On the Habitual Dimension of Problems of Democratisation; Using the Example of Egypt after the Arab Spring [1] [#N1]

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Abstract: *Three years after the so-called Arab Spring, the old authoritarian political system seems to have been restored in Egypt. In this paper, particular regard will be paid to the role of 'non-Islamists' in this process. On a theoretical level, a process-sociological model of democracy will be introduced, which includes – in addition to the institutional dimension of processes of democratisation and de-democratisation – also the habitual dimension of such processes.*

Key words: *Drag Effect of the Social Habitus, Democratisation and De-democratisation, Arab Spring, Egypt, El-Sisi.*

> They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, an unlimited governmental power which protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above (Marx 1852: 119-120).

Processes of democratisation in every society are accompanied by severe tensions and conflicts. They are very closely connected with counter-processes in the opposite direction. The path such processes take depends on the power ratio between the different groups affected by these processes in the respective society. In the absence of differentiated and comprehensive theories of democratisation and de-democratisation, in the first part of this paper, I would like to offer a process-sociological model of democratisation and de-democratisation that can help to understand and explain such processes in a more reality-congruent manner. The model was first developed in the late 1980s by Dawud Gholamasad through his reception of the ideas of Norbert Elias. It is based on empirical studies of social and political developments in Iran before and after the 'Islamic Revolution' in 1979. This dynamic and multidimensional understanding of processes of democratisation and de-democratisation was developed from a critique of 'process-reduced' and static theories of democracy, which were mainly confined to the present and the manifest or institutional dimension of processes of democratisation (Gholamasad 2007: 58; Elias 1978: 65–68). This model was empirically tested and expanded by myself based on the study of the social and political processes of three societies, which in the research are described as the 'failure' of the Second Republic in France (1848–1852), of the Weimar Republic in Germany (1918–1933) and of the Constitutional Monarchy in Iran (1906–1925) (Alikhani 2012). The processes of institutional de-democratisation in all three of these examples share, despite their *differences in form*, some *structural similarities*, due to the 'drag effect of the social habitus' of a great number of their carriers which at the and led to an 'institutional de-democratisation' (Gholamasad 1997: 370).

In the second part of the paper, I will examine and develop this model further by applying it to political developments in Egypt after the so called 'Arab Spring'. In doing so, I would like to determine to what extent

this model could also explain the processes of institutional de-democratisation in this country that followed a short period of institutional democratisation which lasted from January 2011 until the coup of general el-Sisi in July 2013.

1.   A process-oriented model of democratisation and de-democratisation

The dominant theories of democracy, which are mainly developed from a political science and less from a sociological point of view, neglect not only the *latent*, or *functional*, but also the *habitual* dimension of democratisation and de-democratisation processes (Gholamasad 1993: 394). An attempt to capture the habitual dimension of such complementary has been made with the aid of undifferentiated concepts such as 'political culture' (Eckstein 1988: 789). Using such concepts, however, one is not able to properly grasp the problem of the 'non-simultaneity of developments' between these three institutional, functional and habitual dimensions in the course of processes of democratisation and de-democratisation in a society.

In summary, one could say that the dominant 'theories of democracy' went through two different phases in the second half of the twentieth century. The theories developed at the end of the twentieth century, for example those of O'Donnell, Schmitter and Przeworski, broke with the focus of earlier theorists of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Lipset and Moore, who emphasised macro-societal forces and conditions. Theorists from the late 1980s onwards considered the previous work as deterministic, which did not see any role played by political actors in promoting and consolidating democracy. While the earlier theorists put 'structures' and 'conditions' which are not easily alterable in the foreground, the second generation of theorists emphasised a bigger role for 'relevant actors' and 'political elites' in changing such structures and conditions. Thus, a kind of a rather voluntaristic approach replaced the former deterministic perspectives in a polarised debate, with far-reaching theoretical and practical consequences. In this way, questions regarding the consolidation and durability of newly created democratic institutions gained prominence, especially in relation to the link between 'democracy' and economic reforms (Munck 2011: 334–335). 'Democracy promotion' as an instrument for building new state institutions and strengthening 'civil society' became of significant importance, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Burnell 2009: 1). Since then, 'the promotion of democracy' as a political strategy increasingly became one of the priorities of US foreign policy (Cox 2000: 5). This aim was tried to be reached through a wide variety of strategies and actions, operating across a spectrum extending from peaceful to forceful means (Hobson and Kurki 2012: 3). A discussion of the implications of this kind of understanding of the term 'democracy' would go beyond the scope of this paper.

By neglecting the role of long-term social and political structures in resisting the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, such theories have increasingly come under pressure to offer an adequate explanation. Since the weakening and failure of new democratic institutions in various Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Hungary and Turkey as well as in some Middle Eastern countries, such as Iraq after Saddam Hussein and Afghanistan after Taliban rule, one has to ask what is the exact relationship between the work of the agency of individuals who try to plan and enforce democratic institutions and the long existing functional and habitual relationships and constraints in a society.

The process-sociological model of democratisation and de-democratisation offered in this paper claims to empirically demonstrate the specific relationship between the long-term functional and habitual structures in a society and the attempts of individual 'agents' to change these structures. Based on the political development of Egyptian society after the 'Arab Spring' in 2011, in particular, the problem of the collapse of newly created democratic institutions as the result of the 'drag effect of the social habitus' of a great number

of Egyptian political activists will be given extensive attention. The term 'social habitus' will serve in this context as a conceptual instrument to help to overcome the polarised and polarising debate over 'agency versus structure' and to see the complex relationship between individuals and society more realistically.

