THE TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

IN EGYPT DURING SADAT'S ERA

by

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ABSTRACT

This work traces the transformation of official political discourse in Egypt between 1971 and 1981 through official statements and written texts. Performative practices are also analyzed as locuters of discourse. Discursive shifts concern such topics as Israel, Zionism and Imperialism; state and governance; and society. Counter-discourse of radical Islamists is also analyzed through the similar lens of texts and practices. Similarities and contradictions between these two discourses regarding various aspects are explored in this research.

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INTRODUCTION

Language shapes the way we think,
And determines what we can think about it.
Benjamin Lee Whorf

The overarching concern of this research is the interaction between language and conflict. It seeks to unpack the complex interrelationship between political discourse and political action. Discourse, closely analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Lacan and Jürgen Habermas, is a complex notion, which is now widely used in the fields of humanities and social sciences. In the works of Michel Foucault, discourse is referred to as "different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practices"[1] and as an "entity of sequences of signs in that they are enouncements,"[2] that is, statements. In this study discourse is defined as a set of written and spoken texts, understood as a form of social practice and determined by social structures.[3] Counter-discourse is understood as a discourse formed in response to the dominant "story." It addresses and challenges the cognitive and axio-systems created and promoted by the official narrative.

The study of the hegemonic discourse produced by political elites, and of the counter-narratives created by different political actors, sheds light on multiple themes.

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[1] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 3.
[2] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 141.
[3] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York: Longman,1992), 17.

First, rhetoric reflects political culture and the values that inform and sustain conflictual situations. It unpacks the conceptual boundaries and semantic margins of such notions as war and peace, unity and national interests, and so forth and reveals political convictions that the participants of political discussions (conflict) have and, therefore, it becomes possible to assume how the conflictual situation may resolve and if the parties are able to reach consensus. Second, it serves as an instrument of political action, engenders change[4] and hence constructs and reconstructs political reality.[5] As Lisa Wedeen notes, "the use of words, the understanding of abstract concepts, and the enactment of everyday practices produce specific logics and generate observable political effects."[6] Third, it illustrates the fluctuating, multilayered and contextual identities of "Self" and "Other" and shows complex patterns of mutual representation. Thus, according to Hannah Arendt, actors reveal their identities through public speech and performative actions: "in acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world."[7] Fourth, since discourse and counter-discourse is frequently understood as a form of social interaction[8] and an action embedded in social context, the study of it illuminates the relations between the state and

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[4] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 204.

[5] As Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough note, "it is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes, that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse," and that these processes are shaped by these discourses substantively.
Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 4.

[6] Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 15.

[7] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), 179-180.

[8] For further discussion see Teun A. Van Dijk, *Discourse as Social Interaction* (London: Sage, 2004), 336.

the society. Both official and counter-narratives reflect the articulation, distribution and contestation over the meanings of normative categories, and such concepts as war, peace, nation and state, and more. Finally, the study of discursive practices sheds light on the political culture of a given society. There are linguistic dimensions of political culture, which is defined by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba as "attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system"[9] and which is reflected in the discourse. In addition, political culture reveals complex relations within the state-society-individual structure, illustrates power relations within the political *field* (Bourdieu) [10] and reflects the hegemonic ideology. Thus, discourse in its linguistic and performative forms mirrors social structures. The mutually constitutive relations between discourse and social structures should be emphasized: discourse is determined by social structures and it reproduces these structures and, hence affects the societies, sustaining continuity or triggering change.[11] In this regard David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis note, "discourses are concrete systems of social relations and practices that are intrinsically political, as their formation is an act of radical institution, which involves the construction of antagonisms and the drawing of political frontiers

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[9] Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989), 12.

[10] Pierre Bourdieu argues that societies are divided into autonomous spheres of *play*, *fields*. Each functions according to specific set of values and regulations, i.e., *capital* (see Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)).
Discourse reflects power hierarchy within each field and serves as a way of struggle over political capital.

[11] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 42.

between 'insiders' and 'outsiders.' They always involve the exercise of power."[12] In a similar manner Pierre Bourdieu characterizes the nature of utterance, saying that "utterances are not only signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority*, intended to be believed and obeyed (his emphasis)."[13] This power aspect of discourse will be analyzed in this study.

Language is not the sole system of signification that constructs political discourse. Lisa Wedeen introduces the analysis of *semiotic practices* as a useful tool for understanding the complex nature of political discourse. This "meaning-oriented" approach studies how "symbols are inscribed in concrete actions and how they operate to produce observable political effects." [14] Commemoration through mourning and celebrations, epic narratives, political spectacles, military parades and so forth all represent forms of political discourse and can explain the meanings invested in particular events and notions that are invoked and consumed by political actors. These practices reflect cultural imagination, reveal previously dominant political discourses, and thus show the political dynamics of the society in all its complexity. Other symbolic forms, such as visual images, also help us understand the formation, development and effects of political discourse.

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[12] David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis, "Introducing Discourse Theory and Political Analysis," in *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis*, ed. David Howarth, Aletta J. Norval and Yannis Stavrakakis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 4.
[13] Pierre Bourdieu, "Language and Symbolic Power," in *The Discourse Reader*, ed.Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland (London: Routledge, 1999), 502.
[14] Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *The American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002): 714.

In this research I will trace the development of political discourse in Egypt between 1971 and 1981. Three key events in Egyptian history were chosen for this analysis: the October or Ramadan War of 1973, the Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979 and the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981. These events are connected to each other by a continuum of discursive and performative practices. However, there are significant ruptures and semantic shifts in this continuum, which form the object of this study. How did the representation of Israel as the Zionist entity (*al-kiyan al-sahyuni*)[15] transform into the perception of it as a party to the Peace Treaty? How did the narrative about "the mobilization of every effort for the sake of confrontation with the enemy"[16] turn into the desire to overcome "the wall of suspicion, fear, hate, and misunderstanding that has for so long existed between Israel and the Arabs"?[17] How could the annual celebrations of the glorious *al-'ubur* (the crossing of the Suez Canal) sit with Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and his address to the Knesset? Indeed, Sadat himself commented on this particular paradox in his speech to the Israeli Parliament:

> No one could ever conceived that the president of the biggest Arab state, which bears the heaviest burden and the main responsibility pertaining to the cause of war and peace in the Middle East, should declare his readiness to go to the land of the adversary while we were still in a state of war.[18]

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[15] "Importance of Escalation of Arab Struggle," Cairo Press Review, *Al-Goumhouria*, 6 July 1973.
[16] Ibid. 25 July 1973.
[17] Zeev Maoz and Allison Astorino, "The Cognitive Structure of Peacemaking: Egypt and Israel, 1970-1978," *Political Psychology* 13, no. 4 (1992): 647.
[18] "Address made to Israel's Knesset." Essential Speeches (January 2009): 0. Academic Search Premier, EBSCO host (accessed January 23, 2011).

There are historical explanations for such changes in political behavior in Egypt, based upon domestic, regional and international variables. To explain such shifts, a number of political scientists have analyzed changes in the regional balance of power or applied "leader-centered" approach, exploring the operational codes and the psychological idiosyncrasies of the Egyptian leader.[19] The question of *why* such discursive transformation took place is beyond the scope of this study and needs to be addressed more comprehensively by historians or political scientists. Of particular concern here are the ways in which this change in political discourse occurred through the use of words and various practices. It is also important to analyze the context of formation and the nature of the most salient counter-narrative of that time and its complex interrelations with the official discourse.

In the analysis of discourse the context is crucial, hence, the first chapter of this work is devoted to the historical background of the events under study. It is important to remember that context does not represent a constant, but is fluid, flexible and subject to change. There is an "objective" historical context and there is the context created by the discourse. The study of this *discursive* context reveals the ways in which people use words, establish signs and interpret meanings and act. Discourse has the ability to construct and constitute notions (e.g., unity), to create entities and norms (e.g., homeland, cooperation) and position political actors (foe and ally), which alters the representation of the context. Discourse does not only reflect reality, but in many ways constructs it. However, discourses (as much as contexts) are not "omnipotent" – they are the products of particular political forces. As D. Howarth and Y. Stavrakakis point out, "discourses are

[19] For further discussion see Ibrahim Karawan, "Sadat and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (1994): 250-252.

contingent and historical constructions, which are always vulnerable to those political forces excluded in their production, as well as the dislocatory effects of events beyond their control."[20]

The second chapter traces the transformation of the official discourse in Egypt during 1973-1981 and the discrepancies and ruptures that characterize this change. An analysis of counter-discourses, namely the radical Islamist narrative, elucidates some of the methodological questions raised earlier. Firsthand materials from Egyptian newspapers, works by Egyptian intellectuals and texts by the "producers" of counter-narratives constitute the foundations of this chapter. Both hegemonic and counter-discourses interact with each other through deliberation and contestation over ideas and policies. Steve Buckler identifies three levels of discourse: theory, ideology and rhetoric.[21] On the level of ideology, discourse possesses action-guiding potential and seeks to create solidarity with regard to the action agenda.[22] The hegemonic discourse of the Egyptian government was operating on this level. At the level of rhetoric actors compete for power in the political arena and this was the medium through which counter-discourses functioned. Clashes between these discourses with different aims and political agendas culminated in the assassination of Anwar Sadat and showed the different ways in which ideas operate in politics.

The third chapter of the study focuses on the "practical" aspects of discourse and addresses the commemoration of the Egyptian victory in the Ramadan War of 1973.

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[20] Howarth and Stavrakakis, 4.
[21] Steve Buckler, "Theory, Ideology, Rhetoric: Ideas in Politics and the Case of "Community" in Recent Political Discourse," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9, no.1 (2007): 36.
[22] Ibid., 37.

These practices communicated a particular political message, reflected a verbal discourse and were sustained by it. Analysis of performative practices sheds light on the mechanisms of group identity formation and illustrates the forces that engender social change.

This research aims to illustrate that the correlation between political discourse and political outcomes is not direct. "Successful" rhetoric does not necessarily produce legitimacy for the regime, or lead to "successful" political agendas and actions.[23] Discourse, which is driven by political pragmatism and national interests and seems coherent, consistent and rational, may produce unexpected reactions from the consumers of this discourse – here the assassination of Anwar Sadat by *al-Jihad* is a compelling example. This shows that change in discourse does not necessarily entail shifts in social perceptions and identities. This study embraces an interpretivist method of analysis, which is based on a careful reading of the texts [24] and draws on insights from the fields of linguistics and social theory.

This research raises general questions of how the discursive transformation occurs in situations of conflict, how it is presented to the audience and perceived by it and what the limitations of political language are. Hence, it contributes to the lasting debate within the field of socio-linguistics about the nature of language (including its political aspects) and its effects.

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[23] For further discussion see Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 5.

[24] The author adheres to the approach of J. Derrida, that "there is nothing outside the text."

CHAPTER I

1972-1981: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

> The very act of locating the occasion or the text in its appropriate context is not merely to provide the historical background, but actually to begin the process of interpretation.[25]

In order to understand the discursive transformation that took place in Egypt during the period under study, the historical context must be analyzed. Michel Foucault (1972) argues: "the 'situational context' of a statement (the social situation in which it occurs) and its 'verbal context' (its position in relation to other statements which precede and follow it) determine the form it takes, and the way it is interpreted."[26] Therefore, understanding the historical framework within which the discursive transformation took place is crucial for a proper analysis.

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[25] David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Inventing of Tradition," *c*.1820-1977," in *The Invention of Tradition* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 105.

[26] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 47.

Interwar Period (1967-1973)

International and Regional Contexts

As a result of the Six-Day War of 1967 Israel gained control over East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, the Sinai and the Gaza Strip from Egypt,[27] and became the strongest military power in the region. With the exception of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which were considered a pivotal gain of *al-Naksa*,[28] Israeli political opinion about the newly conquered territories was divided between those who deemed them crucial "for Israel's security and those who saw them as negotiable in return for peace settlements."[29] After the contested discussions about the future of the new territories a cabinet decision was taken on 19 June 1967: "Israel proposes the conclusion of a peace agreement with Egypt and Syria based on the international border and the security needs of Israel."[30] The international border stipulated that Gaza Strip was a part of Israel. Moreover, Israel insisted on freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal, the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba and demanded guarantees of overflying rights in the Straits and the demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula.[31] Egypt and Syria rejected these conditions, insisting on the complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories. Although the irreconcilable position of the Arab states towards Israel was restated vigorously during the Khartoum summit in

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[27] Elizabeth Monroe and A.H. Farrar-Hockley, *The Arab-Israeli War, October 1973. Background and Events* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1975), 1.
[28] Setback. An Arabic name for the defeat in 1967 War.
[29] T.G. Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2004), 82-83.
[30] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000), 253.
[31] Ibid., 254.

September,[32] the balance in the Arab-Israeli dispute changed fundamentally, in that the existence of Israel was no longer an issue. The return of the territories occupied during the war became the Arabs' most pressing concern.[33] The change in the regional equilibrium required a more flexible policy from the Arab states, which deemed the possibility of indirect negotiations and political rather than military means of resolving the dispute feasible. Israel, however, interpreted the message from Khartoum as obdurate and final and the opportunity for negotiations between the parties to the conflict was lost.

International reaction to the postwar Arab-Israeli dispute was reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which affirmed the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict."[34] The absence of a definite article before the word *territories* created multiple controversies around the interpretation of the document. While the Israelis argued the Resolution implied the withdrawal from "some" territories, the Arabs insisted the Resolution meant "all" the territories. The Palestinians opposed the document, because it acknowledged "territorial integrity and the sovereignty of *every state* (my emphasis) in the region," including Israel, and did not mention a future Palestinian state, confining the Palestinian cause to the "just settlement of the refugee problem."[35] Egypt and Jordan agreed on settlement, but insisted that Israel relinquished its conquests. Israel did not accept the Resolution officially until 1970, demanding direct negotiations with the Arabs regarding the peace agreements. Gunnar Jarring's mission, aimed to promote an Arab-Israeli settlement based

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[32] The three Noes of Khartoum: no negotiation, no recognition and no peace with Israel.
[33] James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 273.
[34] U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, in Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, 316-317.
[35] Ibid., 316-317.

on the UN Resolution, proved generally unsuccessful, because the parties to the conflict were too far apart in their mutual expectations and demands. The intransigent position of Golda Meir concerning the conquered territories made the parties drift even further apart. She was elected prime minister of Israel in March 1969 and believed that "every square inch of the territory of Israel had been nourished by the blood of her children," [36] so that any withdrawal to prewar borders was unacceptable without direct negotiations and peace treaties with the Arabs.

The new wave of Palestinian refugees and "the growth of the Israeli settlements along the Jordan valley and outside Hebron triggered the revival of the Palestinian liberation movement."[37] A Fatah[38] underground campaign, initiated in the winter of 1967-68, was untimely and resulted in Israeli retaliation. But it demonstrated the Palestinian resilience and soon revealed the new dynamics within Fatah itself.[39] Under the guidance of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) the armed struggle was conducted mainly in Gaza and Jordan, which posed a threat to King Hussein's rule. A number of attacks on Israeli airliners took place between 1968 and 1970, which brought Palestinian grievances to the attention of the international community. The most conspicuous manifestation of the growing power and influence of the PLO were the events of "Black September" 1970 in Jordan.

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[36] Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 220.
[37] Shlaim, 285-87.
[38] The largest faction of the PLO.
[39] The Charter of 1964 was revised and emphasized the leading role of the PLO in the national armed struggle and affirmed the supremacy of Arafat as a leader of the Palestinian liberation movement.

Israel's diplomatic immobility and its unwillingness to withdraw from the occupied territories led President Nasser to abandon any aspirations for a peaceful solution, and "his famous slogan "That which was taken by force can only by recovered by force" was coined."[40] The War of Attrition between Israel and the Arabs began in 1967. Using Egypt's demographic advantage over Israel, its inability to wage static warfare and its sensitivity towards casualties,[41] Nasser made it clear that "it would only be a matter of time before Egypt attempted to recapture the Sinai."[42] The Sinai served as a buffer for the Israelis against Egyptian attacks. While military bombardments, air attacks and raids were being launched on Israeli positions near the Canal and the Jordanian border, a new Republican administration in the United States with Richard Nixon as president, Henry Kissinger as his national security adviser and William Rogers as secretary of state elicited a new peace plan. The Rogers Plan was based on UN Security Council Resolution 242 and called Israel to return to the international border and address the Palestinian refugee problem. The Plan was rejected by Israel and the War of Attrition continued until July 1970, after which both sides resumed negotiations and accepted the cease-fire promoted by Rogers.

Domestic Scene

Nasser's death on 28 September 1970 brought his vice-president Anwar Sadat to power. For the first six months he did not have much influence and seemed to be the president whom Nasser's closest supporters wanted. From September 1970 until January

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[40] Shlaim, 289.
[41] Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol.1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2008),175.
[42] Ibid.,175.

1971 Sadat seemingly respected the collective leadership principle while quietly forging his own support base. He managed to safeguard backing by the military and the police, benefiting from power rivalries and arguments among the leading political figures. He skillfully drew near those who Nasser antagonized[43] and, as John Waterbury argues, relied on the rural middle class and the rural elites.[44] The perception of Sadat as a compromise figure or a transitional solution changed after May 15 1971. The president carried out the "corrective revolution" (*thawrat al-tashih*), which aimed to liquidate the Nasserist power centers (*marakiz al-quwwa*). Thus, Sadat "arrested the "barons" of the Nasserist left, who had sought to impose collective leadership on the country"[45] and manipulate the "Colonel Yes" (*bikbashi sahh*)[46] behind the scene.

Nasser's successor inherited a burdensome legacy: a crushing defeat in the 1967 War and territorial losses; a particularly bad financial situation with an increasing budget deficit and currency shortages; and a complex state of affairs in both domestic and foreign political arenas. It was the time to revise international political alliances and seek ways to achieve the two chief goals of Sadat's pre-1973 war rule: "freeing the national territories occupied by the Israeli enemy, and preserving the "gains" of the July revolution."[47] In order to restore national respect and to recover the Sinai, Sadat altered the course of Egypt's foreign policy. While the Soviet Union could rebuild the Egyptian armed forces, only the United States could assist Egypt in its endeavors and apply

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[43] Namely, some Marxist figures.
[44] See John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 504.
[45] Martin W. Daly, *The Cambridge History of Egypt. Modern Egypt from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century*, Vol.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 359.
[46] Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* (New York: Palgrave , 2000), 43.
[47] Daly, 360.

pressure on Israel.[48] Sadat made several attempts to demonstrate Egypt's willingness for rapprochement with the United States, which were treated rather coolly. At the same time, Egypt depended on Soviet military and financial assistance; hence the balancing strategy demanded a skillful approach. In March 1971 Sadat announced that relations with the Soviet Union were intact and continued to attack the United States: "We have no faith in America. I have written to Nixon, telling him we put no trust in his country's promises."[49] Although the agreement with the Soviets promised lucrative projects and the reorganization of the army, Moscow had its own concerns. It was not in the interest of the Soviet Union to support the arms race in the region to the point of confrontation with the United States. At the same time arms supplies were one of the ways it could exercise indirect influence over the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although supporting the Arabs, the Soviets did not make any anti-Israeli pronouncements.[50]

By 1972 it became clear that while the United States was providing Israel with complete support, the Soviets were not planning to contribute to the tensions. President Sadat continued to announce daily that the year 1972 was "decisive" for the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the political dynamics on the regional and international levels did not promise any "decisive" developments. Realizing that the Soviet Union was seeking détente with the United States and was thus not ready to offer Egypt its full support, Sadat expelled the Soviet advisers from Egypt in July 1972. This gesture did not

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[48] Thus in May 1971 Sadat signed a "Friendship and Cooperation Treaty" with the Soviets, which promised to reconstruct the Egyptian army. At the time there were no diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt.
[49] Saad el-Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez* (San-Francisco: American Middle East Research, 1980), 93-94.
[50] Mohamed Abdel Ghani el-Gamasy, *The October War* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1993),128-129.

engender any substantial response from the United States, but unofficial channels of communication between the countries were opened. At that time, president "Nixon was trying hard to win a measure of support from Jewish voters"[51] and could not make any positive political moves towards the Egyptians.

The diplomatic stalemate sparked risings in Cairo. In January and February university students were demonstrating. Slogans criticized "the United States for supporting Israel, the USSR for failing to provide Egypt sufficient arms, and Sadat and Sadiq[52] for questionable leadership."[53] Later in the year Canal Zone refugees and private sector workers joined the demonstrators, demanding improvements in working and living conditions. "The strains of the war economy were obvious: defense spending increased from 11.1 percent of the GNP in 1966 to 21.7 percent in 1972."[54] Moreover, many of the recruits, who had been kept in the army awaiting a new war since 1967, wanted to return to civilian life.

Once every means of changing the post-1967 status quo peacefully had been exhausted, Sadat decided that it would take another war to make Israel relinquish the Sinai:

> Our … commitments are being put to the test. The problem of liberating the land is central to our life…The battle will be fought using whatever weapons are available. We will plan for this….Our situation will have to change or our cause will end, die, and disintegrate… 1973.[55]

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[51] Fraser, 92.
[52] Chief of Staff, General Muhammad Sadiq.
[53] George W. Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy Between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000),131-132.
[54] Ibid.,132.
[55] el-Gamasy,127.

In such tense circumstances it was becoming clear that a new war was inevitable. Strategic alliance with Syria was pivotal for the future war, since this would force Israel to divide its forces to defend two fronts. Sadat and Hafiz al-Asad began serious preparations. Egyptian and Syrian generals, who possessed sophisticated Soviet weapons and led trained soldiers, worked out a strategy based on the element of "surprise." They believed that concessions from Israel would follow after the Arab armies broke through on the Golan front and simultaneously crossed the Suez Canal. This strategy would deny Israel strategic and tactical mobility. Resting on the laurels of its 1967 victory and equipped with American weaponry, Israel's intelligence agency played down Arab fighting capacity and the intense preparations of the Arab soldiers, who in one of Sadat's graphic phrases, had been "eating sand"[56] while training.

On 6 October 1973 the Egyptian and Syrian troops were moved into position for an attack. The timing chosen for an offensive was the most favorable – the Jews were preparing for the most sacred day in their calendar, Yom Kippur; Golda Meir was visiting France and then had to fly to Vienna after Palestinian gunmen attacked a train carrying Russian Jewish immigrants through Austria. Abba Eban, the foreign minister, was in New York attending a UN meeting. Washington was in turmoil after the exposure of the Watergate scandal and the vice president was facing tax charges.[57] In this chaotic situation the War of Liberation began.

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[56] M.N. Mahanna, *The Role of Egypt in the Middle Eastern Peace Process since 1967* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1984),72.
[57] Fraser, 93-95.

Yom Kippur/Ramadan War of 1973

The Ramadan war demonstrated an impressive performance on the part of the Arab armies and their capacity to fight in a tougher way and coordinate their moves more effectively. It also revealed "political solidarity and a close cooperation between the Arab states with regard to arms supplies and the use of oil weapon in the pursuit of military-political ends."[58] The indisputable moral victory of the Arabs destroyed the myth of "invincibility" that had surrounded the Israeli army.

The Egyptian and Syrian offensive began at 14:00 hours on 6 October 1973 with attacks on Israeli units on the Golan front, the storming of the Suez Canal, heavy artillery bombardment on the Bar-Lev Line and its subsequent destruction (Operation *Badr*).[59] The Israeli government underestimated the extent of the Arab preparations, and no mass mobilization of the Israeli forces was ordered.[60] The strategic question for the Arabs was how to overcome the enormous advantages possessed by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), namely its maneuvering abilities and air superiority.[61] Moreover, in order to break through the Bar-Lev Line, it was necessary for the Egyptians to cross the Canal and breach the sand walls that the Israelis had constructed. It was also difficult to cross the

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[58] Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "The October War and the Prospects for Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in *Middle East Crucible: Studies of the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973*, ed. Naseer H. Aruri (Wilmette: The Medina University Press International, 1985), 4.

[59] Gamal Hammad, *al-Ma'ariq al-Harbiya 'alya al-Jabha al-Masriyya: Harb Oktobr 1973, al-'Ashar min Ramadan* (Cairo: al-Zahra' li'l-A'alam al-'Arabi, 1989), 101.

[60] The Israelis became the victims of the intelligence conundrum, misjudging their enemies' capabilities and their intentions. Both American and Israeli intelligence reports warned the Israeli government that the Arab armies were fully equipped and ready to attack. The diplomatic dead end also urged the Arabs to act. However, the Israeli leadership perceived the Arab armies as still vulnerable after the crushing defeat of 1967.

[61] Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 3,1109.

Canal using the heavy vehicles that the Egyptians had at their disposal. Relying on the Soviet 9M14, SA-7, SAM-6 missiles and anti-aircraft ZSU-23-4 guns, which sheltered the Arab ground advance, Lieutenant General Saad el-Shazly decided to launch a limited offensive (e.g., Operation High Minarets), but remain on the defensive on the tactical level. The first wave of infantry crossed the Canal at 2:15 and breached the Bar-Lev Line. It fell after two hours of intense fighting, and the infantry penetrated further into the Canal Zone. Israel's losses were compensated for generously by the United States, which provided Israel with new and more advanced weapons and equipment.[62] It was believed in Washington that an Israeli defeat would appear to be an American defeat as well: it would imply the superiority of Soviet weapons. Nevertheless, the situation on the Golan front was even more devastating for the Israelis [63] until they managed to recapture their positions and pushed the Syrian armies back. After this success, Golda Meir ordered an offensive into Syria, which changed the course of the war. To divert Israeli attention from the Golan front Sadat commanded the troops to leave the air defense umbrella and advance further into the Sinai.[64] It proved to be a disaster for the Egyptian positions in the peninsula. Major General Ariel Sharon launched an offensive operation *Gazelle*, which allowed him to break through the Canal. The Egyptian air defense network was disrupted and the army could not fend off the attack. It was one of the largest tank battles ever fought, and inflicted severe losses on the Egyptians. The Egyptian retreat in the Sinai coincided with the Syrian defeats on the Golan front.

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[62] Hassan el Badri, Taha el Maghdoub and Mohammed Dia el Din Zohdi, *The Ramadan War, 1973* (Dunn Loring: T.N. Dupuy Associates**,** Inc., 1978),101.
[63] The Syrians conquered the key IDF positions on Mount Hermon.
[64] Ibid., 95-97.

The Soviets called for a cease-fire several times, but Henry Kissinger delayed the negotiations. He expected Israel to regain the positions it had lost, but also feared Egypt's total humiliation.[65] On 17 October the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries imposed an oil embargo on the United States and the Netherlands in retaliation for America's massive airlift to Israel. After Kissinger's visit to Moscow and intensive Soviet-American negotiations, the UN Security Council passed a Resolution 338 on 22 October, urging both sides to stop fighting. However, the Israelis did not observe the Resolution and continued the offensive, using their air-to-air and air-to-surface advantages.[66] The trapped Egyptian Third Army and the threat of its destruction by the Israelis led to the confrontation between the super powers. The Soviet Union posed an ultimatum to the United States and warned it would undertake unilateral action, if UN Resolution 339 from 24 October was not enforced. On 26 October 1973 UN Security Council Resolution 340 ended the fourth Arab-Israeli war.

Postwar Disengagement: on the Road to Peace (1974-1977)

Regional and International Arena

The results of the October war were mixed: Israel achieved impressive military gains and successfully countered the attacks of the Arab armies, pushing them back. However, the myth of Israeli invincibility was shattered. Without American military and diplomatic support Israel would not have been able to position its army on the west bank of the Canal and threaten Damascus. On the contrary, the Arab states displayed unprecedented cooperation, spectacular offensives and the ability to use the "oil weapon"

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[65] Kissinger, 541.
[66] El-Gamasy, 296-299.

to achieve political and military goals. The moral victory of the Arabs forced Israel to negotiate. In this regard the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat noted:

> Egyptian military forces performed a miracle by any military standard (*'ala ay miqyas 'askari*). And they devoted themselves to the fullest to their duty. They captured the spirit of the entire epoch (*istaw'abat al-'asr kulluhu*) training and using weapons, but also in terms of knowledge and abilities. When they received an order to respond to the provocation of the enemy and to curb the defiance of his arrogance, the army proved itself strong. These forces took in their hands several fronts (*sudur*), which happened for the first time and surprised the enemy and deprived it of its balance with the swift maneuvering.[67]

The US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger directed the postwar negotiations between the parties to the conflict. His "step by step" diplomatic strategy, aimed at "incremental progress beginning with the military disengagement between Israel and Egypt as well as Israel and Syria,"[68] unfolded against the backdrop of Nixon's resignation, the victory of the communists in South Vietnam and the political defeat of Israel in the October War. Post-war developments in Israel brought Yitzhak Rabin to replace Golda Meir, who resigned after an inquiry revealed the mistakes made before and during the war. For Prime Minister Rabin, wittily referred to as "the sphinx with no secrets," two issues were above all others: "Israel's security and Israel's strategic partnership with the United States."[69] For Anwar Sadat it was important to achieve a settlement under American auspices. In these circumstances Kissinger began his famous "shuttle diplomacy."

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[67]Said 'Uthman, *Ma'rakat al-'Ubur* (Cairo: Radio and Television Magazine/Serials of Books 1973), 15.
[68] Ismail Fahmy, *Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1983), 60.
[69] Shlaim, 325.

A cease-fire agreement signed between Israel and Egypt on 11 November 1973 stipulated "the movement of supplies to Suez and the Third Army, replacement of Israeli by UN checkpoints, the exchange of prisoners, and discussions of the separation of forces."[70] Soon after the agreement was signed, Kissinger received confirmation from Saudi Arabia that the oil embargo would be lifted once Israel returned to its 1967 borders and the peace talks resumed. The next destination for Kissinger after Cairo and Jerusalem was Moscow, where the superpowers agreed to hold a peace conference in Geneva. During the meeting Jordan and Egypt negotiated the situation along the Suez Canal with Israel. Syria did not participate in the Conference, but did not try to undermine it. Following Kissinger's successive trips to Cairo and Jerusalem, a disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt was signed on 18 January 1974. It marked the Israeli zone of control west of the Mitla and Gidi passes and allowed Egyptian tanks and battalions to be stationed east of the Canal, a provision that Sadat assured he would not abuse. [71] Sadat gave secret promises that Israeli cargoes would be permitted to pass through the Canal once all the obstacles were eliminated. This agreement laid the foundation for Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied during the 1967 war and gave Kissinger opportunity to focus on other fronts of Arab-Israeli disengagement, namely the Golan front and Jordan.[72]

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[70] Fraser, 101.
[71] Ibid., 102.
[72] The agreement between Syrian and Israel was signed on 31 May 1974, according to which Israel withdrew from the strategic positions in the hills around Quneitra and the town itself. Direct negotiations between King Hussein of Jordan and Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yigal Allon did not lead anywhere, for Israel refused to raise the topic of Palestine in any way or form, but in any case preferred to discuss terms with Hussein rather than Arafat. Moreover, Rabin promised to place the question of West Bank to a popular referendum, so there was not much that he could offer Hussein.

In March 1975 Kissinger resumed his "shuttle diplomacy" in order to promote an interim agreement between Israel and Egypt. The major point of contestation was the passes, on which Israel remained inflexible and demanded a declaration of non-belligerence from Egypt, while agreeing to withdraw to the eastern edge of the passes.[73] This was unacceptable to Sadat. President Ford and Kissinger tried to apply pressure on Israel and threatened to "reassess" US Middle Eastern policies. This message had the opposite effect on the Israelis, and their intransigence grew. Hence, Kissinger's "step by step" strategy failed in 1975 "when Israel refused to return the strategic Mitla and Giddi passes and the Abu Rhudeis oil field to Egyptian sovereignty without an Egyptian pledge of non belligerence."[74]

Rabin's visit to Washington in June 1975 and the meeting between Ford and Sadat in Salzburg at the beginning of June revived another attempt at an interim agreement between the parties. The Ford-Sadat consensus was founded on the mutual desire to avoid war and limit Soviet influence in the region. A series of concessions made by Israel and Egypt preceded the meetings: Sadat reopened the Suez Canal and Israel reduced its forces there.

The Sinai II agreement between Israel and Egypt was concluded on 4 September 1975 and provided for the Israeli withdrawal from the Abu Rhudeis oil fields and the passes.[75] The oil fields and the passes constituted a part of the demilitarized buffer zone

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[73] Shlaim, 336.

[74] Naseer H. Aruri, *Middle East Crucible: Studies of the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973,* ix.

[75] However, some hills at the eastern end of the Gidi Pass and the station at Um Hashiba inside the passes were kept by the Israelis. See Agreement between Egypt and Israel, 1 September 1975 in John Norton Moore, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Readings and Documents* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977),1209-10.

and were under UN control. In return the United States signed an agreement with Israel, promising it support with regard to Israel's military and defense requirements and economic needs.

The Sinai II represented a separate agreement between Israel and Egypt rather than a step towards a comprehensive Middle East settlement. It caused uproar in the Arab world. Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians felt that Sadat was pursuing strictly Egyptian interests and that by signing the agreement he was weakening the overall Arab position, which primarily focused on the return of the Occupied Territories. And indeed, the agreement did not produce any change in the destiny of the Palestinians, the main victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although the status of the PLO underwent a significant transformation after the October War,[76] the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon, where the Palestinians were the principal victims, undermined whatever diplomatic breakthrough had been achieved in 1974-1975. The intervention of Syria in 1976 stopped the first phase of the Lebanese civil war, but did not address the larger issues that had sparked it.[77]

When Jimmy Carter was elected president of the United States and Zbigniew Brzezinski was appointed his National Security Adviser, political and public opinion about the Arab-Israeli conflict shifted. It was felt that the core issue of the dispute should be addressed, namely, the fate of the Palestinian people. The Brookings Institution, an

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[76] During the Arab summit in Rabat in October 1974 the PLO was acknowledged as a the sole legitimate representative of the Paletinian people, and thus as a government in exile. It was granted observer status in the United Nations and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established. Zionism was declared a form of racism.

[77] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 187-204.

influential Washington think tank, put human rights at the forefront of its agenda, in which it was supported by the president and his advisers.[78] Meanwhile, major political changes took place in Israel with the electoral triumph of Menachem Begin, who advocated Israeli territorial integrity. His views were in stark contrast to those of his predecessor from the Labor Party, especially with regard to the Occupied Territories and dealing with the PLO and Egypt.

Domestic Scene

Serious changes in Egyptian domestic politics took place after the October War. Liberalization measures from "above" coincided with Sadat's attempts to consolidate his powers and augment his legitimacy. The popularity earned from the October victory allowed him to leave Nasser's legacy behind and launch his own project for Egypt. Although one can argue that there was a degree of logic and political calculation behind Sadat's actions and agendas, on the whole his political and economic course was characterized by a lack of consistency and multiple contradictions.

As Martin Daly argues, the war "allowed the regime to transform...a military defeat - for the first time Israeli troops had acquired a foothold on the African bank of the Canal and the Third Army, surrounded at the Suez, only escaped capitulation because of American pressure on Israel – into a political victory."[79] The new government program, reflected in the October Document of March 1974, launched the policy of *infitah*, an attempt to attract foreign investors and opening local markets to their activities. Under Law 43 such investors received significant tax and customs privileges. The open door

[78] Fraser,112-113.
[79] Daly, 361.

policy eliminated the public-sector monopoly in domestic banking, prioritizing foreign banks and currency.[80]

The economic projects inspired by the *infitah* were mostly in the spheres of tourism, banking and investment and did not bring sought-after innovations and technologies to Egypt. In 1976 Sadat began negotiations with the IMF, asking it to provide loans for Egypt; the IMF demanded the removal of subsidies on basic commodities. Such "structural adjustment" engendered mass protests: demonstrators attacked the most visible symbols of "economic liberalization" – nightclubs, shop windows and travel agencies. The economic and social consequences of the *infitah* were devastating – the budget deficit increased and Egypt was dragged into the spiral of short-term debt.[81] Standards of living declined, which forced many young Egyptians to seek employment opportunities in the Gulf countries.[82] Hence, *infitah* bred a new form of Egyptian economic and political dependence.

Significant political changes took place in Egypt between 1974 and 1977. After Anwar Sadat had carried out the "corrective revolution," he announced his intention to establish a "state of institutions" (*dawlat al-mu'assasat*), where the rule of law would be guaranteed. The first step in this direction was the constitution of platforms (*manabir*) within the Arab Socialist Union, in which every segment of the Egyptian nation would be included. After the discussions, multiple projects were proposed to create these platforms,

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[80] Ibrahim G. Aoude, "From National Bourgeois Development to Infitah: Egypt 1952-1992," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 94, 16, no.1 (1994), 278.
[81] Daly, 362-365.
[82] See John Waterbury, *Egypt: Burdens of the Past, Options for the Future* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 336.

but Sadat accepted only those of the right, center and left orientations and rejected the Nasserist project, fearing the possible re-establishment of the Nasserist party.

Economic liberalization, presented as an achievement of the October *victory,* and the prospects of fruitful cooperation with the West and the moderate Arab regimes, coincided with further political transformations. Between 1974 and 1979 the president attempted to introduce a pluralist political structure, which would provide diversity in political life (*ta'addud*) but preserve the "gains" of the Revolution. In fact, Sadat sought a controlled parliamentary system, where "the social forces he represented would be dominant."[83] Indeed, the "Egypt party" that he promoted won 280 seats against 12 for the right and 2 for the left in the first plural elections of October 1976.[84] However, the reconstruction of the Wafd Party in 1978 and the creation of the Socialist Labor Party shattered Sadat's expectations for an "obedient" opposition: the Wafdists hurled criticism on the regime's devotion to the US and to further rapprochement with Israel and "froze" its activities. The opposition from "outside" the system was not tolerated and those who disturbed "social peace and internal front" had to be barred from political activity.[85] Eventually, the Shame (*'ayb*) law, prohibiting any criticism of the regime, was introduced.

While trying to eliminate his ideological and political competitors, Sadat created the National Democratic Party in 1978 to strengthen the ideology of "democratic socialism." The platform of the party announced its intention to build a state based on religious values and scientific innovations, reaffirmed that *Shar'ia* was the main source

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[83] Aoude, 19.
[84] Popular participation during the elections was low. See Daly, 367.
[85] Daly, 366.

of legislation, and claimed that the attempts of the right and the left "minority" to disturb the "majority" represented by the president were illegitimate and disruptive for national unity and peace.[86] After his "liberalization" policies, the president tried to create an illusion of mass participation in politics by resorting to plebiscites on various topics: "the confirmation of Egypt's democratic social orientation; its membership of the Arab nation; the Arab-Israeli peace agreement, the social origins of the Revolution and the *Shar'ia* being the main source of the law, and other."[87]

The most contradictory act that Sadat initiated, which would be fraught with fatal consequences for his regime and himself, was his amnesty for the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement underwent ideological transformation while in exile in Saudi Arabia during Nasser's rule. On their return to Egypt, *al-Ikhwan* were allowed to establish Islamic associations (*jama'at islamiyya*) in the universities, but could not operate as a political party.[88] In this way Sadat was hoping to marginalize the "atheists" (Nasserists and Marxists), but to keep the activities of the Brotherhood under control. To placate his "new allies," a law of apostasy was adopted in 1977, which was one of the many manifestations of the "re-Islamization" of Egyptian society. It was especially noticeable in the media and the general appearance and behavior of the citizens. Soon Sadat's "flirtation" with the Islamists proved to be dangerous – his "new favorites" turned against him.[89] While the Muslim Brotherhood operated within the set of rules outlined by the

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[86] Beattie, 236-239.
[87] Daly, 368.
[88] Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol.2, 716.
[89] The first most fervent tensions between the regime and the Islamists sparked when "Jihan's Law". According to this law, initiated by Sadat's wife, women had the right to ask for divorce if her husband married a second wife without receiving the agreement

regime and tried to promote itself in parliament by forging alliances with the Wafd and the Socialist Labor and the Liberal parties, various radical groups that adhered to the agenda of Sayyid Qutb mushroomed in the 1970s. Mass dissatisfaction with Sadat's domestic and foreign policy was voiced by the Islamists, the right and the left, and exploded after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, which paved way for the Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt. "The mask of democracy was gradually removed, revealing the regime's repressive face";[90] representatives of the opposition, politicians, intellectuals, moderate and radical Islamists, activists from the right and the left wings of the spectrum, were accused of inciting the riots and thrown into jail in September 1981.[91]

Hence, the bankruptcy of the *infitah*, which abandoned the policies of central planning, but failed to produce an economic miracle, and the impotence of political "liberalization" and "democratization," which retained their authoritative and repressive nature, represented a dire omen for Sadat's era, which would end tragically in 1981.

1978- 1981: The Camp David Accords and the Assassination of President Sadat

The most remarkable about-turn in Egyptian foreign policy was the Camp David accords, signed on 17 September 1978 by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin at Camp David in the presence of Jimmy Carter. It was preceded by a series of secret meetings and preparations.

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from his first wife. See John Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 304.

[90] Judith Tucker, "While Sadat Shuffles: Economic Decay, Political Ferment in Egypt," *Middle East Research and Information Project Reports* 65 (1978): 3.

[91] Daly, 372.

For example, during a meeting between Moshe Dayan and King Hussein of Jordan in London in the summer 1977 the possibility of a settlement between the two states was discussed. A month later a meeting between Dayan and the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Hassan Tuhami took place in Morocco. During the negotiations rapprochement between the two sides became more possible than ever. A courageous move was needed from any party to overcome the "psychological barrier" that Sadat frequently referred to.

In 1976 Israeli politicians were still predicting a new war between Egypt and Israel and Sadat declared "Egypt could not enter into negotiations with Israel unless Israel first withdrew a further distance from the Egyptian territories it was still holding."[92] In this uncertain atmosphere Sadat made a bold maneuver and announced his readiness to visit Jerusalem and negotiate peace with the enemy. The historic visit to Jerusalem and Sadat's famous address to the Israeli Knesset took place in 20 November 1977. From the initiatives that Egypt had demonstrated during Sadat's rule it was clear that the shift did not occur all at once. Indeed, Egypt had long been searching for some sort of disengagement with Israel. After Sadat announced that he "welcomed the Israelis to live among the Arab nations with full security and safety" and that he sought to achieve "durable peace based on justice,"[93] Israelis "danced in the streets in near euphoria, shock waves rattled the Arab world, and the international community watched in disbelief."[94]

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[92] Yoram Meital, *Egypt's Struggle for Peace: Continuity and Change 1967-1977* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 1997), 172.
[93] "Address made to Israel's Knesset." Essential Speeches (2009): 0. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 17 Feb. 2011.
[94] Shibley Telhami, *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to the Camp David Accords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 6.

The promising rapprochement that simultaneously earned applause and condemnation was difficult to transform into a lasting peace, as each side was pursuing different aims. While for Egypt the agreement had to be based on Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, fulfillment of the Palestinian aspirations for an independent state and the ending of war between Israel and all Arab nations,[95] Begin was interested in a separate bilateral agreement with Egypt. He did not yield to the euphoria of the moment. He sought to eliminate the most powerful enemy of Israel and not to give promises to the Palestinians, which he may or may not have regretted later. Moreover, the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements in the Sinai was creating a series of obstacles for the peace process. In the meantime Egypt was witnessing a dramatic rise in Islamist political activity, and Sadat quickly became isolated both in his own country and from his counterparts in other Arab states. Fear of the growing antipathy between the parties, domestic opposition to Sadat's peace initiative and other alarming developments in the Middle East[96] pushed the United States to lay the groundwork for the negotiations.

The Camp David Summit took place from 5 to 17 September 1978. After numerous concessions made by Egypt and the United States, Begin accepted the document.[97] There was no word, provision or paragraph that would stipulate the

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[95] Joseph Finklestone, *Anwar Sadat: Visionary Who Dared* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 205.

[96] Namely, Israel's offensive in Lebanon in 1977.

[97] The Peace Treaty was critical for Sadat, who was slowly turning from a glorious "War Hero" into a Traitor. Carter had to balance his foreign policy initiatives with his democratic Jewish constituency, on whose votes he depended. On the contrary Begin had nothing to lose. Indeed, he declared that "if he had to sign or cut off his two hands he still would not sign the document." - Muhamed Ibrahim Kamel, *The Camp David Accords: A Testimony* (London: KPI, 1986), 372.

resolution of the Palestinian problem;[98] the phrase regarding the removal of the Israeli settlements in Gaza and West Bank was deleted; all references to Jerusalem were omitted from the agreement as well.[99] Hence, the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" proved to be a failure. "The Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace between Egypt and Israel" stipulated the establishment of normal relations between the countries following the partial [100] Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai.

Hence, the Agreement manifested the complete estrangement of Egypt from the Palestinian cause and provoked severe condemnation from Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. On his return to Israel Begin denounced the ambiguous provisions made about the occupied Palestinian territories in Camp David and encouraged the construction of new settlements, which undermined both Carter's mission and Sadat's efforts to achieve peace. The alarming developments in Egypt and a broader Middle East – the worsening situation in Lebanon, the revolution in Iran and the radical Islamist insurgency in Egypt - did not bode well.

In the 1970s Egypt was undergoing a profound socio-economic transformation. The demographic boom and the migration of young people from rural areas to the cities resulted in massive unemployment coupled with inflation, cronyism, nepotism, deteriorating of the socio-economic conditions and bitter disappointment with a political regime that failed to fulfill its promises. The crises of state legitimacy and traditional

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[98] Some transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza were pronounced. "The Israeli military government would be withdrawn once the inhabitants of the areas elected a self-governing authority that would replace the military government." - Fraser, 120.
[99] Kamel, 372-373.
[100] Israel was to withdraw to the Arish-Ras Mohamed line after the Peace Treaty was signed. Israel demanded the establishment of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between the countries, while it was still occupying part of the Egyptian territory.

religious authority, and disenchantment with barren secular ideologies triggered the revival of ideologies based on faith.[101] Socio-economic hardships, the repressive nature of the ruling regime, dramatic political changes and instability on a regional level popularized narratives that advocated a violent overthrow of the government.

Another interesting phenomenon that originated in the dawn of the twentieth century and became conspicuous in the late 1960s and 1970s was the transformation of religious authority.[102] Young engineers and doctors claimed the right to interpret religious texts and issue religious opinions (*fatawa*) without having had formal theological education. For instance, the electrical engineer who would become Sadat's assassin issued religious pamphlets outlawing the '*ulama*, the "turbaned valets of those in power," and calling for the assassination of Sadat, "the apostate of Islam nourished at the tables of Zionism and Imperialism."[103] These fringe groups that belonged to fundamentalist (*al-salafi*), *jihad*, and *al-takfir* trends[104] created counter-discourses to the hegemonic one of the government. They bitterly opposed Sadat's peace initiatives and pursued regime change through a combination of preaching and violence.

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[101] Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 10-14.

[102] See Aaron Rock, "The Rise of Lay Religious Authority in 1970s Egypt: The Case of Dr. Mustafa Mahmud," Unpublished paper, Middle East Studies Association, San Diego, 2010; also Thomas Pierret on Syria and Hilary Kalmbach on Egypt.

[103] Kepel, 14.
The leader of the Society of Muslims (Jama'at Islamiyya) Shukri Mustafa, an agronomist, appropriated the terminology of S. Qutb (*jahiliyya, takfir, hijra, mufasala* and *'uzla*) and projected them onto the current situation in Egypt. He saw his mission as destroying the instruments of legitimation of the Egyptian regime, starting from the government puppets – the '*ulama* – the army, and then the Pharaoh himself. Such fringe groups were often hostile to the Muslim Brotherhood, which denounced violence and sought legitimation and political participation through the existing power mechanisms.

[104] Nachman Tal, *Radical Islam in Egypt and Jordan* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 25-26.

On 6 October 1981, during a military parade dedicated to the anniversary of the October victory, army officers belonging to the radical Islamist group *al-Jihad* assassinated President Anwar Sadat. Mohammed Abdel Salam Farag who established the organization in 1979 planned to seize the "reigns of government once Egypt is engulfed in chaos after the murder."[105]

As Dr. Rafa'at Sayyed Ahmad notes, multiple "political mistakes, committed by Sadat" led to a violent political finale. The failures of *al-infitah*, the unpopular Peace Treaty with Israel (*al-kiyan al sahyuni*), a political "witch hunt" (*al-mutarada al-siyasiya*) against the Left and Islamic forces, as well as the alienation of Sadat's closest supporters, and a sharp socio-political polarization (*al-istiqtab al-siyasi al-hadd*) are the most obvious reasons that set the irreversible forces in motion.[106]

This brief analysis of the Sadat's era provides the historical context, necessary to understand the discursive shift that occurred between 1971 and1981.

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[105] Ibid., 27.
[106] Rifa'at Sayyid Ahmad, *Limadha aqtulu al Sadat? Qissat Tandhim al-Jihad* (Cairo: al-Dar al-Sharqiya, 1989), 7.

CHAPTER II

DISCURSIVE SHIFT THROUGH TEXTS: OFFICIAL DISCOURSE AND ISLAMIST COUNTER-NARRATIVE IN EGYPT (1972-1981)

> Language practices are inherently political insofar as they are among the ways individuals have at their disposal of gaining access to the production, distribution and consumption of symbolic and material resources.[107]

This chapter will focus on texts (mainly presidential speeches or statements, newspaper articles and other written texts), which illustrate the transformation in the official discourse in Egypt during the Sadat era and the counter-response that it provoked from various radical Islamist groups, namely *al-Jihad*. These texts reflect the universes of meaning constructed both by the regime and the radical Islamist opposition, and reveal the tropes that informed the texture of the political field at that time in Egypt. The texts demonstrate the inner dynamics of the discourses, their corpus and content, and the relationship between the discourses. Based on different values and promoting different agendas, these discourses reveal "the competition over resources, issues of moral probity and deprivation, of purity and impurity, and of progress and decay."[108] The ideological

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[107] Monica Heller, "Code-switching and the Politics of Language," in *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East,* ed. Yasir Suleiman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11-12.
[108] Ibid., 5-6.

contestation expressed in the discourses illustrates the power relations between social groups and constructs political realities. In this regard Yasir Suleiman persuasively argue that language "does not just reflect the reality, but *acts on it*, configuring it and shaping it in accord with a given ideology."[109]

In his works Michel Foucault analyzed the repressive power of institutions and, by extension, of language, which represents an instrument through which power is projected and human knowledge categorized. It is clear from the study of both discourses in Egypt that they are based on exclusion, the use of dual oppositions, and the pronouncements of the "ultimate truth" and the "true" values. Hence, both of them are repressive. Claiming to be a "liberating" discourse, the counter-discourse of radical Islamists is in fact as repressive and exclusive as the official one. It is also controlled by those who have the right to utter, by what can be spoken of, and how something has to be spoken about. Pretention to possession of the ultimate truth and certain actions toward the implementation of this truth are generally repressive and disciplining in their nature. The recipients of both discourses consume certain notions, which are already categorized (e.g., who is the enemy, what did we fight for, on what principles will the future state be based, etc.); the discourses narrate certain stories, which contain mechanisms of social control,[110] and determine how these stories should be understood. This chapter will illustrate how these aspects found expression in these two discourses.

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[109] Yasir Suleiman, "Language and Political Conflict in the Middle East: A Study in Symbolic Sociolinguistics," in *Language and Society in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), 11.

[110] After 1973 articles entitled "*Fouq al dababa*" with a photo, depicting a family reunion, or photos of the solders entitled "*'awdat abtal al jaish al-thalith*" were published extensively. These articles narrated a story of the village that produced "the most number of martyrs" ("*al-'id..akbar min ayy 'id fi buyut alladhina qaddamu akbar 'adad min al-*

Official Discourse

Among the various tropes that were a part of the official discourse during the Sadat period, several dominated in the discursive arena and underwent an explicit transformation over time. The first group of tropes includes *Zionism* and Israel (e.g., its nature, issues of war and peace, etc.), *Imperialism*, and the perception of political ideologies (Arabism, Egyptianism, Islamism). The second group embraces the concepts of the *State* and everything that is pertinent to it (e.g., notions of democracy, freedom, good governance and leadership, etc.). The third group comprises themes related to *Society* (e.g., citizenship, social unity and cohesion). The fourth group contains abstract notions (modernism, secularism, etc.). This chapter will address several of these tropes, especially those prominent in radical Islamist discourses. The scope of the paper does not allow for the detailed elaboration of every group of themes within the official discourse and may become a subject of another work.

Israel, Zionism and Imperialism

The official rhetoric about Israel, Zionism and Imperialism changed dramatically during Sadat's rule. When he accepted the presidency in October 1970, he announced his

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shuhada'") for the noble cause of October or the glorious days that the Third Army is living *("al-jaysh al-thalith salaba wa ya'ish a'dham ayam"*). These stories constitute a discourse and should be understood within the structure of this discourse. For instance, in the Islamist cognitive map the state has fallen into the abyss of *jahiliya*, therefore, as the extensions of the state, state institutions should be dismantled and those who serve these institutions and this *jahiliya* state cannot be "true" Muslims.
See al-Ahram, March 15 1974.

adherence to "the path of Gamal Abdel Nasser,"[111] which implied repelling the danger that emanated from the "enemies" and liberating "the sacred national soil."[112] Israel was identified as the primary "enemy" of the Arab nation along with international Zionism and world Imperialism. In his speech to the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) in November 1970 Sadat announced: "All efforts, manpower, and economic resources will be mobilized until victory against Zionism and Imperialism is achieved." [113] This representation of Israel as a "tiny, aggressive and expansionist state" [114] was monosemantic and void of inner complexities. Hence between 1970 and 1973 the discursive continuity from Nasser's time was preserved.[115]

The "insidious trio" continued to dominate the official rhetoric after the October War, which in the words of Naguib Mahfouz represented "a man's attunement with his existential reality; a challenge of his fears, and his decision to confront the greatest power of evil, a Revolution of the will, mind and spirit."[116] However, the trope of "just peace"

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[111] Address by the U.A.R. President Designate Anwar al-Sadat before the National Assembly on the Occasion of his Candidature to the Presidency of the Republic, October 7, 1970
http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/AADV%20Speech%20to%20NatlAssemb%2010.7.70pdf.pdf

[112] Ibid.

[113] A. I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan Press, 1976), 193.

[114] Saad al-Shazly, p.132.

[115] According to Sadat, the United States "could not be trusted" and the attitude toward the Soviet Union remained ambiguous – close cooperation turned into the exile of the Soviet advisors on the eve of the war. Over time the official rhetoric focused on the achievement of "balanced relations based on friendship and common interests."For further details see the memoirs of Saad al-Shazly and Isma'il Fahmi.

[116] P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Middle East: From the End of Empire to the End of the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1997), 18.

with Israel began to be articulated more clearly.[117] Peace based on justice was juxtaposed with the "peace of aggression, conceit and arrogance," which Israel, as assumed, was attempting to impose on the Arab world. In a speech in October 1973 Sadat emphasized the necessity of peace as a guarantee for the respect of "the legitimate rights of all the peoples"[118] of the region. Yet, he labeled Israel as the "force of terrorism" and admonished it - "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" – if it demonstrated aggression.[119] The war against Zionism and Israel's "racist doctrine and logic of expansion through brutality and violence" was represented as the continuation of "mankind's war against Fascism and Nazism."[120] However, Egypt as "a rational seeker of peace and a supporter of détente"[121] clearly stated its desire to bring all parties to the conflict to the negotiating table. This dialog with the "enemy" was possible under the well-known conditions of Israel's withdrawal from the lands occupied in 1967 and its respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Hence, peace, which seized to be a mere antonym to the state of war, acquired new semantic dimensions that rested on notions of dignity, respect, equality, security, and so forth. The oxymoron "peace with the enemy" thus became possible.

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[117] The trope of "just peace" was not new to Sadat's discourse – it had been occasionally articulated in some of his early speeches. However, after the October War its practical implementation became more feasible.

[118] Speech by President Anwar al-Sadat at the Inaugural Meeting of the Extraordinary Session of the People's Assembly, October 16, 1973 (Cairo: Ministry of Information, State Information Service, 1973), 21.

[119] Ibid.,15.

[120] Ibid., 19.

[121] This representation of Egypt based on the notions of rationality and "peacefulness" was promoted by President Sadat in opposition to the representation of Israel as irrational and aggressive.

This dialectic tone was also typical for the utterances about Colonialism and Imperialism. Both notions along with Zionism were placed in the same semantic category and described the policies of Israel and the United States, which supplied Israel with weapons "without restrictions and conditions."[122]Although the same set of epithets was applied to the United States as to Israel (e.g., powerful, mighty and tyrannical)[123] in 1972, a year later Sadat expressed his disappointment with the irrationality of the unconditional support that America was rendering Israel during the 1973 war:

> This is regrettable that this should be the attitude of one of the super powers in this age…Where to, when we and not Israel form the greater part of the Middle East; where to when all your interests all your interests are linked with us and not with Israel?[124]

Hence, a more sound relationship with the major supporter of the "enemy" was possible and even desirable in the context of détente and with the goal of the preservation of peace. Later, commenting on the personality of President Carter and the fruitful cooperation between the two leaders in their quest for peace, Sadat said: "President Carter is *true* to himself and *true* to others. I find that I am dealing with a man who understands what I want, a man impelled by the power of religious faith and lofty values – a farmer like me."[125] This rhetoric of *trust* and partnership contrasted the earlier tropes of mistrust and suspicion and represented a major departure from the revolutionary pathos, where the emphases were placed clearly.

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[122] President Sadat's Speech to the Second Session of the Egyptian People's Assembly, October 15, 1972 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/Sadat%20Speech%2010.15.72.pdf
[123] Ibid.
[124] Speech by President Anwar al-Sadat, October 16, 1973, 18-20.
[125] Anwar al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), 302.

During 1974-1976 the discourse about Israel, Zionism and Imperialism became more complex, and the binary oppositions that persisted earlier began to attenuate and eventually became less prominent. First, a more nuanced approach toward the creation and the projection of the image of Israel was undertaken, so that the perception of Israel as a black box began to wane. The notion of Jews was divorced from Zionism and the coexistence between Arabs and Jews in the past was emphasized:

> The history of the Jews indicates…that they never felt as secure, tranquil and at peace – both individually and collectively – as they did under the wing of the Islamic nation…you can then imagine the amount of bitterness and pain we felt when a political movement arose under the slogan of Zionism…[April 21, 1974][126]
> The Egyptian economy…was in Jewish hands until 1951, and even after. We never complained about it for we coexisted with each other. But problem of Zionism altered all that… [October 27, 1975][127]

This coincided with the introduction of the "peace" trope and its incorporation into Egyptian political course.

Second, the representation of the imperial powers – the United States and the Soviet Union – and the rhetoric about them became less emotionally charged and less incriminating. Egypt's rapprochement with the pro-Western Gulf states, which were the main allies of America in the Arab Middle East, the necessity for injections of US financial aid into the Egyptian economy and moves toward peace under the auspices of the United States made for certain corrections to the official discourse. Colonialism was attributed to Zionism only, and the superpowers became viewed as allies and supporters of Egypt in its "struggle for peace" in the region:

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[126] Raphael Israeli, *"I, Egypt": Aspects of President Anwar al-Sadat's Political Thought* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1981), 120.
[127] Ibid., 120.

> As for the two superpowers and other influential responsible states and international blocks…our hands are stretched towards one and all unconditionally, provided they show understanding of our reality and respect our national will.[128]

During his speech at the National Press Club on his arrival in the United States, Sadat appealed to the American people, which definitely made his address very personal and indicated a major transformation in the official discourse. He said: "I need your support and cooperation"… in making the Middle East a place "regulated by peace and permeated by a spirit of hope and good will."[129]

From 1977 until 1981 the inconsistencies in the representation of the "enemy" became even stronger. Israel was portrayed on the one hand as irrational and unpredictable – "Let Israel indulge in fits of hysterics as it pleases"[130] –and at the same time a party to the peace negotiations, in which Sadat was ready to compromise: "I am even ready to go to the Knesset and discuss with them."[131] Israel was even credited with earlier attempts to establish peace with the Arab world that had remained unsatisfied: "For 25 years, they were calling for peace before the whole world, while we were saying no to their appeal; but today the opposite is true."[132] In his famous speech to the Knesset on November 20, 1977 Sadat addressed the members of the Israeli Parliament "with open mind and heart, and with a conscious free will." The "psychological barrier" that Sadat

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[128] Sadat's Address at the Opening Session of the People's Assembly, October 18, 1975, http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches.htm

[129] Sadat's Speech at the National Press Club, October 27,1975 www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/BACK%20National%20Press%20Club%2010.27.75.PDF

[130] Excerpts from Sadat's Speech to the People's Assembly, November 9, 1977 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/AADH%20Speech%20to%20People's%20Assembly%2011.9.77.pdf

[131] Ibid.

[132] From Sadat's interview in *al-Watan al-'Arabi*, February 16, 1977 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/remarks.htm

sought to overcome could exist only between equals, between rational and mature parties to the conflict and only by mutual efforts toward an understanding that perpetual peace could be achieved. This elevation of Israel as an equal and rational partner in the peace treaty was unprecedented in the official Egyptian discourse. The Knesset speech was imbued with various symbolic tropes that have been analyzed by Norma Salem-Babikian. The most interesting in this context is the evolution of the concept of peace, which acquired both religious (the concepts of *'adl*, *salam, Allah, insan* and the coincidence of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem with *'id al-adha*, etc.)[133] and secular dimensions (e.g., equality of nations before the international law, self-determination, etc.). In his address to the People's Assembly he talks about "responsible Israelis," who were able to adopt a civilized way of tackling the corrosive Arab-Israeli conflict.[134] This image of Israel remained more or less intact until 1981. The recurring trope of peace (*salam*) as a condition for security (*amn*) and safety (*aman*), as the ultimate goal and the only condition for the sound and progressive development of both countries and the broader Middle East, peace almost as a providential and inevitable event, a sacrifice, a destiny, a burden and relief persisted until Sadat's assassination.

State and Society – the Development of the Main Tropes

The central concepts regarding the state and its nature, which were developed over time in Sadat's discourse, were *freedoms, the rule of law, and the state of*

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[133] Norma Salem-Babikian, "The Sacred and the Profane: Sadat's Speech to the Knesset," *Middle East Journal* 34, no.1 (1980): 15.
[134] President Sadat's Speech to the People's Assembly, November 26,1977 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/AADK%20Sadat%20Speech%20after%20Jersusalem%2011.26.77.pdf

institutions. A new *responsible* government and a *responsible* leader, a father figure, a hero, a far-sighted sage, a shrewd politician and a sovereign, who represented "the will of the nation," emerged as new tropes and figures of speech in the official discourse.

The first step on the way to establish "democracy" was the liquidation of the "centers of power" (*marakiz al-quwwa*) and the establishing of Sadat's political authority. Although Sadat severely criticized and eventually marginalized his political opponents, those who "tried to inherit the mantle of Nasser by imposing their will on the people by force,"[135] the figure of Nasser and his contribution had remained undisputable throughout 1971 and 1972. In his speeches commemorating the death of the leader, Sadat referred to Nasser as "the most valued hero," "more eternal than words," "fighter for liberties, rights, justice and unity of the Arab people," and so forth.[136] After the October War Sadat stepped out of Nasser's shadow and began to claim that he played a pivotal role in shaping his legacy: "I participated *with* Gamal Abdel Nasser in the process of re-constructing the Armed Forces. It was then my *destiny* to bear the responsibility of carrying on this build-up and assuming their Supreme Command (my italics)."[137] With the de-Nasserization campaign the criticism of Nasser's policies, but not of the *za'im* himself, became more pronounced. Implicitly and sometimes overtly Sadat exposed the mistakes of the previous regime: "Our Armed Forces are no longer an arena for conflicting interests nor a means for achieving political and personal aims. They have

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[135] Saad al-Shazly, 104.
[136] Vice President Sadat's Remarks after the Death of President Nasser, September 1970 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/AADUStatement%20to%20Nation%209.28.70pdf.pdf
Speech at a Memorial Rally for President Nasser, November 6, 1970. http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches/AADX%20Memorial%20Rally11.6.70pdf.pdf
[137] Speech by President Anwar al-Sadat, October 16, 1973, 11.

been purified by the glorious October War."[138] These mistakes had to be "corrected" through the establishment of a qualitatively different system:

> We have transported…Egyptian reality from a state of revolutionary legitimacy to a state of constitutional legitimacy. Class struggle based on hatred and social separation has been replaced by social security and peace. Together we abolished all exceptional procedures adopted by the Revolution…[139]

Sadat asserted himself as an unquestionable leader, responsible and willing to sacrifice for the country's progressive development: "I have talked to you about my sufferings ever since I assumed power; stiffing my passion, dealing with hardships, and preparing everything for the battle without having the right to reveal and explain everything."[140] How did Sadat envisage this new system? First, he proclaimed his desire to introduce and nourish various *freedoms*: "I want freedom of the press;"[141] "There is no need, nor justification for expressing our opinions through clandestine means or outside the framework of institutions;"[142] "I want security for the people. There will be no more espionage and tracking down people's private lives,"[143] and so on. The demonstrations that broke out on university campuses in 1973 and the secular and religious opposition to Sadat's postwar policies, which waxed and waned at different times, led to the reformulation of some definitions: "Freedom of thought is a constant quality within man…however, ideas must conform to…the principles and values of society"[144] and "some elements failed to comprehend their role within the new structure… they

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[138] Address by President Anwar al-Sadat at the Opening Session of the People's Assembly, October 18, 1975 (Cairo: Ministry of Information,1975), 12.
[139] Ibid., 17.
[140] Ibid., 10.
[141] William A. Rugh, *The Arab Press* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 47.
[142] Address by President Anwar al-Sadat, 1975, 11.
[143] Israeli, 87.
[144] Ibid., 93.

collapsed."[145] These freedoms were not absolute and could be implemented with certain reservations: "If freedom of expression is sacred, Egypt is more sacred and I am not prepared to relinquish any of her rights."[146]

According to Sadat, *the state of institutions* and *the supremacy of law* had to be implemented in order to "determine a framework for democratic conduct…between our institutions, the state and the people."[147] As the president argued, a modern state of "science and faith" had to be built on the sacred institution of an independent judiciary, functioning in the name of the people and the constitution, based on "noble and tolerant values."[148] Mechanisms of "control and surveillance of all the government bodies"[149] would allow power to emanate from the people. Modernism, as Sadat argued in his October Paper, is "knowing the right order of priorities."[150] In the modern state people would be able to "realize their self-fulfillment and develop their creative capacities"[151] with the help of institutions and the systems that would produce "a suitable environment for development and creativeness."[152] The society would be founded on faith, which generally implied an Islamic moral life-style and adherence to ethical values. Faith had to

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[145] "Collapsed" was the term used by Sadat in his book *In Search for Identity* with reference to those who disagreed with him.
See Ismail Fahmi, *Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East*, 277.
[146] President Sadat to the Higher Press Council, *al-Ahram*, May 27, 1975.
[147] Raphael Israeli, *The Public Diary of President Sadat*, Volume 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 333.
[148] Government statements on May 15 and Building the New State, May 20 1970 and January 12, 1971.
http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/Written_Works/AAFF%20Building%20theNew%20State5.15.70.pdf.PDF
[149] Ibid.
[150] From the October Paper by President Anwar Sadat, April 1974
http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/Written_Works/AAFE%20The%20Egyptian%20Man4.71.pdf.PDF
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

be "free from fanaticism and impurity"[153] and to encourage learning and progress. In 1976 Sadat announced the introduction of a multiparty system, which very soon proved to be "flawed." According to Sadat, in a modern state the opposition was expected to be "genuine and constructive"[154] and nobody should be allowed to take advantage of "freedoms and democracy." Not unexpectedly, Sadat's utopian postulates about the state and the organization of society were bitterly contested in the discourse of the radical Islamists.

How did Sadat view an Egyptian citizen or society and the nation as a whole? In his speeches the themes of social unity, cohesion and social peace figured frequently and were especially noticeable after the 1973 War. These tropes were embodied into the newly coined term "the alliance of the working forces of the people," whose effort is directed at the "democratic experiment," by which he meant his version of the socialist solution.[155] The "participation of all in a constructive and democratic dialog by means of their popular representatives"[156] was crucial in these progressive endeavors. Egypt was depicted as a part of "a single and indivisible Arab nation," but civilizationally and historically unique.[157] Egypt would become a "producer society," drawing inspiration

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[153] Ibid.
[154] Munir K. Nasser, *Egyptian Mass Media Under Nasser and Sadat: Two Models of Press Management and Control* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 19.
[155] Message sent by President Anwar al-Sadat to the People's Assembly on the Anniversary of the Rectification Revolution, May 15 1976 http://www.sadat.umd.edu/archives/Written_Works/AAHN%20Aniv%20RectificationRev5.15.76.pdf.PDF
[156] Israeli, 95.
[157] Address by President Anwar al-Sadat, 1975, 13.

from the *infitah* policy, soundly functioning with "effective and simplified laws" and social guarantees such as jobs and health care.[158]

This brief account of the most visible fluctuations in the official discourse illustrates major inconsistencies within it. It is progressive in its declarations about the democratic nature of state institutions, the rule of law, public participation in politics and individual rights and freedoms while simultaneously both authoritarian in its emasculating definitions of these rights and freedoms and repressive in its enframing of reality. The official discourse represents the agenda of a single individual that is often incoherent and filled with contradictions. Contrary to the widespread view that discourse reflects and acts upon reality, this analysis shows visible inconsistencies between reality and rhetoric. The discourse addressed a different political reality, which had no connection to the real one, and of course failed to create the reality that Sadat envisioned for Egypt. This gap provided space for alternative discourses to emerge and take hold.

Counter-Discourse of *al-Jihad*

The second half of this chapter identifies and analyzes the major themes that informed the discourse of the radical Islamist groups, particularly *al-Jihad*, and its relation to the dominant narrative created by the government. The main text that this analysis is based upon is called the Neglected Duty (*al-Farida al-Gha'iba*) by the lay intellectual and ideological inspiration of *al-Jihad* Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj (1954-1982). Like a distorted mirror, this work reflects the issues and tropes developed in the official discourse of the Sadat era. This half of the chapter discusses the central

[158] Ibid., 14-16.

themes elaborated in this counter-discourse, namely, the *state* and its internal organization; the *society* and its nature; *war* and *peace*; *Israel* and *imperialism*. The analysis shows that while these discourses differ in their systems of representation, they remain relatively similar in their structure[159] and are both exclusive and repressive in their definitions and strategies.[160] These discourses were created and utilized by a particular political actor (s) in their struggle for resources, but both failed to address the issues of the socio-historical reality in which they were constructed. Neither found a wide audience and neither became a leading force in the future political developments in Egypt.

The State and Society

In contrast to Sadat's *state of institutions*, the state envisioned by Faraj was an *Islamic state* (*al-dawla al-Islamiya*) and the *Caliphate* (*al-Khilafa*), which had to be restored. The establishment of these two political entities and the rule of God (*iqamat hukm Allah 'ala hadhihi al-ard*) are considered a primary goal of *al-Jihad* movement and a duty for every Muslim (*al-qital alaan fard 'ala kulli muslim*). Faraj argues: "if the Islamic state cannot be established except by fighting, then we must resort to fighting (*yajib 'alayna al-qital*)"[161] and those who abandon the path of Jihad would be punished (see *'uqubat tark al-jihad*). In this connection he emphasizes that jihad in the path of

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[159] Both employ semantic and linguistic oppositions, which are rather manipulative (e.g., inter-textual oppositions *kafir – mu'min*; responsible Egypt – irrational Israel; intra-discursive oppositions: *farida – mas'uliya*; peace based on justice – justice as the rule of God).
[160] To evaluate, proclaim the *truth* and to prescribe.
[161] Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, *al-Farida al-Gha'iba*, 2. PDF File http://www.scribd.com/abouzekry/documents?page=4 (accessed April 15, 2011)

Allah is the only way to "return and raise the monument of Islam" (*'awda wa raf' sarh al-Islam*) and to overthrow the "tyrants of this earth with the force of the sword" (*tawaghit hadhihi-'l-ard lan tazul illa bi-quwwat al-sayf*).[162] The answer to the central question that Faraj asks the readers - Do we live in an Islamic State? (*Hal nahnu na'ish f'il-dawla al-islamiya*?) – has of course to be negative, which implies that the ruler of this *dar al-kufr* cannot be considered a Muslim,[163] but represents an apostate (*hakim bi-ghayr ma anzala allah*).[164] Such a portrayal of Sadat as an apostate tyrant (*fi ridda 'an al-Islam*) posed a challenge to the discursive "authority" of such tropes as *al-Ra'is al-Mu'min*, the Believer-President, or the Hero of Peace, that the president attempted to promote.[165]

In his speeches Sadat often addressed the glorious army as one of the central institutions of the Egyptian society. As he indicated, the main role of the army is to "defend the homeland, its dignity and reputation along with defending the Constitution which is the source of legitimacy in this country."[166] Faraj, in contrast, talks about the establishment of a Muslim Army (*tandhim al-jaysh al-muslim*), whose duty is to fight (*al-qital*) the enemy. He develops an entire ritual around the duty of *jihad*, which includes the application of a certain method of fighting (*uslub al-qital*) and the chanting of special prayers (*al-da'wa qabla al-qital*), and he considers various problematic matters around it, such as lying (*al-kidhb*), cooperation with the infidels (*al-isti'ana bi-mushrik*), and such. This discourse is aimed at the creation of an "enclave" society with its own institutions (a

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[162] Ibid.,1.
[163] Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: the Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 8.
[164] Faraj, 5.
[165] The text is permeated with the urgency of war and jihad and the sense of despair, which contrasts the tone Sadat chose to promote his agenda of peace and détente.
[166] Address by President Anwar al-Sadat, October 18, 1975, 12-13.

believing minority, a Muslim army, etc.), whose language, norms and laws are distinct from the ones in the outer society of *jahiliya*. Such militant language became a channel through which "the petite bourgeoisie and lower classes expressed not only their resentment of corruption, decadence and inequality, but also their hostility towards the very state machine that embodied these evils."[167]

The rule of (the secular) *law*, which became Sadat's mantra, was equated to the Mongol Yassa (*al-yasaq*),[168] and juxtaposed to the sovereignty of the Law reviled by God (*shari' Allah*). All the institutions in the "apostate state," including the benevolent societies (*jam'iyat khayriya*) and the various brotherhoods, are placed under the jurisdiction of the secular law; hence, they are considered a part of a *jahili* system and thus prohibited by Faraj. According to the leader of *al-Jihad*, the laws that Sadat sought to establish are the products of Imperialism (*al-isti'amar*) and cooperation with "the Crusaders, Communists and Zionists."[169] In Faraj's cognitive map there can be only two forms of state rule: *al-Hakimiya* (*hukm allah* or government from/guided by God[170]) and *al-Jahiliya* (state of ignorance before the advent of Islam; un-Islamic governance). *al-Hakimiya* represents "the unity of divine Sovereignty and temporal authority with the implied notion that the latter stems from the former."[171] *al-Jahiliya* describes Sadat's government, where he deems himself an unquestionable sovereign, and is used to

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[167] Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991), 80.
[168] Here Faraj quotes Ibn Kathir, who argues "…lam yufarriq bayna kullu min kharaja 'an al-hukm bima anzala Allah…wa bayna al-tatar." Faraj, 6.
[169] Ibid., 5.
[170] Jensen, 10.
[171] Salwa Ismail, "Discourse and Ideology in Contemporary Egypt" (PhD diss., McGill University, 1992), 92.

denounce the society as a whole.[172] In this context Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, a mufti of the *al-Jihad* group, reminds the readers of his book a Word of Truth (*Kalimat Haqq*) that there is one creator (*al-khaliq wahid*) and one *king* (*al-malik wahid*, my italics) and that is Allah. He laments the fact that ungodly law and government (*shar'iyat al-jahiliya wa hukm al-jahiliya*) has been substituted for God's Law, and that popular sovereignty (*jil min al-bashar*) has been placed above the rule of God (*fawq hukm Allah*).[173] The elaborations on the nature of governance that Faraj presents to the reading public are underpinned by quotations from Ibn Taymiyyah (*Bab al-Jihad*) and Ibn Kathir, which reflect the narration style of Shaykh 'Umar. The "Blind Shaykh's" a *Word of Truth* (*Kalimat Haqq*) is almost entirely based on references to the medieval religious authorities with little commentary from the author. As Salwa Ismail has argued, this is done in order to "endow the commentary with a higher authority and a special status in the discourse of the *truth* (my italics)."[174] It is interesting to note that while such style is typical of Shaykh 'Umar, it is rather unusual for the new "intellectuals," who in the words of Shaykh himself frequently "do not remember the Quran, do not know the rules of grammar, and are often mistaken even in the names of the books on which they base their arguments."[175]

Sadat's state based on *science and faith* also found an equivalent in the discourse of Faraj. Thus, the quest for learning (the first component of Sadat's equation, and *talab*

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[172] Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 28.
[173] Sheikh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, *Kalimat Haqq*, 4, 19. PDF File http://www.scribd.com/abouzekry/documents?page=4 (accessed April 16, 2011)
[174] Salwa Ismail, 96.
[175] Ayubi, 80.

al-'ilm in Faraj's vocabulary) is not sufficient to establish an Islamic state.[176] And by faith alone, which is usually expressed in proselytism (*al-da'wa*), the formation of a broad support base (*qa'ida 'arida*) and praying (*dhikr Allah*) or through practicing *hijra*, the "prison-state" will not be destroyed.[177] Through waging jihad, which is considered the height of worship (*qimmat al-'ibada al-fa'aliya*), a believing minority (*al-qilla al-mu'mina*) is capable of implementing the Islamic state project. This postulate contradicts Sadat's rhetoric regarding the "participation of all" and the "alliance of the working forces." For Faraj religion implies obedience and submission (*al-din huwa al-ta'a*) and not a life-style or an inspiring force that Sadat described in his speeches. Reminiscing Sayyid Qutb, who announced "*la budd li'l-islam an yahkam*" (it is inevitably that Islam will rule), Faraj calls for jihad, which is necessary in order to restore a complete authority of God over the religion.

As for the organization of the society, Faraj claims that the relationship between the ruler, who is the best Muslim (*ahsan islaman*) and the strongest of all (*al-aqwa*),[178] and the society (of Muslims rather than citizens) is to be based on obedience to the leader, expressed in the oath until death (*bai'ya 'ala al-mawt*).[179] It is clear from the text

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[176] As he argues, it is not sufficient to become a Muslim doctor (*al-tabib al-muslim*) or a Muslim engineer (*al-muhandis al-muslim*), since this will not lead to the collapse of the apostate regime (*lan yasqat al-nidham al-kafir*). See Faraj, 11-13.
It may seem surprising that such a representative of "lumpen-intelligentsia" (O. Roy) as Faraj does not value knowledge, which denounces Sadat's policies in this field. However, this fact is not surprising, taking into account the situation these alienated young men found themselves. As Roy argues, at that time in Egypt "education bestowed neither knowledge, not power, nor status." See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 94.
[177] Here Faraj implies the methods embraced by Muslim Brotherhood and Sufi orders and by *Takfir wa'l-hijra.*
[178] Faraj, 20.
[179] Ibid., 20.

that the hierarchy of authority in this enclave "society of warriors" is derived from their particular understanding or the *imagining* of the Prophet's life and his relationship with the community of believers. However, the mechanism for the selection of the leader is not discussed in the text; it is not clear whether the leader is simply *primus inter pares* among the few believers (*al-qilla al-mu'mina*), and the form that the relationships between the leader and the followers will take in the framework of a modern state remains unclear.

Israel, Zionism and Imperialism

Israel as a political entity is almost absent in the discourse of *al-Jihad,* and Zionism and Imperialism did not figure as frequently in the vocabulary of the movement as in the official discourse. A short and direct passage of *al-Farida* entitled "The Far Enemy and the Close Enemy" explains why the liberation of Palestine – a trope so regularly repeated in Sadat's speeches – is not urgent in current circumstances and that priority should be given to the elimination or the fighting of the "Close Enemy," that is the Egyptian government and the "regime of the Pharaoh" (*qital al-'adou al-qarib ula min qital al-'adou al-ba'id*).[180] Faraj argues:

> The blood of the Muslims will be spilled even if (*hatta wa inn*) a victory is achieved. Is this victory achieved in the interest (*li-salih*) of the Islamic state or for the interest of the apostate rule (*al-hukm al-kafir*)? …We need to focus on our Islamic goal (*qadiyatna al-islamiya*) which is the establishment of the Law of God (*shar' Allah*) in our country first.[181]

[180] Faraj, 15.
[181] Ibid., 15.

The existence of imperialist entities in the heart of Muslim land is "due to the leaders Farida wants to be removed."[182] Imperialism (*istibdad* or *isti'amar*) provided the fertile ground upon which the hated regime thrived. Laws based on the alien values of modernism, secularism, freedoms and so on informed the policies of an "authoritarian-modernizing state"[183] and sustained the "apostate regime." Faraj believes that Jerusalem will be re-conquered once the rule of God is established in every Muslim country.

Hence, in opposition to the recurring theme of *peace* invoked by Sadat, the narrative of Faraj is constructed around the notion of *jihad*. It is a narrative of confrontation with the Other, that is, the apostate state. The enemy here is void of nuances and complexities, while the image of the enemy in the official discourse becomes transformed into a party to the peace treaty. Behind these major differences stand the opposing systems of values, around which both discourses are constructed. Both of them claimed to represent *the truth* and sought change based on continuity: Sadat referred to the new achievements and the 7000 year history of Egypt; Faraj invoked the authority of the medieval '*ulama* and the history of Islam as "a tool of validation"[184] and depicted the true Islamic state built on the blood of mujahidin. As the analysis has shown, both discourses tried to address the *problématique* of the century in its domestic and international dimensions. For Sadat it was the modernization of Egyptian society and a just peace in the Middle East. For the radical Islamists it was the annihilation of the

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[182] Jensen, 18.

[183] This term was coined by Raymond Hinnebusch in contrast to the authoritarian-populist state under Nasser. For further discussion see his *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat: The Post-populist Development of an Authoritarian-modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[184] Salwa Ismail, "Confronting the Other: Identity, Culture, Politics, and Conservative Islamism in Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no. 2 (1998), 208.

jahiliya embodied by the ruling regime and the recreation of an invented Golden Age of Islam in a contemporary context. Despite obvious contrasts, both discourses share certain similarities. They claim to be universalizing discourses that produce totalizing categories (e.g., citizen, Muslim, etc.),[185] and strive to structure and dominate the political field. However, both failed to resonate within the larger audience, with which they sought to engage. It is interesting to note that almost none of the projects initiated by Sadat were carried over to the Mubarak era.[186] Radical Islamist discourse proved almost equally barren and did not initiate any significant socio-political transformations apart from scattered eruptions of violence in the 1990s.

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[185] Ibid., 17.

[186] Symbols of Sadat's era both in the discursive dimension and in the realms of spaces and practices "faded or were pushed into oblivion." For further discussion see Yoram Meital, "Who is Egypt's "Hero of War and Peace"," *History and Memory* 15, no. 1 (2003); and Judith Tucker, "Looking for Sadat's Square," *Middle East Research and Information Project* 116, 1983.

CHAPTER III

1972-1981: DISCURSIVE SHIFT IN COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES AND SYMBOLS IN EGYPT

Each age refashions its discourse to serve new causes[187]

Theoretical Framework

Semiotic practices [188] that include spectacles, iconography and some verbal modes of expression[189] represent constitutive parts of any political discourse. Understood as texts, these practices illustrate how "people use words, establish and interpret signs and act in the world in ways that foster intelligibility."[190] Various forms through which significant historical events are commemorated serve as reservoirs of meanings. They reveal tropes and themes that dominate in particular political epochs and elucidate the evolution of meanings invested in these practices over time. Political spectacles are the modes of communication between the "audience" and the "producer." They promote images and symbols, which frame political thinking, convey political messages to the

[187] Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), 5.
[188] Semiotics is a study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.
[189] For instance, jokes.
[190] Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture …" 720.

participants, and anchor "visually and audibly politically significant ideas and self-conceptions.[191]

In some way, every state is a *theatre state*, whose performances are "pointed towards spectacle, ceremony, and public dramatization."[192] Especially conspicuous are the ceremonies in authoritarian states, where the heroic ethos is celebrated through spectacles and performances. Thus, military parades on the Red Square or demonstrations in the Soviet Union served as a form of patriotic affirmation,[193] the glorification of the homeland and the manifestation of the nation's invincibility. The monumental architecture and grandiose military parades of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy served as part of an effective propaganda machine, projected state power and conveyed a particular vision of history, culture, identity, modernity and the future. Spectacles in the form of military processions, ceremonial presidential addresses, festive iconography and so forth became especially salient in Egypt after the Free Officers' Revolution of 1952 and throughout the Nasser era. Later, the celebrations of the July Revolution and the laudation of the *za'im* (leader) were eclipsed by parades commemorating the victory in the October War and extolling President Sadat's personal contribution.[194]

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[191] Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination…*,19.
[192] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980),13.
[193] Catherine Merridale, "War, Death, and Remembrance in Soviet Russia", in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 62.
[194] As Michael Keren notes, "Nothing makes an event more popular than its personification, its presentation in relation to one individual with whom it is easily identified." – Michael Keren, "Commemorating Jewish Martyrdom," in *War, Memory, and Popular Culture. Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration*, ed. Holger H. Herwig (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009), 9.

When spectacles become the medium of communication and social control, *public space* becomes transformed into a "representational battleground, where many different social groups fight for access and fight for control of the images that define them."[195] Commemorative objects, ceremonies, and texts become fields of contestation between various groups. According to Gershoni and Jankowski, "Opposition groups shape subversive counter-narratives of commemoration to challenge prevailing master narratives shaped by dominant groups."[196] In an authoritarian state, where the totality of state power is salient and the state is the main locus of authority, the regime "monopolizes public spaces"[197] through commemorative performances and bestows meanings on these performances, alters them and withdraws them, in order to serve the regime's best interests. The "audience" may agree with these meanings and interpretations or, as Lisa Wedeen has illustrated for Syria, it may not. In such states public discussions are restricted by censorship; hence, counter-discourses are expressed in *private spaces* and through different *practices*.[198]

Although some political philosophers juxtapose "public" and "private" (Habermas), "public" here is not defined in opposition to "private." In a modern state the

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Indeed, Sadat is remembered as the "Hero of War" and the '*Ubur* is associated to a large extent with his name.

[195] Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

[196] Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Commemorating the Nation: Collective Memory, Public Commemoration and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004),12.

[197] Joshua Hagen, 'Parades, public space, and propaganda: the Nazi culture parades in Munich', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90, no. 4 (2008): 349.

[198] In authoritarian states, opposition groups cannot initiate any form of counter-commemoration that opposes the official political message of the government. However, these groups may engage in various *practices* that contest the official governmental agenda, promote an alternative narrative for the nation, demonstrate different values, celebrate different identities and promote different ideological and political preferences.

line between "public" and "private" is often blurred. The understanding of "public" used in this paper is analogous to the one elaborated by Elizabeth Thompson, who defines the term as follows: "public space embraces areas in the physical environment, where city residents encounter fellow members of their urban community. It also indicates a metaphysical kind of shared and anonymous space, as in communities imagined in the press."[199] It can be argued that at a certain point in time (1974-1977) all social groups[200] in Egypt more or less agreed upon the interpretation of the October victory, the meanings that surrounded it and its centrality to modern Egyptian history. However, not all of them[201] supported and agreed upon the way in which the meanings invested in the event evolved in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Public space, in both physical and virtual senses, was dominated and permeated by the state. Therefore alternative discourses occurred in the private domain, which remained private both physically and ideologically.[202] At the same time, these private spaces were public in a sense that they were open to anyone who chose to enter them, and that open and public debates took place there.[203] As many theorists of social movements and mass mobilization and

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[199] Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 173.

[200] For instance, the military, the intelligentsia, various political groups, students, and the representatives of the professional class, and such.

[201] Namely, the Islamists, the Communists, the Nasserists and some intellectuals and so on.

[202] These spaces, i.e. apartments, training camps, and so forth were privately owned and managed and they were open to those individuals who shared the established code of conduct and ideology typical for such places.

[203] This definition is analogues to the "associational" view of public space suggested by Hannah Arendt. In her view, a space where "men act together in concert" becomes public. Thus, "a town hall where people do not act in concert is not a public space, but a room in which people gather to hear a Samizdat or in which dissidents meet with foreigners becomes a public space." – for further discussion see Seyla Benhabib,

contention argue, "Under authoritarian rule, the masses lack formal political access to mitigate the adverse effects of modernization projects and the deterioration of quality of life. With few open channels for political recourse, the result is societal frustration and sense of alienation."[204] Therefore religion, which is imbued with symbolism and practices, becomes a mobilizing and organizing ideology. These initially religious symbols and practices acquire a new "socio-political" dimension and translate particular messages and create counter-narratives.

This chapter will address the official commemoration practices and the transformation they underwent over time and will analyze the performative practices adopted by the radical Islamists. They projected a counter-discourse and different messages and symbols were pertinent to them.

Official Commemorations of the October Victory and the Discursive Shifts in Commemorative Practices

Valorization of the Victory and the Soldier

The Ramadan War quickly became a central event in the Egyptian historical imagination and was widely commemorated at all levels of Egyptian society. It even eclipsed the "traditional" celebrations of the July Revolution. It was an event that restored the pride and dignity (*al-'izza wa'l-karama*) of the Egyptians and the larger Arab world after the set back (*al-naksa*) of 1967 and inspired new projects in different fields. The war bestowed a new legitimacy on President Sadat and granted him the title of the "Hero of

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Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics (New York: Routledge, 1992), 93.

[204] Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004), 8.

the War and of the Crossing" (*batal al-harb wa'l-'ubur*). It became a reservoir of meanings that fluctuated over time depending on the international, regional and domestic contexts.

New holidays, ceremonial performances, and iconography were introduced to commemorate the "victory," intended to demonstrate the competence of the Arab armies and the solidarity of the Arab states in their defeat of the enemy. National pride in skillful leadership, the bravery of the soldiers, and the endurance of the Arab (Egyptian) people, and the strength of Arab weapons became the primary focus of the commemorations and were juxtaposed with the humiliation of the Israelis. This was the main emphasis of the celebrations during the first two years and reflected the new balance of power in the region.

The Day of the Crossing (5 October – 9 October) and the Lifting of the Israeli siege of the City of Suez (24 October) have become important fixtures in the Egyptian holiday calendar since 1974. Mass festive activities began with official visits to the cemeteries on 5 October. Cemeteries and the graves of the soldiers represent a part of the "spatial-historical system"[205] of the memorialization of a war and create continuity in time between the past and the present. The contribution and sacrifices of the soldiers were commemorated during the military parade in Nasr City and visits to the hospitals, where wounded servicemen were honored. Praise for the Egyptian armed forces manifested itself in the display of captured Israeli (American) weaponry and vehicles and

[205] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 168.

photographs of Israeli prisoners of war, who were portrayed as weak and vulnerable. [206] Young graduates were feted by the Military Academy on 9 October, and sporting events and cultural activities organized by the Ministry of Culture attracted thousands of spectators. Various textual and audiovisual depictions of the Egyptian armed forces crossing the Canal were introduced and served as a "metaphor for the awakening of the Egyptian society from the gloom that swept it in its entirety after Egypt's crushing defeat in the 1967 war."[207] The feeling of elation coupled with the elegy over the fallen soldiers is skillfully illustrated in Yusuf al-Qa'id's novel "War in the Land of Egypt" (*al-Harb fi bar Misr*), where a narrator-soldier is sitting near the coffin of his fatally wounded comrade Misri and exclaims:

> It is a sad, depressing scene I have to relate, whereas you people in the land of Egypt are living in times of victory, happy laughter and boundless joy. You are a happy people, happier than our forefathers ever were and happier than our grandchildren will be.[208]

The soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice were immortalized in stone. The monument to the Unknown Soldier was inaugurated in October 1975. It is a hollow pyramid, a symbol of Egypt's pharaonic heritage, with the Soldier's tomb as a black cube placed inside the pyramid. Seventy-one names of the martyrs (*shuhada'*) both Muslim and Christian (Coptic) are engraved on its walls. The platform, which overlooks the monument and the road for military parades, is embellished with a bronze eagle, which represents Republican Egypt. Pharaonic, nationalist and religious symbols and references were brought together and emphasized the continuity of the state and celebrate its

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[206] Gershoni and Jankowski, 284-285.
[207] Yoram Meital, "Sadat's Grave and the Commemoration of the 1973 War in Egypt," in *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narratives*, ed. Michael E. Geisler (Middlebury: Middlebury College Press, 2005), 224.
[208] Yusuf al-Qa'id, *War in the Land of Egypt* (New York: Interlink, 1998), 93-94.

achievements and its might. As Meital argues, the monument represents the national effort to "unify diverse social, communal, and religious groups into a single abstract citizen."[209] Important speeches were pronounced at this site, wreaths were laid and the prayers chanted at the Soldier's tomb. Pupils made an obligatory field trip to the Madinat Nasr neighborhood of Cairo to visit the memorial and learn about the war. This ceremonial and education event, which became part of the national education system (*al-tarbiya al-wataniya*) institutionalized meanings, symbols and messages, engraved in a multidimensional pattern of national commemoration.[210]

The practice of memorialization and commemoration of the war through naming became widespread. Thus, a new city, named the Sixth of October (*Madinat al-Sadis min Uktubar)* was founded and a bridge over the Nile in Cairo was given the same name. Names are related to particular sites or, to use Pierre Nora's notion, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. These spaces are connected to "moments of memory" or "single key moments in which a total revision of the connection to the past was crystallized in an individual or collective work."[211] These sites of memory named in a particular way were characterized

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[209] Meital, "Sadat's Grave and the Commemoration of the 1973 War in Egypt," 230.

[210] It is important to note, that President Sadat's desire to be viewed and perceived as a "Pious President" was reflected in these commemorative acts. The image of a "Believer President," who sought to create a society based on "faith and knowledge", would be severely contested by the Islamists. Among the moderate secular opposition it was ridiculed. For example, in a popular joke that casts doubt on Sadat's religiosity, he asks his wife before leaving the house: "Jiji, go get my stick and *al-zabeeba*." *al-zabeeba* is a colloquial term for a small dark spot that appears on the forehead of a Muslim after many years of prostration during prayer – see Samer S. Shehata, "The Politics of Laughter: Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak in Egyptian Political Jokes, *Folklore* 103, no. 1 (1992): 84. Following the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt witnessed an explosion of jokes about Sadat taking drugs, which called into question not only his religious credentials but his sanity as well.

[211] Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France*. *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Histories and Memories Volume 4 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), x.

by "three senses of the word – material, symbolic and functional – that are created by the interplay of history and memory."[212] Naming as a meaning-making practice creates "collective cultural and public memories,"[213] shapes national imagination and reveals narratives formed by the government, which seeks to institutionalize a particular memory and a particular set of meanings connected to it. In an authoritarian state, it is the regime that possesses the right to give names and to impart meanings to these names. The label of "6 October" is an extended metaphor that brings about a series of associations, all shaped and encouraged by the government.

During the first years of commemoration, the victory was represented as a glorious outcome of Arab cooperation with a multidimensional significance: on the military level it had reaffirmed the competence of the Arab soldier; while on the domestic level it had restored Egyptian self-confidence; "regionally it had demonstrated the effectiveness of Arab unity; and globally it had placed the Arab and Palestinian causes on the world agenda."[214]

Another trope that the regime sought to promote through various performative practices was that of *redemption* and *purification*: the victory erased the defeat in the Six Day War and thus redeemed the Arabs from the woeful memories of national humiliation and loss. Hence on 5 June 1975, which had brought about painful associations with *al-naksa*, President Sadat announced his intention to reconstruct the cities in the Suez Canal Zone that had been destroyed during the military conflict. On 5 June 1976 the Canal was

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[212] Yoram Meital, "The Aswan High Dam and Revolutionary Symbolism in Egypt," in *The Nile: Histories, Cultures, Myths*, eds. Haggai Erlich and Israel Gershoni (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 225.
[213] Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 173.
[214] Gershoni and Jankowski, 287-88.

reopened for shipping. Wearing a white admiral's uniform, Sadat attended the ceremony, which was followed by a military parade in Port Said. The president proceeded down the Canal on the naval destroyer "October 6."[215] Thus, the recollections of the 1967 defeat were overshadowed by the new military achievements, which brought national liberation and the leadership into the focus of victory.

These themes that were transformed later and were embodied in Egyptian iconography, represent a fascinating example of how images transform over time according to the fluctuation of the political context and also how political satire became a convenient filter through which this shift was expressed. Thus, before and during the war political cartoonists depicted Israel as a bald one-eyed criminal who had been terrorizing the world. This creature represented the IDF as bloodthirsty and inherently violent. Sometimes Israel was portrayed as Golda Meir. Her dresses were short, unattractively revealing her naked legs, her appearance repulsive and imbued with masculine features. She was shown as a leader, as she was driving the car, where the American president was a back-seat driver. She was closing his eyes and mouth, persuading him to follow her course.[216] The international community, depicted as a doubtful and indecisive American president (Nixon), or a globe that resembled the hairless head of pirate-Israel, or the United Nations building sinking in the ocean, was another character in these cartoons. Egypt was portrayed as a middle-aged woman, bidding farewell to her soldier sons.[217] It is clear that satirical forms of graphic expression underwent some changes once the rapprochement took place between Israel and Egypt on the one hand and Egypt and the

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[215] Ibid., 291.
[216] See Cairo Press Review, July 28 1973 reproduced from Al Gomhouria.
[217] Ibid.

United States on the other. For instance, some political cartoons showed Israel as a short old man with sharp teeth, typical Semitic features and a Star of David placed on his bald head. The image of Israel still remained unappealing and dehumanizing, but it showed some shift in the perception.[218] The image of Israel now became more human, a person dressed in civilian clothes giving press conferences and talks.[219]

1975-1978 – "Other" Crossing

After the first anniversary of the Crossing (1974) the glorious victory acquired new meanings and interpretations. They found their expression in metaphors attached to festive activities, monuments, and textual and audiovisual projects. The attempts of the regime to nationalize and unify the memory of the great historical event and channel discussions around it were salient. Thus, the Monument of Martyrs, honoring the casualties of war, was unveiled in 1975 and the Arches of Victory were constructed along the Suez Canal during 1976. Seven sculptures, representing the long record of Egypt's military victories over its enemies from the Pharaoh Ramses II to the October war, were erected in 1976.[220] Commemoration of war casualties and the celebration of the victory coincided with the introduction of Sadat's *infitah* project, the opening of the Egyptian

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[218] Khalid Kishtainy, *Arab Political Humour* (London: Quartet, 1985), 167.
[219] Ghislaine Alleaume and Farida Gass el-Hakk, *Essayons d'en rire: Dossier 5* (Paris: CEDEJ, 1982), 108-115.
One of the political cartoons depicts Israel as a Master of Chicanery (*al-talakik*); the other portrays it as contemptuous of international opinion (*eta'malou mokhkom! ma'aqoul ana ghaltan wa al-kam dawla illi fi al-'alam hom al-sah?*); sometimes a distinction is made between Israeli state embodied in the figure of Begin and Israeli public; moreover Begin as depicted as driving the car (representing the state of Israel) over the cliff (i.e. into [political] destruction) with his policies towards the Palestinians,while the Israeli people (*sha'b Israil*) are jumping out of the car in a state of shock.
[220] Gershoni and Jankowski, 286.

economy to the West and broad changes in Egyptian foreign policy. The meanings surrounding *al-'ubur* were translated into a new socio-economic dimension, which had to be engraved in various commemorative practices. For instance, 1976 witnessed the opening of a rail link between Port Said and Isma'iliyya, and in 1977 a tunnel was built under the Suez Canal. The "military crossing" became transformed into a "civilian crossing" that reflected itself in various civilian projects directed at socio-economic modernization and the reconstruction of the Sinai. The presentation of these "civil" achievements coincided with the glorious day of victory and became in a sense an invented tradition. As Eric Hobsbawm argues, "Inventing traditions is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition."[221] This process of creating rituals and symbolic complexes occurs "when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand and the supply side."[222]

The expansion of meaning was depicted also in a series of celebration stamps that had been issued every year since 1974. Yoram Meital describes different motives reflected in the stamp catalogue that reveal the discursive shift. Most of the stamps portray president Sadat in military uniform standing against the backdrop of a fluttering national flag and the commemorative slogans "Spark of Liberation" (*shararat al-tahrir*) and "October War 1973" (*Harb Uktubar 1973*).[223] Instead of arms and armor the stamps

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[221] Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, 4.
[222] Ibid., 5.
[223] Yoram Meital, "Sadat's Grave and the Commemoration of the 1973 War in Egypt," 233.

contain symbols of peaceful achievements (buildings, tractors, factories, etc.).[224] Civilian achievements represented a continuation of the military victory under the wise guidance of the national leader. The image of Sadat was transformed from a military leader into a wise ruler, who had initiated significant changes for the country and the nation. The trope of "civilizational crossing," peaceful achievements and the nation built on economic and scientific development permeates commemoration practices between 1975 and 1977. These themes in commemoration reflected various changes in domestic and foreign policies that Sadat initiated.[225]

1978-1981 – the War as Prelude to Peace

Inevitably, the various steps on the way to a settlement with Israel and the peace negotiations with the former enemy under the auspices of the United States brought about a significant shift in the meanings attached to the war and victory. The War was represented as an important event on the road to peace with Israel, peace based on justice, the elimination of psychological barriers and the establishment of mutual trust. In harmony with this theme various construction projects manifested peaceful developments

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[224] Meital, "Who is Egypt's 'Hero of War and Peace'? The Contest over Representation," *History and Memory* 15, no.1 (2003), 153.

[225] For instance, the interim agreement between Israel and Egypt that was preceded the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai was celebrated in a series of stamps depicting the map of Sinai and the Egyptian flag flying over the oil fields.
It is also interesting to note that the "civilizational" breakthrough, expressed in civilian development, military achievements and gradual détente with the former enemy, was set against the policies promoted by Nasser. De-Nasserization was expressed in all Sadat's gestures, whether the amnesty for political prisoners and the destruction of Liman Tahr prison or critiques of Nasser's military leadership and authoritarian rule during the Six Day War. Every action undertaken by Sadat during the interim of 1975-1978 was intended to underline the liberation and renovation of Egypt.
See also Yoram Meital, "School Textbooks and Assembling the Puzzle of the Past in Revolutionary Egypt," *Middle East Studies* 42, no.2 (2006): 255-270.

and progress in Egypt. Thus, in 1979 the new Egyptian National Library and Museum were opened to the public, and during the same year a new medical center, schools and bus station were opened.[226] Upon the initiative of President Sadat a new suburb of Cairo, named the City of Peace (*Madinat al-Salam*), was built, which made some contribution to the solution of the problem of overcrowding and overpopulation in Cairo.[227] The understanding of the October victory as an all-Arab achievement was replaced by a more Egypt-centered discourse. The victory was nationalized and portrayed as an Egyptian achievement, while Syria's role was severely marginalized. This occurred against a backdrop of widespread Arab (and domestic) disapproval of the separate peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. Political cartoons ridiculed the theme of Arab unity and depicted Arab leaders as obstinate and pragmatic, treacherous and lacking in political instinct (which ostracized Egypt supposedly possesses).[228]

The symbols of peace adorned school textbooks, newspapers and magazines and celebratory stamps. For example, the stamp issued after the Peace Treaty was signed in 1979 depicted a white dove carrying an olive branch over the image of the Sinai Peninsula and the text "Peace Treaty" (*Ittifaqiyat al-Salam*) and "The sixth anniversary of the Crossing" (*al-'Ubur*).[229]

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[226] Gershoni and Jankowski, 294.
[227] Ibid., 294.
[228] Alleaume and Gass el-Hakk, 121, 124. E.g. the caricature titled "Mihrajan layali al-Qahira al-sinima'i" depicts the Brothers Marx, Qaddafi and Assad, as the Brothers Karamazov, who are very amicable to each other but are holding knives behind their backs; while Arab leaders are negotiating a new location for the Arab League headquarters, a Gulf sheikh is sitting in the corner and counting money amid the cacophony of voices.
[229] Yoram Meital, "Who is Egypt's 'Hero of War and Peace'?," 155.

The Counter-Discourse of the Radical Islamists in the Late 1970s (Practices)

Islamists and Civil Society

The theme of the "public" is connected to the discussion of the "state" domain, just as the "private" is a part of the debate about "society." As mentioned earlier, an authoritarian state does not only hold a "monopoly on violence," but also possesses a monopoly on establishing and interpreting symbols through meaning-making practices. However, these symbols imbued with meanings do not exist in a vacuum, but are directed at an "audience," which responds to and discusses them.

In most respects "the Egyptian government had wide administrative and legal powers, which gave its organs almost unlimited sway."[230] These powers allowed the government to initiate messages through texts and meaning-making practices. However, in the late 1970s "while retaining political power the existing regime ceded substantial control over the societal and cultural spheres to the revolutionary challenger,"[231] that is, the Islamist groups, which promoted their own particular understanding of the historical trajectory of the country.[232] Hence, the alternative interpretations were discussed in the private domain, on the societal level.

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[230] Sami Zubaida, "Religion, the State, and Democracy: Contrasting Conceptions of Society in Egypt," in *Political Islam. Essays from Middle East Report*, ed. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 53.
[231] Sheri Berman, "Islamism, Revolution and Civil Society," *American Political Science Association* 1, no. 2 (2003): 253.
[232] The influence of the Nasserist and Communist organizations waned with increased official repressions and the president's encouragement of the Islamists. As a result, Nasserist and Communist groups were marginalized, and their members either defected or joined the ranks of the Islamists.

Civil society in every state is not homogeneous. It is represented by voluntary associations (de Tocqueville, Saad Eddin Ibrahim), which can be autonomous from, or in some extent dependent on, the state and enjoy different degrees of formality and power.[233] Civil society can be defined as an informal network of relationships (Tariq al-Bishri) of a liberal or illiberal, democratic or authoritarian nature. As much as civil society can promote democratic change, some of its elements can also lead to the isolation of the citizens from the state and promote "contending political programs that often resort to violence and repression."[234]

The most notable counter-discourse(s) in Egypt in the 1970s in both textual and performative aspects was attributed to the Islamists, whose activities gained momentum as a result of the generally declining legitimacy and efficiency of the state.[235] Islamist political trends (sing. *tayyar al-Islam al-siyasi*) were quite heterogeneous, represented both by the "moderate" Muslim Brotherhood and the "more extreme" *Jihad* and the *Takfir* trends.[236] The second part of this chapter will address the practices adopted by the radical Islamist organizations, because they reflect the most prominent and striking textual and performative counter-narratives. In this regard Ayubi has argued that the Islamist discourse embodies:

> A broad alternative system of meaning and power, to the hegemonic system represented by the existing socio-political order, which inevitably

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[233] The mere existence of such organizations in Egypt was subjected to Law 32 and permits had to be obtained from the Ministry of Social Affairs. The government policies of patronage and favor or regulations and discipline impeded the emergence of such associations in both economic and social spheres despite the principles of liberalization proclaimed by the *Infitah*.

[234] Maha Abdel Rahman, "The Politics of 'unCivil' Society in Egypt," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 91 (2002): 21.

[235] See Chapter I for details

[236] Tal, 26.

> marginalizes and/or alienates certain individuals and certain social groups… it is a very different thesis from that advocated by the State. The 'difference' itself seems to fulfill a certain function vis-à-vis an order that is deemed to be at most evil and corrupt, and at least a failure or a non-fulfilled promise.[237]

Although these radical groups emerged within Egyptian society, they represent its product rather than the society itself. Their discourse and practices engendered authoritarian and violent impulses in the "private" domain.[238] These units of authority and communal organizations, represented by the Islamist groups, used existing social networks to permeate the socio-economic and cultural life of the society and take some functions of the state upon themselves. These organizations were exclusive, embraced authoritarian forms of internal management, and, as Muhammad al-Sayyid Sa'id argues, did not represent "some sort of grassroots, "authentic" popular expressions."[239] While some of these groups interacted with members of society, other groups went as far as to excommunicate it and seek its destruction.[240] Therefore, it would be incorrect to argue that radical Islamist discourse in the late 1970s – early 1980s in Egypt was a genuine expression and manifestation of Egyptian civil society.

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[237] Nazih Ayubi, *The State and Public Policies in Egypt Since Sadat* (Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1991), 175.
[238] The dubious "associational" belongings of these groups and the obvious lack of a normative component, i.e.,"civility in dealing with others, respect of differences, and a tacit or explicit commitment to peaceful management of conflict," suggests that these groups can be hardly considered to constitute part of "civil society." Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "The Troubled Triangle: Populism, Islam and Civil Society in the Arab World," *International Political Science Review* 19, no. 4 (1998): 374.
[239] Zubaida, 61.
[240] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt,* 120.

Practices as Locutors of Counter-Discourse

These polarized "layers of authority," that is, the state and the radical groups, projected their interpretations and understandings of Egypt's political trajectory on the society through texts and performative practices. Every message articulated by the state was bitterly opposed by the Islamists through their own *risala*, which was based on an evenly different system of meanings and symbols. Thus, President Sadat was promoting a glorious image of the Egyptian state built on "knowledge and faith," and the multifaceted nature of this state rested on the rich heritage of the pharaonic, Islamic and nationalist symbols. A "*Believer*-President" was leading the *community of citizens* toward peace with their most vicious enemy. This image was contested by the Islamists, who detested the "prison-state"[241] governed by the *Pharaoh* that had imposed on Egypt a shameful "pact with the Jews" under the "Crusader conspiracy." The Jewish state, where Sadat went to seek peace, was labeled as *dar al-harb*. Egypt was not viewed as *dar al-Islam* or *dar al-salam*, for it was inhabited and governed by the people that endorsed the most detestable vices in the eyes of the Islamists – secularism, imperialism, and Zionism. The Egyptian *society of infidels* was juxtaposed to the *community of Muslims*, who wanted to build a true Islamic state on the ruins of *jahiliya*. Such vision embodied a radically different *Weltanschauung*, which nullified any political move the president undertook.

As Max Weber argued, "ideas – religious, moral, practical, aesthetic – must be carried by powerful social groups; someone must revere them, celebrate them, defend them, impose them. They have to be institutionalized in order to find not just an

[241] Gilles Kepel, "Islamists versus the State in Egypt and Algeria," *Daedalus* 124, no.3, (1995):110.

intellectual existence in society, but a material one as well."[242] One of the organizations whose institutionalized symbolic *practices* represented a vivid example of counter-discourse was *Takfir wa'l-Hijra* (or *Jama'at al-Muslimin*) that emerged on the political arena of Egypt in the 1960s and was headed by the agronomist Shukri Mustafa. The semiotic practices of this group were informed by the understanding that a *jahiliya* society had to be excommunicated. During "the phase of weakness" *takfir* could not be pronounced publicly, therefore the group had to withdraw from the rest of the society of unbelievers (*mufasla kamila*) and create a little Society of Muslims on its margins.[243] People of the cave (*ahl al-kahf*) were wandering in the mountains and living in the caves, practicing al-'*uzla* (isolation), in some sense recreating the imagined experience of the Prophet Muhammad. Shukri gathered his disciples at his house – the only *space* he deemed appropriate for praying[244] - and created his own community, isolated from the apostates and functioning according to a different set of rules and principles. There were only four mosques where prayer was allowed – *al-Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca, *al-Masjid al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem, and two Mosques in Medina (*Masjadayn Qubba wa al-Nabawi*). According to Shukri, a mosque could be called the mosque of God (*masjid Allah*) and, therefore, appropriate for praying only under three conditions. First, if the *da'wa* there is "faithful to God *alone*" (*khalisa li-allah wahduhu* – my italics); if it is built according to the conditions and qualities mentioned by God (*al-shurut aw al-awsaf allati dhakkaraha Allah*; here Shukri cites *Surat al-nur*); and finally, if it is founded on piety (*al-ta'ssis 'ala*

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[242]Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books,1973), 314.
[243] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, 75.
[244] *Hukumi* (public) mosques were considered temples, where imams, actual infidels, were worshiping idols.

al-taqwa).[245] It is obvious that the mosques built by the state, in which "state" *ulama* preached, could not meet any of Shukri's requirements. Hence, attending Friday prayers was prohibited and serving the state was not allowed in this counter-society: the army, exalted in Sadat's Egypt for its heroic achievements in 1973 was an institution of a *jahiliya* state, in which adepts of *Takfir wa'l- hijra* were not allowed to serve. Moreover, the glorified *al-'ubur* that Sadat valorized was devaluated: Shukri declared at his trial that the war between the Arabs and the Jews could not be regarded as an Islamic struggle and the conquest of Palestine was useless, because it would not be ruled by the pious rulers according to the will of God.[246] After discrediting mosques and the army as the institutions of a "prison-state," the Islamists undermined Sadat's initiative to open new universities and implement a new economic program. Shukri outlawed universities as mere instruments for the legitimation of the *jahiliya* state and the bastions of the "corrupt liberal thought" and he prohibited any sort of work that served the state and embraced the new economic ideology. Moreover, other social institutions, such as marriage, were brought into question. Members of the Society "were married within the group according to a special ritual and had children, thus assuring the survival of authentic Muslims."[247] They lived with other members of the sect in furnished apartments, which were inaccessible to most Egyptians in a society that was sinking into the abyss of unemployment. