

## MASTER'S DEGREE FINAL DISSERTATION

# Assessing the Role and Capacity of Civil Society in Fostering Human Development in the Arab World: Egypt as a Case Study

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## **Dedication**

This modest work is dedicated to the Arab Spring's millions of victims.



## **Acknowledgement**

Thank you to those that supported me morally during the preparation of this study.

I would like to give special thanks to my mentor, Dr Sidi Omar, for his support and guidance.



## Abbreviation-Acronyms

ACS	Arab Civil Society
AHDR	Arab Human Development Report
AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANN	Arab Network for NGOs
ANND	Arab NGO Network for Development
CDS	Centre for Development Services
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party
FOM	Free Officers Movement
GCS	Global Civil Society
MBM	Muslim Brotherhood Movement
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEF	Near East Foundation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SCAF	Supreme Council of Army Forces
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	The World Trade Organisation

## **Abstract**

Over the past thirty years, both concept and role of civil society have been under noticeable evolution due to the political, economic and social conception development that globalisation and its dynamics brought about. In the West, the civil society has developed an influential role in the human development's policymaking, implementation and evaluation. Civil society in the liberal democratic countries is considered as partner to both governments and private sector in human development. The strength of the Western civil society due to its enabling environment such as democracy and cultural settings. While the Arab civil society is still lagging behind despite the fact that its size and volume of received foreign funds both are increasing. The Arab uprisings had brought to the light many questions than answers about the capacity and credibility of the Arab civil society in making positive social change. In this thesis, the Arab civil society and its domestic and external environment both will be revisited and analysed in order to identify its weakness and challenges as well as its strengths and opportunities. In Egypt, for instance, it is highly noted that the more the size and funds of civil society organisations increases, the more the poverty and social unrest increases. In this research, Egypt is presented as a case study, with an intent to approach the civil society through anatomising its political, economical, cultural and social context. The methodology applied in this research is a combination of different perspectives and analysis of different researchers and field experts from inside as well as outside

the Arab region. The research reveals that the capacity of the Arab civil society is not fully optimised, as it identifies the cultural factor as a key challenge. This study is vital to the understanding of the obstacles that Arab civil society faces, especially the domestic challenges.

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## **Introduction**

Over the past thirty years, the world has been witnessing a rapid change in all aspects of life; in technology, communication, economic and political systems, community development concepts and approaches. Globalization has been the conduit of such rapid change. The globalisation dynamics have made the world interconnected as one body by which if one part is aching, the rest of the body feels the pain. This can be seen and felt with a little reflection on some current global issues such as poverty, terrorism, massive immigration, environmental problems, armed conflicts and wars and transmitted diseases...etc. A poverty problem in Africa is an immigration problem in the West, an environmental problem in Asia is a health problem in many parts of the world, an ethnical/religious conflict in the Middle East is a terrorism and security problem in many parts of the world.

Globalisation has brought about new concepts of state governance that are based on democracy and human rights as well as new economic concepts such as free trade and open market economy that produced new economic policies and applications. It also brought new concepts of human and community development such as gender equality, grass root participation, social responsibility, social welfare, environment protection and national security. Globalisation is manifested in the emergence of powerful international insinuations and mechanisms that effect the life of many populations. Economical and financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the International Standard Organisation (ISO). These institutions recommend, decide

and/or simply impose certain economic policies such as the structural adjustment and privatisation on the indebted nations like most of the Arab countries (except the Gulf States) in order to guarantee the repayment of the debt, with no regard to the social consequences on people's life. All the Arab countries that applied those policies had to reduce the expenditure on social programs and services in health, education and public housing. In addition, they had to privatise many subsidised public services such as electricity, potable water, food supplies and products of house construction. Those imposed economic policies had led to an unacceptable standard of living for the majority of the Arab population. Moreover, the undemocratic governance by which repression and state security apparatus constitute the tools of stabilisation. The unfulfilled social demands and repression of despotic regimes both made the Arab masses develop a common feeling of humiliation and dissatisfaction that had paved the way for the Arab uprisings.

The "Arab spring" whether is based on genuine social movements or is just conspiracy, is a historic event and turning point in the Arab social and political life. It is also a model that portrays the influence of globalisation and its dynamics over the destiny of the masses. My personal view is that there are many lessons learnt from the Arab spring. In this study, the focus will be on the lessons that are related to the Arab civil society.

One of the Arab spring by-products is the transformation of radical religious ideologies into a reality such the proclaimed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS). In the following chapters, more related points will be investigated and addressed such as the role of the ACS in the initiation of the Arab uprisings and its reaction to the

dynamics and outcomes of the Arab Spring. Also, the impact of the Arab Spring on the Arab civil society organisations. To sum up, such global challenges need collaborative global efforts to meet them. Poverty and violence both have been spreading over many parts of the world, and despite the scientific and technological advancement, yet, there no magical formulas are explored to eradicate them. In order to meet such challenges, the need for a global collaborative efforts and actions is more crucial now than ever. The civil society sector for many decades is seen by the international community as a vehicle/agent for change and partner to governments in fostering both human and community development.

The civil society sector encompasses a wide array of diverse organisations concerned with human and community development issues such as democracy, human rights, women empowerment, citizen security, environmental protection, development policies, social inclusion and protection, relief, immigration.. etc. The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are formed by the people free well in form of voluntary initiatives that reflect certain social trends and meet unfulfilled social demands.

The civil society organisations in the Arab region have a pyramid shape where religious and charity organisations that constitute the majority of Arab CSOs are placed at the bottom, the intermediary community organisations in the middle and pro- democracy and human rights organisation on the top.

Both the political and cultural context play critical role in determining the capacity efficiency, and growth of the civil society. In the Western political and

culture context, civil society organisations have healthy environment for existence and growth. The freedom and unrestrictive legal framework enable the CSOs to play an effective role as partner to government in fostering human development. Whereas in the Arab region, the political and cultural context is different. In the following chapters, the political and culture context both will be investigated as well as their impact on the Arab civil society.

### **Research problem**

The Arab region for such long time has been suffering from chronic social and developmental problems such as wars, ethnic and religious armed conflicts, poverty, political instability, gender inequality, lack of democracy and human rights. Meanwhile, the Arab ruling governments are no longer able to confront such developmental and social challenges alone, this due to a number of reasons: First, the questioned legitimacy of governance, since the alternation of power in the Arab states usually occurs through military coups, fake elections, foreign influence/intervention, by inheritance or accidentally. Second, the Arab states governance usually lacks both public support and vision, therefore, they draw social development policies that do not respond to the social demands or risks. Third, the corruption that is a common character in the Arab states except some Gulf States. Fourth, the lack of citizen participation that due to citizens distrust in their governments and the marginalisation of ethnic, religious minorities, youth and women. In addition to these challenges, the new concepts of governance and human development brought about by globalisation made the Arab governments realise the role of the civil society and spare for it a margin of freedom. Thus, the Arab civil society is emerging as an actor that is filling

the gap of social service provision produced by governments' inability. Moreover, there are many Arab civil society organisations play an important role in social policymaking, implementing and evaluation as well as monitoring state violations for human rights.

The Arab Spring dynamics and outcomes have shed the light on the Arab civil society organisations, questioning their capacity and role as an agent for social change. This thesis attempts to identify both the capacity and role of the Arab civil society in making such change, through investigating its domestic and external environment. The study also intends to examine the Arab civil society relationships with the other players such as global civil society, private sector, governments and the religious groups.

### **Research goal and objectives**

The overall objective of this thesis is to assess both the role and capacity of the Arab civil society in fostering the human and social development in the Arab region. This objective will be reached through examining the political, cultural and social environment of Arab civil society in order to identify its weaknesses, strengths, threats and opportunities.

### **The Global Civil Society**

The civil society sector is emerging not only as partner to governments in fostering human development at the local level, but also as an international player that influences global trends and issue. The civil society contains diversity in its nature and composition, therefore, its definitions vary considerably, based on differing conceptual paradigms, historical origins, and its political and culture

environment. The importance of addressing the global civil society is to demonstrate the differences between the environment of Arab civil society and its counterparts, especially the Western civil society. It also sketches the relation dynamics between the Arab civil society and global one. The objective of this section is to provide a broader understanding to concepts, definitions, typology, characteristics, roles, social impact and paradoxes of the civil society in general.

### The Arab region

Although the Arab countries share broader cultural and social factors such as language (Arabic), religion (majority Muslims), and social value set, yet, they are not homogeneous nor harmonious. Despite the fact that the Arabs share common political and cultural features, but each Arab country has certain political and cultural particularities that slightly or largely differ from one country to another. For example, the Gulf region has certain cultural and social context that differs from countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon. Since decades, the Arab region is been marked by political instability and social unrest due to the constant internal and external conflicts and wars. The Arab countries also share common social composition by which many different religious and ethnic minorities co-exist in improper political setting that does not grantee equity and participation of all citizens. Moreover, the Arab region shares common developmental challenges such as poverty, lack of freedom, low level of knowledge base and low women profile.

For decades, the Arab countries have been governed by autocratic or semi-democratic systems that lack of legitimacy and public support, as a result, the civil

liberties are limited. The challenges the Arab region faces influence the Arab civil society's capacity and halt it from playing its expected role in making social change. For the Arab civil society to play its role as partner to governments in fostering human development. In this section, the political, cultural and social profile of the Arab region will be addressed in order to investigate the environment in which the Arab civil society operates.

#### Arab Civil Society (ACS)

The Arab civil society it has been a subject of international and Arab debates since the last three decades. Although ACS is increasing in size and scope of activities, yet, still is lagging behind its counterparts in the West. ACS role in making real social change in the Arab region is under questioning. The Arab uprisings have brought about new determinates as well as exclamation marks about its feasibility and social impact on the human and social development in the region. At this stage, and in order to assess its capacity and role, it is important to address first, its historical concept development, characters, and the forms it took throughout the region. It is also important to identify and analyse the constraints that Arab civil society organizations face, through examining its political, cultural, and social environment.

This chapter addresses the Arab civil society's external and domestic environment, the relation nature and dynamics between the Arab civil society and the other players such as the global civil society, governments, private sector and interest groups. For the Arab civil society to better play its role and to assert its existence as a partner to governments in social development, its challenges must be identified, its

opportunities must be explored, and recommendations must be drawn in order to reach solutions.

### The Arab spring and civil society

The “Arab spring” was a historical event by all measures, the 2011 was the year of radical change in the Arab region. The Arab people, especially the youth broke the wall of silence and crossed the barrier of fear. They took to the streets expressing their discontent and rejection to the authoritarian ruling regimes, challenging the state security apparatus and managed to outset the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya. Now six years have passed since the Arab spring took place, and the spring harvest was not all flowers as expected by many, except the Jasmine in Tunisia. Some of the harvest is the emergence of new political and social actors such as the Islamists portrayed by organisations such as the al-Nahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Salafists in Egypt and similar radical groups in Yemen, Lebanon and Libya. The Arab spring also brought the “Mujahdeen” in the borders between Iraq and Syria, and the proclamation of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which caused almost the full, and multi-destruction in entire four countries: Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq. The debates about the failure or success of the Arab spring, its causes, and whether it was a genuine social movement based on national will for change or whether it was just a conspiracy made by USA, are still occupying much space in both Arabic and international social media.

In this section, the Arab spring will be exposed as a social phenomenon and a turning point in the Arab societies. The players, causes, dynamics, outcomes and lessons

learnt will be addressed. In addition, the role of the civil society in the initiation of the Arab Spring as well as the impact of the Arab spring on the Arab CS both will be investigated.

#### Case study: Egypt

In this chapter, Egypt will be presented as case study of the Arab civil society and its political, cultural, and social environment. The reason behind selecting Egypt as a case study is due to a number of factors: First, Egypt is the most populous Arab country (it is almost one third of the Arab population), and is considered as the cultural and enlightenment centre of the Arabs. Second, Egyptian civil society is the oldest in the Arab region and according to Kandil<sup>1</sup> (2015: 69), it encompasses around 50000 NGOs. It also has a diverse nature, large scope of activities and experience with different political and economic systems throughout the last century. Moreover, its intense engagement with the global civil society, especially the donor agencies. All these features constitute a rich research ground that provides important materials that to a large extent are valid to reflect the situation of the Arab civil society.

This chapter intends to address different aspects of Egypt such as identity, cultural, economical and social context as well as an outline of the recent political history and its relation to the Egyptian civil society.

#### **Research goal and objectives**

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Amani Kandil is the Executive Director of the Arab Network for NGOs since 1997. She published a number of important books and researches that are related to the Arab NGOs capacity building and the activation of the role of civil society.

The overall goal of this thesis is to assess both capacity and role of the Arab civil society in fostering the human development in the Arab region. This goal will be reached through examining the political, cultural and social environment of Arab civil society in order to identify its weaknesses, strengths, threats and opportunities.

### **The personal motives of this study**

My interest in choosing this topic of the Arab civil society is due to three reasons: Firstly, my attachment and involvement as volunteer and as professional in the field of NGOs in Egypt. I have spent twenty years in the field of community development, six of them as a volunteer in foreign voluntary NGO called Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). ICA was serving local communities at grass root level in remote rural villages in Egypt. The other fourteen years, I worked as a professional development practitioner at the Centre for Development Services (CDS), which was sponsored by an American philanthropy, called the Near East Foundation (NEF), whose headquarters are based in New York. CDS is specialized in technical assistance, consultancy, research, training and information provision and dissemination, networking, program design, development, and evaluation. My work in CDS required and allowed me to work directly with both local communities and donor agencies: in other words, I was intermediary agent.

Secondly, my being Egyptian Copt, one of the minority groups of the Arab region. For the minorities in the Arab region, especially, the non-Muslim, democracy and human rights are the safeguards and guarantee of existence and peaceful co-living.

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<sup>2</sup> The Copts were the people of Egypt before the Arab conquest in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. They identified themselves and their language in Greek as Aigyptios (Qibt in Arabic, Westernised as Copt).

Moreover, for democracy and human rights to be reached, a healthy civil society must be established.

Thirdly, my living in many different Western countries, the UK and USA, whether through my ex-job, personal visits or as an immigrant and resident of Spain for the last fourteen years. All these made it impossible for me to avoid two things; first, falling a victim to involuntary comparative analysis between the West and the Arab region, especially Egypt, almost in every aspect, including the civil society. Second, my being as an immigrant in Spain, I had to be within the target group of many civil society organisations such as Red Cross, Caritas, AMICS...etc. For job seeking, free legal consultancy, receiving free language course, skill development and vocational training programs. These are the motives behind my interest to accomplish this study.

### **Structure**

The thesis titled “Assessing the role and capacity of the Arab civil society in fostering the human development in the Arab World: Egypt as case study.” The thesis comprises introduction, four chapters, and conclusion.

Chapter one is about global Civil Society; definitions, typology, characteristics, roles, paradoxes and its feasibility. The objective of this chapter is to provide general understanding to the nature, role and impact civil society.

Chapter two is about the Arab Region; background information, political, economic, cultural and social profile. The objective of this chapter is to examine the environment in which the civil society operates. In addition, to identify human

development situation in the Arab region as well as the development challenges it faces.

Chapter three is about the Arab civil society, historical development, role, typology, its political, cultural and social environment. This chapter is focus of this thesis and aims at assessing the capacity of the Arab civil society through identifying the external and domestic challenges and threats it faces as well as its opportunities and strengths.

Chapter four is about the different views about Arab spring in terms of its causes and impact. Also, is about the role of the Arab civil society in the events of the Arab spring as well as the impact of the Arab spring on the civil society organisations. This chapter aims at identifying the mutual effect between the Arab spring and civil society.

Chapter five is a case study of Egypt. The objective of this chapter is to provide in depth analysis about the environment in which the civil society operates Last chapter is drawing conclusion and recommendations

### **Research Methodology**

The research is based on bibliographical references: books, reports, specialized journals, documented interviews, and statistical data. The Arabic published materials will be a main source to present the views of the Arab civil society experts and field practitioners and Arab scholars, since the subject is focused on the Arab civil society. The methodology followed in this study is based on bibliographic contrast and analysis, which includes presentation of; different perspectives, views, and conceptions about the civil society in general, and the Arab civil society in

particular. Furthermore, my views, analysis and critique as a researcher, community development volunteer and professional, and as an Egyptian citizen, will be presented throughout the study.

The core subject of this study is the Arab civil society, will be addressed and analysed more in depth and be supported by a case study of Egypt as an example. The main themes of the research will be focused on examining the capacity and role of the Arab civil society and its political and cultural environment, its engagement with the global civil society, its relationships with both government and private sector. It will also focus on the challenges, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths of the Arab civil society.

### **Research sources**

The research will be based upon bibliographical references; books, reports, articles, specialized journals, documented interviews, and statistical data. The Arabic published materials are a vital source to represent the Arab views and perspectives on Arab civil society.

### **Research limitations**

This research faced some obstacles relating to the certain statistics about the Arab civil society such as the unavailability of certain statistics about the actual size of the foreign funding to the Arab civil society organisations, especially the human rights organisations. The difficulty of finding reliable studies that evaluate qualitatively and quantitatively the social impact of the entire Arab civic sector.



## **Chapter I: Global civil society: General overview**

The civil society sector is emerging not only as partner to governments in fostering human development, but also as an international player that influences global trends and issues. Global civil society has brought to light global issues such as poverty alleviation, environment protection, promoting diversity, fair trade, campaigns against weapons of mass destruction, women empowerment and many other issues.

Civil society contains diversity in its nature and composition, therefore, its definitions vary considerably based on differing conceptual paradigms, historic origins, and country and cultural context. In order to empower the civil society, we have to look at all its elements and prerequisites, examining its concepts, processes of formation, governance, finance and the cultural context in which operates. The objective of this section is to provide a broad understanding about concepts, definitions, typology and characteristics, paradoxes and qualities of the global civil society in general. This is to pave the way to the ensuing sections of the Arab civil society by which the research will be narrowed and focused.

### **Background and definitions**

Over the past thirty years, the world has witnessed a dramatic expansion in the size, scope of activities and capacity of the civil society. Although the civil society has become a significant actor in human development, yet, its definition and concept both are still puzzling. In this section, the different definitions, typology, characters, concept development of the civil society, and its role in community development will be addressed in order to provide a broader understanding of the civil society's role.

## **Definitions**

The civil society has become a fuzzy concept, so far there is no a single definition in the civil domain literatures that agreed upon by all civil society concerned scholars, field experts and institutions. In the following paragraphs, different definitions of civil society will presented. Here I quote Salam (2002: 2), stated that “As matter of fact, there is no one ‘classical’ definition of civil society in the history of ideas. Hegel’s conception of it diverged from Locke’s and interpretations by Gramsci and Habermas as to what civil society is not only departed from earlier versions, but differed from each other as well. Likewise, there is no consensus among contemporary scholars seem to agree on what the chief characteristics of civil society are.”

Civil Society as defined by Willetts is “A complex contested term, usually referring to all people, their activities and their relationships that are not part of the process of government. It may also be used to cover all processes other than government and economic activity”.

<sup>3</sup>Civil Society International states that “Civil society is an unusual concept in that it always seems to require being defined before it is applied or discussed. In part this is because the concept was rarely used in American discourse before the late eighties and many people are therefore unfamiliar with it. In part it is a result of an inherent ambiguity or elasticity in the concept”. (This is not so unusual; the apparently straightforward notion of freedom can in certain circumstances carry a meaning closer

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<sup>3</sup> [www.civilsoc.net/whatisCS.htm](http://www.civilsoc.net/whatisCS.htm)

to license than to liberty.” It also indicates that the “the simplest way to see civil society is as a "third sector," distinct from government and business. In this view, civil society refers essentially to the so-called "intermediary institutions" such as professional associations, religious groups, labour unions, citizen advocacy organizations, that give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation in democracies.” Civil society has many definitions and none of them is agreed upon. In this section, different definitions that reflect different views of intellectuals as well as international institutions will be presented in order to provide a general understanding about the civil society.

The London School of Economics and Political Science report (LSE, 2005-2006), defined it as follow: “Civil society refers to the arena of UN-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.”

4OECD defines civil society as follow: “The multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represents a wide range of interests and ties. These can include community-based organisations, indigenous peoples’ organisations and non-governmental organisations”

Civil society as defined by the 5United Nations (UN) “Is the “third sector” of society, along with government and business. It comprises civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations. The UN recognizes the importance of partnering with civil society, because it advances the Organisation’ s ideals, and helps support its work.”

6The World Bank adopts a definition of civil society that has been developed by a number of leading research institutions: “the term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.”

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<sup>4</sup> <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7231>

<sup>5</sup> [www.un.org/en/sections/resources/civil-society/](http://www.un.org/en/sections/resources/civil-society/)

<sup>6</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/search?q=civil+society+defination&%3Acq\\_csrf\\_token=undefined](http://www.worldbank.org/en/search?q=civil+society+defination&%3Acq_csrf_token=undefined)

For the difficulty of defining the civil society, Salamon (2003, 7: 9) has adopted a bottom up approach that based on experiences from different countries to build up a structural-operational definition that imply five features, these are:

1. Organizations, i.e., they have some structure and regularity to their operations, whether or not they are formally constituted or legally registered.
2. Private, i.e., they are not part of the apparatus of the state, even though they may receive support from governmental sources.
3. Non-profit, i.e., they are not primarily commercial in purpose and do not distribute profits to a set of directors, stockholders, or managers.
4. Self-governing, i.e., they have their own mechanisms for internal governance, are able to cease operations on their own authority, and are fundamentally in control of their own affairs.
5. Voluntary, i.e., membership or participation in them is not legally required or otherwise compulsory.

There are other practical definitions of civil society that used by some specialists and field practitioners. These definitions are grouped according to its legal form, funding sources and purpose.