Also, through this new process-oriented model of democratisation and de-democratisation, an attempt was made to overcome the opposing positions drawn between cultural relativism and Eurocentric ideological theories in order to conceptually come closer to the *structural similarities* of these institutional de-democratisation processes in different societies all over the globe. The conceptual tools of this model and its theoretical implications allow synchronic and diachronic comparisons to be carried out between different societies. Thus, empirically one is not only able to demonstrate the long-term directions of the dynamics of democratisation and de-democratisation processes in today's complex European societies, but also those processes in societies which by our common static concepts of democracy have not been considered as 'democracies'. The empirical studies of Norbert Elias, particularly his *Studies on the Germans*, could serve as an example of institutional de-democratisation processes as a consequence of the lagging of social habitus of the people affected behind the newly created institutions in Germany during the Weimar Republic. In this study, Elias demonstrates a direct link between the seizures of power by National Socialists and the long-term developments of the patterns of behaviour and feeling of the Germans which had been shaped in a rather authoritarian manner. According to him, the creation of democratic parliamentary institutions after the First World War could not lead to the democratisation of these deeply internalised patterns and systems of belief of the Germans (Elias 1996: 337). This type of governance, which requires compromise and is based on discussions and arguments, gave the hostility towards each other of some Germans, with their authoritarian and military personality structures, extra nutrition (Elias 1999: 411). According to Elias, in the course of the traumatic experiences of violent conflicts during the Weimer Republic, the longing for the old form of rule with a permanent control from 'outside' became even stronger for a great number of Germans. This longing was expressed in demands for a 'strong man' at the top of this form of rule who could bring people involved to unity and oneness again and put an end to the divisiveness (Elias 1996: 317–318). Such a man makes decisions, gives orders from the top and takes the heavy burden of responsibility from the shoulders of emotionally exhausted subjects (Elias 1996: 388):

> The cumulative experiences of fragmentation and the corresponding self-image of the Germans as people who are not capable of living together without discord and quarrelling also found expression in the longing for a sovereign, a monarch, a strong leader who would be able to bring them to unity and consensus (Elias 1996: 318).

Today, Elias would probably ask himself, whether ex-general el-Sisi is acting as the same 'strong man' in Egyptian society, who could bring order and security from the top and end all violent conflicts. Elias's empirical study of Germans, as he implies, can serve as a theoretical model for studying similarly structured processes in different societies regardless of their levels of development:

> When, therefore, in a nation, or some of its powerful sections, forms of belief, conscience and ideals – in short, levels of control within the personality itself – are traditionally strict and authoritarian as was the case in Germany, people will, in all probability, turn to leaders with similar characteristics (Elias 1996: 343–344).

Both Elias and Gholamasad give emphasis to the two relatively neglected dimensions of democratisation processes, namely the functional and habitual. With the aid of more precise and differentiated process

sociological concepts, they also try to elaborate the relationship of these two dimensions to each other and to the institutional dimension. In another paper I published in 'Human Figurations', one could more extensively read about the connection between these three dimensions (Alikhani 2014). The main focus of the following study will be put on the relationship between the habitual and institutional dimension of democratisation and de-democratisation, based on a new empirical example from Egypt.

1.2.   The habitual dimension

The habitual dimension of processes of democratisation refers to the more or less reality adequate perception of shifted power differentials in favour of former outsider groups, and especially, by outsider groups themselves in the course of functional democratisation. The institutionalisation of the new balance of power often requires the more-or-less conscious experience of these shifts (Gholamasad 1997: 365–366). According to both Gholamasad and Elias, for the people concerned, there will be a gradual change throughout these processes of perception and experience in terms of the common social structure of their individual behaviour, their language, their emotions and especially the formation of their consciences and ideals (Gholamasad 2001: 619; Elias 2001: 148–149).

From this process-sociological perspective, the concept of social habitus refers to a specific and more or less individualised stamp which every single individual shares with other members of his or her society. This stamp is not static, but exists within a 'change continuum', which results from the process character of single individuals and their interdependencies (Gholamasad 2001: 617–618). Depending on the structure of each society and its degree and manner of individualisation, the balance between continuity or change inherent in these patterns of feeling and behaviour (social habitus) is different. By studying the habitual dimension of democratisation processes, it becomes possible to ascertain whether the people affected by these processes can identify with the new institutions – that emerge in the course of functional democratisation processes – and accordingly could politically act according to their standards. This allows one to gain a scientific access to the emotional anchoring of the new processes and the degree of emotional satisfaction for the people involved. To put it simply, the habitual dimension of democratisation refers to the deep internalisation of these new institutions and functional connections. Only then can these processes gain an enormous strength in the steering of conduct, action and feeling of the involved people, which can be *socially* inherited.

In the course of habitual democratisation, a process of 'civilising' of codes of behaviour and feeling of the people affected takes place. Through the increased civilising of interpersonal relationships, physical violence as 'a principle of regulation of competition for the available power and status opportunities' (Gholamasad 2006: 64) becomes suspended from social and political life. The balance between rights and awareness of duty shifts in favour of the former. Accordingly, former 'immature subjects' who are oriented towards authoritarian rule are transformed into 'mature citizens' with a relatively autonomous conscience (Gholamasad 2007: 62–64). Other complementary processes, to which Elias in his numerous works refers, such as the shifting of the balance of I- and we-identity or self- and external-control in favour of the former in each case, also take place over the course of the processes of habitual democratisation. Based on the empirical studies of Elias, Gholamasad as well as my own previous research, at the theoretical level, I have established the following list of principal ideal features of a 'habitually democratic personality'. This list has the potential to be further modified and developed. Without a majority of such personalities in a society with a sufficient combination of these features, an institutional 'democracy' could not remain stable and permanent, particularly, in situations of crisis. This is regardless of the *level* of the development and the *degree* of the democratisation of societies. These features are in their structure more *emotional* than *cognitive*

1. A relatively high degree of self-control and the ability to think in the long-term perspective, especially in crisis situations.

2. The ability to make political judgements on their own. The shift from the obeying of external instances and authorities to self-constraint, the shift from subject to citizen with a more or less autonomous conscience.

3. The emotional ability to make compromises and concessions with opponents.

4. The emotional ability not to think in dual (black/white) categories.

5. The emotional ability to bear differences and divergences of opinion.

6. The emotional ability not to think and act according to already existing hierarchies and authorities.

7. Respect for human rights, especially the rights of women and minorities.

8. Believing in peaceful methods of resolving political and social conflicts: the strict abandonment of exercising any physical violence, except in self-defence.

Without these habitual preconditions of democratisation, it would be very difficult to maintain and implement democratic institutions, as we have seen it in Afghanistan and Iraq in the past decades. These preconditions are not just simple 'result of situational circumstances' (Kuzmics and Haring 2013: 493). On the contrary, they represent long-term structural developments. Even in the societies already defined as democratic, it is possible to lose these features of 'habitually democratic personalities', as they are just *learned* and not *biologically* inherited.

