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UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA

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Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
Grado en Relaciones Internacionales

Trabajo Fin de Grado

The egyptian military:

An institutional pillar of Al-Sisi's
regime

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Madrid, Junio 2023

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1. Introduction

Authoritarian regimes have taken many forms around the world and throughout history. Their inner configuration as well as the context that surrounds them has shaped the way in which they carry out policy, as they give prevalence to certain figures and institutions which in turn affect their priorities and their assessment of threats. Undeniably, this is a product not only of the existing regime, but also of how power has been configured throughout the nations' history, making certain actors more prevalent than others. As a result, it becomes crucial to the understanding of such countries to analyse their inner configurations of power, the sources of tension that enable possible changes in them and in what ways regimes try to canalise such tensions to survive. Being at the centre of such an existential matter, these tend to have far-reaching implications in the entirety of the state.

In the case of Egypt, the military has been a crucial player in the development of its politics for most of its existence as a modern state. It has endured change and challenges and shown to be able to adapt to them and maintain a predominant position in Egyptian society. A clear example of this process can be observed with the deposition of Mubarak's long-standing presidency as a result of the 2011 protests and the ensuing attempts to create a new stable government (Albrecht & Bishara, 2011). All throughout the transitional period, the military proved to be one of the main political players with which bargaining needed to take place so as to obtain and maintain power. Such was the path trodden by the Muslim brotherhood and its leader, Mohammed Morsi, winner of the presidential elections celebrated in 2012. The bargaining process entailed periods of both tension and understanding between parties, on the one side, using the presidency as a source of power, on the other, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (Abul-Magd, 2014). A clear example where an understanding was reached was the creation of a new constitution, in which ample privileges were conceded to the military. On the other side, the struggle for power and control became apparent with the reconfiguration of the SCAF by Morsi, who appointed new officers to lead the organisation. It was through this measure that a relatively unknown figure became the head of the SCAF, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (Aclimandos, 2016). Nevertheless, such lack of public presence would not last long, as the disapproval of the Muslim Brotherhood steadily rose and tensions between them

and the military reached a crashing point, leading to the disposal of Mubarak and the establishment of Al-Sisi as the new head of state.

Such events where the military gains privileges in exchange of support towards the head of state are not a novel in Egypt, quite the contrary, it is the way the country has been ran for most of its modern history (Abul-Magd, 2017b), which explains their prevalence in society and their influence in political decision-making. A notable outcome of this way of operating has been the presence of the military in many sectors of the Egyptian economy with a considerable lack of oversight from the state. Such autonomy has been reflected in the exemption of military business from most taxes. This privilege has enabled the military to not disclose figures from their operations, which has created problems for experts to assess their size in the Egyptian economy, with estimates ranging from 5 to 40 percent (Blumberg, 2011). Their privileges do not end in the economic sphere, equally expanding to the political one, affording them a striking autonomy affording them the possibility to have the final word regarding their budget. As a result, it has shaped the way in which politics are carried out, therefore transforming as well political and institutional culture.

As a result, it is interesting to analyse how Egypt and its political system fit in the context of theories of authoritarian regimes and civil-military relations while shedding light on the possible mechanisms that have led to the creation of such processes, how they shape the current regime and the way it maintains control of power. With it, an analysis can be made regarding the extent to which the country fits into pre-established categories delineated by scholars, examining in which ways they have adapted to their own particular form of configuring the state. This could counter certain shortcomings of the actors identified in the traditional categories while creating new challenges for the state. As well as provide limited but valuable insight into the inner workings of the Egyptian system which provides very little openly available information due to the nature of its regime on delicate areas surrounded by secrecy.

2. Objectives and questions of the study

The initial hypothesis of this study regarding the nature of the Egyptian regime is that it stands in between a personalist and military regime, striking a balance between two models. A secondary hypothesis is that such nature affects the policies they carry out and how they

envision solutions to maintain power vis-à-vis its citizens. As a result, this study seeks to analyse the nature of the Egyptian regime in its current state as of 2023, see where it fits in the typology of authoritarian regimes and how it functions. With it, drawing connections between its position in the spectrum and the policies that it pursues will be attempted. Such attempts are made with the objective of better understanding the Egyptian military and its position in Al-Sisi's regime, as it is clear that the military remains a very influential political player, but its extent is purposefully obscured. Doing so, will provide insight into elements of the worldview of the regime, and explore its distinctive features created by the context in which the regime arose and the one in which it currently exists. Through such an approach, particularities of the Egyptian regime are given especial relevance, so as to see how they fit in broader theory and, hopefully, provide a more integral view of the regime. To this end, a set of questions has been designed so as to establish certain boundaries and areas of interest in which to carry out the study, which are:

- 1) What is the position of the military in Al-Sisi's regime? Does it diverge from the traditional role of the military in power explained in academia?
- 2) Is there personalization around the figure of Al-Sisi in the current state of the regime? Are there boundaries established to limit such personalization?
- 3) Can a link be drawn between such configuration and their methods to control the population?

3. Methodology

The objectives and methods of this study adhere to a case study, that being a single-country study in the field of comparative politics. The goal of using a comparative method is to carry out the testing of a hypothesised empirical relationship among variables (Lijphart, 1975). Such methods are regularly used to compare different countries to analyse their similarities and dissimilarities, so as to draw conclusions on possible factors that may cause such differences. In the case of this study, the scope is reduced to a single case, and a comparison is made with theory to understand how it fits into broader frames, based on observing patterns throughout the world. As a result, the single-country study is more intensive, as it has a lower degree of abstraction, but is likewise less extensive as it only focuses on one

country (Landman, 2008). Such a focus has particular advantages, such as providing ample contextual description through which new classifications can be created if sufficient dissimilarities are found with categories already existent established by theory. As a result, they can bring new information to existing studies and confirm or deny their applicability in a given context. Furthermore, if phenomena are observed that nuance a theory, this can then be tested in other contexts, thus creating new research questions for the field, and, if a pattern is discovered, new theories can be crafted. Due to it, cases are normally selected due to them having particular characteristics that can provide special interest for existing theory either by their features being similar to a concrete theory or by being starkly different and observing if certain outcomes still take place or not (Landman, 2008). Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that due to the highly context-specific development of the study, the potential for generalisations that fit into broader theory are quite limited, as there is the need to previously compare the case with other countries to confirm or deny the existence of a consistent pattern.

It has been through this logic that Egypt has been selected, due to their nature as a regime where a strong head of state exists but there is also a notable presence of the military institution in political life and processes. Such characteristic has been a reoccurring feature in the country, but the interest of the study lies in the current state of the nation under Al-Sisi. With it, certain features of the regime are to be examined, so as to understand the logic they follow and if such features are explained by existing theory. To carry out the study, a pure analysis of the inner functioning of the ruling coalition and its relationship with the leader is not possible to do. Doing so would entail an examination of the ruling elite to see if there exists domination of a particular actor in it, and for it, Dahl defends that the interests of such an actor must prevail constantly and have mutually exclusive interest from the others (Dahl, 1958), therefore being aware of incredible subtleties in the mechanisms of the regime. The impossibility for it lies in that such a process would entail gaining access to delicate details, insider conversations and dealings that are only known by a very select group of people which are not willing to disclose them publicly as it could jeopardise the regime.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that such endeavour is impossible, as data can be collected from other sources regarding the outcomes it produces to infer by proxy an assessment on the balance of power inside the regime. As such, this can be later compared with the patterns laid out by theory to assess if they match with expected behaviour or not. For it, an examination of the background of certain powerful positions within the regime is possible. These will have to be available on the public domain through official web pages and news reports which limits the scope to public offices of certain importance, such as the governors of

each governorate. Additionally, an analysis on the design and functions of certain institutions within the military and the government can be carried out, which could reveal important factors about the distribution of power in the country. Another observable factor is policy and legislation, as these need to be openly disclosed to become effective and could provide insight into the objectives of the regime. Both of the previous elements can be investigated through legislation that is publicly available so citizens comply with it, an especially relevant piece to analyse will be the Egyptian Constitution of 2014 and its amendments. Lastly, the sources of legitimation used in their rhetoric and its effects can also be measured, providing a frame of values that reflect what is tolerated and what is not, which is strongly tied with what the regime perceives as a threat and as beneficial for its interests. This data can be obtained from translated reports, speeches and media owned by the state as well as studies and analyses made by academics regarding propaganda.

After the gathering of such data has taken place, they will be put in context of broader theory, to examine if they fit described patterns of behaviour, or, on the contrary are outliers, while trying to reason the interests of the regime and the factors of the context that make it so. Throughout the study, there will be an examination of possible signs of different phenomena using tools designed by scholars to ascertain the nature and reasons for certain measures. As a result, personalism will be measured to ascertain the power of the head of state, as well as the power of the military and the controls they have established to limit it through a barometer created in scholarly articles (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018). Another factor to consider will be the measure of the militarization of society, by examining if certain positions of political control are assigned to officers or ex-officers and its extent by researching sources of information in official websites. The institutional design and functions laid out in legislation will be paramount to understand such variables. Additionally, examining the methods of control of the population should create links with theory on authoritarian regimes and its methods as it is one of the most explored areas in academia of these types of regimes. For it, its different dimensions studied in theoretical work such as Svoboda's (Svoboda, 2012) will be explored to then analyse recent events reported by the press and specialised institutions such as think tanks and see what category they fit. Afterwards, these measures will be analysed to see if they are characteristic of a military regime as stated by theory through authors such as Linz (Linz, 2000), Stepan (Stepan, 1971) and a variety of others.

4. Theoretical frame

To better understand the situation of Egypt and have a backdrop with which to compare it, it is necessary to give a theoretical overview of several areas of academic study. These will provide a frame of reference to situate and appreciate the characteristics of the regime, while understanding the processes that have led it to take the shape it has taken. Doing so is particularly crucial in such a context, as many of the inner workings of an autocracy such as the organisation of power, the interests of each group and the processes that have led to such developments are shrouded in secrecy. This is due to the fact that they are not accountable to the broader public in such minutiae and disclosing them could jeopardise current agreements or go against the interests of powerful members of the state. Thusly, such elements are not publicly available, or, if they are in some form they have to be interpreted sceptically as they will probably not represent reality. As a result, it is far preferable to analyse if observable factors match with what theory describes in such contexts or not, therefore providing a possible explanation for the causes and consequences of such elements.