As for the legal form: A civil society organization is one that takes a particular legal form (e.g., an association or a foundation) or that is exempted from some or all of a country's taxes. Terms such as associations or tax-exempt organizations are often used to convey this sense.

The funding: A civil society organization is one that financially depends on revenue from private contributions, not from business transactions or government

support. Terms such as voluntary sector, charitable sector or non-profit sector are sometimes used to convey this sense.

The purposes or objectives of the organisation: A civil society organization is one that promotes the public good, empowerment and participation, or seeks to address social problems such as poverty. Terms such as civil society, NGO or community based organisation (CBO), charity or third sector are often used to convey this sense.

### **Civil society role in human development**

The international development thinkers, theorists, researchers and field workers pin their hopes on the role civil society can play to deal with global issues such as poverty, conflicts, equality, environment protection, human rights, democracy and good governance...etc. In the meantime, the civil society itself needs international collective efforts to strengthening it in order to play its expected role more effectively. The role of civil society organizations has become vital for fostering and sustaining human development. Civil society is seen as a partner to governments in setting, implementing and evaluating development policies and strategies. Over the past thirty years, the world has been witnessing a rapid increase in the size and scope of activities of civil society organizations (CSOs). Capable civil society organizations are the cornerstone of advancing communities and countries. They participate in, and influence the public policies, monitor the performance of governmental bodies, hold governments responsible and accountable, promote human rights and democracy, defend the interests of the people, and foster the welfare of citizens. Civil society

organizations are not only for services delivery but also for empowering people through, advocating, lobbying, and influencing policies.

Civil Society is also seen as a catalyst of modern democracy. <sup>7</sup>The World Bank states that “CSOs have also become important channels for social services delivery and the implementation of many and various development programs, especially in regions where government presence is weak, in post-conflict situations.” It also states that “CSOs’ influence on shaping global public policy has also emerged over the past two decades. This dynamism is exemplified by successful advocacy campaigns around issues such as banning of land mines, debt cancellation, gender equality, and environmental protection which have mobilized thousands of supporters around the globe.”

### **Typology**

There is a number of NGO typologies, each in which classifies the NGOs according to one of the following aspects:

- a. Purpose: NGOs that aim at making political change such as pro-democracy or fulfil certain social risks as charity organisations.
- b. Activity: Whether service provider or non- service provider such as human rights organisations.
- c. Identity: Whether religious such as church organisations or secular.
- d. Beneficiaries: Whether self benefiting whereas contributors/members are the beneficiaries such as labour unions and syndicates or other benefiting where

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<sup>7</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/search?q=civil+society+defination&%3Acq\\_csrf\\_token=undefined](http://www.worldbank.org/en/search?q=civil+society+defination&%3Acq_csrf_token=undefined)

contributors are not the beneficiaries. Sectoral expertise: Such as relief, donor agencies and intermediary organ.

e. Geographical scope: Whether national, regional or international.

### **Civil society characteristics**

Civil society's characteristics as identified and grouped by Peterson and Van Til (Feb. 2004) are summarised as follow:

The commons: Civil society is advanced when people share a social right of access to community resources.

Office: Civil society is advanced when people can exercise their civic duty of self governance through participation in political structures that exhibit decentralised power and authority. On other words, when community members have opportunity to hold positions of decision making and leadership.

Associations: Civil society is advanced when people can openly and voluntarily participate in diverse social affiliations, groups, networks, and structures of self governance and social transformation.

Trusteeship: Civil society is advanced when citizens who have decision power work to improve local economies, and exercise transparency when use community resources for the public good.

Sovereignty/Interdependency: Civil society is advanced when citizens and organisations can freely participate in all aspects of political governance, make decisions and perform actions without being constrained by the state or other authorities. On other words: civil society advances when it becomes free and independent by the rule of law.

Accountability: Civil society is advanced when citizens through community-based groups and associations have civic freedoms and rights that enable them to hold the political and economical actors responsible in case of misconduct and violations.

Equity: Civil society advances when citizens are provided equitable access to and use of resources. Economic equity is essential for producing an improved quality of life for all citizens, especially the marginalised.

Justice: Civil society advances when citizens achieve social justice by the rule of law and for those excluded from the political process.

Reciprocity: Civil society is advanced when citizens through reciprocal, mutually dependent collaboration with others. Negotiate, mediate, and resolve conflict through peaceful means. (Peterson and Van Til, Feb. 2004).

### **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) different terms**

NGOs form a heterogeneous group and they do not share a common identity.

There are general features that distinguish NGOs from other organisations, these are:

Voluntary: formed by people's free will, and for serving the people.

Non-profit: NGOs do not aim at making profit.

Independent: According to the legal framework by which they operate, they are independent. Its objectives, activities and target groups are determined by the people who formed it or by the elected members to manage it.

Not self-serving: NGOs are formed to fulfil social needs, not their members' need.

"NGO" is not the only term used to express such organisations, there are alternative terms such as: Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs), civil society, independent sector, self-help organisations, grass-roots organisations, voluntary sector, third

sector, transnational social movements organisations, and non-state sector. Also there are various terms are used for NGOs as listed below.

BINGO - Business-friendly International NGO

CBO - Community Based Organisation

CHARDS - Community Health And Rural Development Society

CSO - Civil society organisation

DONGO - Donor Organised NGO

ENGO - Environmental NGO

GSO - Grass-root Support Organisations

GONGO - Governmental - Operated NGO

GROs - Grass Root Organisations

INGO - International NGO

QUANGO - Quasi-autonomous NGO like ISO

MANGO - Market Advocacy NGO

NPOs - Non-profit Organisations

TANGO - Technical Assistance NGO

VDOS - Voluntary Development Organisations

Qualities of civil society organisations

Civil society organisations enjoy certain qualities that constitute a relative advantage and distinguish it from the other players. Kandil stated these qualities of civil society in the context of its partnership to governments and private sector in responding to the social risks. Kandil (2015: 212) states that <sup>8</sup>“Civil society

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<sup>8</sup> “my translation”

organisations are formed by people and for people, they are a product of different voluntary initiatives at different social levels, and exist in different geographical zones, rural and urban.” Kandil also points out that the voluntary nature of these initiatives is an advantage in terms of the freedom of deciding their formation, activities and target groups. Moreover, the civil society organisations are not constrained by complicated bureaucratic administrative systems. All these qualities make the civil society organisations faster and flexible than governments and private sector in responding to the social risks and reaching out to target groups easier, especially in cases of natural disasters and conflict zones. She further explains that the dependence of civil society organisations on volunteers, even if is partially, enables CSOs to recruit personnel quicker than governments to respond to the social risks. Kandil (2015: 213) concludes that <sup>9</sup>“these qualities enable the civil society organisations to approach all social classes, from grass roots to the elites in an easy, flexible and effective manner.”

### **Civil society paradoxes**

The civil society carries paradoxes in many of its aspects such as concept, objectives and operational system. As for its concept as defined by many scholars, civil society is considered as a product of liberalism based on citizenship and characterised by freedom of participation. It is also defined as the groups and individuals that occupies the sphere between citizen-state/nation that represented by voluntary and non-profit organisations. and collations such tribes, clans and religious/sectarian groups. The paradox lies in the contrast in the civil society concept

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<sup>9</sup> “my translation”

itself, since CS promotes the non-discriminatory participation. While, civil society comprises faith, clans and tribal organisations that adopt discriminative ideologies (racial or sectarian).

Another paradox lies in the relationship between civil society and the state, the dichotomy of governmental and non governmental or civil society vs government. Although the civil society tends to be autonomous and develop counterweight to the state, yet, it depends on the state of its legal identity as well as some financial support.

As for paradoxes related to civil society objectives, is that: On the one hand, the civil society promotes public participation in making, implementing and evaluation public policies. On the other, the diverse nature of the civil society leads to polarisation of citizen participation. Consequently, the public participation gets divided.

Beshara (2012: 74) states that <sup>10</sup>“the civil society contains in its particularity a discord with the government, this leads to a public unconformity with politics which minimises the public participation that is the key for any civil society development.” He further states that the “The weakness or dismantle of government never produces a viable civil society, by the contrary, the civil society is a birth of a powerful government, and is existed for equilibrating this power.”

Another paradox lies in the domination factor, as there some governments are politically and economically dominating the public by elites, by the same token, there some civil society organisations are culturally or ideologically dominating on the public by elites. Both civil society and governments inclined to public domination,

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<sup>10</sup> “my translation”

this does not ensure full public participation. As for the dilemma of domination, Ghuneem (2005: 14) demonstrates that “the civil society cultural and political domination on the public by class of elites is manifested in the political parties, educational institutions, NGOs, religious institutions (churches and mosques) and communication media.” As for the role of civil society, monitoring government performance is considered as a chief role of civil society, whereas state’s monitoring civil society is considered as a constrain of freedom and autonomy of civil society.

### **Feasibility of the civil society: Cost vs. social impact**

Although, the civil society organisations have been receiving an increased political and financial support from the International donor institutions as well as countries especially the Western. Yet, there is no viable mechanism of measuring its social impact. On the one hand, in regions whereas democracy and civil society are not yet mature, is hard to gather reliable information that necessary to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring its social impact. On the other, the social change process tend to be slow by nature, consequently, is hard to measure the social impact of short-term programs and projects conducted by CSOs.

The civil society is evolving and growing as a third sector that holds a considerable share of global employment market as well as capitals. Yet, there no a reliable mechanism of its social impact assessment is developed. Therefore, its credibility is questioned by many specialists and observes. WEF (2013: 6) states that “According to the Yearbook of International Organisations, the number of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was reported to have increased from 6000 in 1990 to more than 50,000 in 2006, and now to over 65,000. At the

national and regional level, in China alone, there are over 460,000 officially registered non-profit organisations with nearly six million employees. In 2009, it was estimated that India has around 3.3 million of NGOs.” CSOs have also become significant players in global development assistance. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1/04/2017) reports that “Development aid reached a new peak of USD 142.6 billion in 2016, an increase of 8.9% from 2015 after adjusting for exchange rates and inflation. A rise in aid spent on refugee in donor countries boosted the total - but even stripping out refugee costs aid rose 7.1%, according to official data collected by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).”

McGann and Johnstone (Jan. 2006) state that “The proliferation of NGOs is challenged by the fact that the impact, nature, and interests of these organisations can each become almost impossible to measure. Despite the fact NGOs have always played a role in “sustaining an independent civil society”, their proliferation and the increased scope of their role in every aspect of society now requires better monitoring and regulation so that they can function effectively and protect the integrity and independence of the entire third sector.” Both Hancock (1992) and Ericsohn (Nov. 1981) also expose the expenditure of the relief and aid sector, and show how most of the expenditure is consumed by administrative costs such as jet and or business class flying, 5 stars hotels and restaurants, and imaginary. It is important also to present the experience of Lempert (Jan, 16, 2008) that he started his article with “Money stuffed in envelopes for government officials. Gifts of cars, computers, and overseas junkers. Pressures to falsify reports and hide information from public oversight.

Destruction of minority communities, cultural heritage, and the environment for productivity profit.” He further states “It sounds like the criticism typically levelled at corrupt multinational corporations or military juntas in the developing world. But these behaviours are actually common practice in the international development community, where the careers and self-interest of donors and their cronies comes first, and the peoples of the developing world are treated as little more than a means to private ends.” He confirms “These practices listed above occur in the UN system, international banks, donor countries, NGOs, and missionary organisations, and they have persisted and possibly worsened during 20-plus years I have spent as international development consultant. A standard critique of international aid is still true today-that it is designed to serve the short-term interests of donor countries and that the agenda is one of dependency and neocolonialism, promoting international trade rather than stability.” (Lempert, 2008).

## **Chapter II: The Arab region**

Despite the fact that the Arab countries share common cultural, linguistic and religious heritage, but there are neither homogeneous nor harmonious. The Arab countries differ from one to another; each has particularities in terms of polity and governance pattern, economic situation, margin of freedom and civil liberties, women status, and community development progress. Although, they own the factors of an economic success such as; qualified cheap young labour, plenty of natural resources such as oil and gas, other valuable minerals, and strategic geographic location, yet, their community development pace and outcomes are lagging behind. In the previous chapter, the civil society was generally introduced to provide an understanding to the global civil society in general. In this chapter, the general profile of the Arab region; population, culture and social values, religions, political and economical situation will be addressed. This chapter also addresses the Arab common characters, differences and development challenges. The importance of addressing the Arab political, economical, cultural and social conditions because they constitute the environment in which the Arab civil society operates.

### **Geography and population**

The Arab region, strategically speaking, extends from Bahrain in the east to Mauritania and Morocco in the west. The region encompasses parts of Africa, Asia, the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the Red and Mediterranean seas and to the Arab Gulf (Map of the Arab World, Figure 1, appendix). The population of the Arab region, living in 22 countries (formal members of the Arab League), is around 350 millions (AHDR, 2016), constituting around 5% of the world population. The Arab countries

have the largest proportion of young people in the world.” Most recent statistics indicate that two thirds of the Arab populations is below thirty years of age, half of them falling in the 15-29 year age bracket.” (AHDR, 2016: 7).

The Arab population is a mosaic of ethnic, national, and religious groups in each country. In the following section, the composition of the Arab population will be addressed with the intent of highlighting the social dynamics and risks and their connection to the Arab civil society.

The Arab states can be categorized geographically and sub-culturally as follows; The North Africa (Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Western Sahara), the Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Emirates, Oman and Iraq), the Arab-Levant region or al-Sham in Arabic (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine), North-Eastern Africa (Egypt and Sudan). Economically, The Gulf Union States, Libya, Algeria and Iraq are mainly petroleum based economies, and have better economic status than the rest of Arabs. All the Arab states are republics except Gulf States, Morocco and Jordan are monarchies. As a race, the vast majority are Arabs (95% of total population), with minorities of many different ethnic groups. As for the margin of civil liberties and women profile, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan and Morocco are relatively more advanced than the rest of Arab countries.

### **The Minorities**

The Arab region comprises around 350 million people, in which 75-80 % of them are Sunni Muslim Arabs. The list of minorities is long, and encompasses an array of ethnic, national, religious and tribal groups, both Arab and non-Arab as well

as Muslims and non-Muslims . In this section, the main minorities groups will be addressed in order to outline the cultural and social dynamics in the Arab region.

### The Kurds

The Kurds mainly reside in the Middle East, and constitute about 35-40 millions people, by which 11-12 millions of them reside in the Arab region mainly in Iraq and Syria <sup>11</sup>(Institut Kurde de Paris). The Kurdish is an Indo-European language, not a Semitic as race, therefore there are not Arab although they are Sunni Muslims. The Kurds in Iraq were under attempts of Arabisation of their residence zones in the north of Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of them were subject to attacks and/or expulsion from their homes to be replaced by Arabs. The Iraqi Kurds and after long struggle, they live under autonomy government. In Syria, they are subject to discrimination, half of them do not enjoy full Syrian citizenship.

### The Berber

The Berber who known as Amazigh which means “free human” are the original inhabitants of North Africa since history was begun. They become Muslims by the Arab-Muslim conquest of the seventh and eighth centuries. The Amazigh have their own language (Tamazight) and own culture, they are not Arabs. There are many different census about their number, here we state an average based on the different statistics. They constitute between 40% to 50% of the population in Morocco, 15%-20% in Algeria, 5-10% in both Tunisia and Libya, and in total they are all together about 25 millions. The Berber culture and language both were ignored by all the

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<sup>11</sup> [www.institutkurde.org/](http://www.institutkurde.org/)

governments of the North African states. In Algeria, there is a conflict with Kabylia region that is mainly inhabited by Amazigh. In Libya, the Berber have no political presentation.

### The Christians

There are many different Christian groups in the Arab region, most are intensified in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, and recently there are small minorities (immigrants and ex-Muslims or the new Christians ) in the Gulf states and North Africa. The total Christian population is about 25-30 millions. In Egypt, the Christians are mainly Copts (the original inhabitants of Egypt) and constitute around 10% of the population (state statistics). Although constitutionally in most of the Arab countries the Christians are equal to Muslims but in practise they are treated as second class citizens. The political presentation of the Christians does reflect their percentage. Moreover, they are excluded from having high State job positions in most of the states. Moreover, the new Christians (converted to Christianity) of the Gulf and North African states are persecuted and usually been targeted by both state security apparatus and the Muslim extremists. In Lebanon, the Christians constitute one third of the population and mainly Maronites. There are Christian minorities of Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenian, and other small sects live in Iraq and Syria. In general, there is tension and conflicts between the Muslim majorities and the Christian minorities in the Arab region, that due to discrimination. Recently, the Christians of Iraq and Syria were targeted by al-Qaeda attacks, and lately by ISIS, and most of them had to leave their countries.

## The Shiites

Although the Shiites are Muslims Arabs but they are in constant conflicts with the Sunni Muslim Arabs, due to theological and geo-political reasons. In Iraq and Bahrain they are majorities, and in Yemen they are about 30%. The Shiites constitute minorities in the rest of the Arab region. The Shiites are mainly Twelver Shia called (athna'ashrya) in Arabic, the rest are Sevener Shia.

## The Alawites

The Alawites are considered as a sect under the mainstream Twelver Shia, they reside in Syria, and constitute only 12% of the population. Al-Assad family is Alawites and has been ruling Syria for decades.

## The Jews

The Jews were about one million Jews in the Arab states before the establishment of Israel as a state in 1948. Most of them were forced to leave the Arab region, except in Morocco and Tunisia still are small Jewish populations.

## Other groups

There are also other small populations of Bahais, Turkmen, Circassians, Kharijites, Nubians in Egypt, Druz in Lebanon and Syria and black African tribes in Morocco and Mauritania.

## Culture, identity, faith and social value set

In the Arab states, the main religion is Islam, the second being Christianity, in various forms/sects. Sunni and Shia both constitute the two mainstreams of Islam. The difference between them is based on two controversial points; first, the interpretation and application of Hadith (حديث) which is the narrations of the Prophet Mohamed and

his disciples who are called Sahabah in Arabic (الصحابة). The Hadith constitutes the second main source/reference of Sunni Islamic faith after Quaran. The second point of difference that was the reason of the division between Muslims since the death of the Prophet Mohamed till present day, is the succession of the Prophet. The Shiites believe that Imam Ali ben abi taleb who is the cousin of the Prophet Mohammed should had been the successor of the Prophet, and the Caliphate must be confined only to the family members of the Prophet. Sunni and Shiites had been through wars, armed conflicts and tension since then till today. The Shia populations are majority in Iraq and Bahrain, they constitute minority in Syria and Lebanon. It is worth mentioning that both Sunni and Shia each of which encompasses many different sects and different religious perspectives.

The religious practices are well observed by the majority of Muslims, they fast the month of Ramadan, offer tithes or Zakat in Arabic (زكاة), pilgrimage to Mecca, and pray five times a day at specific times (dawn, noon, mid afternoon, sunset and in the evening). Friday is the religious day for Muslims, and at Friday noon prayer is preferably celebrated in the local mosques. Most of Muslim Arab women wear veil/Hijab (حجاب), in the Gulf region they wear Niqaab (نقاب) which is a religious dress that covers all the body except the eyes or part of them. In the Arab culture, the community has a high regard and respect for the elders, not only because they symbolise the wisdom and life experience, but also are considered a blessings in the family. Caring for elders in the Arab region wither Muslims or Christians is considered as part of the religious duties. This care of old aged people is the positive side of the culture, whereas its negative side is the domination of the elders on the

political and social life. On other words, the Arab social culture is patriarchal by which the participation of youth and women is limited. The sense of belonging to community is almost confined to the family and close friends sphere. They atab people usually participate in the community events when are related to family, tribe, clan or religion. The family is the centre of the Arab person and traditional form of family is widely spread in the Arab society. The Arab males at age of 18 and plus they think of making a family as soon as they get jobs or financial support. I think that due to the conservative religious culture that prohibits/criminalises the intimate relationships outside marriage. Most of the Arabs like to talk about politics but rarely participate in the political and public events. Over the last three decades and with the advent of globalisation, the Arab culture has been facing a wave of transition. The Arab youth have an ease of dealing with the information and communication technology, that was clearly manifested in the Arab uprisings.

Currently, the Arab masses are culturally divided and/or diverse, the trend of liberalism and secularism has been growing rapidly. Nowadays, is normal to find many different Arab youth groups are forming on-line collations or fronts for defending community issues that were considered taboo ten years ago. For examples; solidarity groups for religious reformists and liberal thinkers, anti-system groups, Arab atheists, ex-Muslims, even singles groups for relationships. Moreover, the negative consequences of the Arab spring have made many of the Arabs, especially youth to re-read the reality and wonder why the Arabs are backward. Presently, Arab youth discuss over the social networks such as Face-book, Twitter and Blogs many social and religious sensible issues and concepts.

## **The Arab personality and character**

As an Egyptian and based on different readings, the Arabs generally are conservatives and tend to be religious. They are cooperative, once a foreigner is lost in street or searches for help, you find many persons around to help. They are more introvert than extrovert, emotional than rational and they care about their public image. They are fatalistic, this due to the religion (Muslims and Christians), since the destiny of man is already decided by God. It is important to clarify that the Arabs although they share common culture, yet, they vary from one country to another, and generalisation will be erroneous. Arabs of the Gulf to a certain extent have different character than the Arabs of the Levant. Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan and Morocco they are more open to the West than the rest of the Arab countries.

## **The Arab political development and state formation: Historical overview**

The Arabs belong to the Semitic group that originally existed in the Arab peninsula before the emergence of Islam. The Arabs were expanded beyond the Arabia due to the Muslim conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries. In the 13th century and with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, Egypt, the Arab-Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine) and Hijaz came under the Turkish Sultanate. By the 1570, most of the Arab region was fell under the control of Ottoman Empire. The concept of the modern state governance was firstly introduced to the Arabs post World War I, synchronized with the fall of the Ottoman empire, and the advent of the western colonialism (mainly France and Great Britain) to the region. Most of the contemporary Arab states were not entirely a result of local or national political evolution process. The colonisers had replaced the Ottoman imperial governance structure with the

western form of state. The Arab states started to gain their independence from colonialism during and after the World War II.