The political rise of Donald Trump in the USA could serve as another example of habitual de-democratisation of a great number of US citizens, especially white middle-aged and older men who are afraid of losing their social positions and 'identities'. The majority of his followers seem to have a deficit of some of these features which potentially could – in the case of the victory of Donald Trump – contribute to another wave of institutional de-democratisation, similar to that experienced by many of Americans following the events of 11 September 2001. These followers are supporting – in their fierce fight against an establishment perceived as alien and corrupt – somebody with authoritarian rhetoric and tendencies. At least in his political speeches, Trump does not seem to believe in democratic ways of conflict resolution. The current focus on Donald Trump is extremely misleading in understanding the real structure of his rise to power. To understand Trump as a structured rather than random phenomenon, studying him and his personal character on the level of a single individual would not be enough. It would be much more revealing to study the social habitus of the supporters that made the rise to power of such an authoritarian personality possible. From a process-sociological perspective, this rise to power could be explained – aside from being a reaction to increasing social inequality in the USA – as a reaction on the part of followers of Trump against a wide range of rapid social, economic and political developments that seem to them to be eroding the basic values and customs of the US society:

> Social movements reflecting these values have brought policies such as environmental protection, same sex marriage, and gender equality in public life to the center of the political agenda, drawing attention away from the classic economic redistribution issues. But the spread of progressive values has also stimulated a cultural backlash among people who feel threatened by this development (Inglehart and Norris 2016: 29).

This 'cultural backlash thesis' could be interpreted, in a process-sociological language, as a 'drag effect of the social habitus' of a great number of Trump's supporters behind a reality perceived as fast changing, alien and threatening. At the political level, this social habitus could give rise to emergence of a kind of 'authoritarian

populism', as we currently observe it not just in the USA, but all over the globe (Chacko and Jayasuriya 2017: 126).

1.3.   The institutional dimension

The institutional dimension of processes of democratisation refers to the manifestation of the shifted power balances in favour of previously less powerful groups in the course of functional democratisation processes. This manifestation is associated with a more reality-congruent experience of power shifts by the people involved and thus with habitual democratisation. Over these relatively slow and long-term processes, the former outsider groups can increasingly gain access to the sources of power and status monopolised by established groups, from which they had previously been institutionally excluded (Gholamasad 2001: 620). The institutions evolved often reflect the particular social needs of the majority of people in a society (Gholamasad 1992: 8). The manifestation of power shifts can find expression in different forms, including norms, laws and other institutions. The emergence of the suffrage movement and the development of new political organisations 'for the competition and elimination struggles' between groups of people, such as political parties and trade unions, are just a few aspects of these transformations over the course of processes of institutional democratisation. As part of these processes, impersonal forms of organisation replace the former rather personal forms of organisation (Gholamasad 1997: 366).

1.3.1.   Processes of institutional de-democratisation

Over processes of democratisation in a society there may be periods in which there is a consequential 'non-simultaneity of development' of the three mentioned dimensions of the democratisation processes. The term 'non-simultaneity of developments', borrowed from Ernst Bloch, was replaced by Gholamasad in his later studies on the genesis of the emergence of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 with the more precise and dynamic concept 'drag effect of the social habitus', as coined by Elias (2001: 211). Through this balance-concept, one could better become aware of the development of the democratisation and de-democratisation processes in both directions (Gholamasad 2001: 617). The term 'drag effect of the social habitus' refers to the consequences of the transformation of self-experience of the people concerned 'dragging' behind social transformation (Elias 2001: 211). In this respect, newly emerged institutions and functional connections do not necessarily result in stable institutions, which can satisfy as common objects of identification the emotional and 'material' needs of the people affected, in the wake of functional democratisation (Gholamasad 1997: 366). In these cases, the entire patterns of behaviour and feeling of the people can lag behind the real power shifts, because the perception of this new constellation of power and the development of new patterns of behaviour and feeling are relatively slow and tedious processes. The transition from an autocratic-dynastic to a parliamentary nation-state, for example, requires the overcoming of the older and more familiar patterns of thinking and speaking. In general, however, the language, the emotional state and especially the conscience formation – in other words, the social habitus of individuals – change more slowly, compared with the relatively rapid transformation of societal structure (Gholamasad 1997: 366; Elias 2001: 148–149).

A restructuring of the social habitus of people in a society depends on its power of resistance to the new developments as well as on the relative strength of the spurt of development in that society. Depending on the structure of the social habitus, the ongoing social processes can be slowed down or even blocked (Elias 2001: 211). In such situations, the single emotionally overwhelmed individuals often demand, following the functional democratisation, instead of more 'socialisation of the state' a stronger 'nationalisation of the society' (Gholamasad 2001: 626). The less autonomous 'forensic conscience' (Gholamasad 2006: 20) of these individuals in this stressful situation has to deal with such as overwhelming perceived conflicts and yearns

again for a stronger external regulation which should support them in this unbearable situation of permanent threat. The 'political immaturity' and the emotional inability – through a corresponding degree of self-control and the ability of long-term view – to resolve conflicts with words and through discussions drives these individuals who are less capable of conflict and consensus towards self-destructive thoughts and actions (Gholamasad 1993: 398). In this situation, physical violence can become an important means of regulation of behaviour and feeling. Violence and counter-violence in turn will lead to further insecurity of their own situation and an increased fear of the perceived sources of the threat. The only escape from this 'double-bind trap' [2][#N2] appears to the concerned individuals the restoration of old institutions, which better correspond to their personality structure which is geared to a previous context of functions and institutions:

> Insecure through social transformations which provide him with new challenges, he is usually for his survival in his new social function and position strictly dependent on the more reliable and displeasure-avoiding acquisition and repetition of certain social standards of behaviour. These standards are idealistically offered to him in the form of familiarly and from generations appearing to him as valid codes of conduct and belief systems or in the form of a 'charismatic personality' as a living example (Gholamasad 1997: 372).

Thus, the desire for greater external social controls becomes stronger in emotionally overwhelmed individuals who have become uncertain as a result of rapid processes of individualisation and the disintegration of the familiar units of identification. This desire is occasionally manifested in the form of a 'strong' and 'charismatic man' at the top who represents the older and more dominant layers of social habitus of those concerned. This is accompanied by the hope that this person will end what the people feel as emotionally repulsive and unbearable. A 'strong sovereign' should assume the whole function of conscience of these people and thus liberate them from the effort of their own formation of judgment and from the burden of responsibility:

> Instead of 'pluralism' as reproduction of institutional multi-polarity of control, this movement seeks to achieve an 'ideas and group monism', which manifests the relatively low capability of conflict (dealing with conflicts in a democratic and non-violent way) and consensus of social groups that are promoting this movement (Gholamasad 1996: 25).