4.1. Theory on authoritarian regimes

The first aspect to study must be the most characteristic feature of the Egyptian regime on a basic level, which is that it is an authoritarian regime. Understanding its features will provide insight into which are the most pressing interests of the regime while laying the basic foundations which will be further explored later with concepts such as the limitation of political participation or methods to control the population.

The seminal work of Juan Linz is crucial to understand what an authoritarian regime is and what are its characteristics. In chapter four of his work *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*, originally published in 1975, Linz describes authoritarian regimes as political systems with limited political pluralism, without a guiding ideology nor intensive political mobilisation in which a leader or small group exercises power within ill-defined limits, but predictable ones (Linz, 2000). Regimes on the other hand, are understood as a leadership group with specific interests at play in authoritarian decision-making which influence the domestic policy and international behaviour of a country (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2014). From the same body

of work as this last definition, periods where authoritarian government take place are also defined. As such, regimes become authoritarian when the executive arrives to power through undemocratic means, changes the formal or informal rules to achieve power without a democratic process or democratic elections are carried out but the military prevents the implementation of the result.

Coming back to Linz and his work (Linz, 2000), he highlights the low level of specificity of their political institutions which effectively hold a grasp on society to limit the political expression of certain groups and their interests. This creates a limitation in participation, ruling legally or de facto which groups have such privileges, and which do not. The main criterion behind such permissions is which group has the trust of the leader or ruling group. Thus, this has as a consequence the continual co-optation of leaders from the different entities which are trusted so as to make them participate in the system. Such processes are at the core of creating inner groups in the regime, which are one of the main components to understand them.

Linz realises that such regimes may lack a ruling political party, as more than ideology they operate around mentalities, markedly emotional rather than rational (Geiger, 1932), this comes from their ampler unstructured and changing character. As a consequence, mentalities provide non codified ways of reacting, are less binding and harder to expand among the masses. The existence of mentalities is a direct consequence of how these regimes operate, as Linz understands that such regimes need a complex coalition of forces so as to neutralize a maximum number of rivals and as a result, mentalities provide enough ambiguity to erase the tensions between the different groups conforming the regime. By the same token, they generate apathy in the population, as it is designed to not be identifiable by any sole group of society and their cleavages and their participation is already limited by design (Purcell, 1973). This apathy is only changed by the regime in moments of where there is an upsurge of nationalism or the regime is in danger, as these provide great sources of mobilisation and possible unity among society.

Linz also creates a typology of such regimes accounting for their variety and distinguishes some characteristics in them. This is done by analysing which entities have the permission to participate in the political sphere and which are side-lined. Most pertinent to the object of this study is the regime defined as Bureaucratic-military-technocratic regime. He emphasizes how these can have a strong party or not, in the negative case, mentalities will be more present (Linz, 2000). What they do have in common is that coalitions are dominated either by officers or bureaucrats, while remarking that not many have a leader which is

charismatic in Weberian terms, that is to say with a unique mission. Instead, such regimes tend to fit the definition of personal rulership of Guenter Roth, functioning in a highly legalistic structure which they use as a source of legitimacy that is twisted and abused to favour the regime (Roth, 1968). As an objective, they not only seek to limit the participation of the broad population but also curtail the power of privileged elites so as to better enact the interest of the regime. As such, they tend to appease the population with economic support and one of its main threats come from those who participate in the system but have their interest cut short in favour of the interest of the regime.

4.2. The military in politics and civil-military relations

To better understand the Egyptian regime and its form of authoritarianism it is crucial to examine the role of the military in such regimes and some of its main characteristics. While certain aspects of classical sources on this field are outdated and mostly apply to the time they were produced in, they also provide useful insight regarding certain intrinsic characteristics of the military in politics and of the body itself. Furthermore, the outdated aspects apply to the Egyptian context in times of Nasser which provide insight into how such trends were formed and can elucidate changes that the Egyptian military has undergone to surpass certain shortcomings which will be analysed at a later point.

4.2.1. Praetorian regimes

To understand how Egypt reached the level of militarisation it has on the present day it is vital to understand the origins of the military in politics in the country, as they have achieved to maintain a foothold on the political system since they took part creating the republic. As a result, it is fundamental to analyse the state of society when this happened as it afforded them certain privileges that they maintain as of today which are unreachable for any present military who takes power in the present.

One of the main branches of analysis of military intervention started with the notion of Praetorian states and societies, advanced by Huntington and Perlmutter among others. Perlmutter understands the Praetorian state as one in which the military tends to intervene and could dominate the political system (Perlmutter, 1969). The main cause for these praetorian societies, as Huntington understands them, is the weakness of their institutions due to a lack of leaders that moderate and mediate between the different groups of society and an absence of

methods to resolve inter-group conflict (Huntington, 1968). This is further aggravated as there are striking differences between groups such as a sharp unequal society in economic matters and the lack of a sense of joint interest by class. As a result, social forces act in accordance with their own capabilities politically, labourers strike, students protest, and the military give coups. Due to the existing tensions between groups, an action by a group normally causes a response by another, leading to a rise of tensions. There is a lack of methods to stop the rise, as the society is fragmented, and leaders struggle to represent a plurality of interests which makes their position tenuous, this also tends to mean a weakness in political parties and their inability of creating mobilisation on their own terms. As a result, the military has a special role to play in such societies as it is the one whose actions have more direct impact on the political system since they can directly replace it while others are only able to put pressure on it. Here, Perlmutter adds that as the military is relatively separated from society, they are able to use symbolic values to their advantage by appealing to their characterisation as impartial and courageous and create a sense of unity around them with which others identify (Perlmutter, 1969).

As such, they are the ones who can broaden or restrict participation in the system the most, which is linked with several stages analysed by Huntington regarding praetorianism. Following this logic, Huntington sees that when societies start to modernize, the military develops ideas of progress and becomes a professionalized group with inner unity (Huntington, 1968). Such ideas normally come from middle-ranking officers and seek to broaden the participation spectrum to accommodate the demands of the middle class, transitioning from praetorian oligarchy to radical praetorianism. To reach a common ground between the military and society, normally a moderate leader is placed, but pre-existing tensions rearise, creating grounds for a new attempt to seize power by a more extreme officer who seeks to secure the newly acquired status of the middle-class (Nun, 1967). These features describe in great detail the political situation that Egypt underwent in the transition from a monarchy to a republic led by officers with the first military leader being Naguib, who was promptly ousted by efforts led by Nasser and his affiliates.

Nevertheless, Huntington predicted that as societies grew more complex, the capacity of the military to create support would diminish, leading to mass repression (Huntington, 1968). But such efforts would prove unsuccessful as in the end, the institutions built by the military to further their interest would transcend them and bring an end to the dominance of the military in politics.

4.2.2. Military action as response to society

While Praetorianism Theory helps understand the past and the reality through which the military came to power, it is less useful to appreciate the present reality fully. For it, an in-depth analysis must be performed of what are the interests and role of the military once it gains power. Such elements will affect how the Egyptian military decides to act, what forms of government they prefer and how it affects the military institution itself.

Perlmutter (Perlmutter, 1980) as well as other academics have also studied the role of the military once a coup is given, clearly differentiating two roles regarding their willingness to return power to civilians. One is the military as arbitrator, or what others have called the moderating pattern (Stepan, 1971), in which the military does not seek to change the social order, instead wanting to return to barracks in a relative short period of time, establishing a deadline and being concerned with the fact that exercising direct political power could create internal rifts within the military. Here Stepan also emphasizes the importance for this type of military of seeing themselves as not legitimate to rule in continuity. On the flipside, the ruler type, or a pattern of new professionalism, rejects the existing order and tries to reform it, as they see themselves as legitimate actors to defend the national interest in all spheres of society. As a result, they maximize army rule to safeguard their permanence in power, seeing themselves as an assurance of stability. According to Perlmutter, this creates certain problems for the military as professionalism suffers due to the fact that political factors may be given preference instead of the chain of command, making a junior officer more powerful if he is correctly positioned regarding politics (Perlmutter, 1969). To these two traditional roles, Linz adds a third one on his description of Military-bureaucratic-technocratic regimes in which the army, stands outside the political process tying their support to regimes on conditionalities to avoid stating a clear position that would split the army between supporters and dissidents (Linz, 2000).

Alfred Stepan also sought to analyse how the Brazilian military was affected by their coup and their period in power and examined the way they conducted policy in his book *The Military in Politics* (Stepan, 1971). One of the main theories at the time was that the military rule had fewer weaknesses than civilian government, so Stepan sought to put this hypothesis to the test, providing new insight on the nature of military rule. He noted that as the military failed to create sustained unity and an agreeable program with the rest of society, their only way forward was to turn increasingly authoritarian. This, in turn, led to them taking steps in

power that diffculted their own removal from government, which were the purging of officers and the continued impossibility for them to create understanding with forces that they had banned (Stepan, 1971). As a result, if they were ever to relinquish power, such groups were likely to come back, which was unacceptable for them not only due to their ideological clashes, but also because it would jeopardize their future. This turn to authoritarianism also motivated a transformation in which competition between ideas and positions turned into an intra-military conflict thus narrowing the coalition formed by the leaders of the coup. Similar dynamics can be observed in the Turkish case (Yalman, 1968)

Such division does not only rest on the lust for power and rewards, as conflict is prone to arise as policy is carried out. Avoiding it requires the creation of a previous agreement regarding policy. Nonetheless, even in such cases, conflict may still arise, as the field of politics places the military out of their normal context of functioning, that is, one guided by a strict doctrine. As a result, the existence of a previous agreement can act as the new guiding doctrine, but this one is more malleable and adaptative, as it lacks the strong enforcing mechanisms and tradition of military doctrine (Janowitz, 1964). Further challenges are posed as officers are forced to wrangle with concepts out of their area of specificity, as they are made to decide on political and economic policies. As an addition, due to their background they also tend to be less equipped for bargaining compared to civilians, due precisely to the fact that in their usual sphere the existence of doctrine strongly limits the need to reach agreements through negotiation, strictly following the doctrine instead. All of these elements undermine the operational unity of the army, which Stepan argues is required for enforcing control of the state apparatus (Stepan, 1971). Such need for an operational unity lies at the core of the military regimes' liabilities, making them fear dissension and criticisms. This is one of the main difficulties they face when trying to integrate civilian sectors in their government, more prone to criticism as they voice their needs and goals which diverge from the ones of the army. It is precisely this aversion to opposition that makes them turn to repressing criticism, which tend to increase critical voices which increase the repression, creating thusly a cycle in which the army becomes increasingly isolated.

