems of Existence, Legality and Function* (in Arabic), Strategic Notebooks Series, Vol. 13, No. 132, 2003. See also Hassanein Tewfik, op. cit. pp. 273-276.

[12] Hamdy A. Hassan , *Performance of the Peoples' Assembly* (in Arabic), in M. S Kharboosh  (Ed), Political Development in Egypt, Cairo, Center for Strategic Studies, 1994.p. 175.

[13]   This law was considered the first common law to be applied to all syndicates in Egypt. However ,the raison d'être for this law lies in the government determination to combat the Muslim Brotherhood, whose influence in some syndicate has been rising since the late 1980s. see: Fahmy, op.cit. p.107.

[14] Amany Kandeel,. Civil Society in Egypt at the Rise of a New Millennium. Cairo: Al Ahram Center for Politicaland Strategic Studies, 2000, p. 15. and Moheb Zaki, Civil Society and Democratization in Egypt, 1981-1994, Cairo: Ibn Khaldun Center for Development, 1996, pp. 36-99.

[15]  Aymen Abdel-Wahab, .the NGOs law :Towards the revitalization of Civil Society in Egypt, al Ahram:Strategic Papers, Center for Political and Strategic Studies Vol 10, 2000.

[16]  Abdalla, op.cit.

[17]Kristina  Kausch , Defenders in Retreat :Freedom of Association and Civil Society in Egypt, FRIDE Working Paper, 82.April 2009.

[18] Denis J. Sullivan, NGOs and Development in the Arab World :The Critical Importance of a Strong Partnership Between Government and Civil Society, *Civil Society and Democratisation in the Arab World*, Ibn Khaldun Center, Cairo Egypt. , vol. 9, no. 102. June 2000.

[19] Kristina Kausch, op.cit.

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