The need for security, peace, order and unity stands in contrast to 'open disputes' that are often perceived to be intolerable. The need to participate in the process of governance is replaced by the need of 'being governed from the top' (Elias 1999: 412). Thus, the relatively lowly differentiated and simple self-control apparatus of these people restores the old relatively conflict-free and straightforward super- and subordination relationships in order to overcome the 'irritating' political disputes that arise with the new spurt of development towards institutional democratisation. This can only correspond to a more differentiated and complex self-control apparatus. For these people, these idealised bids equipped with external constraints assume stronger than before the entire function of conscience, because their self-constraint instances are – in relation to the change resulting from the social dynamics in the way which groups of people are bonded to each other – relatively *instinct-permeable*, *fragile*, *unstable* and *less autonomous*. Their lagging *self-constraints* apparently require in this situation a constant support and reinforcement by *external constraints* (Gholamasad 1996: 368).

By employing this theoretical framework, as mentioned, one can better understand and explain the seizure of power by charismatic personalities after shorter or longer periods of institutional democratisation. For instance, processes of institutional de-democratisation could also be currently seen in Hungary under the rule

of Viktor Orbán, in Turkey under the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and in Russia under the rule of Vladimir Putin. The ongoing developments in Poland indicate another example of institutional de-democratisation in which the 'system of checks and balances' (La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Pop-Eleches and Shleifer 2004: 446) has come under threat (Bucholc 2016). In all these examples, one seems to face a very weak and divided opposition and a 'sovereign' or a 'strong man' who is still very popular trying to test boundaries and gain more and more room for decision-making. In which direction developments in these countries will go remains to be seen. This will depend on the power resources which different involved groups have at their disposal in their forthcoming struggles. The rise to power of general el-Sisi could serve as another empirical example of institutional de-democratisation as the function of *drag effect of the social habitus* of a great number of Egyptian revolutionaries after the so called 'Arab Spring'. In the second part of this paper, I will apply the model of democratisation and de-democratisation introduced above to the developments in the Egyptian society after the uprising in January 2011.

2.　El-Sisi and processes of de-democratisation in Egypt

Egypt after the so called 'Arab Spring' provides a new example by which this model of democratisation and de-democratisation could be examined and developed further. Nearly two and half years after the successful uprising against a dictatorial regime, an elected president was replaced again by an army general through a military coup. In the following section, I will try to demonstrate how one crucial part of the revolutionaries themselves contributed to the restoration of the old authoritarian political order after a short period of the relative democratisation of state institutions. The main focus will be on one important section of post-Mubarak political groups and activists which contributed to these processes of de-democratisation.

In modern Egypt, there have been two strong political institutions: The Muslim Brotherhood and the military. After the fall of Hosni Mubarak as the representative of the military in January 2011, the Brotherhood got its historic chance to mobilise its followers and to assume political power. However, after one year of the presidency of Mohamad Morsi, the candidate of the Brotherhood, discontent among Egyptians arose. The Brotherhood was, among other things, not able to fix the deep structural problems in Egyptian economy, something which Morsi's successor, x-general el-Sisi, has also failed to achieve after nearly two years in office. The unprofessional and polarizing style of rule of the elected president Morsi intensified the anger of many Egyptians. The military, stigmatised as the main pillar of the Mubarak regime, saw its opportunity to step in and once again enter the political arena.

Without the struggle between the Muslim Brotherhood government and the opposition, represented by the National Salvation Front and the Tamerod movement, remaining in a political stalemate, the military would have not been able to carry out such a coup so easily. The Instigator of the coup, general el-Sisi maintains a tradition of sixty years of authoritarian rule of military leaders in modern Egypt. All evidence indicates that he would oppose every attempt to be dismissed as a strong ruler. Egypt in the fifth year after Mubarak demonstrates a shrill narrative of a 'war on terror' and an age-old autocratic logic that trades rights for the promise of security and stability. El-Sisi as 'the strong man' responded, especially in the period shortly after the coup, to the needs of many Egyptians for stability, order and security and acted as a saviour, attempting to avert civil war and restore the state. In return he has taken their chance of having a democratic political system. In this sense, the Egyptian people's 'revolution' has not just been 'hijacked' as some revolutionaries repeatedly have claimed afterwards, but a great number of Egyptian civilians and political activists from different groups willingly and unwillingly – due to the drag effect of their social habitus – contributed to these processes of de-democratisation (Savran 2013).

Also in this example, similar to examples elsewhere upon which the theoretical framework of this paper is based, those who carried out the uprising of 2011 played a significant role in the rise of power of a 'strong leader'. Not just pro-Morsi Islamists, but also the so-called liberals, leftists and seculars – in this paper also called non-Islamists – contributed enormously to the dynamic of these processes of de-democratisation. Although the reaction of the non-Islamists could be better understood in the context of their relationship to the Brotherhood, in this paper, I would just like to focus on the contribution of the latter groups shown in some Western media as allies of the 'democratic value-oriented West' in the fight against the dangerous and anti-democratic Islamists. In fact, there seems not to be such a great difference between the majority of the members of these so-called leftist, liberal and secular groups and the majority of the Muslim Brothers in terms of their undemocratic and authoritarian social habitus. The struggle between these groups appears to be more a struggle for political power than for any specific democratic and human values. Otherwise, one could not understand and explain why the military and its non-Islamist supporters could ally with the more radical Islamic Salafi 'Party Al-Nour' against, in comparison, more moderate Muslim Brothers (Lübben 2013, 280-282). [3][#N3]

In post-coup Egypt, state and private media have been dominated by pro-regime viewpoints, while dissenters have been demonised. Public debates have been mostly shut down and political discussions with 'strangers' are once again a risky endeavour. Surveillance recordings of activists are leaked and aired on television, with presenters vilifying them as 'traitors'. Over the past two years, the crackdown has widened far beyond the Brotherhood. Prominent activists, scholars, journalists and public figures have been arrested who dare to speak out. Egypt's jails are bursting with prisoners. Within just two days of a mass trial more than five hundred members of Muslim Brotherhood were sentenced to death, although most of the death penalties were later commuted to life in prison after strong international condemnation. The Brotherhood as a socially influential organisation was declared a 'terrorist group' in December 2014 and a court in Egypt has dissolved the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the Muslim Brotherhood's political wing (Kirkpatrick 2013a).

"The Egyptian authorities are using every resource at their disposal to quash dissent and trample on human rights", said Amnesty International in a report published ahead of the third anniversary of the 'revolution' on 23 January 2014: 'Three years on, the demands of the '25 January Revolution' for dignity and human rights seem further away than ever. Several of its architects are behind bars and repression and impunity are the order of the day', said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa deputy director (Amnesty International 2014). Between Morsi's ouster and January 2014, hundreds of protesters had been killed and as many as 20.000 people had been imprisoned (AlDailami and Pabst 2014: 78-79).