The existence of such inner rifts and difficulties within the military also disproves a common myth in academia, which is the notion that, once established, military regimes follow a certain line of policy until the end. This is untrue, since as divisions within the military become apparent, a struggle for power may ensue and if a change in leadership takes place, it is most likely that different policy goals will be pursued. Going even further, Stepan argues that it may be the case that a military is more likely to stage a coup against a military regime

than a civilian one, as there is a shared sense of responsibility of the whole army for the government that is in place (Stepan, 1971). Therefore, becoming more involved in the notion that the government should follow a certain direction. Tying this to the types of militaries mentioned previously by Perlmutter (Perlmutter, 1969), another logical nexus for such a claim is that in the ruler type, not only the army will feel more responsible for the government, but also has a greater sense of their direct intervention in politics being legitimate, making them more prone to act against another military regime too.

4.2.3. Characteristics of the military regarding intervention

While the interaction with society is important and affects the military institution, it is also necessary to study essential factors of the military to better understand its characteristics. This is vital, as such information cannot be accessed any other way than through comparison with other militaries, analysing which elements bring them together and which separate them will prove useful to understand the particular features of the Egyptian army.

Authors have studied the intrinsic characteristic of the military as a factor in their intervention in politics, side-lining political structures and causes of society itself. While the political structure of society cannot be ignored as an important factor, such studies provide interesting insights and mechanisms to better understand military bodies. One of the seminal works in this category is the book *The Military in the Political development of New Nations* by Janowitz. In it, one of the areas analysed is the factors that contribute to cohesion and cleavage within the military. As a factor of cohesion, he sees that a common education, training, years of internal military politics and indoctrination into the system aid to create a group solidarity which harbours loyalty between members (Janowitz, 1964). But such loyalty, he argues, can be directed to a specific subgroup and not the whole military, therefore identity factors such as ethnicity or religious allegiances could create a relevant cleavage inside the military body. To these external factors, one impervious to all militaries are intergenerational cleavages, as senior and junior positions are usually distributed by years of experience and play a role in the interest senior factions have in maintaining the status quo while more junior ones are more in touch with contemporary politics, creating a possible ground for division. As this is common to all militaries, there are well established mechanisms to limit such problems. One being the promotion system in which if military doctrine is followed and loyalty maintained, rewards are promised, and, if these are not enough, the expulsion and early retirement of a part of the

officers is also put in place to limit cleavages from taking root. Nevertheless, Janowitz understands that such limitations are weak if a clash of personalities based on the cleavages takes hold of the military, making the divisions apparent and creating conflict.

Another area of interest are the areas where the army directly influences society once it becomes embedded in the political system through intervention. The first element of relevance is their ability to provide technical skill to the population through assistance in the case of major disasters or training (Janowitz, 1964), this is normally provided through their diffusion of knowledge as they need such skills to maintain a modernized status and become operative, but it can also be provided through compulsory military service. Such a mechanism is not always used to this end, but its existence is relevant for analysis, as the military regularly uses it to diffuse certain values and associate symbolic elements with the institution. Another skill are administrative ones, through which economic enterprises can be managed to assist the military or even the population. While these factors can be beneficial, Janowitz agrees with Stepan in problematising the direct control of a country's economy by the military, as they are forced to wrangle with areas outside their expertise such as agriculture. Nevertheless, when studying the case of Egypt, he saw it as a successful endeavour in economic matters as he understood that the military was the body through which an equilibrium was reached between the private and public sectors. The reason behind it was that the government expanded its economic sector and controlled industrial establishments headed by ex-officers and civilians through planning agencies, thus being able to enact successful policies (Janowitz, 1964). As it will be examined in the analysis section, such notions were too optimistic.

Coming back to notions of education, formation and military service, the military can also be successful in creating a national identity through it, creating a sense of unity in citizens. A notable factor at play in it is the preconceived idea that society has of the military and how military service is oriented. Such factors were especially relevant at the dawn of national independence as military service could be used to impart fundamental education lacking before (Lang, 1965). Furthermore, if they had played a role in the national liberation struggle, there was a strong sense of sharing a same identity between civilians and the military, presenting the latter as a bulwark of national values (Safran, 1961). Another more atemporal factor that pushes for a strengthening of the relation between civilians, the military and national identity is the existence of a defined national enemy or having contested borders which makes national and mainstream discourse run along the lines and objectives of the military. Another value that the military can embody is the one of equality, as the main requisite to join the institution is to be a national and procedures to rise the echelon are clear, so it remains accessible and neutral (Pye,

1961). As it will be analysed later, this is not always the case, as certain groups can be vetted from entering the military. Nevertheless, these restrictions normally apply to groups subjected to otherization, thus not being truly considered part of the national identity, or its understanding by the military. Other factors that contribute to the good standing of the military in society are the perceived prestige and effectiveness of military leaders, which are acquired through their actions and the use of rhetoric. Such factors tend to rise when a recent conflict has been successfully managed by the military.

Regarding their direct intervention, Janowitz argues that in many cases, especially in new nations, an increase in economic activity and standard of living will give legitimacy to the regime, overriding the principles of traditional authority (Janowitz, 1964) or one that follows the established process to take power. As a result, it could be argued that the survival, or at least the public support of military regimes is dependent on the effectiveness of their government. Such a requirement faces several challenges as it has already been established previously. A novel mechanism is provided by Janowitz regarding the halt of a cycle of repression and self-isolation of the military previously named by Stepan. This requires two preconditions, the existence of a technocratic middle-class willing to work with the army and a professional self-image of the military, that is to say, a military that is against continued repression (Janowitz, 1964). Once these are met, Janowitz argues that the cycle can be broken by gathering support of the civilian masses through propaganda or political organisations. But, taking a note from Linz and his concept of mentalities and its effects (Linz, 2000), it is important to state that creating effective political parties has proven challenging to these regimes, so propaganda tends to be a method that is used more frequently and effectively.

In contemporary studies regarding military regimes some of the classic notions have been confirmed as stable patterns of behaviour through time and with a variety of cases. It has been proven that although they have a robust façade due to their control on violence, they are quite fragile as they tend to fall more than other types of regimes (Geddes B. , 1999) and do so most often at the hands of other officers (Frantz & Ezrow, 2011). Another appreciation made is that although through history they have been portrayed as an actor furthering the causes of other groups of society such as the rich, this does not tend to be the case, instead having their own sets of interests and values which depend on their context and ideology, making them distinct from other civilian regimes. Another concept put to the test was their need to create partnerships with civilians due to their inability to manage modern economies or reach agreements. This idea seems to be correct, as military regimes who established connections and included sectors of civilian society in their government lasted 3 times longer in power than

those who did not (Geddes, Frantz, & Wright, 2014). The unity of the army still remains at the centre of military matters in contemporary theory, as their retreat from power has mainly been carried out to avoid an internal division after the tensions of holding office reach a peak. The reasons listed for a coup have been varied, but the most likely ones have two sources. The first is related to resentment on the inner functioning of the military due to their material wants, that is, either living conditions, salary or politization of the advancement in the military echelon. The second is related to the efficiency of the institution, which can take different shapes, such as, the creation of parallel organisations who jeopardize the control of violence of the military or the creation inside the military of political bodies that undermine military discipline. As we can see, none of these truly fit the reasons given for coups in our historical overview of Egypt in the State of Play.

Another important factor that has been particularly highlighted in more recent academic publications is the possibility of a military regime branching out in two paths, greatly affecting their inner workings. The key factor is whether such regimes operate under a military junta or instead through a military strongman (Brooker, 2000), who may have left his military positions at the start of its rule, but nonetheless, is still considered a military regime if the institution is consulted and has enough power so as to constrain him. To measure such differences in power, the personal control that the dictator has on the military is key to analyse the concentration of power and how much of his own interest can he impose when both clash. Another important indicator in such cases is the ability that the junta has of establishing term limits for the dictator and to choose its successor (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2014).

As a result, the necessity to analyse different forms of organisation within autocracies has become apparent. As a result, an examination of where Egypt is placed in the continuum formed by different types will allow an assessment regarding if Egypt follows one model or takes fragments of various types.

4.3. Personalistic regimes and the two problems of authoritarian regimes

In our field of interest, two branches of authoritarian configuration are relevant, personalist regimes on one side and institutionalization models on the other.

4.3.1. Personalistic regimes

To analyse how much power Al-Sisi retains and its capacity for autonomy it is vital to analyse those authoritarian regimes that accumulate more power in a single figure, those being autocracies. With it, standards can be established and then compared to the Egyptian regime to understand the extent or lack thereof centralisation of power on a single figure.

Personalistic regimes are defined as those where a person dominates the military, the state apparatus and the ruling party without internal opposition (Van den Bosch, 2015). To understand their structure, it is useful to use the model designed by selectorate theory. In it, Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) create a model in which they divide the internal structure of authoritarian regimes in three spheres, the selectorate, the ruling coalition and the leader. The selectorate is the totality of individuals who own the qualities necessary to choose the leadership of a government (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, & Morrow, 2003) and therefore, gain access to private benefits shared by the dictator. The inner circle, or winning coalition, is a fragment of the selectorate of sufficient size so as to grant the leader appropriate power to have control over the rest of the selectorate and of the remnants of society who are not part of the system.

