Egypt Before and After 2011:
An Uncertain History of Revolution

By

Mariana Gallegos Dupuis
V00799794

Supervised by
Dr. Andrew Wender

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Despite the harsh repression imposed by the counter-revolutionary regime led by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the nature of the Egyptian revolution that began in 2011 remains uncertain. Whether or not historians will even label it a revolution remains to be seen. The ideological and institutional battle between the new regime and any remaining opposition has drowned out the diverse voices of the revolution that initially challenged the status quo in Tahrir Square and around the country. In the name of promoting "stability" in Egypt, the regime, standing on the ruins of the Muslim Brotherhood, manipulates inter-communal differences to ferment fear of state collapse and characterizes anyone who disagrees with its policies as a threat.

Recent revolutionary theory is marked by a distinction between what is known as third generation scholarship that focuses on state-centered, structural factors and fourth generation scholarship that takes an interdisciplinary approach accounting for a multitude of further socio-political factors. The unfolding conflict in Egypt is an exceptional case study for comparing the merits and limitations of these two approaches. Using them comparatively to examine recent Egyptian history reveals common threads that run through the past and present as well as crucial differences that separate these temporalities. How, if at all, has the paternalistic political relationship between a military autocrat and the Egyptian people, initially associated with President Gamal Abdel Nasser, changed due to the events of 2011? How, if at all, did the revolution of 2011 affect how individual Egyptians understood themselves in relation to the state and each other? I frame my study of the unfolding events in post-2011 Egypt around ongoing historiographical debates concerning the causes and character of revolutions, in order to underscore the delicate

business of historians of grappling with the present and conceptualizing the future, while contemplating the significance of the past.

This thesis is divided into four main sections: the rest of the introduction unveils the theory I apply to the Egyptian case study; chapter 1 analyses Egyptian history roughly from 1952 to 2011 as to contextualize chapter 2, which examines contemporary Egyptian history since 2011 through the application of revolutionary theory; the conclusion explores what revolutionary theory suggests about the present and future of Egypt.

The fourth generation of revolutionary theory developed as a revision of the third generation's rigid emphasis on structural factors of revolution. Influenced by a Marxist historical perspective prevalent in the 1970s and 80s, third generation scholars claimed that the emergence of a revolution was determined by particular structural alignments, domestically and internationally.[1] Theda Skocpol, a benchmark structuralist scholar in revolutionary theory, defined the great social revolutions as "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures… accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below."[2] Her often-quoted definition excludes countless variances in the character and temporal length of revolutions: revolutions from above, cultural revolutions, religious, ethnic, or gender-based revolutions, etc. And although the stature of structuralist work remains foundational to revolutionary theory, a new generation of scholarship seeks to expand the boundaries of this field of inquiry.

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[1] Jack A. Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science,* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (2001): 140; George Lawson, "Within and Beyond the 'Fourth Generation' of Revolutionary Theory," *Sociological Theory,* Vol. 34, no. 2 (2016): 109. When I use the phrase "influenced by a Marxist historical perspective," I am referring to how these scholars applied class-based analysis to studying a variety of revolutions.

[2] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) quote in Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 140.

In an attempt to capture and incorporate the key exclusions of the third generation's theory, interdisciplinary scholars have redefined revolutions. Jack Goldstone, a crucial fourth generation revolutionary scholar, defines revolutions as "an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in a society, accompanied by formal and informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine existing authorities."[3] Essentially, fourth generation scholars cease to attempt to define reasons why revolutions take place, and focus on studying the conditions under which states become unstable; they treat revolutions as emergent processes arising from a multiplicity of causes rather than as static entities.[4] Fourth generation scholars legitimize the phenomena that occur outside the system by studying it.

Fourth generation scholarship has grown in many directions. Sondra Hale, writing with feminist and postcolonial theoretical lenses, discusses how postmodernism has influenced the nature of contemporary insurrections in the way they seek to dismantle the old "regimes of knowledge" and delegitimize the master codes of historical narratives.[5] She argues that postmodernism offers scholars and revolutionaries "indeterminacy rather than determinism, … diversity rather than unity, difference rather than synthesis, and complexity rather than simplification."[6] Postmodernism thus produces new forms of knowledge that reflect the paradigm's emphasis on the value of subjectivity.

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[3] Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 142. Lawson's working definition of revolutions—within the framework of fourth generation revolutionary theory—is "conjunctural amalgams of systemic crisis, structural opening, and collective action which arise from the intersection of international, economic, political, and symbolic factors." George Lawson, "Within and Beyond the 'Fourth Generation' of Revolutionary Theory," 109.

[4] Ibid, 110. For Goldstone and Lawson, state instability is a pre-condition for revolutions.

[5] Sondra Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 10/3 (Fall 2014), 41- 42.

[6] Ibid, 42.

Originally, the term revolution was harnessed to a structuralist or modernist paradigm whose foundation relies on the concepts of nation-state, class, and sovereignty. Yet, fourth generation scholarship continues to use the term revolution because it has been adapted to describe a new subject constructed by postmodern forms of knowledge.[7] Antonio Negri argues that under a postmodernist paradigm, the concept of revolution communicates the complete transformation of a society's or an individual's subjectivity, identity, and perspective.[8] Emancipation itself requires revolutionizing the way individuals indentify themselves.[9] Because they are not tethered to state-based understandings of revolution like third generation scholars, postmodern fourth generation scholars submerge their conception of revolutions into a longer temporality.

Recent revolutionary theory is engaged in dialectic to define the nature of revolutions. Although the fourth generation offers valuable amendments to third generation scholarship's rigid loyalty to a modernist paradigm, fourth generation scholars have been unable to detach their work from a state-centred analysis.[10] This case study demonstrates the relevance of the scholarship of both of these generations to mid-to-late twentieth-century and contemporary Egyptian history.

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[7] Antonio Negri, "Afterword: On the Concept of Revolution," in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World.* Edited by John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 252-4

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid, 254.

[10] For specifics, please see George Lawson, "Within and Beyond the 'Fourth Generation' of Revolutionary Theory."

Chapter 1:

1952 to 2011

Egyptian history has a long-standing relationship with rebellion and revolution. This chapter examines this dynamic of change between the people and the state—particularly from 1952 to 2011—as to contextualize the revolution of 2011 examined in the next chapter. Although third and fourth generation revolutionary theory has shaped the way I have studied and present this period of history, my priority here is to study the motifs of Egyptian history that develop from 1952 to 2011 as they are relevant to contemporary Egyptian history. After providing a brief overview of Egypt's history of revolution and rebellion before 1952, I analyze the following aspects of the relationship between state power and the public under Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosni Mubarak: popular political exclusion, domestic security agencies, economic policies, performed identity of the leader, and the relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 1821, over 20,000 peasants revolted in the south of Egypt against increasing taxation, forced labour, and an unprecedented conscription policy.[11] Another three peasant uprisings took place in 1822, 1844, and 1863.[12] From 1879 to 1882, Egyptians rose up in a nationwide revolution seeking to limit the power of the monarchical military state with a constitution.[13] The British navy came to the aid of the monarchy, bombed Alexandria, and defeated the revolutionary troops, commencing a seventy-year-long military occupation.[14]

Yet, a nationalist revolution shook the country in the spring and summer of 1919, protesting against the Paris Peace Conference and demanding independence and a constitution.[15] Despite the non-violent nature of the revolution, British forces killed over

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[11] Khaled Fahmy, "The Long Revolution," AEON Essays (November 20, 2015).
[12] The 1822 peasant uprising was quashed by the government's machine guns under the command of Muhammad Ali. Both the 1822 and the 1844 uprisings were in the Delta. Ibid.
[13] The revolution was led by Ahmed Urabi. Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Jean-Pierre Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27.