Some post-coup liberal talk-show hosts in a dehumanised way denounce the Brotherhood as a foreign menace and its members as 'extremely violent creatures' unfit for political life (Kirkpatrick 2013b). A hyper-nationalist euphoria unleashed in Egypt by the toppling of Morsi has swept up even liberals and leftists who spent years struggling against the country's previous military-backed governments. [4][#N4] An unpopular few among them have begun to raise alarms about what they are calling signs of 'fascism': the fervor in the streets, the glorification of the military as it tightens its grip, the enthusiastic cheers for the suppression of the Islamists and media creating an atmosphere of a personality cult around el-Sisi. But the vast majority of liberals, leftists and seculars in Egypt have joined in the jubilation at the defeat of the Muslim Brotherhood. They are still trying to persuade everybody that the overthrow of Morsi was not a 'coup' but a 'revolution'. The army merely carried out the popular will, they insist (Wojciechowski 2015: 59).

Three years after the Egyptian uprising, the country's liberals and leftists, who bitterly opposed Mubarak, had become largely aligned with another, even more brutal, military-dominated regime. For instance, the prominent Egyptian democrat Kamel Mogeith, a socialist newspaper columnist, feels the military's

replacement of an elected government was not quite the offence to democracy it appeared to be. Mogeith asserts that Morsi's replacement was not a military coup, and he believes the army was simply following the Egyptian people's lead (Rosen 2013). Like many other liberals, Nasser Amin, director of the Cairo-based Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary, sees Morsi's replacement as the 'third wave of the Egyptian revolution', with the first two being the ouster of Mubarak and the replacement of the transitional military council with an elected civilian government. Ziad el-Eleimy, a former member of parliament who was imprisoned in 2003 by the Mubarak regime, agrees. 'The third wave', he says, 'was composed of those who had issues with having a theocratic state.' The secularists, he believes, have not been co-opted by the military. Indeed, they forced the army to take action against Morsi's abuses of power (ibid). El-Eleimy is not alone in believing this. Nasser Abdel Hamid, a former leader of the Coalition of Revolutionary Youth and a columnist for the Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper, asserts:

> There was no way [out of the June 30 crisis] except for the military to listen to the street and implement its demands. If the military did not respond to the people's motives and demands… then they would be furious toward the military as well […] By dismissing Morsi, Sisi was simply implementing a roadmap that Egypt's secular parties formulated during a meeting at the Zamalek Marriott hotel on June 22, 2013 (ibid.).

The language of these followers of ex-general el-Sisi, who describe themselves as liberal, leftist and secular, is very authoritarian and aggressive. Based on the study of this language one is easily able to highlight their anti-democratic social habitus. Especially, the lack of both self-control and a long-term view constitute two of the main elements of their social habitus. In a very polarised way of thinking and feeling, the enemies of the Muslim Brothers are perceived as their friends and allies, no matter who this enemy is and what they might want to achieve after the removal of the common enemy. Even the use of physical violence for the elimination of their political opponents is legitimised, as we will identify in their reaction on the crackdowns of pro-Morsi sit-ins in August 2013. All in all, the personality structure of a great number of the members of these groups seems to not correspond with the main features of a 'habitually democratic personality' outlined in the first part of this paper. The current state of these groups is critical after the collaboration with 'the enemy of their enemy'. Structurally Similar to Reza khan in Iran from 1925, Hitler in Germany from 1933 and Napoleon III in France from 1852 (Alikhani 2012), el-Sisi already began with their elimination after getting rid of the first enemy:

> Tarnished by this history, riven by infighting and lacking broad appeal, the liberals now appear helpless to check Egypt's slide back to authoritarianism. A common lament of liberals is that, having preserved democracy with his coup, Mr Sisi then stifled their voices. […] Liberal appeals for democracy now feel stale, as most Egyptians seem comfortable with Mr Sisi, who has brought a sense of stability after years of upheaval. Having quashed dissent, he is now being urged by supporters to amend the constitution to reduce the powers of parliament. (*The Economist* 2015).

As we will see, the authoritarian personality structure of these non-Islamists could not bear differences and divergences of opinion. Although they could fight together against the common enemy, they are not able to find consensus and build coalitions between themselves. 'The liberals have been bedevilled by their own egos', says David Ottaway of the Wilson Center, an American think-tank (ibid.).

2.1.   The reaction of non-Islamists to crackdowns of sit-ins

One event which clearly reveals the anti-liberal and anti-democratic attitudes of many non-Islamists is their reaction to the crackdowns on pro-Morsi sit-ins. Based on their statements regarding this crackdown, one could easily figure out their disrespect for human rights and peaceful political solutions in dealing with their political opponents. In the following, I will quote several statements of some prominent non-Islamists to support my claim.

The turning point came on 14 August 2013, when the military and security forces brutally cleared the two mass sit-ins at the Rabaa al-Adawiya mosque that formed the epicentre of support for the ousted president and at Cairo University. Up to 600 people were killed (AlDailami 2014: 74), in what Human Rights Watch describes as 'The most serious incident of mass unlawful killings in modern Egyptian history.' (Abaza 2014). The National Salvation Front leadership, which includes former presidential candidates Hamdeen Sabahi and Amr Moussa, issued a statement applauding the raids. Many other non-Islamists were relatively untroubled by the violence. For instance, Nasser Amin mentioned the Article 21 of the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

> We could say that this sit-in actually violated this article through its long duration in a residential area and the turning of that sit-in into an armed or militant camp which endangers the residents' rights, as well as their security (Rosen 2013).

A former member of parliament and a leader of the Constitution Party, a liberal group founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohamed el-Baradei, Bassel Adel, using dehumanising and criminalising language, said in an interview:

> They need to put a siege upon them, and cut off their supplies of water, of cement, because they are building walls. There are weapons and criminals in there, as well as good people, but they should deal with these criminals now (Booth and Al-Hourani 2013).

Also, Shadi Ghazali Harb, the founder of the liberal Awareness Party, justified the exercise of violence as the only way to oppose the Muslim Brothers:

> In peaceful protests, yes, there may be some human rights violations, but with the Muslim Brothers, there are always guns. We are sure they are armed. These sit-ins should be dismantled, by any means, and, unfortunately, there will be injuries and probably deaths (ibid.).