In personalist regimes, this winning coalition is used to gain distance from the selectorate until a point is reached where the ruler becomes completely independent from it. This is achieved by introducing members in the ruling coalition that have a personal allegiance with the ruler and lack strong ties with the selectorate (Van den Bosch, 2015). As a result, many times ties of blood, ethnicity, personal friendship or loyalty are used to these ends. This can only be achieved in certain contexts as the selectorate is per definition powerful and as such, in many cases, is able to contain such attempts from the dictator.

Selectorate theory is concerned with the size of each group, as it understands that such notions are the ones that affect most critically the configuration of a regime. As a result, a precondition for personalist regimes is the existence of a smaller selectorate than in non-personalistic regimes resulting in a reduced winning coalition with the ties previously mentioned. Another condition is that selectorates be disorganized and their loyalty ensured through patronage and repression, achieved normally through alternating patterns of favouring and repressing certain portions of the selectorate, thus making reshuffles and purges a common feature (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2017). Such measures are taken so as to limit the acquisition of power through time by any individual that is not the leader and ensure their continuity in power. As a result, rules are non-existent, or more exactly, the only rules are the ones the leader creates for its personal gain at that specific point in time. Due to this, institutions are inexistent, or at the very least, wildly ineffective as they cannot enforce a constant set of

rules, which is one of their main functions. A factor contributing to personalism is that the economy of the country is dependent in its majority from a subset of raw materials of elevated value as the leader can take hold of them and manage the diffusion of riches effectively.

To create objective data points, Geddes designs certain variables to discern the existence of personalism in a regime or not. These are: the personal control of the security apparatus, the existence of loyalist paramilitary forces, the control of the party executive committee, this last one acting as a rubber stamp, the control of appointments, the creation of a new party, the control of military promotion and the purging of officers (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018).

An important tool in the arsenal of dictators who attempt personalization to control the military is counterbalancing. Such strategy is defined as the creation of bodies and institutions analogous to the military to curtail their capacities thus guaranteeing that security and protection become directly tied to the executive branch (Escribà-Folch, Böhmelt, & Pilster, 2020). As explained in section 3.2.3, such a strategy has a high probability of resulting in a coup by the military if applied without the existence of certain factors that limit the capacity of the military to give a coup such as leveraging a rift in it to ensure a limitation of their cohesiveness. This could take the form of using ethnical or familial ties to curtail the capacity of the military.

4.3.2. The problem of authoritarian power-sharing

As one hypothesis is that the Egyptian regime is a mixture of personalistic regime and military regime this entails necessarily some type of agreement between both parties. As a result, it is of great importance to examine how such agreements come to happen in authoritarian regimes and what are the conditions for it to succeed. With it, information can be obtained to then see its applicability to the Egyptian case.

While selectorate theory is useful for a first approximation to concepts such as ruling coalition and the social roots from where they emerge, it also has certain limitations, as its focus on the size groups as sole explaining factor can be quite limiting for understanding authoritarian regimes. A more productive approach can be found by studying the decision-making process and the creation of power-sharing agreements, as this explains in greater depth what are the methods through which some interests are furthered while others remain sidelined. This is what Milan Svobik baptises as the problem of authoritarian power-sharing (Svobik,

2012), having as main actors the dictator and his allies. There are extensive recent academic studies showing how such a procedure can be designed and the underlying incentives that are impervious to such arrangements.

The central dilemma for Svoboda in managing the relation between the dictator and its allies is creating a mechanism that binds both parties to joint rule (Svoboda & Boix, 2013). This is due to the fact that, unlike democracies, there does not exist an independent authority that can be trusted, and as a result, it is challenging to guarantee that the spoils of power are divided in accordance with a previously created agreement. The creation of such an agreement is basic for the functioning of an authoritarian regime as support is traditionally traded for economic or legal privileges. Instead, the main mechanism identified by Svoboda is the capacity of the allies to credibly threaten to remove the leader from office through rebellion if the agreement is violated (Svoboda, 2012). Such violation may not only be a result of not sharing benefits, but also of using the secrecy characteristic of such regimes to misrepresent the size of the pool of available profits. This element reveals a monitoring problem on the side of the allies. An effective tool to remedy this joint set of issues is to create institutions through which to mediate interaction. These help the regime in bringing enhanced transparency, a periodical review and formal rules. Such factors create a way not only to induce the ruler to comply with them, but also, they create a reliable barometer to measure the extent of such compliance (Svoboda & Boix, 2013). But these institutions only remain effective insofar as the threat posed to the power of the ruler by its allies is credible, as if not, the ruler will be free to act according to his wishes. Such an analysis brings forth a new understanding of institutions in authoritarian regimes as traditionally they were analysed either as a tool for co-optation to gather the support of the opposition or as a way to limit the power of the head of state through the creation of norms, but under this new light it becomes apparent that institutions main purpose is to alleviate monitoring problems, whether engaging in the first or the second course of action.

The model is consequently based on the figure of a leader and a multiplicity of notables who have influence at a local level but are quite limited by their own at a national level. Therefore, the model is not based purely on the sizes of elites but instead on the size of their share of power and studying if the sum of them can credibly pose a threat to the power of the dictator. As a result, the relationship between both lies in the balance of power between the parts which is ever changing as time passes. Such changes come not only from external factors but are also motivated by the dynamics among the ruling elite and the ones with the leader. This is due to the fact that all actors seek to optimize their share of power and benefits, but this is done at the cost of others, turning it into a zero-sum game. As a result, the exclusion of

notables from the coalition is beneficial for the rest. The dictator also benefits from this process, as the power and rents obtained by the removal can be redirected to himself or to those partners whose support is most needed (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018). Such interests become especially apparent at the start of an authoritarian regime but remain a constant factor throughout it. In them, a process of purging and exclusion takes place until there cannot be a smaller coalition. Two factors come into play to reach this point, the first is if further shrinkage would jeopardize the arrangement of power by allowing the possibility of the creation of a more powerful, alternative coalition. While the second one occurs when there is no unanimous will nor sufficient power among the rest of the members to expel one of them (Acemoglu, Egorov, & Sonin, 2008). As a result, the formation and composition of the ruling coalition is the result of many phases of power struggles, until a certain balance of power is reached. Within it, lies the skill and capacities of each member to skew the balance in their favour. The product of it will be a key factor that will shape what form will the regime take, as depending on who absorbs the power of an ousted incumbent, it could open the door for greater personalization, enhanced control by notables or the emergence of a powerful rival figure to the dictator.

This balance can produce three scenarios, one in which the ruler dominates and can rule alone, one in which the ruler is guaranteed to fall from power if a coup is staged and a middle ground where the result is uncertain (Svolik, 2012). The last scenario is achievable since such influence and power is not clear cut, making a self-assessment of the position by the notables only possible in estimation. Additionally, each of them must factor in not only their share of power, but also the one of other notables from whom they have even less information, in large part due to the secrecy of such regimes, making them observe an imperfect signal of each other. Another factor at play in this last element is that such calculations have to be made, at least at first, in isolation, as if a plot of coup is revealed and prevented, this will entail high costs for the plotters. Considering these features, Svolik and Boix (2013) apply game theory to understand when stability is reached and the benefits of institutionalization. The main factors that they ascertain to be relevant in obtaining stability are that the dictator can offer a high payoff to the allies, the offers of the challengers are small, and the costs of a failed rebellion are high (Svolik & Boix, 2013). But as it can be observed, such factors are dependent on externalities out of the control of the regime. As a result, without institutions, a period of economic crisis would compel allies to rebel due to the monitoring problem revealed previously.

Still, it is important to remember that institutions remain relevant and can bring stability only if the balance of power does not starkly favour one side. If the contrary were to be true,

notables could already force the dictator to act a certain way or, in the other case, notables would be unable to act even if the leader abused their privileges due to them not posing a credible threat. Such arrangements bind the members to mechanisms that control their range of actions but also grant stability and avoid possible regime-ending conflicts, therefore providing assured benefits. An important factor in such prevention is the possibility, only afforded by institutions, to voice concern over certain policies or issues in a closed environment, therefore presenting opposition in a significantly less threatening way for the regime than if done publicly. Still, there are asymmetries of power between the dictator and the incumbents as the first one has the power of agenda-setting, relegating the role of the later ones to a reactionary role.

Nevertheless, institutions remain useful for all members as they are fundamental to apply policy concessions, one of the two main mechanisms that dictators have along with rent sharing to reward loyal notables (Gandhi & Przeworski, 2006). As a result, these infrastructures are especially relevant when the leader does not have direct control over a substantial portion of the economy, thus explaining why states that rely on a subset of raw materials tend to become more personalized, as less compromises are needed in policy matters to maintain stability. The need and cost for cooperation from members of the coalition changes on a per-case basis, as is highly context specific, but one of the main factors that create higher costs for the incumbent is the unity of the coalition. This is so since it limits the power of the leader to play off their rivalries and create situations in which he personally benefits, instead, the coalition forms a bloc which increases their bargaining power and effectively limits the power of the ruler. The nature of such factors tends to be similar to cleavages explained in previous sections such as ethnicity, religion or class among many others.

4.3.3. The problem of authoritarian control

Once power arrangements have been analysed, it is useful to dig deeper into notions of controlling the population, and fundamental to prove the second hypothesis. With it, the final piece of authoritarian elites' interest can be examined, as it is a crucial element for their survival. Therefore, both arrangements inform and affect each other, making understanding one without the other challenging and parts of their policy puzzling. As a result, this can bring the last element to scrutinize the relationship between the dictator and the military in Egypt, as the rulers are nothing without the ruled.

Moving away from the configuration of the ruling elite and its relationship with the dictator, the other core issue of authoritarian regimes is how the rulers manage their relationship with the broader population, which Svoblik names the problem of authoritarian control (Svoblik, 2012). It is precisely this factor which encourages the dictator to search for support among the powerful, so as to better maintain a control of the state and its population. It is crucial for their regime stability to control the population, as shows of dissension can quickly grow and create mass protests that can lead to a widespread revolution and thus challenge the regime. A clear example analysed in theory is the case of the Eastern European Revolution of 1989 particularly studied by Kuran (Kuran, 1991). In it, he advances how it is precisely this control of the population which creates the preconditions for what was named cascades. In them, the realisation by citizens that others too oppose the regime, strongly compels them into action, and, if a critical mass is reached, a rebellion takes place. As a result, controlling the population and limiting open demonstrations of opposition is crucial for the survival of authoritarian regimes.