800 Egyptians.[16] The British finally terminated the protectorate in 1922, formally recognizing King Fuad as the sovereign of Egypt while maintaining key restrictions on Egyptian independence to protect their interests.[17] For instance, the British interfered with the drafting of the constitution, enabling the crown (their allies) to dominate parliament.[18] It was in this context that Hassan al-Banna, a charismatic schoolteacher, founded the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, seeking to expel foreign influences while maintaining support for economic modernization.[19]

After the humiliation of Israel's victory in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, there was an upsurge of tension against the government of King Farouk.[20] The Muslim Brotherhood assassinated Prime Minster Mahmoud Nuqrashi in December 1948; in response, thousands of Islamists were arrested and government agents murdered Hassan al-Banna in February of 1949.[21] Then, in January of 1952, British forces crushed nationalist protests in the Suez Canal area, leading to widespread riots in Cairo.[22] The Muslim Brotherhood, who actively participated in the riots, communicated secretly with the clandestine group of Free Officers through Anwar Sadat, one of the founding officers.[23] On July 23 1952, eighty Free Officers took control of the army, arresting almost all of the generals.[24] King Farouk was deposed

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid. The British government maintained some control over communications, defence, policy on Sudan, protection of minorities, and British interests.

[18] Fahmy, "The Long Revolution."

[19] James Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," in *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (OUP, 2015): 64; Laurence Caromba and Hussein Solomon, "Understanding Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *African Security Review* 17, no. 3 (July 22, 2010): 119.

[20] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 33.

[21] Ibid, 34; Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 26.

[22] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 34.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 34; Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955), 11.

and exiled; Egypt's constitutional monarchy was overthrown.[25] Sadat read the declaration

of the revolution broadcasted on national radio:

> We have undertaken to clean ourselves up and have appointed to command us men from the army whom we trust in their ability, their character and their patriotism. It is certain that all Egypt will meet this news with enthusiasm and will welcome it.[26]

Key themes of the ideology of the incoming Free Officers regime are tangible in this

opening salvo. The cleansing process refers to asserting Egypt's independence from both

internal despots and British influence, as the ideology of the movement was socialist and

anti-imperialist.[27] The declaration depicts the Free Officers as the honourable guardians of

the nation, and the coup as the mechanism for modernizing the country. The tone of the

declaration is at once celebratory and forceful in its assertion of the legitimacy of the coup

d'état. These motifs are still reverberating today.

To establish the legitimacy of the emerging regime, the Free Officers played a

delicate game between attaching themselves to the remnants of the military's high

command and distancing themselves from the Muslim Brotherhood. To embody the coup,

the Free Officers turned to General Mohammad Naguib, one of the few generals not

arrested on July 1952, who became president in June 1953.[28] After a failed (and probably

staged) assassination attempt against Nasser by the Muslim Brotherhood in Alexandria, the

regime cracked down on the Brotherhood.[29] Although the Brotherhood had originally

partaken in the Cairo riots of 1952 and had joined the rest of Egypt in celebrating the coup,

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[25] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 34; Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement.*

[26] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 34.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid, 49; Joshua Stacher, "Arab Republic of Egypt," in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Mark Gasiorowski (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2014), 375.

[29] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy*, 50. The details regarding the motive for and origin of the assassination attempt remain unclear. For an example of conflicting narratives, see Ibid, 48-51 and Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, 27.

it soon became one of the main targets of the new government. There is even a historical anecdote that as a Colonel, Nasser had visited Sayyid Qutb—a crucial Brotherhood ideologue—before the Free-Officer coup to gain his support.[30] Yet, Qutb was imprisoned for a decade before he was hung in 1966.[31] Writing from his prison cell, Qutb argued that a regime so irredeemably corrupt and blind to God's sovereign power could only be combated through force.[32] In response to the assassination attempt against Nasser, approximately 20,000 members were arrested, many without a trial, and President Naguib was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life, accused of taking part in the assassination plot.[33] In January of 1954, Nasser dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood claiming that it was seeking to overthrow the regime. Arguably, 1954 marked the consolidation of Nasser's place as the undisputed leader of the revolutionary government.[34] Yet, some scholars do not trace the end of the coup and the beginning of the revolutionary nation-state until June of 1956 with the arrival of a new constitution and with 99.9 per cent of voters having approved Nasser's presidency *ex post facto*.[35] This disagreement between scholars underscores the difficulty of defining the boundaries of a revolution, even when it is widely regarded as a successful one. Nevertheless, most historians agree that Nasser emerged from the Suez Crisis of 1956 with global recognition.[36] Although the Egyptian

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[30] Paul Berman, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," *The New York Times Magazine* (March 23, 2003). There were even rumors that Nasser might appoint Qutb as the Minister of Education of the revolutionary regime. Ibid.

[31] Ibid; Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, 28.

[32] Blindness to God's sovereign power is *Jahiliyya,* referring to the period of ignorance in pre-Islamic Arabia before the Prophet Muhammad. Ibid, 28.

[33] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 50.

[34] Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, 27; Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 50.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Please see the introduction to Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955), written by Dorothy Thompson.

army was clearly defeated, Nasser was the political victor of the crisis as Israeli, French, and British troops were forced to withdraw unconditionally under pressure from Washington.[37]

From the outset, Nasser established a military, authoritarian regime that successfully cultivated mass support.[38] The coup replaced the old elites with a presidential regime, an emerging class of military officers and bureaucrats of middle class origin, and a one-party system.[39] Since parliament was disbanded, the one-party system was a crucial innovation, as it maintained the regime's leadership informed of the needs of Egyptian society as it brought all politics under the direction of Nasser himself.[40] This system was centered in the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), the only political party allowed under Nasserite regime, created in 1962; it became the crucial vehicle for social mobility within the state structure.[41] As a political institution, Nasser's single party system controlled trade unions, universities, and the media while maintaining a patronage network in the bureaucracy of the legal system stretching from the cities to the Egyptian countryside.[42]

The beginning of Nasserite regime was also marked by an obsession with internal security. There were four militarized agencies tasked with domestic intelligence: the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) was re-oriented for political operations after the coup; some of the leaders of MID then created the Presidential Bureau of Information (PBI)—which was under Nasser's direct supervision—and the General Intelligence

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[37] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,*

[38] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 568; Joshua Stacher, "Arab Republic of Egypt," in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Mark Gasiorowski, 371-396 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2014). 375

[39] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies,* 568.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid, 569; Stacher, "Arab Republic of Egypt," 375.

[42] Hazem Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," *New Left Review*, 102 (Nov.-Dec 2016): 5.

Department (GID); the General Investigations Services (GIS), part of the Ministry of the Interior, was also expanded and militarized.[43] As Field Marshal, Abdel Hakim Amer manipulated Nasser's paranoia by constantly unveiling new conspiracies while transforming the officer corps into "the largest 'patronage network' in Egypt."[44] Although Nasser was eventually able to become supreme commander of the armed forces, Amer continued to shadow and rival Nasser's control over the intelligence agencies.[45] In the summer of 1965, Amer had MID uncover another Muslim Brotherhood plot. Thousands were detained and hundreds were killed under torture; it was in this context of this renewed phase of oppression that Sayyid Qutb was hung in August of 1966.[46]

Consistent with the socialist ideology of the Free Officer coup, the regime began to eliminate large estates by increasing land ownership restrictions, but there was not enough fertile land to provide for all the landless laborers.[47] The state promoted cooperatives and provided fertilizer, seeds, and credit to increase productivity.[48] Under Nasser, the government provided more services to rural areas such as roads, schools, and health centers.[49] Beginning in the late 1950's, the government began to amalgamate the economy into the state structure by nationalizing banks and major industries and seizing direct control over insurance, banking, foreign trade, transportation, construction, and the textile industry.[50] Egyptians expected this socialized economy to meet their needs for economic development by freeing Egypt from the control of foreign economies, generating

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[43] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 49.
[44] Ibid, 51.
[45] Ibid, 52.
[46] Ibid, 51-2. Filiu argues that a more self-assured Nasser would not have ordered the death of Qutb.
[47] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 569.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 570.
[50] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 570. Ibid.

employment, higher-value products, and exports. The government's welfare policies promised mass education, subsidies for basic commodities and economic independence from the two superpowers of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States.[51] Having inherited an underdeveloped colonial economy in 1952, these reforms were derivations of how Nasser and the Free Officers understood their role in Egyptian history as the gears for economic modernization and emancipation.[52]

In his book on the philosophy of the coup, Nasser ponders his role (and that of his fellow Free Officers) in Egyptian history, comparing his writing process to a "reconnaissance patrol" in which he places his memories within a broader national narrative.[53] He situates the reason for the coup in the context of a grievous historical struggle for Egyptian liberation from the time of Muhammad Ali and the constitutional revolution of 1919 against the British.[54] Nasser describes the process of discovering within himself and his fellow soldiers the "seeds" of the responsibility for achieving complete Egyptian sovereignty, while fighting to protect Palestine in 1948:[55]

> I used to often say to myself: Here we are in these foxholes, surrounded, and thrust treacherously into a battle for which we were not ready, our lives the playthings of greed, conspiracy and lust, which have left us here weaponless under fire. And when I would come to this point in my thinking, I used to find my thoughts suddenly leaping across the field and over the borders into Egypt, and I would say to myself: Over there is our country…. What is happening to us here is a picture in miniature of what is happening in Egypt. Egypt too is besieged by difficulties and enemies; *she* has been deceived and forced into a battle for which she was not ready…[56]

Nasser's comparison of his experience as a besieged, unarmed soldier in the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948 to Egypt's defenselessness from British imperialism links the Egyptian

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[51] Ibid; Stacher, "Arab Republic of Egypt," 383.
[52] Stacher, "Arab Republic of Egypt," 383.
[53] Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, 11.
[54] Ibid, 12, 18.
[55] Ibid, 20, 21, 25, 37.
[56] Ibid, 23. Emphasis in text.

cause for full independence with the preservation of an Arab Palestinian state. His rhetoric reflects Egyptian nationalism as it does pan-Arabism. These recollections characterize his own experience in foxholes in Palestine as a microcosm of European imperialism in which Nasser begins to understand his place in history.

Interestingly, Nasser claims that he saw the role of the military in government as only a temporary guardianship, a reluctant sacrifice to allow for a social revolution that would catch up to the political revolution that was already unfolding.[57] He expresses the sorrow that he and his fellow officers felt at being forced to leave their post in the armed forces to perform this "sacred duty."[58] Nasser claims that beyond any shadow of a doubt, it was necessary for the army to do its duty in 1952: "I can say now that we did not ourselves define the role given us to play; it was the history of our country which cast us in the role."[59] Nasser depicts the army both as the locomotive of progress in Egyptian history and as the guardian of the Egyptian society who is humbly reluctant to take power. Both of these motifs are also present in the aforementioned opening salvo of the coup. In both cases, the average Egyptian is characterized as a child who requires the leadership and care of the new state to overcome petty personal disputes. In contrast, Nasser stresses the Free Officers' sober awareness of the next step in Egypt's national historical progress. In the book, the Free Officers appear to have been entrusted with an unparalleled, sacred premonition that would guide the country forward.

The implementation of Nasser's ideals voiced in his book was far from the quotidian reality lived by the average Egyptian. The economy stagnated as the government

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[57] Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution,* 33-41, 71.
[58] Ibid, 37.
[59] Ibid, 39.

funneled most of its resources to maintain a large army, an inflated state bureaucracy, an ambitious foreign policy, and its welfare state.[60] In the early 1960s, Egypt's security apparatus was decentered in that many aforementioned institutions carried out the same task without communicating between themselves.[61] There was even an expression—that someone had "gone beyond the sun"—to convey the ambiguity of not knowing which domestic security institution was responsible for someone's disappearance.[62]

This intelligence institution feud affected the regimes strategy for the Six Day War of 1967. With a third of the Egyptian army tied up in Yemen, Israel delivered almost a fatal blow to the Egyptian military.[63] In a dramatic speech delivered on June 9, Nasser announced the collective resignation of the country's leadership—including Amer and his own—while the ASU arranged mass demonstrations all over Egypt begging Nasser to stay in power.[64] Nasser retracted his resignation as president two days later, having finally ousted Amer.[65] After Egypt was defeated in the 1967 War against Israel, Nasser began to restrict the role of the military, withdrawing its post in internal surveillance, policing, and domestic intelligence.[66] Nasser was unable to regain the Sinai Peninsula and restore Egyptian territorial integrity lost in the Six Day War.[67] In September 1970, Nasser died of a heart attack; more than five million Egyptians gathered in the streets to mourn the death of a beloved and controversial leader.[68] Caught off guard by Nasser's unexpected death,

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[60] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 570.
[61] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 7.
[62] Ibid, 17
[63] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 52.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid*,* 53. Amer was taken into custody by the GIS where he was either executed quickly or committed suicide. Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid*,* 53.
[68] Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History* (St. Ives Plc: Allen Lane, 2016), 40.

the heads of three national security agencies chose Anwar Sadat as the new president, expecting him to be a mere placeholder.[69]

Yet, Sadat constantly surprised his allies and enemies as he stayed in power for more than a decade.[70] In 1972, Sadat expelled fifteen thousand Soviet troops and military advisers from Egypt, who remained from the Nasserite era, thus compromising the Soviet grip in the Middle East.[71] Although Israel did not consider Egypt a threat without Soviet support, the Egyptian army managed to cross the Suez Canal in early October of 1973.[72] Despite having relinquished Soviet support, the Egyptian army, under Sadat's leadership, was able to shatter the perception of Israeli military superiority following the Egyptian defeat in the Six-Day War of 1967.

Under Sadat, the Egyptian economy turned away from socialism, as it incorporated neo-liberal economic policies.[73] Although Sadat inherited Nasser's political institutions, he altered them to ensure they would follow his directives.[74] He obliterated the Arab Socialist Union and forged a new political party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), which in practice was an extension of the executive office.[75] Sadat created a new capitalist class that was dependent on him by opening up the market, and generated more opportunities for

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[69] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 53-4.
[70] Ibid, 54.
[71] Lawrence Wright. *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David,* 20-21.
[72] Ennio Di Nolfo, "The Cold War and the Transformation of the Mediterranean, 1960-1975" *The Cambridge History of the Cold War.* Vol. II Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 251. This war is known as the Yom Kippur War of 1973.
[73] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 570; Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 42-46. I consciously use the word neo-liberalism following the example of Jack Schenker and Ira Lapidus because I think that the Sadat period of Egyptian history begins the transition between socialism under Nasser and a neo-liberalism under Mubarak.
[74] Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 51.
[75] Ibid, 164-65.

private wealth accumulation.[76] This emerging elite included contractors, speculators in housing, and import-exporters.[77]

The change in tone between Nasser's egalitarian, socialist rhetoric and Sadat's neo-liberal economic policies did not go unnoticed by the Egyptian public. The promotion of a free market transformed the state's role away from Nasser's commitment to addressing inequality and injustice to actively enabling private wealth accumulation. With his ambitious package of economic reforms announced in 1974, collectively known as *Infitah* (Opening), Sadat encouraged foreign investment.[78] Publically, Sadat claimed that the *Infitah* held the "seeds of a politically pluralistic Egypt," while privately he employed the structure of Nasser's exclusionary state to build this new capitalist class that would be loyal to and dependent on him.[79]

These new policies, which suspended the guarantee of material security provided by the government, decimated the core of Nasser's social contract.[80] When Sadat severely diminished food subsidies by millions of Egyptian pounds at the behest of the World Bank in January 1977, mass strikes erupted in two of Cairo's industrial districts and wide spread violence swept Egyptian cities.[81] Hotels, shops, casinos, railway lines, and the NDP's headquarters were vandalized as the people's chant, "the democratic president wants the people to bow low," filled the streets.[82] The security apparatus and the military suppressed the uprising, killing more than seventy people and injuring hundreds. Sadat labeled it the "uprising of thieves," but he was then forced to reverse his cuts fewer than two days after

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[76] Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 40-5.
[77] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies,* 571.
[78] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 40-5; Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies,* 570.
[79] Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 44-5.
[80] Ibid, 45.
[81] Ibid, 46.
[82] Ibid.

announcing them.[83] Despite Sadat's efforts in crafting these economic reforms, the Egyptian economy was still reliant on tourism, remittances sent home by Egyptian workers abroad, and the Suez Canal tolls.[84] Thus, the government retreated from the promises of welfare it had made in the 1960s.

Politically, Sadat allowed a measure of opposition from the left, from the Muslim Brotherhood, and from liberals, seeking to co-opt criticism unlike Nasser who repressed opposition directly and immediately.[85] Yet, like Nasser, Sadat's regime relied on the domestic intelligence network.[86] In response to the *Infitah* riots of 1977, Sadat had to send in the army to quash protests. Over a hundred demonstrators were killed or injured but the protests did not cease until the government restored the subsidies.[87] As a result of the protests, Sadat strengthened the Ministry of the Interior with a paramilitary branch named the Central Security Forces (CSF) determined that his regime should not depend on the loyalty of the military.[88] Sadat sought to present himself as a leader tolerant of certain forms of democracy; only in the last years of his life was Sadat's regime characteristically repressive.[89]

In October 1981, Muslim radicals assassinated Sadat during a public military parade in Cairo commemorating the 1973 Yom Kippur War with Israel.[90] It is within this context that Hosni Mubarak—Sadat's vice-president, chief of the air force, and the man sitting next to Sadat when he was killed—took office.[91]

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[83] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 46.
[84] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 570.
[85] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 16.
[86] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 55-6.
[87] Ibid*,* 56.
[88] Ibid
[89] Ibid; Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 47.
[90] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 571.
[91] Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 571.

Having instituted Emergency Law upon his arrival in office, Mubarak maintained it throughout the entirety of his thirty-year rule in the name of fighting terrorism. In effect, this chronic state of emergency enabled Egypt's vast security network to arbitrarily detain individuals, suspend constitutional rights, and engage in collective punishment and the extensive use of torture.[92] In contrast with Nasser but similar to Sadat, Mubarak sought to control rather than stifle political opposition or criticism entirely.[93] Although he allowed protests on university campuses regarding foreign policy issues, like the American invasion of Iraq, Mubarak used his security apparatus to clamp down hard on the "April 6 2008 Movement," a group of young activists that tried join up with factory workers from the industrial town of Mahalla.[94] To a certain extent, Mubarak also allowed private media channels, newspapers, and talk shows to criticize him occasionally. Political sociologist, Hazem Kandil posits that these avenues for controlled criticism became proxies for political activism that worked to bring down Mubarak. [95]

In the decades leading up to 2011, two interrelated quagmires weakened Mubarak's political structure: his succession and uneven economic benefits from neoliberal reforms. Mubarak's economic policies weakened the remnants of Nasser's welfare state after Sadat, alienating the lower and middle classes, as well as the armed forces. The regime kept shrinking gradually as more neo-liberal reforms were enacted so that the relationship between the state and various Egyptian classes was changed.[96] In its extreme, Goldstone refers to this concept as a "state crisis" whereby the "elite or popular groups consider the

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[92] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 57.
[93] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 16. Kandil describes this dynamic as a game of "safety valves" releasing pressure to keep the situation from exploding.
[94] James Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 28 and 51; Khaled Fahmy, "the Long Revolution."
[95] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 16.
[96] Jeroen Gunning and Ilan Zvi Baron, *Why Occupy a Square?: People, Protests and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014), 100-101.

state incapable of performing necessary tasks of governance."[97] In the early 2000s, the top

three per cent of the Egyptian population was responsible for "half of consumer spending";

this statistic reflects the divisions between the beneficiaries of Mubarak's regimes and the

rest of the population.[98] Additionally, all opposition parties boycotted the parliamentary

elections of November 2010 because they were so conspicuously controlled by the security

apparatus.[99] Businessmen with both close ties to the NDP and Mubarak's son Gamal held

half the seats of the legislature and rose up through the ranks of the political party.[100]

Mubarak's state became a neo-patrimonial regime.[101] There was wide opposition against

Gamal's being publically groomed to succeed his father; this, as Gamal was perceived as

an outsider who favored only the new elite in contrast with the three armed services officers

that had ruled since 1952.[102] The succession predicament and the neo-liberal reforms

enacted by Mubarak ate away at the social contract remaining from Sadat's *Infitah* policies

and established by Nasser and whereby the government promised economic rights in

exchange for Egyptians surrendering their political rights.

 Mubarak presented himself as a benevolent, tolerant, and compassionate father in

contrast to Nasser's "consummate populist leader" image or Sadat's "wiser-than-thou,

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[97] Jack Goldstone, Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), as quoted in Jeroen Gunning and Ilan Zvi Baron, *Why Occupy a Square?: People, Protests and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014), 101. The elites that I argue were alienated here are the "traditional elites" of the modern Egyptian state as they existed under Nasser and Sadat, in contrast with the "crony-capitalist" elite that emerged from the Mubarak's era.

[98] Ibid, 102.

[99] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy*, 151.

[100] Gunning and Baron, *Why Occupy a Square?: People, Protests and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution*,102-3. In 2004, people on the street spoke of "Gamal's cabinet," since his avenue for political control was well known. Ibid.

[101] Ibid, 103.

[102] Ibid, 106-7.

visionary" depiction.[103] Yet, Adel Iskander argues that Mubarak's performance as a father and his actions as an autocrat contradicted each other constantly:

> Mubarak transformed a caregiver state into one that punished its people. He spoke of bounty but provided none of it. He expressed egalitarianism but acted preferentially. He advocated for the masses but empowered few. He claimed to be building a meritocracy but made nepotism the status quo. And he did it all while smiling at Egyptians everywhere you looked.[104]

This brief excerpt from a larger reflection on the 2011 revolution is an example of how an individual witnessed the state begin to unravel long before the official, institutional status of the regime itself was popularly challenged. With state-sanctioned photographs of him everywhere—in post offices, in the streets, at work—Mubarak saturated the quotidian existence of Egyptians, creating a "cohesive reality in an otherwise disjointed urban setting," "an impenetrable matrix of political control and financial corruption."[105] The way in which the military authoritarian regime under Mubarak portrayed itself made its power appear timeless and inevitable. As such, the state constantly reminded Egyptians that they could never be more than the "passive victims of history."[106] It would take individuals who questioned and eventually rebelled against the regime's paternalistic narrative of the state, seeking to limit their involvement in politics, to change Egypt.

Under Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak, a military authoritarian leader informed the average Egyptian the only way to navigate their concerns of the present. The presidential institution first crafted by Nasser defined the economy, the political arena, and the limits on civil society. And yet, while the spirit of Nasser's social contract promising welfare and social justice for every Egyptian was eroded through Sadat and Mubarak's neoliberal and

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[103] Adel Iskander, *Egypt in Flux: Essays on an Unfinished Revolution* (Cairo: The American University In Cairo Press, 2013), 80.
[104] Ibid, 81.
[105] Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 110.
[106] Ibid, 112.

repressive policies, there was no meaningful avenue for political involvement for every citizen.

Chapter 2:

2011 to Present

The uncertainty of whether the unfolding Egyptian revolution that began in 2011 is a success or a failure makes it an exceptional case study for analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of both third and fourth generation revolutionary theory. First, I will outline the key elements of the revolution of 2011 and the coup d'état of 2013. Then, I present the application of third and fourth generation revolutionary theory to this contemporary Egyptian history. The dialectic formed between these two theoretical applications underscores the delicate balance of grappling with the present and conceptualizing the future, while contemplating the weight of the past.

Inspired by the success of the Tunisian protests that led President Ben Ali to flee to Saudi Arabia, activists planned mass protests in Cairo and other Egyptian cities on January 25 2011, National Police Day, a recently proclaimed national holiday honoring a widely despised institution.[107] The uprising took on a life and character of its own: leaderless, anti-statist, spreading rapidly, nonreligious, anti-authority, largely non-violent, and eclectic in the diversity of voices and demands represented.[108] The Muslim Brotherhood did not participate at the beginning out of fear of appearing unpatriotic, but they did endorse the second round of protest on January 28.[109] According to Khaled Fahmy—an Egyptian historian who participated in protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square—the unifying maxims "the people demand the fall of the regime," and "lift up your head. You're Egyptian" wove these individuals across the country together.[110] On February 11 2011, after eighteen days of

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[107] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 47-51.The catalyst for the Tunisian protests had been the self-immolation of a young produce vendor, Muhammad Bouazizi, who had been abused by the local authorities of Sidi Bouzid. For a more detailed description of how these early protests in Tunisia unfolded, please see Gelvin, 46-54.

[108] These initial protests included a wide variety of demands: youth and labor activists, feminists, anti-police movements, and many more. Sondra Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," 56.

[109] James Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 50-1, 63.

[110] Khaled Fahmy, "The Long Revolution."

mass protests throughout Egypt, Vice President Omar Suleiman announced the resignation of President Mubarak, tasking the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) with managing the nation.[111] Through a few weeks of mass demonstrations, the Egyptian people had exercised their collective sovereignty, and forced out an autocrat who had maintained power for thirty years.

Yet, by ousting Mubarak, the military, as a major part of the Egyptian deep state, sacrificed only the head of the regime in an attempt to maintain power.[112] The provisional government and the security forces maintained a confrontational posture towards continuing strikes and demonstrations.[113] SCAF also gave itself executive control exceeding that of the incoming president, as well as immunity from oversight, and control over the national budget.[114] The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party had early successes: in January 2012, it won 47.2% of the seats in parliament; in June, Muhammad Morsi became the first democratically elected President of Egypt.[115] Morsi's government and the deep state began to engage in an existential political war over the construction and rules of the new government.[116] The Brotherhood isolated themselves, appointing only their members to crucial posts at all levels of government, and abused presidential decrees, while the military and the deep state accumulated legislative, judicial,

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[111] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 54.

[112] The term, deep state refers to the undergirding structure that manages state action. The Egyptian deep state is dominated the military, but allied with the intelligence services, the police, the judiciary, and the state media. Please see Sarah Childress, "The Deep State: How Egypt's Shadow State Won Out," Frontline PBS, September 17, 2013.

[113] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 71-2.

[114] The Supreme Presidential Electoral Commission eliminated various candidates for president on "procedural" grounds. Mohammad Morsi was the Brotherhood's second choice. Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 71-3.

[115] Ibid, 64.

[116] Gelvin describes it as a zero-sum game that escalated into a death match within a year, 75-6.

and electoral power seeking to undermine the Brotherhood's rule.[117] Moreover, the Egyptian economy was in a deep crisis: the value of the currency had dropped ten percent by the spring of 2013; tourism plummeted, and fuel shortages in May had resulted in long lines at gasoline stations, higher food prices, and electricity blackouts.[118]

The Tamarod (Rebellion) movement, which began in March 2013, aimed to gather 15 million signatures calling for Morsi's resignation.[119] The liberal founders of Tamarod engaged in a strange critique of the democratic process under which Morsi was elected because there was no way of verifying the signatures collected by the Tamarod movement.[120] Moreover, in contrast with the revolution of 2011, Tamarod's more subdued emphasis on "rebellion" against Morsi's government could accommodate the concerns of the Egyptian elite that were formed during the Mubarak era.[121] After the police and state officials had openly supported the movement, Tamarod announced it had gathered an unverifiable 22 million signatures on June 30 2013.[122] The pressure on Morsi was mounting.

On June 30, the anniversary of his ascendance to the presidency, hundreds of thousands of protesters against and for Morsi took to the street. The army issued an ultimatum the next day, giving Morsi forty-eight hours to offer a plan to share power or confront military intervention. On July 3, three out of five founding members of Tamarod met with General Sisi.[123] Shortly thereafter, the army arrested Morsi, Egypt's first

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[117] For a detailed account of the specific battles within this conflict, please see Gelvin 75-8.
[118] Ibid, 77.
[119] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 173.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid, 174.
[123] Ibid.

democratically elected president. All the while, Sisi asserted that the coup was apolitical in a press statement:

> The armed forces could not close their eyes to the movement and demands of the masses calling them to play a national role, not a political role, as the armed forces will be the first to proclaim that they will stay away from politics.... [The army] will confront with all its might, in cooperation with the ministry of interior, any violation of public peace.[124]

This excerpt from Sisi's statement depicts the military once again as the reluctant guardian of the people, who hesitantly answers the people's plea for protection. Similar to Nasser's recollections in *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Sisi caveats the military's involvement in politics by implying that this involvement is not only temporary, but also necessary for the betterment of Egypt.[125] Like the opening salvo to the 1952 coup read by Sadat on national radio, the tone of the statement is forceful in its assertion that the military's action preceding and proceeding the speech are indisputably aligned with public interests.

Yet, the popularly supported coup d'état led by General al-Sisi and backed by a coalition of secular moderates and institutional remnants was immensely political. The coup re-established military rule and suspended the new constitution enacted by the Brotherhood, making alterations for the benefit of the deep state.[126] The presidential elections were scheduled for May 26 and 27, 2014; the turnout was so low on the 26 that the government panicked and declared May 27 a public holiday.[127] After retiring from the military, Sisi was elected president with an abysmal 47% voter turnout—the population seemed to be suffering from election fatigue and disillusionment.[128]

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[124] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 175.
[125] Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution,* 33-41, 71.
[126] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 78, 80.
[127] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 183.
[128] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 80.

Soon after ousting Morsi, the security forces began a violent repressive campaign targeting the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters. On August 13 2013 at 7am, the security forces opened fire without warning on a sprawling tent-city outside the Rabaa al-Adawiya Mosque in East Cairo.[129] *Human Rights Watch* documented at least 817 deaths and more than a thousand individuals injured. [130] The coalition began to disintegrate as some of the liberal officials of the new government resigned in protest. Nevertheless, thereafter, the government continued to employ the security forces to target Muslim Brotherhood supporters before gradually expanding the scope to any other voices of dissent. From the beginning Sisi's regime justified its existence by both drawing attention to and seeming to combat any threat to Egyptian national security. As of June 2015, the Sisi regime had increased media censorship, banned protesting, incarcerated over 40,000 political prisoners including photographers and human rights activists, and issued mass death sentences.[131] More civilians were killed from August 14 to 18 (928 individuals killed) than during the 18 days of revolution (846 deaths).[132] The army ceased being the guardian of the people's "Tahrir dream" as it mobilized the entire security apparatus against any dissent.[133] Arguably, a harsher military authoritarian regime than Mubarak's has been established. Had the revolution failed? Could it even be called a revolution?

A fourth generation revolutionary scholar might argue that the Egyptian revolution achieved enormous successes that cannot be measured structurally so far, nor could they be essentially reversed or discredited through temporary harsh repression. In the early

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[129] Peter Kingsley, "Egypt's Rabaa Massacre: One Year On," *The Guardian* (August 16, 2014).
[130] Ibid.
[131] Al Jazeera Staff, "The Many Battles of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *Al Jazeera* (June 7, 2015).
[132] Filiu, *From the Deep State to Islamic State: the Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihad Legacy,* 176.
[133] Ibid, 175.

months of 2011, the Egyptian people asserted their collective agency, setting aside differences in political priorities, and demanded the fall of the regime. Together, the diverse ensemble of revolutionary voices in Tahrir Square and throughout the country was so effective that President Mubarak resigned after thirty years as an autocrat.[134] The Egyptian people had successfully asserted their sovereignty over their own politics, a sphere previously closed to them.[135] Jack Shenker, a journalist for *The Guardian* who covered the revolution, describes how his experiences in Egypt influenced his understanding of revolutions:

> [t]hat newfound sense of agency, of an ability to shape things around you in ways you never knew existed—that gave me my definition of revolution: not a time-bound occurrence, nor a shuffle of rules and faces up top, but rather a state of mind. It felt as if nothing could be the same again.[136]

Shenker's account of this unfolding history reflects the merits of fourth generation theory, challenging any rigid, temporal or structural definitions of revolution. Witnessing and participating in this revolution changed the way people understood themselves in relation to the state.

Although a third generation scholar may argue that fourth generation scholars are merely pretending to distance themselves from structural analysis of revolution, fourth generation does offer a nuanced account of how these internal revolutions take place within an individual as well as through institutions. Goldstone refers to this change as generating protest identities, "the sense of being part of a group with shared and justified grievances,

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[134] Trotsky's definition of revolutions is relevant to Egypt: "the forcible entry of the masses in the realm of rulership over their own destiny." Alex Callinicos, "What does revolution mean in the twenty-first century?" *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World,* edited by John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic (London and New York: Routledge, 2008): 153.

[135] Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 3.

[136] Ibid, 12.

with the ability to remedy those grievances by collective action."[137] As was explored in Chapter 1, Egypt has a venerable pedigree of rebellion and revolution against the state and so has been generating protest identities for centuries.

However, particularly in 2011, Egyptians used their imagination to construct different "forms of life" in which they became citizens of their country with an active and powerful political voice, no longer the subjects of an autocrat.[138] Negri argues that the "revolutionary event is the revelation of a new being that fills the present void by launching a futuristic construction—an ontological bridge over / against the abyss of the future."[139] Tahrir square, so eclectic and inclusive in its revolutionary character, questioned the legitimacy of and demanded change from a military autocracy that had been in place since the 1950s. By challenging the status quo, the Egyptian people came together to construct a new reality that embraced the uncertainty of the present and future as they shaped it.

Indeed, by using the vocabulary of revolution, millions of people were making a political choice to enable the creation of a new political reality and to begin to dismantle the old regimes of knowledge.[140] Playful, creative forms of protest, political innovations, emerged throughout the country: some used their bodies for self-expression (the phrase "you will leave by the hands of the youth," was written on the hands of youth), a barcode with an expiration date labeled Mubarak spray painted on the walls of the city, kites flying with the command "leave Mubarak," sarcastic slogans like "I'm desperate. It's been a week since I had tear gas" appropriated public spaces.[141] By embracing the uncertainty of their

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[137] Goldstone, "Toward a Forth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 153.
[138] Negri, "Afterword: On the concept of revolution," 255.
[139] Ibid, 259.
[140] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 18.
[141] Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," 48.

future and the diversity of their fellow protesters, Egyptians demonstrated a powerful commitment to the development of political pluralism in lieu of a repressive, autocratic stability.

Yet, much like the Egyptian revolution, fourth generation revolutionary theory still has to follow through on promises and objectives. This generation of theory has not yet been able to detach from a state-centred analysis of revolution.[142] The Egyptian revolution is at risk of being labeled a failed or abortive revolution, the kind that fails to secure power after temporary victories and large-scale mobilization.[143] The messiness of a revolution might entail its failure if the opposition to the regime is unable to galvanize the people's anger towards a unified national movement.

Goldstone argues that although it is normal for a revolution to include a variety of objectives, the disintegration or success of the movement depends on three crucial factors.[144] How extreme are the differences that exist within the coalition of revolutionary groups? In the case of Egypt, the revolutionary movement included feminists, the Muslim Brotherhood, liberals, movements against police brutality and torture, labor movements, and youth activists.[145] This inclusive, diverse group was united in opposition to the autocratic regime, and in demanding political rights. What circumstances accentuate these differences and give leverage to different factions in the revolutionary leadership? One of the main difficulties for the Egyptian revolution was that the party that came to power in the executive and legislative branches, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice

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[142] Please see George Lawson, "Within and Beyond the 'Fourth Generation' of Revolutionary Theory."
[143] Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 143; Jack A. Goldstone, "Rethinking Revolutions: Integrating Origins, Processes and Outcomes," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 29, no. 1 (2009): 21.
[144] Goldstone, "Rethinking Revolutions: Integrating Origins, Processes and Outcomes," 24.
[145] Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," 56.

Party, retained its insular character of opposition to the regime, acquired from a long history of government repression—even once it was in power. In an imperfect continuation of Nasser's, Sadat's, and Mubarak's regimes, the military and the deep state sought to de-legitimize the Brotherhood, depicting them as religious extremists endangering the goals of the revolution. The Sisi regime continues to employ this rhetoric of fear and difference to, from its point of view, hold the state together.[146] How crucial to the survival of the revolution and the revolutionary state is it for one group to triumph? Unfortunately, in Egypt, the two entities that did hold power, however briefly, during and since the revolution and the coup d'état (the Brotherhood and the alliance of the military and the deep state) did not work to institutionalize the diverse goals of the revolution, but rather to entrench their own power. In search of legitimacy, the counter-revolutionary forces have presented the struggle for power between the Muslim Brotherhood ("religious extremism") and President Sisi (military authoritarianism) as a deadly tug of war with no room for alternatives, in which the latter must win if the state is to survive.[147] President Sisi has equated the violent repression of dissenters with promoting stability for all Egyptians. However, it is worth noting that Egypt has an estimated population of 100 million with forty percent living on less than two dollars a day.[148] There is a real need for economic prosperity and social stability in the lives of the majority of the population. This crucial dimension that informs when and for how long individuals are willing to revolt underscores the strengths of third generation theory in its sensitivity to basic economic and structural realities. As much as

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[146] Al Jazeera Staff, "The Many Battles of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood" *Al Jazeera* (June 7, 2015). For a detailed account of terrorism in the Sinai peninsula, a key motif in Sisi's rhetoric of fear, please see Graham-Harrison, Emma. "How Sinai became a Magnet for Terror: The Bedouin Desert Wastes Where a Russian Passenger Jet was Fowned are Now a Launchpad for Egypt's Deadly ISIS Offshoot." The Guardian, November 8, 2015.

[147] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History*, 13.

[148] Gelvin, "The Beginning: Tunisia and Egypt," 39.

an academic might value the tool kit that fourth generation scholarship provides to peel back the nuanced layers of protest identities, third generation scholarship continues to prove its relevance to a world still made up of nation-states wrought with class conflicts.

The paternalistic, authoritarian model has excluded the Egyptian public from the political sphere for decades. As evident in Chapter 1, President Gamal Abdel Nasser asked his people to relinquish political rights in exchange for social justice and economic prosperity in the 1950s. In his work, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Nasser argues that the military's control over government was meant to be temporary, allowing the social revolution to catch up to the political revolution that was already unfolding. Slowly, the Nasserite social contract was eroded through Sadat and Mubarak's neo-liberal economic polices. For almost sixty years since 1952, Egyptians "could plead for concessions [from Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak] as a child might petition a father, but never intrude on the state's private fiefdoms, never exist as an equal," in their own homeland.[149]

But in 2011, Egyptian society demonstrated its frustration over its exclusion from politics, the social revolution that Nasser claimed to be waiting for to relinquish the military's grasp on power. Yet, due to the blunders of the Muslim Brotherhood and the strength of the counter-revolutionary regime rooted in the Egyptian deep state, another version of a military authoritarian government has been established. It remains unclear whether the Sisi regime is sustainable.

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[149] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 5.

Conclusion

Although there is no certain answer to the question regarding the sustainability of the Sisi regime, revolutionary theory and historical analysis does offer some insight. As Goldstone warns, repression is a double-edged sword that can spur on revolution in an attempt to repress it.[150] As Negri counsels, "in the absence of any rational perspective of development, relied exclusively upon violence and war, the more the problem of violence and war becomes important for the development of the movement."[151] So the use of violence for legitimacy only renders the regime more reliant on the existence of that violence, but it also makes violence the only medium for political interaction or struggle. As evident after various moderates resigned from the government following the Rabaa massacre, the government is promoting a renewed phase of violence to cement its hold on power. Looking back on the origins of the revolution and the fall of Mubarak, the Sisi regime has learned that both Sadat and Mubarak had been wrong to think they could control and manage a degree of dissent.[152] As a result, there is no longer any safe, institutionalized forums in which to register formal disagreement with the regime as there had been in decades past. Therefore, state repression under the Sisi regime is intentionally more forceful and thorough than under Sadat and Mubarak, but also harsher than under Nasser, in that the new regime is not selling a positive alternative reality—like Nasser offered socialism, nationalism, anti-colonialism, and pan-Arabism—to inspire compliance.

It is unclear if Sisi will be able to follow through on his promises of security and economic prosperity.[153] Even before the revolution, the Egyptian government spent more

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[150] Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 160.
[151] Negri, "Afterword: On the concept of revolution," 259.
[152] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 16.
[153] Here I am referring to the 12 phases as described in Goldstone's "Rethinking Revolutions: Integrating Origins, Processes and Outcomes," to discuss what could be next for Egypt. One of the main facets that defines the end of a revolution is that if a stable government bureaucracy emerges. Please see pages 20-28 to see his formula.

on the Ministry of Interior, tasked with internal security, than on health and education combined.[154] Goldstone contends that "a revolution is over when the stability and survival of the institutions imposed by the new regime are no longer in doubt."[155] There are a weak and a strong interpretations of this definition: the weak version is that the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary forces are no longer actively challenging the basic institutions of the new government. It is a sign of conscious weakness that Sisi's regime has yet to offer any room for alternatives or enough safe space to foster the development of political pluralism in Egypt. The government has had to continue to repress its people for the creation of the conditions of legitimacy. Even if there slowly emerges a stable bureaucratic government, the failure of this revolution may just be a temporary set back in political change. Hale argues that failure, "as a form of unbeing and unbecoming," gives one a new relationship to knowledge, and has powerful unintended consequences as it allows one "to poke holes in the toxic positivity of contemporary life."[156] Furthermore, the strong definition, "by which a revolution has ended only when key political and economic institutions have settled down into the forms that will remain basically intact" for a substantial period of time, invites the onlooker to be patient.[157] As Khaled Fahmy reminds us, "given how deep [are] the roots of, and the reasons for, this revolution, it would be naïve to expect its victory overnight with one decisive, knockout blow."[158] Therefore, both the strong and weak interpretations of when a revolution is finished cautions historians from falling prey to the presentism and disillusionment that would preclude an open-minded study of the

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[154] Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History*, 8.
[155] Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 167.
[156] Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," 42, 57.
[157] Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," 167.
[158] Fahmy, "the Long Revolution."

complexity of the revolution of 2011. Indeed, if Mubarak was never able to escape the circle of repression that eventually ousted him, can President Sisi do so?

The Sisi regime remains fluid. One of the main consequences of 2011 was that the old regime's political network, established since Nasser, has been released from an institutional setting.[159] Sisi is having to work though the presidency without a ruling party; a "cabinet of technocrats" is directly implementing his will, but control of Egypt has been decentered.[160] Individual members of the old regime are now negotiating with the government for greater concessions in exchange for compliance.

Kandil argues that there has been a crucial change in Egypt's public perception of President Sisi. In the beginning of his presidency, he was perceived as a wise and pensive figure with concrete plans to reshape the country—a man of destiny who kept "his cards quite close to his chest."[161] However, public perception has shifted towards viewing him as "a necessary evil," who relies on rhetoric of fear of state collapse without much wisdom to offer behind his words.[162] In part, Sisi has become a ridiculous figure because of his spontaneous rambles; for instance, once he seized a microphone to lecture youth on greed and impatience, claiming that he lived for ten years with only water in his refrigerator even though he comes from "a very rich family," which the public knows is not true.[163] His occasional silliness has become a source of public amusement in a way that is inconsistent with how Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak sought to be and were perceived.[164] The intensity of state repression is akin to Nasser's regime. Yet, while Nasser sought to promote the idea

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[159] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 5.
[160] Ibid, 6.
[161] Ibid, 13.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Hazem Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 14.
[164] Ibid, 14-15

of an alternative world that could steer patriotism and engage the passion and imagination of every Egyptian, Sisi is only selling fear of uncertainty and insecurity to build his legitimacy.[165]

The preamble to the Egyptian Constitution of 2014, provides a glimpse into how the Sisi regime is seeking to represent itself within the context of Egyptian history. First, whenever the revolution of 2011 is mentioned in the preamble, it is conceptualized together with the coup of 2013: "'Jan 25—June 30' Revolution."[166] This phrasing insinuates that the contemporary Sisi regime represents itself as the incarnation of the goals of 2011. The preamble places the "'Jan 25—June 30' Revolution" within the context of the revolution of 1919 and 1952, arguing that 1952 "represents an extension of the revolutionary march of Egyptian patriotism, and supports the strong bond between the Egyptian people and their patriotic army that bore the trust and responsibility of protecting the homeland." Once more, the motif of the military as the guardian of the people appears in a medium sanctioned by the regime. After conveniently skipping over Mubarak's thirty year regime, the preamble praises "'Jan 25—June 30' Revolution" for its popular participation, the role of "youth who aspire to a brighter future," its patriotism, how the population that "transcended class and ideology," and, of course, the role of the "people's army [that] protected popular will."[167] The Sisi regime is engaging in a conflicting balancing act as it fastens itself both to Nasser's regime and the revolution of 2011.

Khaled Fahmy has argued that the revolution of 2011 was in a way Nasser's funeral, as the Egyptian people together finally rejected the paternalistic dynamic of

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[165] Ibid, 15.
[166] "Egypt's Constitution of 2014," Preamble, 10-12, Constitute Project.
[167] "Egypt's Constitution of 2014," Preamble, 11.

authoritarianism established by the Free Officer Coup d'état of 1952.[168] After having exercised collective sovereignty through nationwide protests that forced the resignation of Mubarak, the Sisi regime is attempting to push the Egyptian people back into "the antechamber of history," obliging them "to embrace both the ruling class and their own subordinate roles as dependents."[169] Whether he can succeed remains to be seen. Kandil posits that perhaps Sisi will discover what Nasser did after 1967, that "[s]ecurity becomes a much blunter instrument than is required for regimes that want to create a more stable mode of authoritarian rule."[170] Having two different institutions, the Interior Ministry and the military, carrying out domestic repression fosters feelings of resentment for the population that cannot hold any individual or even institution accountable for the state's cruelty. Moreover, the Interior Ministry's security apparatus is more loyal to the old-regime networks, as they have "developed and evolved together" throughout Mubarak's thirty years in power, than to the military presidency's new political institutionalization.[171]

In short, the ambiguity of Egypt's present and future may be enough not to call the revolution a success yet, but it is not enough to discount it as a failure. It remains unclear whether or not the revolution is finished. Third and fourth generation revolutionary scholars may not disagree on this point. The application of third generation scholarship suggests that the Sisi regime remains institutionally fluid; fourth generation scholarship invites historians to combat presentism with patience and refrain from imposing a temporality. How we classify the revolution of 2011 as a uprising, a coup, a rebellion, a success, a failure, or even a moment depends on what discipline and tool kit we use to

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[168] Fahmy, "the Long Revolution."
[169] Ibid; Shenker, *The Egyptians: a Radical History,* 13.
[170] Kandil, "Interview: Sisi's Egypt," 7.
[171] Ibid 8.

analyze this emerging, uncertain history.[172] I have framed my study of Egyptian history since 2011 around the ongoing historiographical debate on the nature of revolutions as to emphasize the delicate business of historians of grappling with the present, anticipating the future, while contemplating the significance of the past. Whatever the future will bring, the Egyptian revolution of 2011 represents a widespread commitment to fight injustice. The consequences of that collective choice remain open-ended. Perhaps the revolution has marked the beginning of the end of military authoritarianism in Egypt, a work in progress.[173]

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[172] Alexandrani, and Friesen, "Conclusion: Moving beyond Tahrir," 174.
[173] Hamid Dabashi has called the revolutions "work in progress, open-ended" as quoted in Hale, "the New Middle East Insurrections and Other Subversions of the Modernist Frame," 57.

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