He called for the military to step in and end the government of the Muslim Brothers on a number of occasions before the coup: 'I think the army has an important role to play in this phase to get us out of this tragedy that the Muslim Brotherhood has put us in.' (Hauslohner 2013: 9). Groups such as the Wafd Party, the most prominent Egyptian liberal organisation, and Al-Tagammu, founded as a leftist party, have strongly backed the military-led transition and applauded the crackdowns. Both parties welcomed a harsh court ruling dissolving the Brotherhood and banning all of its activities, as did the Popular Current, the movement founded by Nasserist politician and former presidential candidate, Hamdeen Sabahi. Like Sabahi, Amr Moussa, another former presidential candidate and the former secretary general of the Arab League has vocally backed the military and has publicly supported the idea of army chief el-Sisi running for president, a move that would eradicate even the slightest pretense of civilian democratic rule (Abdel Kouddous 2013).

In fact, many non-Islamists see in the military a strategic ally against politically stronger Islamists. According to Mona el-Ghobashy, an Egyptian political scientist at Barnard College, they use the military for their political aims: 'They can have the military extinguish their political rivals for them because, as they have shown over and over again, they cannot compete with them on the electoral playing field.' (ibid.). However, the logic of 'the end justifies any means' is more of a Machiavellian than a democratic understanding of politics: In the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end (Machiavelli 1998: 71).

2.2. Critical Voices amongst non-Islamists

One way to work out dominant anti-democratic attitudes of non-Islamists is the study of critical voices among them. This small minority has increasingly criticised the Machiavellian attitudes of its comrades and has begun to express doubts about their euphoria. However, this small minority has become increasingly isolated. Some of them have already been put in prison, others have left the country and are living in exile. These critical voices could be found amongst the left-leaning April 6 Group who had originally backed el-Sisi's removal of Morsi. This group stated on its official Facebook page in reaction to el-Sisi's decision to run for the presidency:

> The defence minister's candidacy for the post of president of the republic would not be in the interest of the divided nation and will not achieve the objectives of the revolution; rather, it will increase the crisis greatly and detract from stability and desired progress (Browning 2014).

Ahmed Maher, a founder of this group, earlier expressed his mistrust of the generals in a Twitter message to another activist:

> If we assume it is not a coup, and I tell people it's not a coup, when they screw us again like they did in 2011, what would I tell people? (Kirkpatrick 2013b).

His allies responded by trying to throw him out, not only from the volunteer team but also from the April 6 group. Esraa Abdel Fattah, a prominent activist, campaigned against him and circulated in the media a list of his statements questioning the 'coup'. She insisted that the Muslim Brotherhood amounted to a 'foreign-backed terrorist group' and therefore should be dealt with consequently. Any kind of critique and debate in this situation would undermine the cohesion in the fight against this dangerous group. Her solution was the unconditional support of the military:

> When terrorism is trying to take hold of Egypt and foreign interference is trying to dig into our domestic affairs, then it's inevitable for the great Egyptian people to support its armed forces against the foreign danger (ibid.).

Maher was detained in November 2013 for holding a demonstration against a new Egyptian protest law. On 22 December 2013, together with other opposition leaders Ahmed Douma and Mohammed Adel, he was sentenced to three years in prison as a punishment for protests against recent measures carried out by the Egyptian military government. He raised fears that the new government was seeking revenge against opponents of Egypt's old order (Fahim 2013).

Another important figure who started criticising the authoritarian procedure of el-Sisi and his non-Islamist allies was Mohamed el-Baradei, the renowned advocate of reform. He was supported by many revolutionaries in 2011, and was an important figure in the overthrow of Morsi. He appeared next to el-Sisi on the day of the coup and served as vice president of international affairs in the interim government. His reputation inside and outside the country was a source of legitimacy for the military-led transition. While el-Baradei did not condemn the incommunicado detention of Morsi in an undisclosed location, nor the closure of sympathetic Islamist television channels, he was among the few politicians – and certainly the most prominent – calling for a political solution rather than forcible dispersal of the pro-Morsi sit-ins in Cairo. El-Baradei's proposals were also met with a vicious reaction in the state and private media, with pundits accusing him of being a 'traitor' and 'a double agent'. Barely an hour after security forces brutally cleared the sit-ins, el-Baradei resigned. He wrote in his resignation letter:

> It has become difficult for me to continue bearing responsibility for decisions that I do not agree with and whose consequences I fear [...] I cannot bear the responsibility for one drop of blood (Fleishman 2013).

Four days later, facing a growing campaign of demonisation against him, he boarded a plane to Vienna and left the country. Ironically, El-Baradei, similar to several other non-Islamists at the time of the power struggle between Morsi and the opposition, rather than calling for more dialog, instead promoted the interference of the military. He indirectly invited the army to intervene almost five months before the coup in an interview with the BBC in February 2013: 'If law and order is absent, they [the army] have a national duty to intervene, and they have said that.' [5][#N5] In a very politically naive way, he predicted that the army would leave after the intervention:

> Nobody wants the army to come back, and I do not think, if the army were to come back they would come back to govern, because they had an awful experience in mismanaging the transition themselves. But they will just come back to stabilize, and then we will start all over again. We would have lost two years, but at one point probably it will be the only alternative (Hauslohner 2013: 9).

Khaled Dawoud, the spokesperson for the National Salvation Front was the next critical voice amongst non-Islamists. Two days after the brutal crackdowns on the sit-ins, Dawoud, who describes himself as a 'leftist, not a liberal', stepped down as the group's spokesperson. After resigning, he said:

> We wanted a political deal, we wanted Morsi removed, but we didn't want to suppress [the Muslim Brotherhood] or kill them or consider them an outlawed organisation. [...] Even some close friends called me a Brotherhood sympathizer, a secret cell, a traitor and a US agent (Abdel Kouddous 2013).

Amr Hamzawy, a political scientist and a founder member of the Egypt Freedom Party who held a seat in the dissolved Parliament, was another member of this small group of liberals who condemned both the Morsi government's misrule and the military coup. In the aftermath of the coup, while many of the non-Islamists praised the military's role in ousting Morsi and the ensuing crackdown on the Brotherhood, Hamzawy emerged as a rare non-Islamist critic of the human rights abuses being carried out by the security forces, the

quashing of dissent by the interim government and the re-entrenchment of the military into public life. He was shocked as he noticed that the majority of his liberal friends remained silent about these incidents:

> I was shocked by how little nominally liberal voices were willing to speak out [...] I was shocked at the fact that liberals were willing to endorse what is to me a freeze of democratic mechanisms (Abdel Kouddous 2014).

In a column on 31 July 2013 in the daily newspaper el-Shorouk, entitled 'The crisis of Egyptian liberals and its re-establishment', Hamzawy condemned the so-called liberal parties for repeatedly calling on the military to intervene throughout Morsi's presidency. He accused them of applying a double standard with regard to the human and political rights of Islamists. In a presentation with the title 'Anti-democratic Deceptions - How Egyptian Liberals Endorse Autocracy' at the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law in November 2015, Hamzawy argued why and how liberals in Egypt have attempted to restore the authoritarian political order in recent decades. According to him, the idea of sequentialism, the notion of a unilaterally defined set of national necessities, and the subordination of society and citizens to the state are among the liberal made grand deceptions. This notion has made it possible for Egypt's new saviour and his ruling establishment to contain popular demands for a democratic order defined by the rule of law, rotation of power, civic peace, and safeguards human rights and freedoms. [6] [#N6] Three years after the uprising, Hamzawy finds himself politically very isolated. He is vilified by his former colleagues, branded 'a traitor' and a 'fifth columnist' in the press and has been barred from travel after prosecutors charged him with insulting the judiciary. In February 2014, as a reaction to the attacks of some of his liberal friends he called the social and political situation in Egypt 'fascistic':

> They are pushing the narrative of salvation from a hero in uniform, [...] You have human rights violations, you have repressive laws being passed, you have the press using conspiracy theories and unitary definitions of what our national interest is, and accusations of treason everywhere. Clearly, when you connect the dots, you are looking at a fascist buildup (Abdel Kouddous 2014).

With each of these four examples of critical non-Islamists there seems to exist certain habitual constraints that force them to behave, feel and act in a certain way. These constraints are signs of more unconscious and deeply internalised principles that one cannot ignore as a habitually democratic person, even in crisis situations. These principles differ from Machiavellian principles that do not care about any moral, human and democratic principles. Decades of military rule in Egypt seem to have left deep traces in the social habitus of a great number of Egyptians, non-Islamists included. Under such an authoritarian state, authoritarian society and personality structures have become invigorated, which allows less room for the development of habitual characteristics to create, support and maintain democratic institutions.

2.3.   Processes of de-democratisation under the rule of el-Sisi

The political future of Egypt looks uncertain. El-Sisi seems to have consolidated his power. According to Khaled Fahmy, a history professor at the American University in Cairo, no one in recent Egyptian history has been so firmly in control of the country (Kirkpatrick 2014). The leaders of the 'revolution' are either in jail, in exile or marginalised. Many Egyptians keep silent, because they were deeply unhappy at the lack of security and order in the years after the uprising in 2011. A few who dare to show their discontent and go on the street face a brutal reaction from the police. For instance, on 25 January 2015, on the fourth anniversary of the

Egyptian uprising, an official event to commemorate the 2011 uprising was cancelled by the authorities. At least 16 people were killed in clashes between police and protesters across Egypt, officials said (BBC Middle East 2015).

El-Sisi's government sees every political protest as a threat and seeks to create a depoliticised society. In a speech during a ceremony at Cairo University honouring 27 'top students' from universities nationwide, el-Sisi warned university students – one of the main supporters of the 2011 uprising – of any political activities referred to as 'malicious' (Writer 2014). He added that universities were solely reserved for education. In speaking about his 'love' for these students and calling them his 'children', he has been acting according to his authoritarian concept of ruling (ibid.):

> As the new school year begins, I call on university students to focus only on your learning in order to promote your scientific and cultural knowledge. I love Egypt's youth and consider them my children. [7].[#N7]

Meanwhile, protesters – both secular and Islamist – are not the only ones in the firing line. Human rights groups are facing growing restrictions and the threat of imprisonment hangs over their members. A vague new amendment on foreign funding means staff could be sentenced to life in prison. Khaled Mansour, the director of the campaign group 'Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)' which managed to operate during Mubarak's rule complained about the strict surveillance by the new Egyptian authorities. He said that, like some other organisations, they may have to close within weeks:

> Controlling funding is just an entry point for them to control our activities so they can come and say: 'You can not work on torture, we are in a war on terror', or 'You can not work on this because it will undermine public peace.' What is 'public peace'? They will never tell you. For them, public peace is public silence (Guerin 2014).

Current Egyptian authorities seem to no longer be afraid of being labelled as sympathisers of the pre-revolutionary regime. In January 2015, Egypt's high court overturned the only remaining conviction against Hosni Mubarak, opening the way for his possible release. His release, while thousands of his political opponents languish in jail, would be a further blow to the 'Egyptian Revolution'. Mubarak's smile from his cage after the Egyptian court dropped all charges against him in November 2014 shows just how badly this 'revolution' has stumbled.

Egypt might have to wait for years, or even decades, for the next uprising. Until then, it seems as though el-Sisi will be able to eliminate his rivals one after another in the name of the 'war on terror', stability and security. Huge populist projects such as high-speed railways, undersea tunnels, a nuclear power plant and, especially, the construction of a new Suez Canal should distract Egyptians and inspire in them a sense of greatness. El-Sisi himself holds the opinion that projects such as these would 'restore the self-confidence of Egyptians' and show them of what they are 'capable' (Saleh 2014). El-Sisi does not seem to believe in any democratic and pluralistic political landscape under his rule. On several occasions, he has expressed disrespect for political institutions and the democratic process. For instance, prior to the election, when party leaders inquired about his programme and plans once he got elected, el-Sisi exclaimed:

> 'What elections? The people want me. I didn't want to be here. I am not expecting victory or defeat. We have already started working.' He admitted that he was '[...] not going to wait for a

parliament. People will not wait for me until a parliament is elected. I will work before a parliament is in place' (Shahin 2014).

With such an authoritarian style of rule, the parliament is expected to be a 'rubber stamping' institution, the primary function of which is to pass laws for the president, like in the Mubarak era. El-Sisi will subordinate parliament's role to legislating on-demand and not monitoring his powers or exercising necessary oversight of the government. In the above-mentioned meeting with party leaders, el-Sisi stunned them by raising the following question: 'Why are you so many and why don't you think seriously of merging into two or three parties and we all work together?' (ibid). He directed this question to a wide variety of parties (around twelve in number) that run the full gamut of liberal, right of centre religious, Salafist, leftist and pro-Mubarak tendencies. Naturally, these parties do not share a common ideological orientation or similar interests. But the question in itself is revealing. It reflects el-Sisi's limited understanding of the concept of pluralism and his negative view of the need for political parties. It also underscores his lack of appreciation for the role of parties as representative of competing interests in society and as serious opposition to the government. It also shows his peculiar understanding of 'inclusiveness', as he expects all political parties to merge and work together with the government. Remarkably, this 'organic' view is reminiscent, if not of authoritarianism, at least of a by-gone corporatist mentality (Shahin 2014). As an ex-general, the language of el-Sisi is a simple language of war, of F16s and tanks. His solution to every social and political conflict is a military one, according well with the maxim: 'If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.' In all his interviews given to Western televisual media, he is asking for more military support for his 'war on terror' inside and outside the country. [8][#N8] In doing so, he represents himself as an essential part of 'the coalition' and as an important ally of the West in its 'war on terror' (Chomsky 20021: 1-8):

The dominant discourse in most Western countries, which categorises Islamists *per se* as anti-democratic and the non-Islamists as democratic, seems to be less reality congruent. That might be one of the reasons why the leaders of some Western countries, especially the USA did not define the overthrow of democratically-elected Morsi as a 'coup' at the beginning (Hudson 2013). [9][#N9] These so-called 'political realists' do not consider the long-term consequences of their political decisions and actions, as they also were not able to see the long-term consequences of empowering Islamists in Afghanistan in their fight against Soviet Union in the 80s. El-Sisi is profiting from these dominant narratives to legitimise his illegitimate rule as an ally to the West, by, among other things, portraying himself as 'protecting Israel' as well as 'a guarantor of stability' in an unstable region. However, this could, in the long run, lead to the increased radicalisation of the Islamists in Egypt and elsewhere who do not see any possible democratic way of gaining political power, which would be a confirmation of al-Qaeda and ISIL's preferred version of the struggle for political power.

Summary

Egypt's case raises another empirical example of how processes of de-democratisation could prevail due to the *drag effect of the social habitus* of a great number of activists in a democratic movement. The process-sociological framework offered in this paper could help to grasp some aspects of processes of democratisation and de-democratisation neglected by dominant theories of democracy. These theories primarily reduce such processes to their institutional dimension and fail to consider not only the functional dimension, but also the habitual dimension of such processes. In this paper, based on the example of Egypt after the uprising in 2011, I tried to illustrate how the existence of a *democratic social habitus* by the majority of people in a society is decisive for the maintenance of a sustainable institutional democratisation, and what could happen in the case of the absence of such a social habitus. This empirically oriented model of democratisation and de-

democratisation contains the capacity of further development based on other examples of institutional de-democratisation, some of which I referred to in this paper. Such examples could be found both in less and more democratised societies.

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1. This paper is a revised version of a presentation with the title 'How Structurally Similar is El-Sisi's Seizure of Power in Egypt to Reza Khans Seizure of Power in Iran in 1925' that I gave at the 21th DAVO-Congress in Cologne in September 2014. ☝ [#N1-ptr1]

2. The term double-bind process refers to interconnectedness of the increasing threat-perception and increasing affectivity of thinking and acting of human beings: '[…] *a high level of danger has its counterpart in a high emotional level of knowledge and thus also of thinking about this danger and action in relation to that danger. A high fantasy-orientated perception of the dangers leads to the constant reproduction of the high level of danger and thus also to the reproduction of ways of thinking that are more fantasy oriented than reality congruent.*' (Elias 1987b: 78). ☝ [#N2-ptr1]

3. In this respect, habitually there seems not to be big differences between Islamists and non-Islamists in Egypt. Not just their disrespect for human rights and their understanding of democracy, but also their short-term view in supporting the army against their political opponents reflect their authoritarian habitus. Morsi was described as a new Pharaoh, but in fact he was ruling a 'deep state' with little political and economic scope for decision making. According to some estimations, the Egyptian military accounts for between 10 to 40 percent of Egypt's entire economy (Kholaif 2013). Demonizing Muslim Brothers and Morsi and lionizing the military and el-Sisi was again thinking in anti-democratic black-white categories without long-term view and self-control. As the German social philosopher Oskar Negt assesses: '*Democracy is the only form of government which must be learned.*' (Negt 2010: 13). This emotionally challenging and long-term learning process might have been more possible under the rule of a democratically elected government. While for non-Islamists the replacement of Morsi might have been at least more likely through democratic procedures, the democratic replacement of a better organised and more powerful general el-Sisi seems to be much more difficult. Developments in Tunisia will force some activists in Egypt to think about the question of why different political groups with different ideologies were able to negotiate a compromise in Tunisia which could not be reached in Egypt. ☝ [#N3-ptr1]

4. The song 'Blessed Be Your Hands' in Arabic 'Teslam El Ayadi' shows exactly this nationalistic and anti-democratic euphoria towards the military and the degree of the militarisation of Egyptian society: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dskl5eMNmco [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dskl5eMNmco]) This song was one of the most popular songs after the coup and during the candidacy of el-Sisi for the presidency. The repeating sentence of the song is: 'may those hands be safe may the military of my country be safe.': '*This is the hero who gave up his life, who carried the name of my country and sacrificed himself for it. The one who protects our land may he be safe. The one who protects our honour may be safe. Those who Egypt is always proud to call my sons (…) This is the one who said, on seeing our wounds, 'It is time for struggle', he said, 'I am going to bring back our happiness' and he held his weapon to his chest. He told Egypt, 'It does not matter if I live or die' and he never accepted to forgive and forget. (…) Millions of grateful words from us to everyone in the army, from the draftee to the general, to those who have a hundred percent solid fortitude, to those who drew the road map for us, from me to you the simplest gift: salute to the most courageous man. (…) The one who said, 'I have to bring back the rights of my country, with no hesitation' also said, 'I will step in fire and make it through and swear to God I wont even rest'. The likes of you, my countryman, is to be carried on shoulders.*' ☝ [#N4-ptr1]

5. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=p9dsGhvfGzU#start=0:00;end=3:13;autoreplay=false;showoptions=false). ☝ [#N5-ptr1]

6. (http://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/news/former-egyptian-member-parliament-amr-hamzawy-speaks-liberalism-egyptii). [#N6-ptr1]

7. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpuJX3QkCaE [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpuJX3QkCaE]). [#N7-ptr1]

8. See his exclusive interviews with CBS News on September 23, 2014: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dwbc_Rai4UA [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dwbc_Rai4UA]) and FRANCE 24 on November 20, 2014: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpNgzWfN3dE). [#N8-ptr1]

9. In April 2016 the German vice chancellor Peter Gabriel referred in his visit to Egypt to el-Sisi as 'an impressive president'. [#N9-ptr1]

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Biography

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