To enact such control, Svoblik distinguishes two main methods (Svoblik, 2012). On the one hand there is repression against the opposition, which is normally enforced by curtailing their rights, limiting their capacity to voice dissension and pursuing them with the state security apparatus to discourage the continuation of their activities. But empowering such agents to enact repressive measures is a double-edged sword as the same means provided to them to carry out repression can afterwards be used to overturn the regime if such forces desire it (Machiavelli, 2003). As a result, making the soldiers or police forces indispensable for the functioning of the regime also necessarily endows them with a quantifiable amount of political power within it. This can take the form of expanded autonomy, greater resources or input in policy-making.

On the other hand, there is co-optation which is a form of presenting groups of society with benefits, normally material, to ensure their collaboration so they have an interest in maintaining the regime. A major tool of co-optation for authoritarian regimes is the creation of political parties, as these not only serve to measure the loyalty and enact control on the population, but also align the interests between those who form part of it and the regime, as they provide through it rewards and a clear path to higher status if certain criteria are followed (Gershenson & Grossman, 2001). As a result, individuals engage in activities that enhance the regime while it creates a network from which to draw potential collaborators and have direct control over them. Such rewards and social status only endure for as long as the regime survives, putting it at the forefront of the interests of any party member and creating a joint

endeavour to this end. But, for a party to be effective and such goals met, the regime must divert a non-trivial number of resources to it, making it desirable to participate in the party for individuals (Gandhi & Przeworski, 2006). Another necessity for parties is that they give access to a multiplicity of groups within society so as to create a joint identity. If only the collaboration of a reduced subset of the population is needed and many are inconsequential, the creation of ruling elites and directing patronage through them is rather preferable as a party would drain a considerable quantity of resources. That is not to say that co-optation needs to be canalised through parties, but they tend to provide less advantages as normally material benefits can be provided by an alternative regime to the one in power, one clear example of such co-optation is the creation of subsidies or the distribution of necessities or commodities (Bank & Edel, 2015).

To these two sources of control identified by Svobik, others have been added by scholars, namely, and sometimes overlooked in authoritarian regimes, legitimacy. This is due to the fact that power in authoritarian regimes tends to be understood through the lens of violence (George, 2007), but for politics to be carried out in a coherent way, a unifying factor that joins individuals must be present, legitimacy. As such, legitimacy refers to the right to rule and the belief that the institutions of the regime are the most appropriate for society. Of course, the shape of such a society is that one and if it's a desirable one is a debatable subject, but it is certain that regimes have an image of an ideal society which they would desire to rule. As a consequence, the sources of legitimacy from which regimes justify their rule have considerable importance as they have political implications. One of the clearest ones is what limits they impose on society to define what is acceptable and what is not, and through it justify the measures they take against those that cross their established boundaries.

5. Analysis

5.1. Historical Context

Military presence in the Egyptian political sphere has been a constant for much of its modern history as, under its current form, it dates to the creation of the republic and the regime of Nasser (Kamrava, 2000). In such times, the interference by the military to depose the monarch was framed as them saving the Egyptian nation, leading to a social revolution that sought to liberate Egypt from Western influence. As a result, Nasser turned to a socialist

rhetoric which pursued to achieve social justice and favour those with lesser economic means while still remaining independent from the USSR due to its markedly Arab nationalist orientation (Perlmutter, 1980). A sizable part of the continuation of support from civilians had to do with the subsidies and large state employment created by Nasser's policies. After the Suez Canal crisis and definitive break with the West, in 1957 laws were created to nationalize foreign companies such as banks and other business conglomerates. On the political side, a majority of top civilian positions were occupied by officers or ex-officers who had taken part in the coup (Berger, 1960), overseeing both policy decisions and nationalised companies. This was made to content the army so as to ensure their compliance in the regime. As a result, Nasser would have to face certain rivalries that tried to contest his power, most notably his army chief of staff 'Abd al-Hakīm 'Āmir.

After Nasser's death, Sadat sought to demilitarize the government and move away from socialism to liberal policies. The first one was achieved after overthrowing a plot of coup organised by other Nasser-era officers who saw themselves as more fit for the position (Kandil, 2011). This led to the removal of a majority of officers from the cabinet and governorates, subsequently replacing them with civilians. But with the turn to liberalism, Sadat eliminated food subsidies which led to the 1977 bread riots. To quell them, Sadat had to use the military and re-establish the subsidies. Still, no major concessions were made to the military (Abul-Magd, 2017b), proving a successful professionalization of the army. Sadat's policies also brought Egypt closer together with the US, opening a path of collaboration regarding defence which is still present today. This also encouraged the Camp David Accords, which led to a growing understanding between Egypt and Israel. Such a path did not only impact on the relationship between the head of state and the military due to the assassination of Sadat at the hands of religious fundamentalists, but also because it deeply changed the role of the military in Egyptian society, as its eternal enemy was no longer so.

With Mubarak arriving in power at the start of the eighties, the military industry grew considerably as demand was high regionally due to the Iran-Iraq war and the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR. In economic policy, Mubarak followed a similar doctrine as Sadat, being a liberal but maintaining subsidies to appease the population. But now that the military was not centred on combat, they started to penetrate the Egyptian economy. This was done thanks to the hybrid economic system put into action, as liberalism was pursued but the state still had a sizable role in the economy. As a result, the military could take on governmental duties for profit (Abul-Magd, 2017b). This would normally entail taking on government

projects while having their own enterprises, transforming them into what scholars have called parastatal entities (Harris, 2013).

Such economic privileges will only grow, as in the 1990s, with the end of the wars that fed the arms industry and military production, the Egyptian military will engage in what has been named defence conversion (Adelman & Augustine, 1992) turning further into non-military production. Such a process was undergone by many countries at the time to satisfy their militaries. Such conversion efforts and strengthening of parastatal entities will be spearheaded by eight conglomerates, those being: the National Service Projects Organization, the Ministry of Military Production, the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation, the Engineering Authority of the Armed forces, the Maritime Industries and Services Organisation, the Department of Social Clubs and Hotels, the Department Medical Services of the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces' Land Projects Organisation (Sayigh, 2021). Most of these organisations are still active to this day, and while they do have certain tasks pertaining strictly to the inner functioning of the military, they also offer goods and services to civilians for profit and manage public infrastructure. To further coup-proof its regime, Mubarak made a habit out of hiring retired officers into bureaucratic and public services positions. One of the most notable cases being an increase in the appointment of retired officers to governorate positions. These are positioned at the top at the regional administrative level and have the same civil rank as ministers (Abul-Magd, 2017b). The governors are granted a high level of autonomy and considerable executive powers, which further established the military as a political player in Egypt.

The growth of military corporations further increased with the beginning of the new millennium, as Hosni Mubarak started grooming his son Gamal for power. This affected the relationship between the military and the President in various ways. First, if successful, it would be the first head of state of the republic without a military past, which meant that as Gamal gained prominence, other prominent figures of the regime grew uneasy, needing to be appeased by handing out privileges and businesses to the military so as to ensure them that they would retain a powerful status (Brownlee, 2007). Secondly, Gamal's measures were aligned with neoliberalism, which led to a decrease in public infrastructure and businesses, but also a reduced budget that affected the military. To compensate for the latter, the process of downsizing the state served as a transference from state to military corporations in many cases. This process was further aided as the minister of defence, Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, had decision-making powers, along with some civilians, in the Supreme Privatization Committee that led such measures (Zahid, 2010). These endeavours were taken without any transparency,

as usually, transactions were announced to the public but specifics such as the quantity of money were rarely, if ever, disclosed (Sayigh, 2021). Additionally, the conglomerates that were formed and reinforced benefited from special privileges and freedom from oversight not afforded to any other businesses, not only by exempting them from taxes, but also the capacity for them to be ruled and protected through military bodies. The list of sectors in which the military expanded is vast, but one of the most relevant was media, giving them a direct outlet to the population.

Such an arrangement made mismanagement widespread and corruption a constant feature of the political system. The privileges given by the state militarized a considerable portion of the civilian workplaces, limiting their ability to conduct strikes and their rights in general. Additionally, the mismanagement of transportation led to an increase in accidents, many of them deadly, which increased public frustration (Abul-Magd, 2017b). These, framed in a context of a substantial economic crisis, were part of the factors that led to the 2011 protests who not only called for the ouster of Mubarak, but also the demilitarization and renewal of the whole system. Nevertheless, the military was able to control the situation and ultimately arise once again as saviours of the country. This was mainly achieved as the military became the preeminent political actor through the SCAF after the removal of Mubarak (Abul-Magd, 2014). Firstly, to control the population and dissent, they promulgated law no. 34 of 2011 which outlawed protests as the country was put under a state of emergency. Regarding problematic ex-officers who were the target of mass discontent, the military let some go while reshuffling others into other positions. Additionally, they were virtually given impunity, as all were tried by military tribunals, even if they were ex-officers and their sentences never published or made apparent (Stenslie & Selvik, 2019). They then deployed a narrative presenting the important role the army played in the country's economy and sought the betterment of Egypt by applying measures from the IMF. Such processes were controlled by ex-army officers, who took the chance to further expand the military complex and its involvement in the industries of Egypt. After the elections, a process of power-sharing took place with the Muslim Brotherhood. But as the SCAF tried to create a new constitution, Morsi rearranged the council, and its new head, Al-Sisi collaborated with him to further entrench the benefits of the military (Mlambo, 2014). As such, the Mubarak era arrangements came back stronger while also granting the military further independence in the new constitution. Most notably, such independence had to do with their budget and spending and the head of the ministry of defence being an active member of the military. Morsi also engaged in coup-proofing by assigning bureaucratic positions to the

military, overall reducing the number from the SCAF-led era but did still appoint 10 ex-officers to lead governorates (El-Shimy, 2016).

Regardless of such an arrangement, there was no economic nor public service betterment which led to a new wave of protests against the brotherhood in 2013. Seeing an opportunity to seize power, Al-Sisi began to build a coalition and emphasised on a rhetoric that saw the military as independent and only concerned with the security and wellbeing of Egypt. He was successful in his endeavours and managed to unite actors across the political spectre, from leftists to liberals and religious organizations such as Salafists, Al-Azar who represents non-politicised Islam and the Coptic Church while also having the favour of Nasserite youths (Khalil & Dill, 2018). Having strengthened his position, he was able to deliver an ultimatum to Morsi and depose him. After the events, the army deployed in full-force its propaganda to gain popular support. As a result, the Moral Affairs Department created media to be broadcasted focusing on unity, the beneficial role of the military and the importance of establishing a new constitution (Trew, 2014), which was drafted by the military. They also distributed aid to those living in precarious conditions, using their production factories and mainly providing food where their logo was present. Gradually, Sisi saw his image improve as the whole change was pictured with him in the centre, gaining charisma and legitimacy to justify his position as ruler. The creation of the new constitution retained the benefits of previous eras and their organizations saw an increase in allocation of resources and provision of services. At the same time, Al-Sisi used its newly gained power to undermine the Muslim brotherhood, its main rival for power (Pratt & Rezk, 2019). This enmity with the Muslim Brotherhood has ensured the cooperation and aid from conservative Gulf States, most notably the UAE and Saudi Arabia (Piazza, 2019), who fear their ideological expansion. These were particularly helpful in the beginning of its regime as its most important international partner, the US, halted their economic support the first years after Morsi's deposition. Nevertheless, even with the return of American aid, the support of Gulf states remains relevant to this day.

It is fundamental to understand this long-running history of military and civil relations to understand the pre-eminence that the Egyptian army has had along the formation and survival of the state, having always been a political player to be reckoned and bargained with when trying to achieve stability. As we can see, both tactics of side-lining and collaboration have been put into action to this end. This has most of the time been done simultaneously, but striking a balance to maintain power has proved difficult and led to crises at certain points. As a result, to understand the current regime, an analysis of the arrangements made between the military and the executive power needs to take place.

5.2. Institutional design and personification of power

To better understand the balance of power and the measures put in effect to limit the power of the dictator, the criteria set by Geddes et al. (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018) will be measured in the context of the Egyptian regime. Doing so, will provide a first approach to the nature of rule in the regime and the distribution of power within the ruling coalition.

The first indicator measured is the personal control of the security apparatus (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018). Through such control various levers can be exercised, as the dictator gathers more information and can use the institution to violently repress challengers and popular opposition. Examining the Egyptian constitution, it is stated in article 146 that “the President shall, in consultation with the Prime Minister, choose the Ministers of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs and Justice” (State Information Service, 2023b). Such permissions are nevertheless limited, as in article 201 it is stated that the Minister of Defense shall be appointed from among the officers of the Armed Forces. Additionally, in article 234 it stated that: “The Minister of Defense shall be appointed upon the approval of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces”. This last article previously had a time limit of two full presidential terms (State of Egypt, 2014), but in 2019 an amendment to the constitution was made in which the restriction of time was erased (State Information Service, 2023a). The SCAF is composed in its entirety, except for Al-Sisi, by the highest-ranking officers of the Egyptian Armed Forces, from the minister and the chief of staff to chairmen of the financial affairs or supply authorities of the military. It is also important to relate this indicator to another one indicated by Geddes, the control over military promotions. Here, it is important to note that the president has also the authority to nominate the second highest authority of the military, the chief of staff of the Armed Forces. The same is true for the chiefs of each branch of the armed forces, as Al-Sisi publishes decrees to name each one of them, an example can be seen with the case of the head of the navy (Presidency of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2021).

While this could seem at first glance to indicate a clear dominance by the part of the President, there are indications that this might not be so. Additionally, the President, being officially the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces as stated in article 152 of the constitution, is expected to make such nominations. But the indicator that these appointments do not fall into personalistic patterns is that, when examining their periodicity and who is nominated, they lack the arbitrariness created by personalistic regimes. This is so because in personalistic regimes, positions are reshuffled on the whim of the dictator, when he senses a

certain rivalry or some officer loses his favour, additionally, he will promote at times under-ranked officers that have proven their loyalty. Neither of these are a feature when examining the promotions of high-ranking officers, as they all fit their qualifications and they follow an orderly pattern. As such, both previous chiefs of staff remained in their seats without reaching four years, one maintaining his position for approximately three years and a half and the other for three years and 354 days (Egyptian Armed Forces, 2023c). The current one has been in the position for almost two years. A similar pattern can be drawn with the appointment of the commanders for the Air Force and the Navy, as the previous incumbents held their office for approximately 5 years and the current ones were put into office on the same day (Egyptian Armed Forces, 2023a) (Egyptian Armed Forces, 2023b). In the case of the Minister of Defense, the former one retained its position for four years and the current one is on the brink of retaining the post for five years.

What is a particular indicator of the orderly manner in which such proceedings take place is that all positions are changed with periodicity, but no members with different hierarchies do so in the same year. This can be an example of wanting to create a stable rotation, in which there is not an influx of novel members to the SCAF, thus preventing a power grab by the president by monopolizing appointments due to the lack of knowledge or familiarity by the new members, while also providing a period in which the loyalty of new members can be tested. On the other hand, the fact that there is a rotation at all also seems to indicate that the interests of Al-Sisi are being respected, as they ensure that no officer grows too accustomed to their power and tries to challenge him. Still, Al-Sisi seems to have favoured the rise of certain officers within the military with whom he built a relationship during his service (Al-Shamahi, 2021) but the extent and effectiveness of such endeavours seem unclear, thus not reaching the level needed for high degrees personalism. The biggest question for the future in this field is the Minister of Defense, as he already has a considerable number of years in this post. Historically the post has rotated periodically except with Mubarak, who kept Tantawi in charge for 21 years until his ouster. As a result, two paths open for the regime and to this date a definite answer is still unclear.

The second indicator is related to the creation of paramilitary forces that are loyal to the dictator. Such acts or counterbalancing have not happened, and they are even considered and deemed illegal by the constitution through article 200. Still, if endeavours of counterbalancing have per objective to ensure the security of the president by having a body with the capacity of force that does not depend on the highest echelon of the military command, this does exist in Egypt. The body that is at the centre of such apparently contradictory

statements is the Republican Guard. Initially a paramilitary force formed to counterbalance the army named the National Guard, it was incorporated into the army in the eighties.

Acknowledging its past, this branch is only accountable to the President, ignoring the decision-making capabilities of all other military positions until reaching the head of the Republican Guard itself. Moreover, it is the sole division of the army allowed to operate in Cairo (Stratfor, 2014), thus limiting the possibility that other parts of the military seize power, as their presence in and around the capital would alert the President of irregularities, giving him the opportunity to respond. Therefore, while no paramilitary exists there are counterbalancing measures integrated within the military body, which is a jarring measure at surface level taking into account what theory proposes. Still, it remains an effective solution, as many of the problems that come for the military with counterbalancing are averted, as by delineating clearly the functions of each part of the military, the internal division that could be caused is avoided if the basis of the regime is respected. Furthermore, while the Republican guard is an elite body, it is considerably small, not rivalling with the power of the rest of the military apparatus, forming a very limited threat to its existence and position. Additionally, there is no rivalry created between the two independent bodies to the level of a military and paramilitary organisation, and while it is probable that feelings of resentment arise in the comparison between bodies, they are still part of the same institution but with different functions, so in a sense, parallels could be drawn to the distaste an individual of the army feels towards one of the air forces or vice versa.

As a result, careful institutional design has provided an effective tool where issues created by the conflict of interest between the military and the president can be moderated, while providing assurances of security for both of the parties. Still, the republican guard provides an important reservoir of loyalty for the president, giving him certain leverage capacity into the army, as he can try to ascend such individuals into the military apparatus. But certainly, the military is well aware of such attempts and can limit them to a certain extent, as the head of the republican guard is some echelons under the highest-ranking posts. Such interplay is probably one of the core reasons why former heads of the Republican Guard tend to be redirected into powerful bureaucratic positions such as governorates instead, as historical analysis shows (Bou Nassif, 2013).

Another relevant indicator is the control of government appointments, which the President effectively controls except for the previously mentioned position of the Ministry of Defense. It is important to note here that the full title of the ministry is the Ministry of Defense

and Military Production thus also encompassing all the businesses and organizations of the military and protecting them.

Regarding the interests of the military, it is important to note that the SCAF is not the only body chaired by the president with high-ranking military officers in its midst. There are also the National Defense Council and the National Security Council, although both of these have positions given to ministers and the Intelligence Services. The National Defense Council is designed so as to create a certain balance between the civil sector and the military, although it is slightly skewed in favour of the military as it is chaired by the president and composed of the Prime Minister, three ministers, the speaker of the House of representatives and the Chief of the general Intelligence Service, for a total of six figures closer to the president than the military interests. Veiling for the opposite interest, there are seven of the highest-ranking officers, the ones already examined when looking at the process of promotion, including the Minister of Defense. This body is crucial for the military as it is charged with discussing the budget of the Armed Forces, as stated by article 203 of the constitution (State Information Service, 2023b). The article goes into more detail asserting that it shall be published in the State budget under one budget line. This is done to obfuscate the size of the military conglomerates and their distribution of expenses, a topic that is at the core of military interests. On the other hand, the National Security Council is dominated by civilian positions as the only military position is the Minister of Defense in a body of 13 members accounting for the chair who is the President. This institution is tasked with establishing the security of the country, facing crises and disasters and identifying sources of threat for Egyptian national security, as stated by article 205 of the Egyptian constitution (State Information Service, 2023b). As such, while it faces a central issue for the military, it does not affect the distribution of power, policy concessions nor material benefits that are channelled to the military for its role in maintaining the stability of the regime, and therefore, does not pose a critical threat for its interests.