In the 1945, right after the independence of Lebanon in 1943, the Arab league was formed to represent the interests of the Arabs. The birth of the Arab league was a key step toward the Arab nationalism, which took further steps and attempts of Arab unity during the regime of Nasser, but all attempts were failed. The Pan-Arabism ideology has been faded away by the death of Nasser in 1971, and been abandoned with the signing of the Peace treaty between Egypt under President Sadat with Israel in the 1978. After the peace treaty in the 1980s, the Islamic groups in many Arab countries, especially in Egypt have started to assert their power in both the Arabic street as well as the political scene. In 1990s, the Pan-Islamism ideology was spreading rapidly over the Arab states and completely has replaced the Pan-Arabism. Over many decades, the Arab region has been witnessing political instability and social unrest that largely have contributed to the backwardness of the Arabs

On the one hand, most of the Arab states had been under autocratic rulers that lack of legitimacy and their tools of stability are state security, informative apparatus and the army. Democracy and freedom are words that only used as a decorative element in the Arab states political discourse. On the other hand, most of the Arab countries have different ethnic and religious minorities that constitute a source of constant conflicts. Iraq and Syria have been facing ethnic conflicts between Arabs and Kurds and sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shiites. In the North African Arab states, conflicts between Arabs and Berber. In Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Sudan have been witnessing conflicts between Muslims and Christians. The Arabs also have witnessed

many external wars and armed conflicts. Since 1948 (establishment of the Israeli state) till present day the Arabs have been involved in three wars with Israel over the Palestinian cause (1948, 1967 and 1973), the civil wars in Sudan and Lebanon, the Iraqi-Iranian war, the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait, the Desert Storm, the Islamists conflict with the state in Algeria and Somalia, and the Arab uprisings of the years 2010-2011. Currently, the Saudi-Yemeni war and the undergoing ISIS war in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Iraq. The terrorism that broke out post the Arab uprisings had made the matter of national security receives the highest priority by both governments and the masses. Consequently, the civil liberties and the little democratic margin were gained pre-Arab spring, now are shrinking. Presently, most of the Arab population is under either emergency laws such as Egypt, radical Islamists influence (such as al-Shabaab extremists in Somalia), or under other forms of freedom restriction such as the Sharia law in Saudi Arabia. This situation of social and political restrictions is articulated by Ibrahim (Saleh, 2012), “as a result, the public has been always torn between the internal subjection to dictatorial governments as well as the external cut off from the world--a situation that has been extensively used by the extremists, by manipulating the religious text to reach certain desires in the name of God and Islam. Such interpretation uses the slogan of ‘just war’ to kill and sacrifice others from different religions with the pretext that they complying with Islamic religious doctrine.” The wars, conflicts and terrorism have intensified the declining of the living standards in many Arab counties, all have added tremendous psychological and financial pressure upon the Arab population. The year 2010 has witnessed the spark of the Arab

uprisings in Tunisia then in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen, by which the hoped political change was achieved except in Tunisia (to a certain extent).

### **Economic profile**

The Arab region is filled with diversity of strategic natural resources such as oil, gas and other minerals. It also has plenty of qualified human resources, since the Arab youth under 35 years constitute the majority of the population. But the development rate is lagging behind. The Arab world produces nearly one-fourth of the globe's oil production, and 11 per cent of its gas production. It sits on 60 per cent and 22.5 per cent of the world's oil and gas reserves, respectively. It is also rich in some minerals such as phosphate, potash, iron, zinc, copper and sulphur". Yet, it is still an underdeveloped region with a constant political instability and social unrest. The majority of the Arab population (Gulf States are an exception) suffers from; poverty, poor health and education systems, poor social service delivery, high rate of unemployment among youth and women, corruption, social injustice, low women profile, and many others social problems. The different development reports clearly demonstrate that the social and economic development indicators in the Arab countries are the worst compared with other regions of the world. The growth rates are slower than the steady increase of the populations, as a result the poverty rate is increasing.

Globalization has motivated many regions around the world to think and work on regional and international economic integration in form of unions or coalitions, as a protection wall against global economic changes and dynamics. Regions such as Asian countries, European countries, and North American countries have reached

agreements and formed economic unions. While, the Arab countries are still far from achieving any form of economic integration amongst them, although they have common cultural factors such as; language, religion and social traditions, Besides, they have plenty of human and natural resources. Economically, The Gulf countries, Iraq, Libya and Algeria and are mainly petroleum based economies, and have much better economic situation than the rest of Arabs. Egypt, Yemen, Somalia, Mauritania, and Sudan record high rate of poverty. Most of the Arab countries has a very small manufacturing base and they mainly depend on foreign imports. In Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco tourism and foreign investment constitute main sources of national income.

### **The development challenges in the Arab region**

For decades, the human development in the Arab region is lagging behind. As stated in the Arab Human Development Report (2003, 28:45), the main challenges that hinder the development in the Arab region are: the lack of freedom, knowledge and low woman profile. This is confirmed by many different regional and international reports. In the following paragraphs, each challenge will be addressed.

#### **Democracy and Freedom**

AHDR (2003, 28:32) reveals that the margin and practice of freedom in the Arab countries is the lowest among all the regions in the world. It also highlights the limited margin of freedom through listing a number of violations that made by almost each Arab state. The report provides many examples such as; limiting the capacity of the political parties, limiting the participation of the civil society organizations, constraints on popular participation, persecution of human right activists, amending

the Constitutions to allow presidents to remain in offices for fourth or fifth rounds, the existence and extension of the emergency laws, falsifying elections, reducing the mandate of parliament members, suppressing demonstrations, prohibiting and/ or controlling strikes, limiting press freedom and internet access, and many other examples that confirm the limited freedom margin that exist in the Arab region.

### Knowledge

AHDR (2003, 33: 109) dedicated a full part about the knowledge status in the Arab countries. The report stated that, the Arab countries need to close a growing knowledge gap by investing heavily in education and promoting open intellectual inquiry. Also they should encourage greater interaction with other nations, cultures, and regions of the world. The report authors argue that “Openness, interaction, assimilation, absorption, revision, criticism and examination cannot but prompt creative knowledge production in Arab societies.” The report lists the deficiencies in the knowledge-base and the education system in the Arab countries, and points out a number of challenges regarding the knowledge system as well as recommends a number of steps that must be taken in order to meet them. these challenges are:

- ◆ Guaranteeing the key freedoms of opinion, speech and assembly through good governance bounded by the law. “A climate of freedom is an essential prerequisite of the knowledge society.” The report also affirms and argues that “It is also imperative to end the era of administrative control and the grip of security agencies over the production and dissemination of knowledge and the various forms of creative activity that are the foundations for the knowledge society in Arab countries.” AHDR (2003:165).

◆ The full dissemination of high quality education. The Arab countries need to radically improve the quality of the education system at all levels. Basic education should become universal and extended to 10 years. Special attention should be paid to early childhood learning and to creating a system for life-long learning. In higher education, improving quality requires subjecting all programs to independent and periodical evaluation. To achieve this, the report calls for the establishment of an independent Arab organization for the accreditation of all higher education programs.”

◆ Indigenizing science, universalizing R&D and joining the Information Revolution. A starting point for this is to overcome the illusion that importing technology as embodied in products, machinery, and services, is equivalent to acquiring knowledge. Basic research should be encouraged and supported by appropriate funding and institutions. Arab governments should also establish networks linking public, private and international sectors, and focus technological research on regional demand. AHDR, (2003:169-171).

◆ Shifting rapidly towards knowledge-based and value-added production. “This calls for a decisive move towards developing renewable resources through knowledge and technological capabilities and towards diversifying economic structures and markets.”

◆ Developing an authentic, broad minded and enlightened Arab knowledge model. This would include delivering pure religion from political exploitation and respecting independent scholarship; advancing the Arabic language by undertaking serious research and linguistic reform; reclaiming the intellectual strengths of Arab

cultural heritage; promoting cultural diversity in the region; and opening up to other cultures abroad. (AHDR, 2003: 172).

In the same line of thought, Boulding stated that “Democracy needs to become an integral part of the psychology of the Arab-Islamic individual. This requires the adoption of long-term strategies and orientations for the educational system of Arab Islamic states. Democracy can be exercised at school, at home, and in society. It permits the exercise of individuality and critical thinking within collectivity. She indicated also that “The problem is not the inability to find the values of tolerance, pluralism, interdependence, cooperation, human rights, and fundamental liberties within the Arab-Islamic heritage. However, the high rate of illiteracy causes confusion and perpetuates myths.” Boulding (1994: 84).

### **Women's Status**

The AHDR (2003: 31-32) indicates that in nearly all Arab countries, women suffer from unequal citizenship and legal entitlements. According to the UNDP reports show that the “gender-empowerment measure” in the Arab countries near the bottom (according to this measure, sub-Saharan Africa ranks even worse). Boulding also confirms such attitude of the Arab region toward the women by stating that “A study of women’s movements in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq sufficiently shows that women’s roles could be enhanced and they could play a leading role in promotion of democracy. Yet, women are increasingly confined to a limited number of professions and have limited access to education.” She also indicated that “The violation of women rights in education and work as well as the application of the Islamic family, prevents Arab-Islamic women from becoming full

and equal citizens, thus violating international conventions on equality between the sexes and the basic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that signed by most Arab states.” Boulding (1994: 85).

### **The State of peace and national security**

Over the last century, the Arab region has been engaged in domestic and external conflicts and wars. Since 1948 till now, the Arabs have been engaged in three wars with Israel over the occupied Palestine. Besides, the Gulf war between Iraq and Iran, the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait, then the American invasion to Iraq. The conflict between north and south of Sudan that ended by the division of Sudan into two states. Also, the political tension in the Arabic-Persian Gulf between Iran and Gulf countries. Add to that, the on going tension between the Arabs and different ethnic and religious minorities such as Kurds, Amazigh, Christians, and Also, the political tension between Morocco and Algeria over the Sahara independence. At the present, there are many internal armed conflicts between the State and the radical Islamists in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen.

The political instability and social unrest both have negatively affected the Arab region and its human development efforts. On the one hand, the economies of these countries were badly damaged, especially those that depend on tourism and foreign investments as main sources of income, such Egypt and Tunisia. On the other hand, all efforts and financial resources were dedicated to the military defence and national security matters, on the account of the human development programs. The UNFPA country profile of the Arab region (2006), states that “Recent political upheavals, military conflicts and escalation of political instability have complicated

development and poverty reduction. These developmental problems are negatively affecting the capacity of the Arab civil society, and hinder it from playing its role in fostering human development. For a positive change to happen in the Arab region, these challenges must be confronted. In the following chapter, the Arab civil society's political, cultural and social environment will be addressed and analysed more in depth.

### **Chapter III: The Arab Civil Society (ACS)**

For a long time, the Arab region has been suffering from chronic developmental challenges such as poverty, low level of social services, armed conflicts, political instability, gender inequality, lack of democracy and human rights. The undemocratic and or semi democratic Arab governments alone, and with their low popularity, and low public support, are not capable of confronting these challenges. Besides, the globalisation and its dynamics both have brought about; new concepts of governance such as democracy and human rights, new approaches of community and social development such as grass root participation, civil society role, and the social responsibility of the private sector. Globalisation also brought new economic policies such as privatisation and structural adjustments, that have been imposed upon many debited Arab countries by global financial institutions such as the International Bank and the International Monetary Fund. All these factors of global changes made the Arab governments to open the door for the civil society and to accept it as player in the community development.

The Arab civil society is lagging behind, and is not in a position to assume its responsibility and/or effectively play its role in fostering the social development and democracy. Although the statistics show rapid growth of the Arab civil society sector, as it is indicated by Kandil (2015:70) states that, the number of the Arab civil society organisations in the years 2000, 2001 was 65000 that tripled to be 250000 in 2015. But, this increase was not associated with an increase; neither of the freedom margin nor the efficiency of civil society.

The Arab civil society faces many constraints that hinder it from playing its expected role as an influential actor and/or as a partner to governments in development. Through the different readings, it was noted that, the role of ACSOs is confined to service delivery as opposed to lobbying and advocacy, in other words, it has low profile of participation in making, implementing and monitoring the social development policies. In order to empower the Arab civil society, its challenges and weakness must be identified and analysed, and its strengths and opportunities must be explored. This chapter attempts to address the Arab civil society; its historical development, typology, and its role. It also attempts to identify the challenges that faces as well as exploring its opportunities.

### **Historical overview**

In this section, the historical development stages of the Arab civil society will be addressed as well as the factors influence its evolution. According to Hawthorne (2004: 6) the evolution of the Arab civil society had passed by four main phases, theses are:

The first phase was before the European colonization of the region in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, civil society consisted mainly of community-based self-help groups, guilds, and religiously oriented charitable and educational institutions, these last funded by Islamic endowments known as “Waqf”.

The second phase “began during the period of European colonialism. “Modern” forms of associative life, such as professional associations, trade unions, secular charities, cultural clubs, and Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood group, emerged across the region. Many of these organizations were

politically active in a way that earlier forms of civil society had not been, and they played an important role in nationalist struggles and in supporting pan-Arab causes.” (Hawthorne, 2004: 6).

The third phase “began after Arab countries gained independence; restrictive new regimes feared that pluralistic, independent associative life would undermine national unity and threaten their power. Thus independent civic activity was brought under tight state control as civil society organizations were transformed into state-dominated institutions”.

The fourth phase began from 1980s and till the present day, which has seen a relative liberalization and diversification of the civil society realm. Hawthorne also outlined the factors have influenced this phase “The spread of Islamist movements has led to a proliferation of religiously affiliated groups active in civil society.” In that phase, Hawthorne further states that “many Arab governments began to implement limited economic and political liberalization, as a way of staying in power”. They permitted some new NGOs to form, and they expanded the margin of freedom of the civil society organisations.

Hawthorne also stated that “The international influences also played an important role in terms of practising pressure upon the local governments.” With the advent of globalization, and the emergence of new social development and state governance concepts such as democracy, human rights and political pluralism as well as advocacy movements contributed to the creation of Arab human rights and pro-democracy institutions. Another factor that helped in the formation of such type of

organizations is the noticeable increase of foreign funds that dedicated to the civil society organisations.

The fifth phase, is the state of the Arab civil society post Arab spring. Kandil (2015) points out the negative impact of the Arab spring on the civil society organizations that manifested in the restrictive legal framework of the civic work such as in Egypt. The author further states that relationship between the civil society organisations and the state has become more conflictive than before the Arab spring.

### **Literatures and academic research**

Despite the cognitive accumulation that ACSOs have developed over the years, yet, there are some aspects of the Arab civil society that need more research and study. Kandil (2011: 157) concludes that <sup>12</sup>“The civil society literatures and researches should adopt multi-disciplinary study approach of the society, its civil organisations and the state in a comprehensive and realistic context- that involves the politics, economy, anthropology and law. A study that based on multi-dimension analytical methodology and framework, with understanding of the relationships and interactions internally as well as externally. Hence, we are confronting many topics/subjects that need to be researched by the Arab academic groups.” Kandil also outlines the focal points that need to be researched and analysed, these are:

Understanding the relationships between the civil society and the marriage of Capital (business) and power in some Arab countries including Egypt. She further articulates that this marriage is negatively effecting the democratic transition, the social justice as well as social reform.

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<sup>12</sup> “my translation”

The extent by which the interest groups can be combined in the civil society domain, since the first only seeks its own benefits whereas the latter seeks the public good.

The extent by which the civil society contributes to the renovation of the classical Arab elites. She exclaims how we can ensure a healthy alternation of positions at the time that same faces of elites dominate the civil society.

Understanding why the youth forces resort to the virtual space to express their opinions and protests instead of joining the civil society.

To what extent the Arab civil society has a common vision that respond to the social risks. Does civil society respond to social risks such as education, unemployment especially among youth, moral risks, globalisation risks and the weak competitive capability of the Arab states and economic pressure and its effect on families.

### **Typology and geographical distribution**

Hawthorne (2004) also categorized the Arab civil society into five sectors, these are:

The first sector comprises organizations based on the Islamic faith that aim at spreading the faith and provide services as charity.

The second sector comprises Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that resemble the western ones. These NGOs aim to support marginalized groups through delivering community services such as medical, educational, economical, and relief services. To large extent, these organizations are substitute to the government. It is wroth stating what the author stressed as the reasons behind the increase of these NGOs. These reasons are: the acceptance of the Arab governments to the role of the

private initiatives in fostering development. The second reason is the spread of the Islamic opposition movements had obliged these governments to allow such NGOs to be expanded.. The third reason is that the Western donor agencies usually prefer funding the NGOs, they are seen as a more reliable recipients for funds than the bureaucratic governmental bodies.

The third sector comprises member based professional organizations such as labour unions and professional syndicates. Hawthorn points out that this sector in many Arab countries is relatively more active politically due to its nationalist history and the weakness of the regimes in those countries.

The fourth sector consists of associations that aim at fostering solidarity for migrants or marginalized groups. This sector comprises also associations such as writers, artists societies and youth organizations. In the Gulf region, this sector includes “Diwanyyas” which are informal forums for socializing among friends, relatives and neighbours about matters of interest such as business or politics with limits.

The fifth sector is new born one that comprises the pro-democracy and human rights organization. The associations of this sector tend to promote democratic concepts and human rights aiming at democratic and political change, Hawthorne (2004: 6-8).

As for the geographical distribution of the Arab NGOs, Kandil (2015, 107:113) states that the concentration of the Arab CSOs in general and advocacy based organisations in particular is intense in capitals, big cities and urban areas. While in the rural and remote zones where poor and marginalised people are, the

number of NGOs is very small. She gives examples supported with statistics in some Arab countries such as Egypt where only 3% of the total CSOs exist in remote cities and rural zones while in the capital Cairo alone there is 25% of the CSOs total. Also in Morocco where 35% of CSOs are located in Rabat and Marrakesh. She further states that this phenomenon is identical to the government policy in the Arab states. She ponders, the CSOs are supposed to fill the gap of government services provision in such areas and should be more concentrated in such deprived zones, not to follow same attitude of governments. She outlines the reasons behind such attitude as follow: First, most of the elites who are aware of the added value of CSOs live in the big cities. Second, the centralisation nature of Arab governments makes the elites and civil society activists be near to the circle of governmental bodies. Third, the civil society activists prefer to be near to communication media and International civil society organisations such as donor agencies and embassies that usually are located in capitals and big cities.

### **Arab civil society challenges**

The Arab Region is witnessing a steady increase in the size and activity scope of national, regional, and international civil society organizations. Kandil (2015:70) reveals that the number of Arab civil society organisations is tripled from the year 2000 till 2010. This increase due to many factors, some of these are; the increase of political, economic, social and cultural challenges in the Arab region. Also, due to the wave of globalization that stormed the Arab countries and imposed new political, economical, social and environmental reform policies that negatively effected the life conditions of the Arab populations. Most of the Arab governments alone can not

confront these challenges. Besides, globalisation also had brought about new concepts of state governance and human development by which the civil society organizations have become an important actor in the community development processes.

Based on my experience as Ex-NGO worker at both levels local and international, the Arab civil society organizations still have a long way to go and to be equal to their Western counterparts in terms of their capacity, efficiency and social impact. On the one hand, the Arab rulers always have doubts and suspicions about the intentions and objectives of the CSOs, therefore, they consider them as a threat, this makes the cooperation between them at minimal levels. On the other hand, the Arab civil society itself suffers from domestic challenges such as: lack of good governance, funding, common strategy and vision, capacity building, networking and coordination. In the following sections, the external and internal challenges that affect the formation, growth and efficiency of the ACSOs will be investigated

### **External challenges**

The Arab CSOs commonly face political, cultural and social challenges. The political constrains such as small margin of freedom and restrictive legal framework. The cultural and social constraints such as the faith and social traditions. The external challenges as identified by different researchers and field experts from inside as outside the Arab region are centred around the following points:

### **1.1. Democracy and Freedom: Civil society-State relation**

The challenge of democracy and freedom is expressed almost by all civil society intellectuals, researchers, field practitioners and international observers. 13Abdel Samad (2005) states that “For, in many countries, CSOs do not enjoy the simple right to exist, where the freedom of association is a lacking concept. They are not yet recognized as legitimate partners for social change and progress towards sustainable development and they often face pressures and obstacles from the government.” He further states that “Thus, these weak governments are increasing pressures and restrictions on civil society activities in the region, where CSOs are often viewed as groups implementing the agenda of international organizations, advocating policies adverse to policies of local governments. Accordingly, the lack of democracy and limited participation of civil society organizations is leading to the adoption of irrelevant public policies and is creating major loss of opportunities for progress in different fields of development in the region.”

Kandil (2015, 139:149) also addressed the impact of democracy and freedom on the Arab civil society from the legal framework perspective. Kandil stated some remarks about the Arab civil society legal framework, these are summarised as follow:

1. The globalisation had brought about new concepts such as democratic transition, human rights, community/citizen participation, citizen security and national security. These concepts have been promoted by the powerful states and international institutions through practising pressure upon the Middle Eastern governments to liberate the civil society.

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<sup>13</sup> Ziad Abdel Samad is the Executive Director of the Arab NGOs Network for Development (ANND)

2. The international and regional initiatives that concerned with the civil society legislation such as: Guides for the good governance of NGO laws which issued by the World Bank, 1997. Also, the legal principles of citizen participation which issued by CIVICUS, 1997, and many other international important initiatives. Also, the regional initiatives such as the code of ethics and the Arabic declaration for transparency both issued by the Arab Network of NGOs in years 1979 and 2002, and the guiding legalisation principles of the Arab civil society (Kuwait, 2006 and Cairo, 2007).
3. Most of the Arab states have in their old legislations a civil society regulatory that seemingly matching the international standards in terms of the rights and guaranties that allow the civil society to be independent from the state. But in reality, the laws contain details that disable/dominate the civil society.

Kandil also investigates the new legalisations over the last decade by some Arab States such as Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Bahrain, she concludes that most of the new legislations did not have consensus in some countries such as Egypt. She further articulates that these new legislations are selective, this due to some allegations such as national security, social peace and public order. Kandil also outlined the legalisation differences among the Arab states, these differences were manifested in the following points:

Number of founding members: Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Palestine they are close to the international standard, while in Yemen requires minimum of 21 members, In Saudi Arabia and Oman both require minimum of 20 members and Algeria 15 members.

Type of activities: Most of the Arab states do not specify the NGOs activities, including the pro-democracy and human rights based, except, the Gulf states, the activities of the civil society organisations are determined .

Registration and foundation procedures: most of the Arab legislations share general characteristics regarding the NGOs registration such as specifying governmental entity for receiving the NGO requests, specifying certain period between 30-90 days for responding. The Gulf states they do not specify period, they leave it open. Only in Lebanon that the NGOs gain the legality the time they solicit.

Language used in articles and/or laws: Most of the Arab legislations contain elastic phrases such as the public order, state security, the public unity and contempt to religions..etc. These ambiguous phrases enable the State to dominate the civil society.

NGO internal governance: Most of the Arab legislations contain laws that provide the State with rights to interfere in the internal management of the NGOs, such as assigning government representative in the board of directors, sudden inspection and election conciliation.

Funding: All the Arab legislations contain articles that control/determine the funding sources, especially the foreign. In Lebanon and Mauritania there is no restrictions, In Morocco and Yemen there is no restrictions but fund recipients NGOs have to report to the State about it. While In Egypt, it is prohibited receiving foreign funds without a prior permission, but NGOs can receive freely foreign funds from institutions inside the country such as embassies, UN offices and other branches of international institutions.

At this stage, it is important to present the outcomes of the third regional conference on the EU-Arab Partnership organised in Beirut on October 2015. The conference has outlined the common challenges for the ACSOs. As stated in the report by Solidar (2016, 6: 10), that “these regional challenges threaten civil society space at different levels, from restrictive legal framework that restrict and limit access to resources, and reduce access to information, hence hampering transparency and state accountability. In addition, the reports have insisted on similar regional violations of freedom of association or civil society and human rights defenders, and lack of peaceful assembly and trade unions rights for independent unions. Lastly, governments-civil society relations are often shaped by security narrative and the lack of meaningful partnership and dialogue with civil society is documented in all countries.” The report stated some cases in the Arab region about the legal framework in relation to the resources’ accessibility (information and funding), these are:

Algeria: Under the Law on Association (2012), for instance the international NGOs representatives are unable to obtain entry visas to Algeria, which hampers their work and their cooperation with local NGOs. Another example of restrictions is that the article 40 under same law prohibits associations from interfering in the internal affairs of the country under penalty of being suspended. In addition, under this law Algerian authorities have been arbitrarily rejecting applications from organisations, consequently, impeding NGOs ability to receive foreign funding or hold public meetings.

Jordan: The Ministry of Social Development can reject NGOs requests of funding without clear reasons, more over, the government has issued new instructions (2015) which narrowed the possibilities of access to external resources. It is worth mentioning that the request of funding by NGOs for programs and projects have to respond to the National Development Plan of the country, or else be rejected.

Palestine: Palestinian CSOs (East Jerusalem) are subject to the Israeli Law of Association under the Israeli Ministry of Justice. Palestinian CSOs to be considered legal have to registered with and report to two authorities. In addition, the Israeli most recent “NGO Bill” that obligates the Palestinian CSOs that receive funds from foreign political entities to provide more information, and it demands increasing transparency.

Lebanon: At the local level, the access to local resources is not organised and is affected by the lack of control and supervision leading to corruption and clientelism.

Egypt: Since 2012, the government has carried out investigations in foreign funding for local and foreign NGOs, In 2014, the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) issued an ultimatum requesting all CSOs, specially human rights based to re-register or else face closure. Lastly, the government has started investigation against civil society organisations on tax inquiry. It is important to mention that the Law 84 provides the government with legal power to inspect and close NGOs receive foreign funds without official permission.

## **1.2. Culture**

The different views that expressed the cultural context’s challenge are centred around two sets. The first, is the extent to which the compatibility of the Islamic discourse with civil society’s concept as a product of the Western liberal ideology.

The second is the relationship dynamics between the modern civil society and the traditional social structures. The third set is, and based on my personal view is about the civil awareness and education that raises the public awareness and participation.

This issue of the compatibility of Islam with the liberal concept of the civil society is addressed by many civil society scholars and researches. Some defend and confirm the compatibility of Islam with the concepts of democracy, pluralism and human rights and others prove the contrary. The Islamic discourse compatibility with the broader concept of democracy and human rights was addressed by Ibrahim (1995:52) within the context of the low record of democracy and human rights in the Muslim countries, especially the Arabs. According to Ibrahim hypothesis, there are three factors that determine the state of democracy and human rights, these are: First factor, is the differences between despotic vs. non-despotic regimes. Second factor, is the difference between textualists and contextualists. The third one, is the process of resistance to Western hegemonic policies in the developing countries. In this section, the focus will be on the second factor of “textualists and contextualists.” Ibrahim further articulates “For Muslims, the Qur’an is the divinely revealed book containing the words and commandments of Allah (God Almighty). Some Muslims take this sacred text literally to live by, and hence are referred to as “textualists or literalists.” Others take the spirit, the broad guidelines, laid down in the Qur’an and adapt them to different and changing conditions in the Muslim communities, and hence are referred to as “contextualists or rationalists.” The outcome of this debate between the textualists and contextualists will determine the direction for the future state of human rights and the political development in Muslim countries.” Ibrahim further explains

the issue of interpretation of the Islamic texts and gives examples of representatives of both textualists and contextualists. Examples of contextualists or Islamic reformists such as Muhammed Abdu and Jamal Eddin al Afghani both contributed to the development of certain cultural aspects such as women empowerment and openness to modernity and Western culture. He also gives examples of the textualists or literalists such as the Wahhabists in Saudi Arabia. Although there are many Islamic thinkers/theorists such as Fahmi Huwaydi and Ahmed Shukr al-Sabihi who have different perspectives of the relation between Islam and civil society. Huwaydi's view was cited by Nawaf (Salam, 2002: 5) stating that "The Islamic society was a self organized society centuries long before the emergence of the idea of civil society, which is much yearned for nowadays by certain people." Al-Soubayhi (2000) also was cited by Salam( 2005) affirms that "The historical experience of the Prophet's era constitutes the first experiment of civil society contract that history has witnessed and which preceded Rousseau's 'Social Contract'."

My personal view and based on my observation to the political and socio-cultural dynamics in the Arab countries, I argue that the issue of Islamic texts modern interpretation (contextualists) can be the magical formula/panacea to the socio-political crises in the Arab countries. I doubt that contextualists/reformists could make positive change for the following reasons:

First, the absence of a unified global representation of Islamic affairs that can approve, adopt and promote new interpretations. It is not as in Christianity whereas the Vatican represents all world Catholics (the world vast majority of Christians). In

Islam, there are many sects, and under each sect, there are many ramifications, which makes it difficult to have a unified global Islamic representation.

Secondly, is the extent to which the general Muslims accept or reject the new interpretations, since Islam for Muslims is not only a belief, but is also a form of life and State- governance system (Caliphate). In the last thirty years, there were many Egyptian thinkers and Islamic reformists such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zeid, Saied al-Khemnie, Islam Buhiry, Mohamed Nassr, Farag Fouda, and Naguib Mahfouz (Winner of Noble Prize in literature, 1988), and many others who tried to have liberal interpretation to both Hadith and some Qur'anic verses, but they were accused of apostasy by both radical Islamist groups and 14al-Azhar. Most of them ended up with jail sentences, exile, or assassination.

Thirdly, the time that Islamic reformists, hypothetically, could reach liberal interpretation to every aspect of the modern life, this would be the time of emptying Islam from its context. This could explain why the liberal democracy is not well promoted in most of the Muslim world. For such long time, the West has been promoting the Turkish state-governance under the Islamic Party AKP as a model of “moderate political Islam” to be adopted and applied by the Arab states. But, in light of the current political situation in Turkey under President Urdogan and his Islamic party, all the liberal democracy Turkey has gained over the last three decades seems to be threatened and has been shrinking.

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Azhar is the highest and most influential religious authority for Islamic Sunni matters inside and outside Egypt.

The second set of views is about the relationship between modern civil society and the traditional social structures. Kandil (2015, 7: 8) addresses some of the constraints that are imposed by faith/religion in general and by Islam in particular. She stated that<sup>15</sup> “the Arab civil society is constrained by Islamic faith in terms of discrimination/exclusion of certain target groups or beneficiaries. The charity-faith based organizations offer their services to Muslims only, and each Muslim sect based organization targets only its followers and excludes the others, even those who are from the same religion.” She gave examples of such organisations in Lebanon where there are 18 different religious sects of both Christians and Muslims, each in which, offerers services only to their followers. This attitude also exist in Egypt whereas the Muslim Brothers and Salafists sponsored organisations only offer services to Muslims.

As for the traditional social structures and their relationship to the modern civil society, the underlying issue here is to which extent both models can be integrated. The first model is driven from and motivated by religious ideology. Whereas, the second model is based on/and driven from the Western liberal ideology. Kandil (2015: 6), uses the term “Jam’ayat ahlyiah” in Arabic (جمعيات أهلية) to express the civil society organisations. The term “Ahlyiah” is driven from the word “Ahl” (أهل) which means “family” as opposed to governmental. She explains that this term is culturally rooted and has historical dimensions, besides it is used in the Arabic legislations. Kandil (2015, 113:114) states that this type of organisations constitute almost 90% of the total civil society organisations in the Gulf States, and 70% of the total Arab civil

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<sup>15</sup> “my translation”

society organisations. Most of these organisations are family, clans, tribal, and religious based. These traditional social structures are deeply rooted as a concept and practice in the Arab society. For instance, al-Waqf, in Arabic “الوقف” is oldest religious endowments, and the systems of kafalah “كفالة” and takaful “تكافل” (sponsorship or guardianship), where the religious groups take care of the marginalized and the needy members in society.

As for the integration between the two models, Ibrahim (1995: 52), states that integration is possible in case of traditional associations “accept the principle of pluralism and observe a modicum of civility in behaviour towards the ‘different other’, then they would be integral part of civil society.” Another issue related to the integration between the two models is the difference between the two models in regard to the relationship nature between each model with the State. On the one hand, the traditional structures in the Arab countries such as al-Waqf (religious endowment) is strongly related to the government while it functions as Non-governmental organisation. On the other, the modern civil society is free from any attachment with the state except in form in partnership to carry out certain programs and projects, but generally is independent from the government.

The third set, and based on the different literatures as well as my personal view, is the lack of civic education in the Arab states. As for the civil culture, Kandil (2011: 22), states that <sup>16</sup>“The civil culture is the most important determinant of the civil society success. Civil society is not only organisational structures that are relatively independent from the state, but also are organisational frameworks that

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<sup>16</sup> “my translation”

reflect an array of values and principles such as pluralism, human rights and freedom of expression that deepen the concept of democracy.”

I think that the lack of civil culture in the Arab region due to the poor education systems, especially the elementary education (kindergarten and primary schools). Education in most of the Arab states is designed to fit the political and religious environment that dominates the Arab world. Freire book (1972, 45:57) can best describes the Arab education philosophy and systems that manifested in the teacher-student relation, where the teacher gives information and student just receives them. The Arab education system is a tool of absenting the students mind by using their brains only as a depositories for information, not for creativity and transformation of knowledge. Simply put, the education system in the Arab region must be be reconstructed on a new foundation/bases that imply global values such as freedom, justice, human rights, life, work, competition, respect diversity and co-living...etc.

The education philosophy in many Arab countries is based on filling the brain of the students with facts and theories, not with tools and methods of searching, analysing and criticizing. When I was student, from primary school till university level I was taught neither to write an essay nor to do a project. I think that the civil education constitutes a direct threat to both authoritarian rulers and the Islamists, since civic principles such as democracy, human rights, pluralism, freedom of expression and worship always are not welcomed by both.

A study by Faour (2013) about citizenship education programs in public schools from kindergarten up to twelfth grade in eleven key Arab countries including Egypt reveals the following two points:

There is a wide gap between the stated goals of national education policies and their implementation. The goals and objectives laid out in the national programs are mixed up with religious and nationalist values. Moreover, the goals are rarely matched with realistic capacity of the State. Faour gives some examples of education goals in Jordan and Egypt. In Jordan the goal is preparing “a citizen who believes in God Almighty; clings to his faith, as nation.” In Egypt is “to deepen the belief of learners in their faith, its principles, values, and its perspective on man, universe, and life; and the alignment of their behaviour with that words and deeds.”

b) All the eleven Arab states were investigated have recorded negative results in the overall 17 Index of School Climate, except Lebanon and Dubai that show international average. On the other hand, the curricula design does not include subjects about citizenship and civil liberties education.

I think the curricula does include subjects of respecting and obeying the Great leader and the clergy of the nation (King, President, Prince, and the Imam). Also, teaching the religions as a subject in the Arab schools contributes to hypnotising the Arab brain. I remember when I was in the primary school, I studied two subjects that were obligatory but without scores added to the final mark, these are: Religion (التربية الدينية) and Nationalism (التربية القومية), but nothing about citizenship and co-living. Such education system and philosophy can never produce generations with liberal or free thinking that can construct an advance the civil society. I think that modern

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<sup>17</sup> The school climate index uses as its benchmark the international average of data in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

education in general and citizenship education in particular both are key factors for the progress of the Arab region.

### **1.3. Global dynamics**

The challenge of global dynamics here refers to capitalism, the new concepts of governance and human development that are promoted by international institutions, aid/donor agencies and peace and security in the region. Many of the Arab civil society institutions and scholars at all levels, whether field or intellectual, with their different perspectives and different schools of thought see that the global dynamics have affected negatively the progress and efficiency of the Arab civil society.

Globalization is seen as a problematic issue for many theorists and field researches from the south because of its dualism/contradiction of capital development and development of the human rights and democracy. They see that both components of globalization (capitalism and democracy/human rights) are contradicting one another. On the one hand, the capitalism only cares about its own development, not the development of people, while human rights and democracy are concerned with the development of people. For authors like Al Sourani (2003) the historical development and the gained experiences of the Western civil society had a different platform than its counterpart in the developing countries. The expansion of Western capitalism in the developing countries was not accompanied by equal expansion of civil society concept in terms of democracy and human rights. He revealed that the civil society conceptual development in the developing countries has been effected by an environment of "traditional hierarchical structures" and governed "by corrupt state

bureaucracies" Al Sourani (2003: 30). This difference of platform/environment of the conceptual development had led to the stumbling of the Arab civil society.

Another problematic issue associated with globalization is that the civil society in the West has gone through a long journey of struggle that led to its maturity. But is not the case with the Arabic civil society. Globalization dynamics are pushing the Arab civil society to have the same state of strength without allowing such journey of struggle occur. Although Kandil (2015: 12) demonstrates some positive aspects of globalisation that have reinforced the civil society, these are: First, shedding light on developmental issues such as; poverty eradication, democracy and human rights, women empowerment and environment protection. The global interest on these issues was translated into a dedication of funds, provision of technical assistance and political support to the civil society organisations in the developing countries.

Secondly, globalisation is coupled with the sophisticated communication technologies such as the Internet which facilitated the exchange of ideas, information and expertise between ACSOs and the international community. It also enabled the non-institutionalised/informal Arab civil society groups (social movements) to express themselves freely and enhance their advocacy's capacity. Kandil (2011: 165), describes the virtual social network applications of the "assumptional or alternative civil society."

The second issue, is the dualism of the international aid agencies which play a crucial role in financial sponsorship of both States and civil society organizations. This dual sponsorship has made some of the Arab civil society scholars find paradoxical function in the international development aid system. On other words; the

international donor supports the civil society organizations in bases of equality, participation and democracy, whereas the State as a recipient for such financial aids does not comply with such bases. In that sense, the international donor does not encourage such principles of democracy, equality and participation. As Al Sourani (2003: 31) states it “by collaborating with the State, international agencies seem to be giving legitimacy to state and its bureaucracies that have yet to acquire legitimacy and establish democracy.”

The second globalisation problematic issue is manifested in the relation between international donor agencies and local civil society. The growing financial power of the international donors in countries where they operate is paralleled with a growing political power of their countries. This political power sometimes is used to practice pressure on governments of Arab countries for political compromises. The negative impact of international donor is also raised by Kandil (2015:11), she states that 18““The donor states through bi-lateral accords and the international donor foundations both use the funding as a tool of negotiation and practising pressure upon the Arab governments, for other political purposes.”

The third donor problematic issue is that the international donor agencies have contributed to the negative competition among the Arab NGOs. Based on my experience as a community developer for 20 years in Egypt, I came to realize that the interest and efforts of many NGOs have only been focused on acquiring funds. As such attitude has produced negative competition among ACSOs which manifested in carrying out a pre-set donor agendas that may not respond to the social risks. For

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<sup>18</sup> “my translation”

example, many of the community development and human rights organisations in Egypt during the years 1990-2000 were carrying out programs of “gender issues development.” This concept of gender issues development then was not responding to social risk, furthermore, it was difficult to translate the term into Arabic. This view also is expressed by Kandil (2015), she explains that there are many NGOs had to incorporate programs and projects that are not necessarily reflecting social priority/needs, they are just following the donor agenda for the sake of acquiring funds. A fourth problematic issue associated with the international donor, and based on my personal view and experience is the financial dependency of local civil society organisations on international donor agencies. This dependency has made the local civil society organizations not to seek innovative ways or mechanisms of self-finance. The fifth donor related issue as stated by Albaz (1997, 147:148) that the international/foreign donor sometimes imposes certain operational conditions on CSOs such as assigning employees from the donor country for program follow up and monitor the fund spending. She adds, the foreign donor also obligates the local CSOs to purchase project equipments and products from the donor’s country, that usually are more expensive than same products from other countries.

The third civil society-globalisation issue is what seen by most of the Arab thinkers as the state of peace and security in the Arab region. For decades, most of the Arab countries have been subject to wars, armed conflicts, revolts, coups and social unrest. As such state of political instability and social unrest does not help the civil society to be developed. Globalisation has contributed to a certain extent to the spread of radical ideologies and terrorism as well as the foreign political and military

interventions in the Arab countries such as in Iraq and Libya, feeding the religious radicalism in Syria, Yemen, Egypt and Libya.

### **Domestic challenges**

The Arab civil society faces not only external challenges that produced by global dynamics, and the political, cultural and social environment, but faces also many other challenges that come from within. These challenges as stated by many prominent field researchers from inside as outside the region are; the internal governance, capacity building and skill development, networking and coordination, sustainable funding and its implications such as politicisation and transparency, common vision and strategy, civil society social impact. In the following paragraphs, each of these challenges will be investigated

#### **2.1. Politicisation and transparency**

As for the politicisation of the Arab civil society, a research conducted by Kandil (2015: 266) reveals that the Arab civil society was and still is subject to politicisation. Kandil's study approached this point through analysis of the new actors of the Arab civil society from 2010 to 2015. The new actors such as political and human rights activists after the Arab spring who have founded NGOs to be back door to politics. Also, new actors such as Muslim Brothers and Salafists movements who have founded many charity-faith based organisations to assert their presence in the socio-political scene in the Arab region. The research concludes that the politicisation of the Arab civil society due to the combination of the civil work with the political as the case with the pro-democracy, human rights activists and other interest groups. Also, the combination of the charity work with the religious as the case with Islamists

groups. The study has captured two related phenomena; the first is, the Islamisation of NGOs, this occurs in the Arab countries which have non-Muslim minorities. The second is, the sectarianism of the NGOs, especially in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. It worth mentioning that those countries have Shiites and Sunni populations, each in which establishes organisations that serve its sect's ideology, and the participation is confined to the sect followers. The civil society organisations also have been politicised before the Arab spring by the businessmen who used the NGOs as a back door to politics and to join the parliament. Another aspect of politicisation is produced by foreign funding: This point was emphasised by (Al-Ja'bari, 2010) cited by 19Asfari Institute (2016: 4) stating that "Therefore this issue of funding can be seen as a double edge sword: on the one hand, governments put pressure on civil and human rights organisations on their quest to receive international grants, and on the other, the foreign funding there is a potential for foreign funding to affect the political dependence of these organizations favor of the donors' agenda."

## **2.2. The internal governance**

Kandil (2015: 263) exposes the state of internal governance of the Arab civil society organisations through a field study that has been conducted on a segment of NGOs from different Arab countries from 2010 to 2015. The study shows the weak state of governance and the common shortcomings of the Arab civil society's internal governance. According to the study, the shortcomings are centred around the lack of democratic practices inside the organisation itself, even inside pro-democracy and

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<sup>19</sup> The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship aims to be a regional hub of a dynamic community of academics, practitioners, policy-makers, and members of the general public interested in exploring traditional and innovative forms of associational life and in advancing realistic solutions to the obstacles to effective civil society and citizenship in the Arab world

human rights based organisations. This was manifested in: Long period of presidency, personalization and nepotism, marginalization of the general assembly, the imbalance between male-female in certain positions. Besides, settling internal differences between the members far from law or the organisation regulations, lack of conducting programs and projects evaluation, except those which funded by foreign donor and the lack of transparency and accountability. These are common features of the Arab civil society governance. The study also confirmed that these common features are still exist. Kandil links the lack of democratic and participatory practices in the internal CSOs governance with the overall culture of the society.

### **2.3 Common vision, strategy and networking**

One of these internal challenges Arab civil society faces is the lack of coordination and networking among CSOs in the different fields as well as of the same field. Said (2004-2005:71) stated that “the Arab advocacy organizations have much stronger connection with the global civil society than their counterparts in the traditional fields of philanthropy, religion and development.” The phenomenon of ACSOs joining international networks and reluctant to local networks due to the advantages offered by these networks of funding, better job opportunities and invitations to conferences abroad. She also configured other reasons behind the lack of local and regional networking due to the competition between CSOs in terms of funds and mutual distrust between NGOs.

Most of the related literatures and researches reveal that ACSOs lack of common vision and strategy that respond to the social risks. Kandil (2015) explains that the lack of networking results such absence of a common vision and strategy. It

was also concluded also that the work of the Arab CSOs lacks convergence of agendas and a strategy for a sustainable local and regional role. Consequently, the Arab participation in global events have expanded but the context of this participation is still lacking, thus limiting the ability to transfer this participation into bridges between the local and the international achievements. Arab participation is presented by organizations but not by social movements. There is also a lack of exposure of the Arab groups which participate in regional and international forums, to the rest of the social segments in the Arab countries that are working on similar concerns.

#### **2.4. CSO capacity building and the foreign expert**

Building the capacity of Southern countries CSOs has become one of the main interests of donor agencies, academic research, national and international development experts whether individuals or organisations. The foreign aids have become an important part of North-South development cooperation system. The foreign expert in turn has become an important player in the development industry. Despite the many development concepts, methodologies and funds have been dedicated to human development in the South, the poverty problem of Southern countries is still unsolved.

In this section, the foreign expert role in the capacity building of the Southern CSOs will be examined/assessed by researchers and field related such as Hancock, Lempert and Sheppard. The foreign expert's character, attitude, motive, work methodology, facts and figures about foreign expertise expenditure will be addressed. The extent by which the foreign expertise contributes to the development of local communities was addressed by Sheppard (Feb. 1981) in his investigation about the

cost of the foreign expert in the development aid expenditure, he stated that “One fifth of all aid is spent on experts. And they control spending of much more, their lifestyles, training, and their ties to home all set them apart from the poor. So what can they do for development?” Sheppard’s article suggests some questions such as the cost effectiveness of the foreign expert, and the impact of the foreign expert on the development outcomes. We may get some more insights about these questions from Hancock (1992) who states his critics to the foreign expertise within the international aid industry, some of these critics are:

- a) The international aid is a huge bureaucracy that more concerned its sustainable rather than the development of the poor.
- b) International aid agencies spend money on big wasteful projects that harm the poor and annihilate indigenous societies.
- c) Aid organizations hire expensive foreign 'technical experts' who lack the local expertise and underestimate the local people knowledge and wisdom of the local people.

I think that the expert problem lies on the North-South development aid mechanism. On other words; there is a long list of procedures and requirements are imposed by the foreign donor agencies on the recipient local NGOs as a pre-condition for acquiring the fund. For example; Project/program needs assessment, proposal writing, sophisticated accountability system, project/program evaluation, impact assessment and ending with a full project/program report that must be presented to the donor agency. Local NGOs usually do not have skilled staff to fulfil them, for the recipient NGOs to get these requirements fulfilled, they have to hire or contract highly

paid domestic or foreign expert. The foreign expert cost, along with the local NGO administrative cost both consume a considerable portion of the fund value. The donor agencies usually permit budget allocations for external resources and other items under different names that open the door to the foreign expert. It worth mentioning that the foreign expert is not meant only the Western expert, but also the outsider who is not from the local community. I think that foreign expert is contributing negatively to the development of both society and its civil organisations. The foreign expertise also increases the dependency of local organisations on the external resources in terms of capacity building. It also consumes a big portion of the funds that should be dedicated to the development of local communities.

## **2.5. Arab civil society self-evaluation and impact assessment**

Self-evaluation and impact assessment are essential processes for; the ACSOs capacity development, optimising the organisations' resources, detecting misconduct and abuse of resources as well as developing indicators for measuring the social impact of these organisations. Self-evaluation is a an organisational skill that requires skilled personnel. Most of the studies and researches related to the Arab civil society organisations reveal that there is a lack of ACSOs self evaluation/critics and impact assessment measures. This constitute a common feature and challenge for the majority of ACSOs. Kandil (2015, 272:273) states that only 3% - 5% of the organisations have conducted a professional self evaluation, this due to the foreign donor requirement. She further states that the Ministries of Social Affairs in the Arab countries often are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the NGOs. She adds, the problem is that these Ministries are not qualified for conducting such evaluation.

## **Civil Society partnership with private sector**

The Arab private sector has made some little initiatives in responding to the concept of social responsibility and or for political or religious motives. The social responsibility of private sector concept is been promoted by many international entities such as UN, ISO, the world Bank, and civil society networks such as the Arab Network for NGOs. Many of the financial insinuations, banks and businessmen, international companies have incorporated section /department or programs for social solidarity. Many social projects were sponsored by the private sector such as low cost housing, hospitals, schools, income generation projects for marginalised ...etc Kandil (2015: 238) states that the interaction dynamics between the private sector and civil society is very difficult to define due to the absence of documentation/reports that trace the private sector contributions to the civil society.

Kandil also reveals that there are many private sector financial institutions and companies refuse to declare the volume of financial support they donate to the civil society organisations for social programs. The same with many civil society organisations that refuse to declare the volume of funds that they receive. She further states that the result of a research that conducted by ANN on the Gulf region about the social responsibility role in the development, indicated that 50% of the segment refused to provide information about the volume of the fund. Kandil (2015: 240) gave examples of each country about the private sector partnership initiatives with CSOs that respond to different social risks. Despite the hundreds of such initiatives, still there is no Data base/bank that accurately traces the dynamics of such partnerships and the volume of funds. Is easy to notice that the “funding factor” is ambiguous in

the Arab world. She further concludes other obstacles that faces the partnership between civil society and private sector such as the lack of mutual trust and the politicisation of civil society organisations by some business men.

### **Strengths of the Arab civil society**

Despite the array of challenges the Arab civil society faces, yet, it still have strong points, these are: First, the deeply rooted social concepts of solidarity, voluntarism and cooperation that driven from the faith. Second, the existence of civil society infrastructure that manifested in a considerable size and scope of activities in some Arab countries, its diversity, NGOs educational and academic institutions and local and regional NGO networks Third, the cognitive accumulation manifested in good quantity of civil society related literatures and researches that have been produced in the three decades. Kandil (2011: 8) states that 20“Over the past 25 years, the a cognitive accumulation about the civil society in Egypt and the Arab region has been achieved. Besides, there a civil society concerned academic group is formed.” Kandil (2015: 9), states that 21“the Arab Network for NGOs (ANN) alone, and since its foundation in 1997 till 2015 has produced around 50 scientific work that cover most aspects of the Arab civil society. Kandil further states that the work of ANN is following the modern research methodologies that based on Multi-disciplinary approaches and comparative studies”. Moreover, there is a considerable number of Arabic NGO educational institutions such as universities, institutions and specialised training centres provide programs and courses on the civil society at different degrees.

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<sup>20</sup> “my translation”

<sup>21</sup> “my translation”

Fourth, is the intentional support that Arab civil society receives from International organisations such as UN and EU that manifested in provision of funds and different development programs that empower the civil society organisations.

### **Threats and opportunities of Arab civil society**

Over the past three decades, the Arabic pro-democracy and human rights organisations both have been advocating democracy with the assumption that despotic regimes are road-block to democracy. Whereas the reality of the Arab societies proves that cultural/religious factors are the blockage. The despotic regimes are by-products of the cultural environment, for i.e., toppling Saddam Hussein, Mubarak, Ali Saleh and al-Ghaddafi did not bring about any democracy, by the contrary, brought chaos, more poverty and armed conflicts. The real threat to democracy and civil society is the cultural environment. The second threat to ACSOs, especially pro-democracy and human rights is the cyber/assumptional civil society which is emerging as an alternative to CSOs, since it polarises the youth and provides equal and free participation. The Arab uprisings have proved that virtual social networks constitute an effective alternative to civil society. The last threat is the interest groups and political activists who politicise the civil society organisations and use them as a coverage to promote their political or religious ideological.

The Arab civil society have many opportunities such as youth participation and partnership with the private sector. The Arab youth has many skills and to a large extent is qualified to drive the civil society. The current civil society structure is dominated by aged elites and radical ideologies and need a new blood to be infused

into its veins. Kandil (2015) states that the Arab civil society failed to attract the youth, whereas the virtual civil society successfully did.

## **Chapter IV: The Arab Spring and civil society**

The Arab Spring was an event that affected strongly both the Arab region and the entire world. It has become a subject of local, regional and international debates. The Arab Spring is pictured and been perceived in different ways. It has produced controversies and extreme views about its causes and the different players were involved. The Arab Spring was a unique social phenomenon, it was a turning point in the Arab region's contemporary history. It was also a critical test for the Arab masses, the authoritarian systems, the Islamists and their ideology, the Arab civic sector and the Western foreign politics in the Arab region.

This chapter purposes to address the commonly called "Arab Spring" as a collective social movement, and to highlight its causes, dynamics and its impact on both Arab civil society sector and the international community in general. This year counts six years since the Arab Spring, and still no progress is made concerning people's life conditions and the civil and public liberties. By the contrary, the political, economic and social situation got much worse than before the Arab spring!

The Arab region during the teen years prior to the Arab spring had witnessed all forms of social protests; strikes, demonstrations, manifestations and labour sit ins. In the year 2011, a wave of social explosions had swept away the Arab region that led to "revolutions" in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen. The spark of the revolutions had started first in Tunisia that led to toppling down the ex-president Ben Ali. The spark was inspired by the self-immolation of a street vendor (Abu Azizi). It worth mentioning that Tunisia ruled by Ben Ali, it had much better position than the rest of the Arab countries in terms of economy, civil and public liberties, women status

and human rights. After Tunisia, and in domino fashion, revolutions have occurred in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen.

### **Causes**

The Arab spring is still a subject of social debates among the Arab elites, thinkers, writers and general public. I was able to develop a general idea about the different views about the causes of the Arab spring through checking different writings, interaction in the virtual social networks such Face book, Blogs, Twitter, and following up the strategic and political TV programs. The views about the causes of the Arab spring are divided into three sets.

The first set of views confirms that the Arab Spring was a result of genuine social movements of the Arab masses that based on a national will and aimed at making real social change. The Arab masses wanted to replace the despotic regimes with a genuine democratic governments for improving their life conditions. The youth who constitutes a majority of the Arab populations was the motor of those revelations. The limited margin of freedom and participation of youth in the political and public spheres, besides, the absence of the Arab states' vision of including them in the development policies and processes had led to the uprisings.

This set of views is addressed by the Foreign Policy Blogs, 22Elhusseini (May, 2013) that identified the reasons of such revolutions as follow; the dissatisfaction of the general public was scaling up during the ten years previous to

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<sup>22</sup> Fadi F. Elhusseini is a political and media counsellor at the Embassy of Palestine in Turkey. He is an Associate Research Fellow (ESRC) at the Institute of Middle East Studies- Canada. He served as Director of the Bureau of Palestine Minister of Foreign Affairs, and as a media advisor at Palestinian Presidency. Mr. Elhusseini was the Executive Director of the Palestinian Council on Foreign Relations and worked as a lecturer at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. He ran a number of TV programs at Palestinian Broadcasting Channel, worked as news writer for a London- based news agency and published a number of political articles in Arabic and English.

the “Arab Spring” due to deterioration of the economy, increasing rate of unemployment, especially among the youth. Also, the poor social conditions, poor health and education services. He added, the negative image that Arabs have about their rulers and their governments, referring to their subjugation to the Western states, as they were seen as the yes-men. Another reason was the phenomenon of inheritance of power from the Arab presidents to their sons, that was spreading over the transition countries. It happened in Syria, from al-Assad the father to Bashar the son, the same was expected to happen in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia. I remember a compound word that was spreading over the Arab region by the year 2005, the word is “Gomlokia”, the first syllabi of the word is “Gom” refers to “Gomhurria” which means republic in English, and the second syllabi “Lokia” refers to “Malakia”, which means monarchy in English. This how the Arabs perceived and described the state-governance in their countries, republics that have been ruled as monarchies.

The second set of opinions reflects views of a sizeable portion of the Arab populations, especially in Egypt. This set believes that the Arab spring was just a conspiracy that resulted by political deals between parties from inside and outside the Arab region. It was designed and engineered by the USA and its alliances, and financed by the black gold of the Gulf, for geo-political, geo-religious (just figurative term), and economical interests. The uprisings targeted certain Arab countries aiming at re-mapping the Middle East. This set of views is affirmed in book review by Bramhall (2015) that demonstrates the role of the US government in instigating, funding and coordinating the Arab Spring uprisings. The author provided clues and proofs with details of the involvement of USA along with its national security and

defence apparatus and mechanisms, other Western and Arabic communication media, and many of civil society organisations such USAID and Freedom House, the National Democratic Institute (DNI), International Republican Institute (IRI), and many other important civil society identities. In Bramhall review, The Arab spring was a replica of the “coloured revolutions” that took place in some east-Europe countries that were under the governance of pro Russian leaders. He reveals that the Arab uprisings and coloured revolutions both were catalysed by the same organisations. In the review, the Arab spring uprisings shared in common four characteristics, these are:

None of these uprisings was spontaneous, all required careful and lengthy planning (5+ years) by the State Department, CIA pass through foundations, and George Soros and the pro-Israel lobby.

All uprisings focused exclusively on toppling the authoritarian rulers without replacing the autocratic structure that maintained them in power.

None of the Arab spring protests made any reference whatsoever to powerful anti-US sentiment over the Palestine and Iraq.

All the instigators “political activists” of the Arab spring uprisings were middle class, well educated youth who mysteriously were vanished after 2011.

Ardic (2012, 18: 22) also presents different opinions of other authors, by which many of these opinions confirm the intervention of foreign countries such as Qatar and the role its satellite TV Network al-Jazeera that has played an important role in fuelling the revolts. Also, the role of Turkey and other countries in the region.

This set of opinions is justified by some puzzling issues that worth analysing, some of these are;

The sudden increase in size and activity scope of community development, pro-democracy and human rights organisations in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen a few years before the Arab spring. Also, the increase of the International funds to those organisations, especially from USA and EU zone donors that was tripled in size from 2000 to 2012.

The double standard of USA and EU foreign politics in the Arab region. On the one hand, they stressed on, and promote democracy and human rights, specially women rights in Egypt, Yemen and Libya. On the other, they turn a blind eye to women rights violations in other Arab States. The dualism of Western donor agencies (USA and EU), that is manifested in funding both the Arab autocratic systems and human rights organisations at the same time.

The Arab spring uprisings were first ignited in countries with better margin of civil liberties in the region such as Tunisia and Egypt. Also, the silence/absence of the international and Arab human rights organisations when the Islamists were dominating the socio-political scene in a structured manner in the transition countries!. Many Arabs also wonder why those human rights organisations turned a blind eye to the rights violations of ethnic and religious by the radical Islamists in the region!.

Another point that noteworthy and sheds doubt about the authenticity of the Arab Spring revolts is the contradictory stance of both Arab and international human rights organisations as well as the foreign politics of USA and EU towards the Syrian

and Bahraini protests. Although the cause of protests in both countries due to unfair political governance, since in both States there is an a minority rules a repressed majority. The protests of the majority Shiites in Bahrain who constitute more than 60% of the population and ruled by a minority of the Sunni elites, they were strongly and violently confronted and quickly controlled by the Bahraini authority and by the help of the Gulf States with the silence of the human rights organisations, with the blessing of the Western foreign politics. While the Sunni protesters in Syria had received all kinds of support that led to the escalation and transformation of those protests into armed conflicts and civil war that continue till present day.

All these exclamation marks were clarified by Elhousseini in the same article and Blog. He traced the plan development of the “New Middle East Project” that was adopted by the USA administrations of GWB dynasty. The idea was initiated by Bush the father in the context of the New World Order, then followed up by Bush the son who consolidated Condoleezza Rice’s theory of “constructive chaos.” Then, Obama’s administration and changing the plan of action but keeping the same objective of the “New Middle East Project.” The USA foreign politics in the Middle East under Obama’s mandate had shifted its policy from State stability to stable governance, accordingly, the plan was modified to transform the governance system of the Arab region into the Turkish governance model of “moderate political Islam.” The interest of USA administration in the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM) has been increased, since MBM was the most organized and financially supported. The contacts and contracts (deals) were made, this was the green light for the Islamists to take control of the political stage.

The third set of views confirms that the Arab spring has started as an authentic popular social movements that led by youth forces, then hijacked by interest groups such as the Islamic movements and the remnants of the toppled regimes. After toppling the regimes, the Arab street in the transition countries was in disorder and chaos, absence of security, daily manifestations, emergence of new groups of radical Islamists, paralysis of public administration system and dismantling of the internal security system such as police and national intelligence. The disorder and chaos were the fertile soil for the Islamists to polarise the poor classes and promote the slogan of “Islam is the solution”, this was the beginning of hijacking the Arab Spring. Partridge (2012) states that “Bradley argues that political change has destroyed this order. Riots now occur daily, hardliners target secular forces and Christians, and the new leaders lack popular support. The tourist sectors of both countries have been hit severely. Worst of all, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Ennhada in Tunisia are set to gain power. Bradley believes that the “moderation” of these two parties is a myth designed to fool both voters and the West.” Bradley (Jan. 2012), in his analysis of the new Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain shows how the revolutions were first ignited and who were the major players behind them and how revolutions were hijacked. Bradley traces the processes of how the organized and financially supported Islamists rode the wave of revolutions and hijacked them from

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<sup>23</sup> John R. Bradley was born in England and educated at University College London, Dartmouth College and Exeter College, Oxford. Fluent in Egyptian Arabic, he has been covering the Middle East for almost two decades, living independently in working-class neighborhoods in cities as diverse as Tunis, Cairo, Tangier, Jeddah, and Sanna. He has written four critically acclaimed, bestselling books. He also wrote “Inside Egypt” that predicted of the revolt against Mubarak.

the masses who ignited them. He also gives examples from Tunisia and Egypt that demonstrate how the Islamists have violently confronted and frightened the secularists and liberal groups. The Islamists planned attacks and promoted rumours against all non-Islamists political groups and individuals for defamation, with the aim to shut their voices and/or exclude them from the political stage. He also shows how the Islamists took control of the street as well as the political scene. He underlines the defeat of the liberal and progressive movements and the transformation of the Islamists into an organised political power that supported by Arab monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar. I agree with this set of views for the following reasons:

The declarations of the Islamists right before the Arab Spring confirm that they were not interested in toppling down Mubarak. They were only demanding certain and modest political and economic reforms.

The Islamic Sunni 24Fiqh (فقه الإسلام السني) prohibits revolting against the Muslim ruler even if He is tyrant. The Islamists leaders have admitted through a number of televised interviews in Egypt TVs at the beginning of the uprisings that they are not interested in ruling, therefore, the plan to rule was out of place.

The Islamists usually avoid clashes with the State security apparatus, this explains why the Islamists did not participate in the first three days of Egypt's revolution of the 25th of January, 2011. They only participated when the police forces gave up and neutrality of the army was assured.

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<sup>24</sup> Fiqh (فقه) is the interpretation/understanding of Qura'n and Hadith (narrations), both constitute the main two sources of the Sunni Islamic teachings.

The initiation of the Arab spring raises many unanswered questions such as; why the spark of revolts was first ignited in Tunisia which is considered the most progressive Arab country with high margin of civil liberties and acceptable women profile? It would have been understandable if the spark was ignited first in Saudi Arabia. Another question was raised; why the revolution spark was extended from Tunisia directly to Egypt without passing by Algeria and Morocco which are neighbours and closer to Tunisia than Egypt to Tunisia?

Although the truth behind the “Arab Spring” is not a core concern of this study, but it provides useful insights and highlights certain issues that influence the civil society such as the Arabic public opinion, role and stance of pro-democracy and human rights organisations, role of international and regional powers, role of communication media, the Western politics in the Arab region, and the influence of the religious ideologies.

This chapter intends to highlight two points; first, the role and reaction of the Arab civil society organisations to the events and dynamics of the Arab Spring. The second point is the impact of the Arab Spring on the Arab civil society organisations.

### **The Arab Spring dynamics and outcomes**

The socio-political scene during the fifteen years prior to the Arab Spring had witnessed a rapid social and cultural changes. There many social dynamics were taking place and manifested in; the foundation of many community development, pro-democracy and human rights organisations, collations, the emergence of social movements such as “Kifaya” that means (enough is enough), pressure groups, interest groups and other forms of political opposition groups such as the 6th of April and 9th

of March. Other parallel dynamics were taking place such as the renaissance of the Islamic movements of Muslim Brothers and the Salafists in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco. The Islamic groups have effectively used their charity-faith based NGOs as tool of mobilising and recruiting the masses in the poor zones. The Arab youth under 30 years that constitutes more than 60% of the Arab population they were the driving force of all these dynamics. Also, synchronised global dynamics such as the rapid advancement of the communication technology such as the Internet and its different social networks applications that provided the Arab youth with a platform of free participation with no fear of speaking up and demanding change. In a paper by Oattway and Hamzay (2011: 11), shows that the Arab youth, especially in Tunisia and Egypt have optimised the Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs as an effective channel of information dissemination by circulating audio visual materials and documenting the human rights violations practised by state security apparatus. Blogs were functioning as virtual human rights organisations. The “Arab spring dynamics” have produced many positive and other negative outcomes. One of the positive and most important outcome is that the Arab people for the first time in decades they crossed the barrier of fear and been able to challenge the state and its security apparatus.

Kandil (2011: 164) has stated that the eleven years prior to the Arab spring had witnessed, and was noticed, a gradual increase of crossing the fear by the masses as well as many civil society organizations. That was manifested in the protests, strike on, sit-ins, and the formation of advocacy groups, collations and organizations. The second positive outcome is the rise of the liberal and secular trends which manifested

in the formation of anti-system and anti-religion groups that shed the light on the state governance model or pattern as well as the concepts of citizenship and democracy.

On the other hand, the Arab spring has produced many negative outcomes such as chaos, riots, more corruptions, social and political unrest, societal divisions and more poverty. It also resulted in armed conflicts between the radical Islamic frictions and the state in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Egypt. The Arab Spring contributed to the emergence of the proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the spread of terrorism all over the region and the world. All these negative consequences had made a sizeable portion of Arab populations adopts the concept of security vs. civil liberty that negatively effected the civil society organisations.

### **Lessons learnt**

One of the social lessons learnt from the Arab spring events is that the politics of control and repression always lead to social explosion. When people are repressed and social justice is missed, then the social explosion is inevitable, and its occurrence would be just matter of time. The societies that are under poverty and repression usually generate new social initiatives and movements as counterweight. For these social initiatives and movements to be fruitful, the society must have a healthy civil society organisations that can contain, adopt, protect, represent and empower them.

The second lesson is that, there nobody in earth is safe when there are conflicts and sufferings in other parts of the world. That is clearly manifested in the spread of terrorism and immigration during and post the “Arab spring”. This lesson expectedly will be translated into more forms of solidarity and cooperation between North and

South at both levels, governmental and non governmental in order to confront such crisis and conflicts before they get out of control.

The third lesson is the important role of faith and ideology, both must be handled with care, because they can be a serious threat to the human well being. Eghdamian (2014), stated that “Throughout history, religious ideology has played a key role in shaping the collective liberation theology. The impact it continues to have on mobilisation of social networks and resources should not be underestimated.”

### **The role of the Arab civil society in the Arab uprisings**

This section intends to identify the role the Arab civil society organisations played in the uprisings. Kandil (2011, 164:165) concludes that the Arab civil society was not the cause of the Arab spring. She rationalises her view by a number of justifications, these are: First, is that 75% of the Arab civil society organisations are charity-faith based that dedicated only to the provision of direct social services to their target groups. The other 25 % are community development, pro-democracy and human rights based organisations by which only 60 organisations (in Egypt) are human rights which their capacity to make such political change is suspected.

Her second justification is that the revolutions were ignited by youth forces who were not involved in the civic sector organisations, instead they were occupying the virtual/assumptional civil society as she calls it in Arabic (المجتمع المدنى الافتراضى) and they brought into reality the revolts. Kandil third justification is that the civil society organisations only got involved in the event developments after the regimes were toppled. Kandil’s point is that the limitations of the Arab civil society that were

produced by the political and cultural environment disabled it of being a vehicle of such significant change.

Although Kandil's analysis seems convincing, but I argue that the ACSOs did not play an important role in fostering the uprisings for two reasons: First, the 75% of the ACSOs are charity-faith based organisations (mainly Islamic) which have been founded, financed and administrated by Islamist groups such as Muslim Brothers and Salafists. Those organisations have played undeniable role in heating up, mobilising, and recruiting the masses. Moreover, they offered logistic assistance to the protesters before and during the revolts such as first aids, mobile clinics, free transport from remote cities, towns and villages to the Liberation Square in Cairo (Midan al-Tahrir) which was the base of the protests in Cairo. They also provided food, drinks, blankets and even cash money in order to keep the manifestations on. Secondly, it is the notable proliferation of those organisations in the last five years prior to the Arab uprisings. It was also noted the increase of the international funds and political support (especially from USA and EU) to the pro-democracy and human rights based organisations that played crucial role in mobilising the masses through monitoring the state security apparatus violations of protesters rights.

Thirdly, Vallianatos (2013: 6), states that "Certain civil society associations, like Kifaya and National Association for Change (NAC), were the direct outcome of this process which also enjoyed contacts and links with civil associations abroad." It is worth mentioning some points in that regard: First, Kifaya (كفاية) is an Islamic oriented group and NAC is a pro-democracy oriented which polarised a number of young people that called themselves "political and human rights activists" and was

led by Mr. al- Bradaie who was living abroad most of his life and returned back to Egypt little time before the uprisings. Third, both Kifaya and NAC members were vanished right after the Muslim Brothers were toppled in 2013. For these reasons I think that the civil society organisations both local and some global ones have played an important role in the initiation of the uprisings.

### **Impact of Arab Spring on the Arab civil society**

The Arab civil society has been witnessing a great set back after the Arab spring. This is manifested in its relationship with both governments and the societies (masses). As for the relationship with the governments, Arab civil society is losing the margin of freedom that gained with struggle over the twenty years prior to the uprisings. Both distrust and conflict between civil society organisations and governments are increasing. Consequently, post Arab spring governments (except Tunisia) have been imposing new legislations that allow them to practise control and surveillance over the CSOs, especially the Islamists sponsored, pro-democracy and human rights based.

To certain extent, the control of the state over the civil society is understandable/justifiable, and is supported by the majority of the public, at least in Egypt. The lack of transparency of some civil society organisations about the funds they receive and the identity of the donors is a key conflictive matter. The governments claim that foreign funding could lead to politicisation of those organisations, as consequence, the national security can be threatened.

As for the relationship between the Arab civil society organisations and the public society, it has witnessed a set back too, especially the human rights and pro-democracy organisations which depend totally on foreign funding. The Arab revolts and by the name of democracy have brought about the radical Islamists to power in the Arab transition states. This made many of the Arab people to develop a negative image about the pro-democracy and human rights organisations. Also, the national security apparatus in Egypt claim that some of those organisations were involved in activities counter the state, and they were politicised, especially the organisations that received funds from American donors such as George Soros and Freedom House.

As an Egyptian, I can affirm that there is a sizeable portion of the Arab population particularly in Egypt is in favour to the tough security measures that taken by the State against those organisations. This due to the volume of destructions occurred in the transition countries. The atrocities committed by ISIS, the spread of terrorism, the massive loss of lives, the millions of unwanted Arab refugees and other millions of displaced. All these made the masses and out of fear develop a negative image about democracy in general and its dedicated organisations in particular. The negative public opinion about CSOs has been evolved after the information revelation/leak which proved the involvement of foreign elements in the Arab uprisings.

At this stage, it is important to quote Kandil (2011: 33) stating that <sup>25</sup>“The last events occurred in the Arab region, refereeing to the uprisings and the armed conflicts, had opened a window to look over and re-think the Arabic and Western theories and

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<sup>25</sup> “my translation”

assumptions about democracy and social justice. These events were unexpected and should make us re-construct our ideas and theories.”

## **Chapter V: Egypt case study**

### **Background data**

The state of Egypt, also known as the Arabic Republic of Egypt, is located in North- east of Africa, and is at crossroads of Africa and Asia. It has an easy access to Europe through its northern coast on the Mediterranean Sea, and access to the Gulf region through its eastern coasts on the Red sea and Gulf of Aqaba. Egypt is bordered by Libya in the west, Sudan in the south, and Gaza strip in the north (Map of Egypt, Figure 2, appendix). Egypt is the largest population in the Arab region, is estimated by different sources of statistics in 2017 around 96 million, with annual increase of 2.1 to 2.8%. Life expectancy is 72 years (men), 76 years (women). Youth (age 15-35) constitutes around 60% of the population, with high rate of unemployment in some Arab countries. The land is one million sq km, by which 4% only is inhabited by most of the population (around 95%). The vast majority live in the Nile Valley by the river banks, the rest of the land is desert that lacks water sources. The official language is Arabic, the Pound is the currency. The main geographical features are the Suez Canal and the Nile river which is the main source of water in Egypt.

Egypt used to be the cultural and enlightenment centre of the Arab world, to certain extent still is the leader of the political, cultural and social movements. Its pyramids, temples, mummies, kings and queens, with all the greatness was made by its early inhabitants (Pharaohs) indicate that Egypt was also the world cultural and enlightenment centre. Egypt the once was a great civilisation, now is a hub of civic problematic issues such as lack of democracy, human rights and state governance.

Over the past six decades, Egypt has been suffering from political instability and social unrest due to the lack of democracy. Since the year 2000 until 2010, the Egyptians have been demonstrating their dissatisfaction of the constant decline of living standard.

The 25th of January was the day of change for the Egyptians who took in the street for the first time since decades demanding without fear (bread, peace, social justice and freedom). The “revolution” succeeded to topple Mubarak and his political party, but largely failed to topple the system/structure that is responsible for producing such despotic patterns of governance.

In this chapter, Egypt and its population, cultural and social profiles, brief political historical development of state governance over the last century, and its relationship dynamics with both political Islam and liberalism will be addressed and analysed. The following section will address Egypt and the Egyptians identity and cultural-religious profile.

### **Identity and character**

The general perspective on the Egyptian personality and character is based on both academic literatures as well as my personal views as an Egyptian. This section aims at reviewing the Egyptian social behaviour, rather exposing its privacy. Since I believe that self-confrontation and/or introspection is essential to identify the root problem. The identity of Egypt and the Egyptian both are present topics in the social debates, especially among the youth in the virtual social networks. For me, Egypt is a cocktail of different cultures, races and beliefs that should enrich the culture context, not to impoverish it as it is happening now. The current Egyptians carry a mix of genes

and bloods of Pharaohs, Arabs, Africans, Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, different colonizers and conquerors of Egypt throughout the history. I agree with the Egyptian thinker Milad Hanna over his description of the Egyptian identity (Hanna, 1999). The author stated that “the Egyptian identity is a mixture of seven pillars; four main pillars and three subsidiary ones. The four main ones are: Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islam. The three subsidiary are: the Arabic, Mediterranean and the African. Egypt has mixed all these pillars in order to form the Egyptian identity.”

I think that the cultural mix of Egypt is manifested in the Egyptian personality and social identity. As for the social, the Egyptians since centuries till the present have been following different social practises in their daily life. The farmers in Egypt are still applying Pharaonic irrigation methods and using the Coptic calender for cultivation and harvest. The urban structure and architecture styles reflect the different cultural components of Egypt, i.e. in Alexandria still exist the Greek fingerprints in architecture in many neighbourhoods. In Cairo exists the Islamic architecture in big neighbourhoods such as al-Hussein. Also still exist the Coptic style in ancient Cairo neighbourhood, along with the colonial style in the canal cities such as El-Suez and Ismailia, furthermore, the Bedouin-Arabian style in Sinai and cities at the borders with Libya.

The Egyptian person is conservative and seemingly religious, but can easily be adapted to corruption. The Transparency International Report (2016) indicates that the Arab states in general occupy an advanced rankings in corruption, not only in the political level but also in public administration and private sector. Egypt also occupies advanced rankings in women harassment. A study conducted on 22 Arab countries

and presented by 26BBC (12 of November, 2013) shows that the Arab countries in general have poor record in women's rights index. Based on a report issued by Daily News Egypt (Sept. 18, 2017) stated that 99.3% of Egyptian women experienced sexual harassment.

Although the Egyptians are seemingly modern, in the sense of consuming the Western liberal cultural products of sciences, medicine, fashion, music, picture movies and Hi-Techs from mobile set to most sophisticated weapons, but criticises the Western culture and principles. Furthermore, leaves no chance to live in the West, not only for economic reasons but also for modernity, social justice, security, democracy, freedom and human rights. This deadly duplicity of the Egyptian character is also manifested in the misconception of both democracy and the practise of civil liberties. While the Egyptians struggle for democratic governance, themselves are not democratic in the house, street, work and school. The Egyptian society to a certain extent is a masculine patriarchal by which the elder is at higher place than the young, man is superior to woman and the rich is above all. The Egyptian is patient but can be rebellious any time, intelligent but undisciplined and more emotional than rational. The Egyptians like to make jokes about anything and everything, especially the politicians. For the Egyptians, telling jokes and comedian films both are popular tools of expressing the public dissatisfaction, since there is no law prohibits joke-telling --so far. The Egyptians are creative but fatalistic that rarely think of the far future (am included).

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<sup>26</sup> BBC: Egypt 'worst for women' out of 22 countries in Arab world, 12 November, 2013.

## Religions

The two main religions in Egypt are the Islam and Christianity. The Muslims are the majority and mainly Sunni and minority Shiites both constitute between 85% to 90% of Egypt population. The Christians minorities between 15% to 20%, are mainly Copts Orthodox and some other minor Christian sects. It worth mentioning that there is no reliable census about the Christian population. According to the state statistics, they are estimated 10%, whereas, they are ranging between 15% to 20% according to the Coptic Church records, since every Egyptian Christian new born must be registered in the church (Hulsman, 2012). The differences of the Egyptian Christians census due to political reasons since they are not politically represented according to their percentage. CNN (26 may, 2017) states that “There is little Christian representation in government in Egypt.” It further states that “The current Parliament contains 36 Christians out of 596 members, 24 of them were awarded seats through a religion-based quota system, according to a report from the Brookings Institution.” The two main influential religious institutions in Egypt are: Al-Azhar that represents the majority of Muslim Sunni and constitutes the highest Islamic authority that concerned with the Islamic affairs inside and outside Egypt. The Grand Imam of al-Azhar is the highest Islamic religious rank. <sup>27</sup>The Grand Imam is responsible for al-Azhar Mosque, <sup>28</sup>al- Azhar University and al Azhar as an official institution. The

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<sup>27</sup> The Grand Imam is Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, is the most prestigious ranking in the Muslim Sunni in the Arab World.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Azhar university is today the most influential religious university in the Muslim world, with capacity of 90000 students at a time.

second influential religious institution is <sup>29</sup>the Coptic Church that represents the Copts and is the official institution of the Coptic affairs inside and outside Egypt. The Coptic Pope is the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church Of Alexandria, and is responsible for the Coptic Church and its affiliate associations and educational institutions. Al- Azhar and the Coptic Church both with their representatives the Grand Imam and the Pope constitute a political weight and have influence over both the public masses and the State. The majority of Muslim Egyptians are moderate and tolerant to non-Muslims except small percentage that is considered as fanatic or radical.

The Christians of Egypt mainly are Orthodox Copts and constitute between 10-20% of the population. They are considered as a factor of political equilibrium due to their being secularists or supporters to secular state form. The Islamists are mainly represented by the Muslim Brothers and the Salafists whose ideology is similar to the Wahhabists of Saudi Arabia. For the latter, Islam is not only a religion but also is a form of governance that is manifested in the Nation of Islam (al-ummah) and the Caliphate is the form of governance that all Muslims should be under it. It is important to stress that this ideology does not express/reflect the views of the majority of Egyptian Muslims.

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<sup>29</sup> The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, also known as the Coptic Orthodox Church, is the principal Christian church in Egypt that represents the Christian Copts

## **Egypt political identity**

The issue of Egypt's political identity and state pattern is a complex set of many factors and players-- is more puzzling than the engineering and construction of the pyramids. The main players are: the militarists, radical Islamists, al-Azhar as it represents the moderate Sunni Islam, the liberals, secularists and the Coptic church that represents the Christian minorities. It is hard to define whether Egypt is a secular or religious state and whether is democratic or not. This due to the contradictory/conflictive articles of the Egyptian 30Constitution that in its first article "The Arab Republic of Egypt is a sovereign state, united and indivisible, where nothing is dispensable, and its system is democratic republic based on citizenship and the rule of law." Although the article admits clearly the citizenship concept, and all citizens are equal before law, and having equal rights. While the second article states that "Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is its official language. The principles of Islamic Sharia are the principle source of legislation."

It worth explaining some essential points are related to Sharia law; firstly, there is no consensus among the world Muslims both Sunni and Shia about a unified definition and application form of Sharia law. This due to the different interpretations of different Fikh schools of the two main books of Islam: al-Qura'n in Arabic ( القرآن ), and al-Hadith (Narrations and biography of the Prophet), in Arabic ( الحديث الشريف ). For example, Saudi Arabia and Iran have differences in the interpretation and application of Sharia law, one of these differences is women right to drive cars in Iran, while in Saudi Arabia is forbidden.

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<sup>30</sup> [www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt\\_2014.pdf](http://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf)

Secondly, the Sharia law for the Muslims is the divine law that is not subject to modification nor development. At this stage, it is important to highlight some of the Sharia law content according to the radical Islamists interpretations in order to identify the differences between the Sharia and civil law. According to the Sharia law, the Muslim is superior to non-Muslim and should not be subordinated by non-Muslim, furthermore, man is superior to woman who must be under the custody of men. As a result of such discrimination, the non-Muslim and women both do not have equal rights and are excluded from full political participation. It is important to stress that in some Islamic countries, women have the right to rule such as Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh.

Thirdly, is the incompatibility of Sharia law with many liberal concepts such as democracy and human rights. For example, women in Sharia law do not have equal share as men in terms of inheritance, testimony, jobs and others, i.e. in Saudi Arabia, the Sharia law forbids women travel abroad alone without a consent/permit of her male patron/sponsor (husband, father, uncle or brother). Furthermore, for the non-Muslim, the freedom of establishing worship temples is restricted. For example, building a church in Egypt requires a presidential decree, and this is a source of continuous conflicts between Christian and Muslims. It is worth mentioning also that according to Sharia, anyone criticise Allah (God), Islam, the prophets, or converts to Christianity is criminalised or be killed, depends on the interpretation/Fatwa (فتوى), as it happened with the prominent liberal writer Farag Fouda and the thinker Naguib Mahfouz (Winner of Noble Prize for literature). Moreover, is prohibited for non-

Muslims to propagate their belief to Muslims. Also, the gender minorities such as LGTB (lesbians, gays, transsexuals and bisexuals) are criminalised. Simply put, the Sharia law according to the radical Islamists discourse/interpretation in the Arab region is incompatible and/or conflictive with the concepts of democracy and human right index. In the last paragraphs, the constitutional paradoxes were addressed in order to identify the political-cultural environment of the civil liberties in general, and the civil society in particular. In the following section, a historical overview (from 1900-2017) on both political and state governance development in Egypt with reference to the civil society state in each stage.

### **Political historical development: Liberalism, Militarism and Islamism.**

The undergoing political conflict between the Islamists, militarists and liberals dates back the late nineteenth century. In the following paragraphs, historical overview on the political and state governance development will be addressed and analysed. This section aims at defining the political, cultural and social environment and their relationship dynamics to the civil liberties in general, and the civil society in particular.

During the last century, Egypt has been ruled under many different political systems and operated under several constitutions. The year 1879 was the revolution of the Egyptian dignity that was led by Orabi (was the head of the Egyptian armed forces) against the tyrant Ottoman Khedive (governor). In 1919 was the revolution of liberation from the British colony led by Saad Zaghloul (civilian). Both revolutions had deepened the national and liberal sentiment in the Egyptian nation. Al-Wafd was the first liberal-nationalism political party that founded by Zaghloul in 1919. Al-Wafd

was a liberal progressive party that politically polarised the Coptic Christians under its slogan “Religion is for God; the nation is for all.” It worth mentioning that during the monarchic Egypt, it was normal for the Christian citizen to be a Prime Minister such as the case of Yousuf Whabi and Boutros Pasha Ghali (Grandfather of Boutros Ghali the former UN secretary General). In the 1928, the Islamic thinker Hassan al-Banna has founded the Muslim Brotherhood movement with an ideology of revival the Islamic Caliphate that was abolished by the secularist Kamal Ataturk in Turkey. Egypt kept democratically, till the military coup of Nasser. The year 1952 was a turning point in the liberal monarchic Egypt, the popular leader Gamal Abdel Nasser and the members of the Free Officers Movement (FOM) which formed by youth military officers, with the support of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM). Both had planned and implemented the revolution, or the military revolution or the militarist-Islamist coup against the monarchy, and ousted the last ruler/member of Muhammed Ali dynasty, the King Farouk. It worth mentioning that Egypt was transformed from a primitive nation into a modern state thanks to Muhammed Ali, who is considered the founder of modern Egypt. The monarchic Egypt was operating under liberal constitutions such as 1923, which was the first Arabic constitution that admitted the right for the Egyptians to establish non-profit organisations (Kandil, 2011, P:102). Monarchic Egypt was more modern and liberal than many European

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<sup>31</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM) known in Arabic (al-Ikhwan), is the oldest and largest Islamist organisation, it has been founded in 1928 by the Islamist thinker Hasan al-Banna, at the wreckage of the Caliphate which was ended by the collapsing of the Ottoman Empire. MBM was incubator and or school for many smaller Islamic radical Sunni groups in the Arab region, some of them were transformed into the Jihadism. The MBM has offices and or representations in many countries in the world. MBM since its birth till 2011 was clandestine movement, using violence against its rivals, it had military wing for carrying out certain military natured operations and terrorist. attacks.

states then, moreover, it was economically powerful country. The year 1953, Egypt was declared republic, the declaration was associated with a change of the constitution, and this was the first setback of democracy in modern Egypt. The “Revolution Council” led by General Nasser has abolished the liberal constitution of 1923, and formed instead, the Arabic Socialist Union (ASU) to be the only political party till Nasser’s death in 1971. Nasser has abolished the liberal progressive political current that was represented by the liberal party al-Wafd and other political groups. This was the birth of the Arabic political theory of “ only one political party rules for ever.” Ghuneim (2005, P:153) also affirms this point by stating that Nasser’s regime was a defeat of liberalism, political pluralism and the civic work. The conflict between the Islamists and militarists over the power has started when Nasser became the president in 1956, after house arresting the oldest member of FOM, Gen. Muhammed Naguib “the first president of Egypt” who was sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM). The conflict between militarists and Islamists has reached its maximum when the MBM attempted to assassinate Nasser. The attempt was failed and the Islamists and their organisations were banned and criminalised by law and the majority of the Egyptians. It is worth mentioning that majority of the Egyptians and Arabs were inspired by the charismatic Nasser and his project of the “Arab nationalism and unity” and the formation of the one Arab Nation State. Since 1952, the constant conflict between the political Islam and the ruling militarists has marked the political scene in Egypt. Nasser had adopted the socialism, and the centralised government state was the only provider for the social demands. The development pattern in Nasser’s regime was “top- bottom approach”, without real

participation of the masses in the social policy making, implementing, and evaluation. The civil society then in such political environment, undoubtedly, had neither political influence nor social impact, except in form of some charity and mostly religious based organisations. After Egypt's defeat in 1967 war by Israel, the Arab project or dream of unity has started to lose its value, and died with Nasser's in 1971.

### Saddat

The arrival of president Saddat (was the vice president in Nasser s regime) to power in 1971, Egypt entered new phase of politics and governance. Saddat opened up a margin of freedom for the Islamists and the liberals, and tightened it up for the socialists and communists. Saddat adopted the Nasser-ism till the war of 1973 against Israel, and the strategic victory of Egypt. After 1973, Egypt economy reached its lowest level, because of two wars with Israel in six years. The State could not keep its classical role of being the only provider of social demands. This opened the door for the civil society to participate and respond to the social risks such as poverty and natural disasters. After the peace treaty with Israel in 1978, the West led by USA started to support Egypt financially through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Much of the funds were directed to the civil society through the USA aid within the aid agreements with Egypt. The First Lady Jihan El Saddat had realised the role of the civil society, and had adopted many social programs relating to the development of women and children status in Egypt. She acted also as a bridge between the government and the civil society, in which the relationship between both was more cooperative than competitive.

President Saddat had to give up the socialism as well as the Arabic dream of unity, and opened the country for the global capitalism, directing the state towards the open market economy, with all its associated implications of privatisation and structural adjustments. The peace treaty with Israel without solving the Palestinian cause and the economic crises, both had led to the return of the Islamists to the political stage, with the slogan of “Islam is the solution.” A new chapter of the conflict between president Saddat who was backed by the army and the Islamists had begun. The Islamists started to get organized, gaining public support through their charity organisations, carrying out terrorist operations against Christian Copts and tourists in an attempt to embarrass the regime internationally. The history repeated itself, and the conflict between Islamists and the state has reached its maximum by the assassination of Saddat in 1981.

#### Mubarak

In 1981, Mubarak was assigned president by the “Parliament” and with the blessings of both the Egyptian army and USA. During the first ten years of his mandate and under the international constant pressure, Mubarak had to open the door for political pluralism. He allowed the return of the old political parties, and the foundation of new ones, under the control of the State. Egypt had witnessed a relative political stability during Mubarak regime that led to undeniable reforms in the infrastructure, animation of tourism, increase of foreign investments as well as the number of the civil society organisations.

Besides, the first lady then Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak had played an important role in adopting mega social and cultural programs, especially in the area of women

and child development in partnership with various civil society organisations. Although, Mubarak and his wife she both they were accused by many civil society activists of governmentalising and dominating the civil society. During Mubarak regime, many pro-democracy and human rights organisations had been founded, that was a peak for the civil society in Egypt. The last ten years of Mubarak mandate was marked by social unrest that manifested in hundreds of social protests due to the political corruption, application of the emergency law, the wedding business sector to power, the issue of trespassing the power to Mubarak son (Gamal Mubarak), as it happened in Syria with Bashar Al Assad, and was expected to happen in Tunisia, Libya and Yemen. Also the selling of the public sector with underestimated value in favour to businessmen who either were members in the dominating ruling party The National Democratic Party (NDP) or relatives and friends to the power. Also, the absence of social measures that should have been taken by the State to protect the majority of Egyptians from the consequences of the economic transition. These were some of the reasons that stirred the stagnant social and civic action and to a large extent had prepared the masses to the revolt. The public dissatisfaction and the return of the Egyptians who travelled to the Gulf states for work who adopted the Wahhabi ideology and style of life, both formed a fertile soil for the growth of the radical Islamists influence and the spread of their ideology. Egypt that time had witnessed considerable increase of charity-faith based organisations, which most of them were founded, funded and administrated by Islamists from inside and outside Egypt. The history repeated itself once more and the Islamists made several unsuccessful attempts

to assassinate Mubarak. The last five years of Mubarak, the social stage in Egypt was prepared for the so-called “Arab spring.”

I think that this political conflict was brilliantly visualised by the Egyptian cinematic film *32 Toyour al- Zalam* (Arafa, 1996) that based on a story written by the Egyptian prominent writer Wahid Hamed and played by Adel Imam, the most popular comedian actor in the Arab region. The film events show the immorality and corruption of both Mubarak regime and the Islamists who were represented by Muslim Brothers. The film shows how the autocratic regime of Mubarak and the Islamists co-operate, co-exist and they depend on one another. On the one hand, the regime’s corruption is the fuel for the Islamists to mobilise and recruit new members to the MBM as well as spreading their radical ideology. On the other hand, the Islamists violence is the justification and/or the pretext of the regime to be in power in order to protect the society. At the end of the film, Egypt was pictured as a ball that has been rotating between the two competitive teams, the state and Islamists.

Ghuneim (2005) addresses the particularity of the Egyptian civil liberties in general and the civil society in particular. He traces the political development in Egypt since 1981 till 2002 from the perspective of state political domination. Ghuneim also exposes the relationship dynamics between the state and the other political players. He defines the Egyptian civil society’s situation by the critical, and/or is in crises. Ghuneim outlines the factors that led to such crisis such as the restrictive legal framework that determines its existence and growth, and the paradoxes of the Arab

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<sup>32</sup> Birds of the Darkness

civil society and its organisations. Ghuneim has identified and analysed in depth the signs of this crises, which are summarised and categorised as follow:

First, the legal framework of the civil liberties restricts the full participation of other political players. Starting from the conflictive articles of the constitution till the various laws and their amendments that regulate the political participation and the role of the political players such as political parties, NGOs, syndicates and labour unions. Ghuneim gives examples of the constitution conflictive articles, laws and their amendments that restrict the freedom of the political work such as law 40 (1977) that provides the Political Parties Committee with legal power to reject the foundation and freezing activities of political parties that are incompatible with the principles of Sharia. Also, the laws that regulate the civil society organisations such as law 32 (1964) and law 84 (2002) which both have articles that restrict the freedom of the civil society organisations.

Second, the crises of the political parties, Ghuneim defines it as a comprehensive crises in terms of the entire setting of the political parties that manifested in its weak structure that disabled them to play their role in leading, organising and representing the different society classes and their interests. Ghuneim points out the reasons behind such structural deficiency of the political parties to the following:

The discontinuity of the historical accumulation of both political parties experience and political pluralism, discontinuity caused by the 1952 revolution.

The Law 40, 1977 that imposed many restrictions on the foundation of the political parties and their activities.

The political, financial and administrative custody practised by the state on the political parties.

The political parties' domestic problems such as the absence of democratic practises inside the parties themselves, the internal conflicts for the party leadership and the lack of youth presence and participation, since most of the political parties are led by old aged leaders. All these internal problems produced dis-connectivity between political parties and the masses by which the political parties have converted into cardboard parties that are subject to state interference as it happened with the Labour Party, that is still frozen/banned by the state.

The relationship dynamics between the ruling party and the opposition parties, and between the political parties and the different syndicates. Ghuneim demonstrates the difficulty of the democratic interaction among them had led to discontinuity of the national democratic dialogue.

The one ruling party crises that manifested in: First, one party dominates the political life and excludes the rest of the political representations. Secondly, the paradoxes of the ruling party itself, since its declared statements about democracy development contradicts with its actual undemocratic practises.

The political low profile that resulted by; first, the state systematic de-politicisation that conducted via its informative, educational and religious apparatus. Second, the political parties failure of promoting political education and building new political cadres of youth. In the Arab region, generally, the politics profession is dominated by the elders in both government and political parties.

The weak syndical status, Ghuneim outlines the reasons behind the insufficiency of the syndical work in the following points:

Limited syndical membership, the syndical membership capacity only meets one third of the labour class.

The syndical committees and general elections both are subject to interference and forging whither in the voting process or in the results.

The lack of trust between the members and their syndicates that forced the members to search for organizational frames outside the syndicates that express their interests. He further states that 85% of the labour movements were accomplished outside the syndical organisational frame. Ghuneim (2005, 150:165).

### **Egypt civil society during and post Arab Spring**

By the end of year 2010, the spark of the Arab uprisings had been ignited first in Tunisia, and within counted weeks, was ignited in Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Libya and Yemen. The Egyptians had broken the wall of silence and crossed the fear barrier taking in the streets raising their voices loudly “Bread, peace, Freedom and social justice.” Demanding good standard of living, social justice, dignity and freedom. Mubarak and his political party (NDP) both were toppled, and Egypt was under the governance of the Supreme Council of Army Forces (SCAF) for two years transitional period, till the presidential elections of 2013. The 25th of January was a warning message from the Egyptians to the autocratic regimes. During those two years, the Islamists took advantage of the authority and security state absence, and have intensified their presence. They mobilised people through; mosques, different Islamist-owned communication media as well as their affiliate charity organisations

that were founded increasingly in the grass root and marginalised poor zones in Egypt (Kandil, 2015). Those organisations played an important role in promoting the Islamist's ideology and they were tools of recruiting new members. The Islamists had succeeded to manipulate the Egyptian masses by accepting the democratic rules as a base of the political game. The MBM had formed the "Freedom and Justice Party (FJP)" seemingly following the Turkish Islamic party model (AKP), in order to have legitimacy of dominating the political scene in Egypt. They have dominated all the transition countries politically and socially. The MBM also managed to make a custom tailored constitution in 2012, that serves their agenda of controlling the political, economic and social life in Egypt. Following the new undemocratic 2012 constitution, the Islamists managed to win the presidential elections mysteriously with a narrow majority of 51.7%, and Mohamed Morsi and FJP both have become the ruler Egypt. During the Islamists rule in 2013, Morsi managed to control both the executive and legislative authorities in order to have full power to transform Egypt into a religious state, the same did Erdogan and his Islamic party AKP, they managed to manipulate the Turkish constitution in 2017 in order the president to have full power. The Egyptian public discontent was highly increasing and the Egyptians started to reject both strategy and agenda of the Islamists. Egypt had entered a new political and social phase that was featured by divisions, constant protests conducted by liberals, secular and Christian groups. It is worth mentioning that the Islamists had practised structured violent and aggressions against the Christian minority (Copts), liberals and

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<sup>33</sup> Was a constitution that based on the religious domination, and was voted by only one third of the electorate and approved by 64% in the referendum. The constitution was feared by liberals, secular and Christians for the insufficient protections for women's rights and freedom of speech and worship.

secularists. This was an introduction to the return of the militarists to the political stage once more, but with the consent of the Egyptian majority this time. <sup>34</sup>El-Sisi as Army chief in command had called in the Muslim Brothers in several occasions to settle their differences with the opposition parties and groups (ironically, most of the opposition voted for MBM in the 2013 presidential elections) by democratic and non-violent manner. He suggested a referendum to prevent social and political division. The MB did not respond positively to the Army calls, considering that an interference in the politics. In 2013, Egypt was on the brink of a civil war because of the political and social divisions and the aggressive practices of the Islamists. The rejection and rigidity of MB and its exclusion to the rest of the political forces had led to another wave of massive protests. Once again, in the 3rd of June in 2013, millions of Egyptians took in the streets all over Egypt (was estimated more than 20 millions protesters) demanding “No for governance of 35al-Murrshed.” This was the second message from the Egyptians to the authoritarian regimes within two years (2011-2103). The Egyptians call the 3rd of June in 2013 “people coup” while the Islamists and their foreign supporters and their owned communication media machinery such as 36al-Jazeera TV network, they call it “military coup” or “counter revolution.” For a sizeable portion of the Arabs especially the Egyptians, El Sisi is a saviour, regardless the artificial/nefarious views of the American Democratic Party during the former

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<sup>34</sup> Abdul Fatah al-Sisi the former head of Egypt’s army and was member of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF). For the Egyptians, the army is a trusted national organisation.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Murrshid is the Supreme spiritual leader of the MBM, his name is Mohamed Badie.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Jazeera is an international TV network that broadcasts in many parts of the world with different languages and sponsored by Qatar. Al-Jazeera was lately accused by the Arab countries led by Egypt of promoting hatred and terrorism in the region. Qatar is currently sanctioned by the Arab countries for financing terrorism in the region.

USA president Obama mandate. El- Sisi has saved not only Egypt from an inevitable civil war, but saved also the entire Arab region and the European Mediterranean countries from the escalation of terrorism. El-Sisi is seen by much of the Egyptians and Arabs as the hero that accomplished the successful version of the 37“Operation Valkyrie, 1944” to get rid of an ‘elected’ expansionist regime that is based on radical ideology of superiority and supremacy. If Operation Valkyrie had succeeded in Germany, several millions of souls could had been saved. Egypt is currently at crossroads politically, economically and culturally, none knows which direction Egypt will take, since all the hypotheses are on the table. With the undergoing armed conflicts and terrorism that dominate the Arab transition countries, the priority for the Egyptians has become the national security vs. liberties. The priority of security has provided the State with more discretionary power over the civil society and its organisations. The current civil society legal bill permits the state via its Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) to review the legal status, objectives, activities and funds of any civil society organisation specially the charity-faith based organisations which sponsored by the Islamists as well as the pro-democracy and human rights organisations that funded by foreign donors. Now and in light of the radical change in the American foreign politics in the Arab region that administered by president Trump, there is an expectation of supporting the Arabs to eradicate the terrorism and to get back gradually to a kind of democracy that can fit in. Since the theory of “political moderate Islam” in the Arab region is proved unsuccessful-- so far.

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<sup>37</sup> Operation Valkyrie, July 1944 was an attempt by Claus vov Stauffenberg and others officers to assassinate Adolf Hitler, Fuhrer of Nazi Germany inside his Wolf Lair field headquarters. The attempt was failed and almost 5000 were executed.

### **Egypt's civil society's legal framework before and after Arab spring**

Most of the Arab states practise by form or another control over the civil society organisations. The state control has been intensified after the Arab uprisings in form of new restrictive legislations. Before I comment on this issue as a researcher, it is important to present first my view as an Egyptian citizen. Firstly, I think that the entire current security situation of the Arab region is critical. On the one hand, there are many undergoing armed conflicts in the region, the Egyptian national and citizen security both are under threat. On the other, the citizens only hold their governments responsible/accountable, not the civil society, for any security failure. Secondly, most of the Arab NGOs complains about the legal framework are centred around “funding and transparency.” Here I ask; if the civil society has the right to monitor the government performance, then, why the it should deny the same right to the state. Simply put, who should monitor the monitor? As a researcher I think that the current legal framework of many Arab states including Egypt is disabling the civil society. I suggest that the civil society can gain freedom with time, when it gains first the public trust and support, this only can happen through communication with public, credibility and transparency.

### **Perspectives on civil society and foreign funding**

Over the two decades (1990-2010), the Arab civil society has managed to develop a positive image and gained public support, at least amongst the Egyptian elites and educated class. Post Arab Spring and with the arrival of MBM to power in

2013, along with the emergence of ISIS in 2014, synchronized with the revelation and/or leak of documents that exposed the role of some foreign agents linked to some civil society organisations in the uprisings, the public has started to change the utopian view about the civil society organisations. Before the Arab uprisings, the CSOs were seen as the panacea for many political, social and economical problems . In a research conducted by Elagati (2013, 10:15) on a segment of interviewees for measuring the public perspectives on civil society organisations who are recipients of foreign funding, has indicated that only one-fourth of the interviewees see that those organisations play a positive role. It is worth mentioning that Egypt as government and CSOs are the largest recipients of US Aid assistance. From 1975 to 2009, Egypt has received about \$28.6 billion from USAID for economic support, services and infrastructure, education, media, democratic and governmental development. This public negative image due to the lack of transparency of those organisations. The research also indicated that the funds received from both USA and Gulf countries were not seen positively by two thirds of the interviewees. After the change of USA administration in 2017, a leak of information and documents that proved the involvement of foreign agents in the uprisings. The public negative image has been increased by which the pro-democracy and human rights organisations have been viewed by sizeable portion of the masses as agents for foreign countries. It is important to mention that the controlled media whether by State or the the remnants of the old regime has played an influential role in promoting such image. One of the most common expressions was used by the public and media was “the human rights boutiques” referring to the human rights organisations as shops that offer all kind of

services for funds, especially from USA to carry out certain agendas. The Egyptian masses also have experienced many paradoxes of the human rights organisations international as well as local in terms of turning blind eye about right violations committed by the Islamists against liberals and minorities while they did not let any chance to scandalize the Egyptian army headed by El-Sisi and promoting violations against the Islamist. Whether this negative image was developed on bases of authentic reasons or artificial ones, the result is that the civil society had lost much of its credibility.

The analysis of the political development in Egypt since 1950s till the present day, and based on views of prominent researchers as Kandil, Beshara and Elagati reveal the following themes:

a) Both Islamists and the autocratic rulers are a common factor in the political instability and social unrest in Egypt. They co-exist and depend one on another in deriving the legitimacy/pretext to be in power.

b) The civil society has been facing a constant setback caused by both autocratic regimes and Islamists, since both consider the civil society as a threat to their existence. On the one hand, the autocratic regimes have been practising many forms of control over the civil society through legalisation, using civil society as a tool of state system decoration, polarising, politicising and corrupting certain NGOs to grantee their loyalty. It is worth revealing that there are many consultants work for the Egyptian government in different ministries (who receive imaginary salaries) come from NGOs. On the other hand, the Islamists make advantage of the little margin of freedom civil society has by founding charity-based organisations with the purpose

of spreading their ideology and polarise the poor and marginalised groups. The Islamists also use the pro-democracy and human rights organisations as a tool of propaganda to expose the repression and right violations practised by the state, for gaining public support internally and externally.

c) The failure of both liberals and secularists to promote the concepts of democracy and citizenship among the masses.

d) The Egyptians themselves are not decisive about which state model/pattern they like to apply and whether they really want to apply democracy in its broader comprehensive concept or only apply the political aspect of democracy (state governance).

f) The foreign factor that is manifested in the Western foreign politics in the region as well as the foreign donors has a strong influence over the Arab civil society. Egypt political and socio-cultural context, to a large extent represents the Arab region historical socio-political state of affairs (with a lesser degree in the Gulf states). Although each Arab country has political, cultural and social particularities, but most of them have passed by similar conditions and experiences in terms of state formation and governance. Most of them fell under colonialism, cultural conflict between liberalism and conservatism, and similar social patterns. In this sense, the Arab civil society development was subject to the same political and cultural environment and dynamics.

## **Perspectives on the role of the Egyptian civil society**

The role of the civil society organisations in Egypt is a subject of many current debates socially and politically. In the following paragraphs, some different views from inside about the role of civil society will be presented. Many of the scholars, journalists, public and civic work researchers assure the importance of the civil society in the social and political development of Egypt. The journalist and Ex- NGO affiliate Yasser Badri in his article in the Egyptian daily al-Wafd (April 16, 2015) states the importance of the active civil society organisations in responding to the social risks in Egypt. He lists the fields that CSOs contribute in the fields of health care and environment protection awareness through the many community based organisations that have clinics and offer health care services. The provision of vocational training programs through their workshops. NGOs also provide educational services such as adult education, literacy classes and private classes to the students of primary, prep and secondary school students. Many NGOs in Egypt have social, cultural and sport centres that contribute to the development of youth. NGOs also play important role in child development through their programs of street kids and child save centres.

Saied Mossa <sup>38</sup>(al-hewar al-motamatden, 17-01-2012) points out the important role of civil society organisations in Egypt. He lists the fields that civil society organisations contribute to the development in Egypt. Mossa states that besides the classical role of the charity-based organisations in service provision to the marginalised and needy, they also contribute to the empowerment of the local communities through capacity building and skill development programs in many

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<sup>38</sup> [www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=291880](http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=291880)

different fields. He adds, civil society organisations hold wide range of experience in strategic planning, program design, implementation and evaluation in community participatory approaches. He also stressed on the important role that civil society organisations play in the social development policies and monitoring the governmental performance.

Researches such as Kandil (2011, 2015) and Abdel Samad (2006) both emphasis on the important role civil society plays in the development of the Arab societies. But they stress on the expectations of this role should not be high, since there are many challenges faces the Arab civil society.

Kandil demonstrates a wide range of services and contributions offered by CSOs that respond to some social risks such as street child care, poverty, empowerment of single women caring families, family cohesion, orphanages, relief services, health care, drug addiction treatment programs, income generation projects for youth, educational services, advocacy for human rights and public policies, and many other social fields.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The globalization has made the world interconnected through the advanced communication technologies and the emergence of a parallel virtual world (Internet). The Internet is a quick transmitter of ideas and news, also it provided a reliable mechanism of interchanging information and experiences amongst individuals, groups, collations, organisations, supporters, and all forms of formal and informal of organisations such as the civil society. A free space where they can express themselves, share thoughts and ideas, learn new things, organise and manage social movements and even revolts as it happened in the Arab Spring by the Arab youth. Globalisation also has led to the free trade, and the emergence of both; the multi internationals companies and intentional non profit organizations. Globalisation also brought about global financial and banking mechanisms with economic and political powers such as; the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Globalisation also has become the conduit of; new concepts of governance, new social development patterns, new economic policies, and new social risks and threats.

Over the last three decades, there many new community development concepts and approaches were emerged. New community development concepts such as women empowerment, gender equality, environment protection, democracy and human rights, good governance. New development approaches such as bottom-up approach that based on the participation of the grass roots in the decision making, the process of implementation and evaluation of the social development programs. By the

end of the nineties, new indicators to evaluate the community and social development were elaborated. The new development concepts, approaches and indicators have led to a new understanding to the role of the civil society organizations in fostering community development, side by side to the governments and private sector. The civil society in many parts of the world, especially the democratic countries is seen as a partner to governments in making, implementing and evaluating public development policies.

The re-realization of the civil society role was translated into a considerable increase of size and scope of activities of the civil society organizations in the Arab countries. (Kandil, 2015:70) stated that <sup>39</sup>“the number of the Arab civil society organisations in the years 2000 and 2001 was 65000 that was multiplied by three to become more than 250000 organisations in 2015, by which 70% of them are charity-faith organisations for services provision, the rest are community development, pro-democracy and rights based that are not services provider but advocacy organisations.” The horizontal expansion of civil society organisations is not necessarily a sign of a healthy civil society. Kandil (2015) also affirmed this point and stated that the increase of number of the Arab civil society organisations does not necessarily mean an increase of their capacity/efficiency. The size increase of the Arab civil society organisations in the last three decades due to; On the one hand, the Arab governments alone are no longer able to face the growing challenges of social demands, thus, they had to open up for the civil society organisations, mostly the charity based for services provision to fill the gap that produced by governmental

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<sup>39</sup> “my translation”

policies. In that sense, most of the Arab civil society organisations (charity-faith based) are just tools for carrying out failed governmental social policies, and they exist only for filling gaps. On the other, the relationship between the Arab states and the civil society sector is always marked by mutual distrust and conflict, each in which has its own rationale.

Both the rising trends of democratization/openness of the Arab governments and the public support that civil society has been gaining over the last 20 years previous to the Arab spring now are decreasing. This due to the people's fear of the radical Islamists and terrorism. Ironically, at the present time, there are much Egyptians appreciate the strict security measures were taken by Mubarak regime. They admit that the state of national security, stability and economy were much better during Mubarak mandate. The ex-regime had managed to protect Egypt from the radicalism and terrorism over the last thirty years, and with the stability factor, Egypt was advancing economically. The economic reports show that Egypt economic annual growth rate during Mubarak regime was around 6%. The public fear has provided the post Arab Spring governments with more discretionary power over the civil society sector. In all the transition Arab countries except Tunisia, the legal framework that regulates the civic work has become more restrictive/dominant than before the year 2011.

For the Arab civil society to play its expected role in making social change, the challenges must be identified in order to reach solutions. The challenges as identified in this study as well as by many field researchers and experts fall under two sets; domestic and external challenges, the external challenges are: First, the freedom

which is manifested in the legal framework that regulates the Arab civic work in terms of its formation, activities, finance and level of participation in making and monitoring social policies. Second, the cultural setting which is portrayed by religions and social traditions that determine the political participation scope of both individuals and the civil society organisations. The CSOs internal challenges as recognised by the civic work insiders as well as outsiders are centred around these themes: Civil society's accountability and/or transparency, its internal governance and capacity building, lack of a unified vision and strategies and lack of self-evaluation and social impact assessment. In the following sections, drawing recommendations/suggestions for these challenges will be approached through the main conflictive issues that ACSO is currently facing. According to the analysis of the political, cultural and social environment of the Arab civil society addressed in chapter III, these challenges can be identified as follow: Funding, cultural settings, CSOs vision and strategy, self-evaluation and social impact assessment.

Funding constitutes a multi-dimensional challenge and is a key factor in many problematic issues that ACSOs face. Funding is a common element in terms of sustainability of many civil society organisations, the legal framework and the civil society relations with; global civil society, the State and private sectors and the masses. Moreover, for the civil society, funding is related to its credibility as well as its social impact (social return). For these reasons, in the following sections, suggestions and recommendations will be drawn based on funding as a core civil society challenge. The following section, funding will be tackled from the perspective of the international aid/cooperation that portrayed in the donor agency attitude.

## Changing the international donor attitude

I think that, for the international donors to reach maximum utilization of the donation value, a new mechanism of funding must be explored. Firstly, a mechanism that should be designed to reduce the fund management cost by the donor as well as the fund raising cost by the recipient NGOs. As for this dilemma of funding, I suggest that an international conference about exploring best ways of fund management mechanisms must be held with the participation of representatives different classes of fund recipient NGOs, especially the grass root organisations.

Secondly, I highly encourage the international donor agencies to dedicate funding for mega social projects that incorporate CSOs, governments and private sector in order to respond to immanent social demands such as health and education. CSOs can play crucial role as watchdog, facilitator for governments and as a conduit of grass roots needs. It is important to mention that the US AID-Egypt in 1980s was dedicating big portion of its aid to Egypt for mega social projects that Egyptian masses benefited from, such as infrastructure, sanitation reform and waste management projects which were positively perceived by Egyptians unlike the present.

## Funding and the private sector

As for the Arab NGOs, I think that the time has come to depend on domestic funding sources such as membership fees, individual donations and the private sector (especially the international and multinational companies). In countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, and Gulf region, the private sector is active and can be an effective partner to both civil society and governments in fostering community development. From the social responsibility perspective, the private

sector business men and companies in the Arab countries should be more involved in the development of the communities where their businesses flourish. Just to take the Egyptian capital Cairo as an example to illustrate the business volume of the international and multinational companies that are operating in the Arab region. In Cairo, almost in every neighbourhood there is Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald, Vodafone, international and regional banks and hotels...etc. Moreover, the private sector in Egypt has a share of 88% of employment capacity <sup>40</sup>(Al-Wafd daily, May 2, 2015). Based on the research findings of Kandil (2015, 238:248), the participation of the private sector in the social development in the Arab region is still modest compared to its business volume as well as its counterparts in other regions in the world. I suggest that the Arab civil society organisations, especially the community development, pro-democracy and human rights should dedicate more efforts to get the private sector seriously involved in the social development as well as regulate its behaviour conduct towards the community natural and human resources. This can be achieved through the following:

Monitoring the private sector violations of workers rights and tax paying as well as the use of the natural resources and its compliance with the environment protection code.

Developing data base that traces the private sector participation dynamics in the community development in terms of volume of funds granted, transparency of funds management, the social fields where funds spent, and developing indicators to measure the social impact of such funds.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://alwafd.org>

Promoting mega national programs and projects (not only building some schools and hospitals for propagandistic purposes) that have real and wider social impact such as the social fund for development <sup>41</sup>(SFD in Egypt) that responds to the social risks of poverty, social exclusion, health and education.

Watchdog the State economic policies that are related to the private sector, for i.e. the private sector in Egypt since the last three decades has been enjoying a package of facilities such as cheap labour, subsidised energy, free or low-cost land for business projects and some tax exemptions. In addition, monitoring the workers rights violations that by the business sector such as workers security and pensions.

Promoting consumer protection mechanism, it is highly noticed (especially in Egypt) the lack of standards that measure the quality of products and services.

#### Funding and transparency

Within the domain of funding, there are some related issues must be addressed, these are; First, the extent to which the Arab civil society organisations abide by the civic code of ethics in terms of funding and financial management transparency. Based on a research conducted by ANN (Kandil, 2015) on segments of some Arab NGOs has indicated that most of the NGOs that received foreign funds were reluctant to give information neither about the donor identity nor the fund size. This issue of transparency is also affirmed by <sup>42</sup>Elagati (2013) who stated that “Arguably there is often a lack of transparency with regard to this kind of funding across the region”.

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<sup>41</sup> SFD was established in 1991 by United Nations Development Program in partnership with the Egyptian government. SFD was created a capital of 1.1 Billion Egyptian pound and regarded as a social safety net.

<sup>42</sup> Elagati is the Director of the Cairo-based Arab Forum for Alternatives (AFA) which is a think tank that seeks to address political and economic issues through scientific methods related to the Arab context that serves as a forum for experts, researches, and activists interested in reforms in the Arab region, and seeks to offer policy alternatives to policy makers and civil society actors in the region. [www.afaegypt.org](http://www.afaegypt.org)

Elagati further stated that “a series of financial scandals affecting politicians and political parties in a number of countries, including Egypt, have led to drastic views on foreign political funding.”

I think that it would be necessary for the Arab civil society to resolve this paradox or contradiction through; conducting self critics and/or self evaluation and demonstrate good governance. It would be illogical if the civil society claims the right to monitor the governments and them responsible for the mismanagement of the state and public resources, whereas the civil society itself is not transparent about its financial resources and their management. Another point related to funding is the legal framework, since the Arab civil society organisations complain about the state control over their formation, governance, activities, and financial resources. By the same token, the Arab states complain about the funding ambiguity of the civil society organisations, especially pro-democracy and human rights organisations. The Arab governments considers the foreign funding is a tool of politicisation of local civil society organisations, and this constitutes a threat to the national security as well as the social peace. I suggest that, the state and the civil society both should find a neutral and/or an independent national mechanism that is trusted by both to monitor the civil society funding. This mechanism can take the form of committee or council that can be sponsored by the parliament and/or the judiciary system or both.

Common vision, strategies and networking

According to Kandil (2015: 203), the Arab civil society organisations lack of common vision and strategy as well as coordination and networking amongst them at both levels local and regional. In regard to the common vision, Kandil (2011: 158) is

questioning whether the Arab civil society organisations have a common vision that responds to the Arab social risks from a future perspective. The Arab social risks such as poverty, poor education and health systems, low quality social services, high unemployment rate, especially among the youth and the low competitive capacity. I agree with Kandil's view that the Arab civil society is more focusing on the state governance aspect at the expense of other social risks and challenges. At this stage, I like to draw the attention to some facts: First, according to the the Arab World Literacy Report (2003-2013: 2), there is 35.6% of the Arab populations (Arab league member states) are ill-literates, nearly double the global rate. Second, most of the Arab governments and people are not aware of the the civil society's role. Kandil (2015: 8) states that <sup>43</sup>“Most of the Arab populations and legislations both perceive and address the civil society organisations as charity organisations. At this stage, a question must be raised; if more than one third of the Arab population is ill-literate and most of the remained two thirds are civilly uncultured, then, how democracy can be reached? Democracy is not only a form of state governance but is also a form of life that must be taught first, then be practised in home, school, job and street. Therefore, I suggest that both Arab governments and civil society organisations must prioritise first the challenges of illiteracy and civil education. From experience, toppling the autocratic regimes in such condition of absence of people's awareness will never lead to a real positive social change.

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<sup>43</sup> “my translation”

For the Arab civil society to make a positive social change, it should search for new strategy and mechanism that foster citizen participation. Civil society organisations should seriously deal with the civil deficit that manifested in the lack of public trust, lack of awareness and participation, violence increase, corruption, religious extremism and rejection of the other...etc .

A strategy of bottom-up change through approaching the grass roots in small towns, remote villages and the marginalised groups. Simply put, the civil society organisations should not leave the society to be polarised by radical religious ideologies and interests groups. Nowadays, advocacy and promotion of democratic concepts and monitoring state violations have become a job of the virtual civil society, which does not require massive funding. A Blog or Facebook account can do these tasks effectively with less cost and better social impact than a pro-democracy or human right organisation. As for networking and despite the fact that there are many successful initiatives of Arab networking mechanisms have been emerged during the last two decades such as the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), the Arab Network for NGOs (ANN), the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), the Arab network for economic empowerment on women (khadija), Arab Network for Women in Science and Technology (ANWST), the Arab European Leadership Network in Higher Education (ARELEN), and many others that cover political, cultural and social aspects. Yet, the networking and coordination amongst NGOs are not maximised due to the foreign origin of the networking concept, thus, is not deeply rooted in Arab

culture. Also, the lack of group work spirit among the Arab CSOs, and the competition between them.

Kandil (2015, 201: 207) also demonstrates that the participation of the Arab civil society organisations in regional and international networks is facing set back in the last 6 years due to a number of reasons such as the armed conflicts and wars in the Arab region. The legal framework that demands the NGOs to acquire permission for joining international networks. I suggest that the civil society organisations in each Arab state should form an organisational structure such as union, collation, council or committee that assumes responsibility of monitoring NGOs conduct, coordination and networking and to represent NGOs politically.

#### Advocacy vs. charity

According to Kandil (2015, 113:114), most of the Arab civil society organisations are charity and faith motivated and mainly dedicated to direct services delivery such as food, clothing, and health care. Kandil states that 70% of the total Arab civil society organisations are charity based, the remained 30% are pro-democracy, community development and human rights based organisations that are dedicated to community development policies and democracy advocacy, monitoring government's performance and promotion of public participation in community development policies and processes. The charity concept is deeply rooted in the Arab culture due to religious motives. The proverb of “better teach the poor people how to fish than offer to them the fish” is not widely perceived by the Arab societies. In that regard, I suggest and/or share two thoughts: First, is encouraging the religious clergies in the Arab region to rethink the current concept of “do goodness” which is only

confined to direct provision of goods and services to the very needy people. The civil society organisations must promote the broader sense of “do goodness” that based on developing the community as whole. The second thought, I suggest that charity based NGOs must incorporate in their agenda programs of wider social impact such as vocational training, skill development, and income generation programs. The local professional intermediary community development organisations can play an important role in enabling the charity and faith based organisations to adopt such social programs. The Arab region currently has a considerable number of professional local organisations that provide technical assistance, training and capacity building programs, and fund raising assistance.

Arab civil society literatures, academic research and media

Despite the cognitive accumulation that ACSOs have developed over the years, yet, there are some aspects of the Arab civil society that need more research and study. Although there are some topics were identified by Kandil (in chapter III) that need more investigations by the Arabic academia. Still are other related topics that I think need to be investigated, these are:

The first topic is about the nucleus of the Arab civil society, the Arab people personality/character and the factors that effect their behaviours, attitudes and tendencies. Inspired by the state of enlightened and liberal monarchic Egypt from 1920s till 1950s, the conservative and socially conflicted Egypt from the 1960s till now, and the rebellion Egypt during the revolution of 25th January 2011. These different social states of Egypt provide many important insights about the transformation of character, behaviours and attitudes of the Arab people.

For a century, the Arab populations have been under many different political, economical systems and ideologies. In the 1940s, the Arabs were advancing towards political and economical liberalism till 1955. After that they shifted to socialism till the 1970s, then shifted to open and uncontrolled market economy till the present. The constant decline of the living standard has made a sizeable portion of the Arabs resort to religion as a panacea to all problems. This rapid change of Arab behaviours, tendencies and attitudes is worth more investigations and analyses, since the human factor is the core of any civic work, and the ultimate goal of any development efforts. It is also important to stress on the cooperation between the civil society organisations and the other research institutions. Kandil (2015:10) reveals that there are many social and community development researches and studies in different Arab universities and educational institutions that for some reasons are not optimised.

The second topic is about the influence of communication media over the social dynamics and the formation or deformation of the public opinion. The Desert Storm and the Arab Spring uprisings both are live cases that demonstrate the effect of communication media on the Arab public opinion. TV networks news coverage, on-line social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Bloggers, live shows and social debates programs, they all have played an important role in mobilising, catalysing and organising the masses for the Arab uprisings. Kandil (2015:15) shows that in many cases, the communication media is either politicised or used as a tool of brain washing and does not necessarily reflect the public interests, therefore, it can be deceptive to the public conscious. According to a report by Arab States Broadcasting Union

44(ASBU, 2014), there are around 1300 TV channels cover the Arab region. Much of these channels are religious based and dedicated to promotion of religious and sectarian ideologies that escalate hatred and violence. Moreover, there are many are politicised and other TV Networks that aim at bairn washing. I suggest that the ACSOs should conduct massive public awareness programs that provide the Arab masses with tactics and tools of sorting out and checking the credibility of such communication media. I also suggest that the Arab civil society should find a common ground with the Arab TV networks in order to promote the civil culture in the Arab region.

The third topic is about the civil\civic culture and education in the Arab region. I suggest that the Arab civil society organisations should conduct intensive studies and researches of how the civil culture can be promoted amongst the young people (kids and youth). For democracy to flourish, must exist a culture of accepting the other, promoting diversity and pluralism, respecting the other's opinion, property, privacy and rights, and regarding truths as relative rather than absolute. Egypt for example, during the transition period after the 25th of January, 2011, it was highly noted that a considerable portion of young people, especially the age 12-18 years, have perceived freedom and democracy as "I do as I like." There many violations, vandalism and looting that were masked in freedom during and post uprisings. It is important to mention that many unique pieces of Pharaonic monuments and tombs were looted and been trafficked during the uprisings and the transitional period. Pro-democracy and human rights organisations can play an important role in fostering such culture of civility among the young people.

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<sup>44</sup> [www.absu.net/](http://www.absu.net/)

The last topic is the comparative studies of countries with similar cultural and social conditions such as South East Asia Muslim countries. For example, the Malaysian civil society experiment in cultural conflict mediation between minorities, state and the Islamic movements and groups that adopt same ideology of the MBM and the Salafists. Some of these groups are: Jamaah Islam Malaysia (JIM), Muslim Professional Forum (MPF) and Islamic Renaissance Front (IRF). It is worth mentioning that the Malaysian society has faced ethnic and religious conflicts similar to those of the Arab countries. (Maszlee, 2012)

At this stage, and according to the anatomy of the Arab civil society and its environment, I come to realise that the key challenge that faces the entire Arab society and its civil society is the cultural factor. The autocratic systems constitute a secondary challenge that is a by-product of the culture itself. In the Arab culture there is no distinction lines between; politics, civic work, charity and beliefs. As the study reveals, exist a line of duplicity that is deeply rooted in our culture and been reflected in our personality and character as individuals and organisations, in our Constitutions and state governance model.

We have an energetic, intelligent and creative young people in the Arab region that constitute majority. They only need a proper education and an opportunity to manifest their intelligence and creativity. I call in the Arab elites to spare enough space for the youth to participate in the political and social spheres. For the Arabs to achieve progress, they must make the best use of the resources they have, specially the human.

Finally, a word by <sup>45</sup>Prof. Constantine Zurayk who is cited by <sup>46</sup>Hafez (2003) in one of his seminal contributions to Arab renaissance, is crystallising the key crises of the Arab region, as he recommending that “What is needed is a thorough assessment of the reasons of the present state of affairs in the Arab world, a thorough critical introspection is needed and every tent of Arab beliefs must be revisited, this intellectual audit of our society is a prerequisite for any rebuilding effort, reason should be the first and last benchmark of this exercise. Arabs must get rid of the sectarian culture that has plagued their societies for so many centuries with hatred of the Other, whither the other is one’s own brother or a foreigner. This has led to hatred of the self and it is time to put an end to it. If the Arabs do not have courage to undertake this kind of intellectual revolution then any attempt of reform will be an exercise in futility and the desired change will remain in the field of dreams.”

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<sup>45</sup> Constantine Zurayk, is one of the most prominent Arab writers and thinkers, Lebanese educationist. Representative of Syria in the delegation of UN general assembly and many similar posts. Order of Merit (distinguished class, Syria), Order of Cedar (Lebanon). He had many academic posts in AUB, also wrote many books about the Arabic cultural issues.

<sup>46</sup> This paper is submitted by Ziad Hafez at a symposium in (3<sup>rd</sup> of April, 2003) on the Human Development in the Arab world and Latin America, the paper titled: The scope and direction of change in the regional and global environment.

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## Appendix



Figure 1- Map of the Arab World

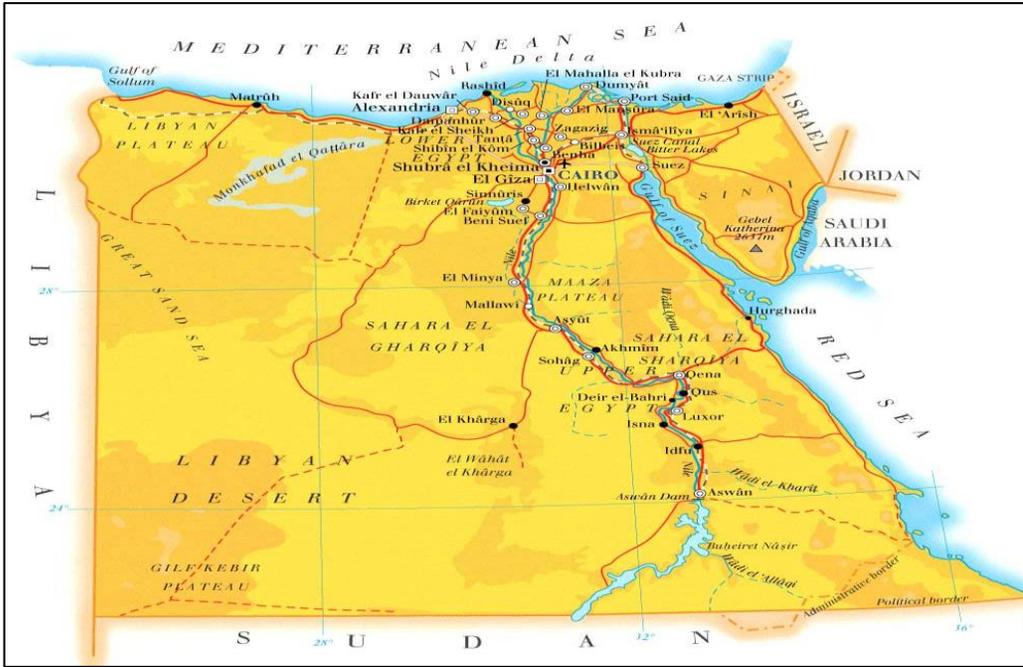


Figure 2- Map of Egypt