The rest of the indicators exposed by Geddes et al. (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018) for measuring personalism are not as relevant to ascertain the relationship between the military and the ruler, as they are concerned with the control of a party and its executive committee. Additionally, such indicators only apply partially to Egypt due to the lack of willingness by the regime to create a dominant party (Springborg, 2015). This unwillingness is a product of the dismantlement of the previous dominant party under Mubarak, the NDP, whose high-ranking members were tried and given sentences after the 2011 revolts, contrasting with the impunity afforded to military officials and ex-officials who were part of Mubarak's apparatus (Stenslie & Selvik, 2019). For now, Al-Sisi has preferred instead to rely on favouring "independents",

such a feature goes in accordance with previously explained factors in the theoretical frame regarding the concept of mentalities by Linz and their unwillingness to create parties (Linz, 2000). Such preferences might possibly be imposed by the military, its closest partner in power, but for now such affirmations are only conjecture. As time passes, if Al-Sisi further solidifies his position in the regime, it could be possible that he attempts to create a new party to gain an alternative base of support independent from the military, but its capacity and willingness to do so remain unclear at this date.

5.3. The Egyptian military's role in power

As the prior section shows, there has been a process of institutionalization between the President and the military to establish a balance of power and eliminate possible conflict, following the theory of Svobik and Boix (Svobik & Boix, 2013). Due to such institutionalization, classic Praetorian theory falls short to explain the current situation of Egypt, as one of the main pillars of Huntington (Huntington, 1968) was the lack of strong institutions that led to a violent and unstable environment. It is useful to understand the seed that created the current system, as it could apply adequately to the situation that brought Nasser and the Free Officers Movement to power, but such a detailed examination falls out of the scope of this study.

Instead, such a process of institutionalization ended the praetorian society, as it established effective controls on who was able to participate politically, and prevented the direct action of other collectives as they would face mass repression and violence. Such institutionalization fused with a long-standing tradition of having a specific role in Egyptian society could provide explanations to their apparent stability as an institution. The cause behind this is that one of the main reasons for the stated weakness of the military when taking part in power is that it creates differences of opinion, fracturing of the body. Such fragility regarding internal division is advanced by Perlmutter (Perlmutter, 1969), Stepan (Stepan, 1971) and many others as it has been a main feature of the analysis of military intervention. But when analysed, such ideas rest on the principle of introducing a factor that comes from outside the military, resulting in officers taking different positions due to the fact that this phenomenon is separated from military doctrine, the common code that facilitates the inner workings of the military.

When examining the case of Egypt, it becomes clear why such a fraction does not take place, or at least does not take place anymore. The fundamental reason behind this is that the current role of the military, that being, not only a security force, but also a network of

enterprises with immense presence in the country's economy and, therefore, in the political system, has become internalised as an additional feature of the institution. As such, there is no inner division regarding this characteristic, making it significantly less vulnerable to one of the main threats that a military involved in politics can face. What is more, because avoiding such a rift is of superlative importance to the military, the whole institution has transformed its inner workings to avoid it. As a result, because it is part of the military doctrine, the military will promote those that agree and are effective in managing such a reality, reinforcing even more this ideological conception of the military. The other face of this coin is that the extensive political and economic benefits can only be enjoyed by a reduced number of officers and as a result, many are dismissed. This could be an added reason to why such a high number of officers are dismissed in their early forties as colonels and brigadier generals, apart from the desire to maintain a hierarchical structure (Abul-Magd, 2017b). These would provide both the tradition and the strict enforcement mechanisms that Stepan (Stepan, 1971) himself attributes to the creation of doctrine and unity that other non-military elements lacked. Nevertheless, historically, measures have been enacted to ensure the operational unity of the military, as under Mubarak, members of the Muslim Brotherhood were banned from joining the military precisely for this factor (Campagna, 1996). The lift was banned with the removal of Mubarak, but as the Muslim Brotherhood has been banned after the ouster of Morsi, such ban on enrolment did not come back into effect.

Another benefit afforded by their position is that secrecy regarding the quantity of rents to be distributed is minimized as a problem, not only due to their extensive institutionalization, but also due to the fact that they already have control over a considerable amount of industry and services, providing them with noteworthy amounts of material benefits. Additionally, the presence of the military at the highest level of regional administration is highest than ever in Egyptian history, as 19 officers or ex-officers hold governorates while only 8 come from a civilian background (State Information Service, 2023c). Such a ratio has maintained stable since at least 2016 (Reuters, 2016), although there have been changes in the incumbents of most of the governorships. Their nomination and term duration are at fully under the discretion of the president, although such predominance by the military and consistency in the ratio throughout the years signals to an agreement between the Military and the President to designate such quantities. The basis established by such an agreement further benefits military control of the country and establishes guarantees regarding their capacity to administer their business ventures. This is due to the fact that Egypt operates in a decentralised manner as stated in article 176 of the constitution. Consequently, the Prime Minister meets on a regular basis

with governors to discuss their allocation of budget, but barring that, governors have a high degree of autonomy regarding their administration of said budget. Being the highest representative of the executive branch at a local level, they also retain jurisdiction over all other local government divisions except for the judiciary branch, and therefore, are tasked with the supervision and execution of state policy on their governorates. Consequently, they are given authority over a broad array of facets of Egyptian society, such as the administration of public enterprises and services, security policy, overseeing investment in their region and many others. As a result, they are a fundamental part of the administration of the nation and therefore, a key component of the correct functioning of the country is dominated by the military. Such a position is granted only to the officers who have reached the highest levels of military rank and, as a consequence, are ensured to have the codes of interest of the military well internalised. Still here, there are some measures of equilibrium, since, as mentioned previously, the head of the Republican Guard, a proven loyalist of the President, tends to be appointed to governorship positions once they retire from active duty.

The military is also given large concessions in the judiciary branch, as individuals who are found to act against the military's interest can be tried through military courts. This is stated in detail in article 204 naming the aggression of military buildings, equipment, secrets, public funds or factories. Considering the vast quantity of factories that they own, whose employees are in large extent civilians and the power they have in the regime, this is a clear tool to protect military interest, as any form of labour organisation or protest aired by employees can be suppressed through their own apparatus. As citizens are aware of such power, this extensively limits their willingness to express dissent or not follow directives given by the upper management, occupied by militaries, ensuring smooth operations in factories and services. This is further emphasized considering that military service is compulsory in Egypt, and many of the enrolled are made to work in military factories providing cheap labour to maximize military profit. Such notions start to permeate into mechanisms of population control, which will be examined in the next section.

The military judiciary is also autonomous and is guided by military logic and discipline. Nowhere is this clearer than in the fact that military judges are chosen by their superiors and the later ones can revert the verdict of the former even if they were not present in the hearings (Rutherford, 2018). This body is another tool that permeates into population control, becoming particularly effective as the prosecuted is not guaranteed the right of having an attorney nor the possibility of appealing the ruling to civilian courts (Isaias, 2015). As a result, they become a body that can interpret laws according to their own criteria and remain completely autonomous

from other sectors of the regime, exacerbating the capabilities of the military to protect and further their own interests. Such an arrangement would be absolutely impossible in a highly personalized regime, but due to the institutional balance between the military and the President, such autonomy can be granted.

5.4. Controlling of the population

As explained in the theoretical section, efforts to control the population encompass a wide array of strategies which are divided into three main branches: legitimization, co-optation and repression. Legitimation is especially relevant, as it informs and frames the manner in which the other two are carried out. Consequently, as legitimization is affected in part by the worldview and interests of the rulers, institutional design has definitive consequences for the methods applied regarding the control of the population.

There are commonalities between the legitimization efforts carried out by the military and Al-Sisi, as both seek to share certain values and symbolical elements, but there are definitive differences as well. Regarding Al-Sisi, he started building his basis for legitimacy soon after being promoted as chairman of the SCAF. While at first this was done in a discrete manner, such efforts increased as he saw popular displeasure towards the Muslim Brotherhood rise as the living conditions of the majority did not improve and their hold on power was tenuous (Abul-Magd, 2017b). As a consequence, Al-Sisi started to build up his identity as a great reformer, one that would bring back an Egypt that had been long lost. To do so, he portrayed himself as an individual with a personal mission, with an abundance of symbolic allusions to religion and its values (Springborg, 2015). As a result, he managed to create for himself an image and set of values independent from any other body or institution of Egypt. Such a phenomenon of portraying a leader as an individual with a mission that only he can carry perfectly fits the definition of charismatic leadership by Max Weber (Weber, 1978). As such, if the objectives of the mission of Al-Sisi resonated with society, they would afford him a clear path towards power. While religious elements were present in his discourse, they were used to imbue of symbolic value his personal project and vision rather than inform the objectives themselves with the creation of a religious society or any similar characteristics. Instead, the mission had four main objectives which were economic growth, improving the position of Egypt regionally and globally, transforming Egypt into a centre for industrial production and protecting the nation from its threats (Yefet & Lavie, 2021). Here we can see how there is an optic to legitimise economic production and wellbeing above the legitimacy of

the democratic process. With such ideas of modernising the nation and reviving past glory, Al-Sisi styled himself as a modern era Nasser, in part to gain the support of the Nasserist youth, but also to draw legitimacy from a national figure.

Such tactics came hand in hand with the legitimation of the army, who also drew from this common past to give themselves the traditional image of being saviours of the nation while also depicting themselves as modern and fundamental for economic development. The salvation of Egypt was necessary as the Muslim Brotherhood was depicted as an enemy, one who had skewed the spirit of the revolution and wanted to Islamize the country, embodying values represented as foreign. Such vilification was furthered as terrorism started to rise after the ouster of Morsi, especially in North Sinai. As a result, both the military and Al-Sisi, were unified in a discourse of securitization, centring themselves on a counter-terrorism narrative in which they enveloped all their political rivals who defended the idea of a political Islam (Rutherford, 2018). Such narratives were made not only to appeal to the security of citizens, but also to tap into a contemporaneous discourse that would align their interests and the ones of the West, as issues with ISIS in the Middle East and concepts of the war on terror were alive and well, attempting to gain external support.

Making securitization rhetoric mainstream meant a justification to strengthen the military further, as they are the body in charge of securing the nation. The idea of modernising the nation and bettering the economy aligned perfectly to justify the creation of new big-scale infrastructure projects, tying them to ideas of progress and futurism. As the military controls the means to take on large parts of such endeavours, they have tended to be allocated to them, ensuring the enrichment of the military. One of the clear examples in this line of thinking is the creation of the New Administrative Capital, following a long-standing tradition for Egypt to create new cities in the desert near Cairo. Here, it is important to state how such projects have not only benefited the military, but also have been able to manage and co-opt certain elites (Almqvist, 2022).

For the ends of legitimation, the media apparatus of the army has become fundamental, as they have run numerous campaigns to legitimize both the figures of Al-Sisi and of the military. These were extensively used immediately after the removal of Morsi to carry ideas of the mission of al-Sisi and the power of the military, but they continue to do so in other veins. Most recently, a campaign called “Your Factory is your Home” has been created to target the workers of military factories, for now spots have been directed to the secrecy of their activities and the importance of reporting illegal activities in the workplace (Egypt Independent, 2023).

Regarding repression, which certain aspects have already been highlighted, such measures have normally been established through the legislative power of the regime, passing laws to restrict and limit the rights of citizens and organizations so as to limit their capacity for organisation and opposition. Most notably, the declaration of the Muslim Brotherhood as an illegal organisation once Al-Sisi and the military took control of the state apparatus permitted them to effectively limit the capacity of its main rival for power at the time. Such measures entailed the destruction of a whole network of sub-organisations which were affiliated to the Brotherhood. The efforts helped to undermine the political support mechanisms that the organisation had as many were networks of aid winning the sympathy of many. This not only helped to undermine a rival, but certain strategies were put in place to reinforce the state apparatus (Russell, 2022). Through it, co-optation was also used, as certain organizations were put under the guardianship of the state to channel aid to now create support for the state. Others were directly put in the hands of the military, which were mainly ones concerned with the distribution of food that now comes with labels from the military in charity acts (Abul-Magd, 2017a). Other organisations were liquidated, and its funds directed to the state, thus not engaging in co-optation but a more direct and material way to reinforce the state.

Numerous other repressive measures have taken place against the entirety of the population, notably, as protests returned to force after the establishment of Al-Sisi, independent unions were formally banned, strikes became illegal and protests were actively suppressed by the police and the military. Such actions were designed to limit the capacity of labour revolts, and were successful in their goals, as labour protests diminished by two thirds from 2011 to 2017 (Abdalla, 2020). Nowhere was such repression harsher than in the businesses of the military, as following law, strikers and labour organizers were put on trial through military courts, demonstrating once more the importance the military industrial complex has in the scales of interest of the regime. Such actions sought to criminalise any individual who posed a threat to the economy of Egypt. Here, the effects of securitization discourse can be appreciated, as objectives of the regime become elements of national security, they are treated violently and repressively. Going to a further extreme even citizenship has been put into a securitization frame, as a result, an amendment was made to the citizenship law that states: “Nationality can be withdrawn if [a person] joins any group, association, body, organisation, gang, or any entity of any nature with the aim of harming the public order of the state or undermining the social and economic order by force or by any unlawful means” (Malek, 2021, p. 17). Therefore, a strict interpretation of such a clause could revert the citizenship of individuals who try to voice their discontent regarding their labour conditions. Another right that could be limited relates to

pensions, as citizens who are fired after their arrest by authorities could be denied their pension (Heydemann, 2020).

Regarding other efforts of co-optation, these have mainly been centred around Islamist associations that are not aligned to the Muslim Brotherhood. Such associations are not always completely separated to the Brotherhood goals, most notably, the Al-Nour party, which although Salafi, also seeks to establish shari'a law into society (Rutherford, 2018). The Party has not been prohibited and has had members in the House of Representatives. Nonetheless, this party has always had a marginal role and its share of power is diminishing, as it wasn't able to gain any seats in the senate elections of 2020 (Emam, 2020). They are not the only Salafi organisation who has been permitted to exist under the regime, but all were co-opted so as to dilute their ideology and limit their capacity for opposition (El-Sherif, 2015).

Another branch of Islam that the regime tried to co-opt was the non-political Islam. Most notably due to their importance in the Islamic world, is the al-Azhar institution who played a key role in the dismantling of Islamic aid controlled by the Muslim Brothers. This was done by appointing the head of the al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayyib, to the board of directors of the body that was to supervise the distribution of such aid, after the appropriation by the state (Russell, 2022). Highlighting the co-optation, the body, named Bayt al- Zakat, has a strong presence in its board of directors of representatives from the ministries, still as the al-Azhar is in charge of rest of the institution the collaboration gives it legitimation as a proper religious body who will apply their values. Still, the regime has not been always as successful making the institution collaborate and bend to their needs as an attempt to impose further control by the government attempting to enter the internal organization of al-Azhar was repelled after it created uproar from its popular base (Brown & Ghanem, 2017). Nevertheless, the institution does not pose a serious threat to the military, as it has only voiced dissension regarding matters that the regime does not consider central to the security of Egypt, which as we have come to show, really means the interests of the regime. Instead, the institution tends to voice their dissension on matters pertaining to religion or interpretations of laws based on religious principles (Brown, 2019). In addition, as the regime controls all media it has been effective in suppressing the reach of their dissenting voice when it went against the interests of the regime (Brown & Bardos, 2018). As a result, the al-Azhar institution becomes useful for the military when in need for religious legitimacy while being an encumbering, but not threatening entity for the regime. It is here that the mentality of the regime can be appreciated in its fullest, that being the mentality of securitization. Through the co-optation of Islamic organizations, it can be appreciated how rhetoric, values and policy are not enforced strictly and precisely. Instead,

certain organizations are banned while others not, not by their ideological component, but by a utilitarian criteria regarding their possible usefulness and capacity for threat to their interests.

An important element for the control of the population in any authoritarian regime is the information and monitoring of it. Of course, the intelligence services of Egypt bear the brunt of such a task. But it is important to note that due to the position of the military in society, being an employer of a substantial part of civilians while also a provider of goods and services for many more, they also have considerable information about citizens. Not only because of information purely gathered by such actions, but also due to the impervious presence of their infrastructure in every city, through which surveillance of the population can be carried out in the manner of a Foucauldian panopticon (Foucault, 2007).

6. Conclusion

Throughout this work an examination of the inner workings of the Egyptian regime has been carried out. A historical overview has been provided so as to give a frame of reference to better understand the foundations under which the regime of Al-Sisi rests. After an overview of academic discipline regarding personalization, authoritarianism, civil-military relations and theories regarding authoritarian institutionalization we can observe that certain theories have been more productive than others. By analysing the current situation of Egypt through their policies and certain visible allocations of power we can answer the questions proposed in section 2.

Answering the two questions of section 1) which were: what is the position of the military in Al-Sisi's regime? Does it diverge from the traditional role of the military in power explained in academia? Regarding the position of the military in the Egyptian regime, it is one of a powerful partner who is fundamental for the current form of authoritarianism, which is a hybrid between a military regime and a personalized one, striking a balance in which understanding who retains dominance remains unclear. Such status is achieved by having extensive autonomy at numerous levels of the Egyptian state, those being most notably: The economic area, having an extensive industrial and service complex exempt from taxation. The judiciary by having independent authority and ruling over matters they consider their own, including their enterprises. Regional administration as they dominate the top level of regional government. In so far as their compliance with canonical models from academia, it could be

argued that due to their historical development and extensive role there are certain aspects that diverge from traditional characteristics of the military in power. In this field we have proven how due to their history which has transformed their doctrine, their operational unity is not as vulnerable as other militaries while being in a position of power. On the other hand, the regime as a whole employs a highly legalistic framework that is skewed to favour the regime's interest which is a characteristic of regimes with military presence.

In relation to the questions in section 2) which were: Is there personalization around the figure of Al-Sisi in the current state of the regime? Are there boundaries established to limit such personalization? Observing the personalization of Al-Sisi, by applying the indicators developed by Geddes et al. (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018) we have found several effective mechanisms to control such personalization, although there are still certain levers that the leader has so as to ensure that the military does not dominate him. Such a case is the Republican Guard, an example of counterbalancing integrated within the military with minimized risks compared to a paramilitary alternative. Additionally, we have found traits of charismatic leadership, through a personalized claim to power through its mission, which tends to be infrequent in such regimes as advanced by Linz (Linz, 2000). Therefore, in the regime both a legalistic framework and a personalistic claim to power cooperate in efforts of legitimizing the regime.

Concerning the question formulated in section 3) which was: Can a link be drawn between such configuration and their methods to control the population? It could be argued that the link that vehiculates it is the mentality of securitization. Considering that the ruling coalition is dominated by individuals who have a past in the security apparatus, such ties are not surprising. Furthermore, such mentality is used to safeguard the most pressing interests of the regime, as security can be alleged to curtail a considerable number of rights by using nationalistic rhetoric and referencing certain sworn enemies.

As a result, we find that the Egyptian regime is a hybrid authoritarian regime who has institutionalized to create a narrow elite who controls the rest of the population. By the great power and presence both the president and the military have in society, they can effectively control for now that no opposition arises, controlling the population and leaving the rest of the elites with a marginal role in which they can only collaborate. Furthermore, they have established an institutional arrangement with non-traditional outcomes that ensures stability as they have bodies to channel and possibly solve conflict between both and diminish the uncertainties that come with authoritarian leadership. As such, struggles for control are still bound to happen, but the possibilities of it erupting into regime-ending conflict are minimised.

An interesting area of research to continue the examination of the regime regarding internal organization, securitization and population control would be the role and institutional design of the intelligence services and the police in the regime. As such, an examination of the possible methods that both branches of the ruling elite use to collect information on the other and what are the methods used to control the population through other security services could prove insightful. If insider information or interviews with former members of the regime could be obtained, it would also open new possibilities to understand such relationships between the military and the President.

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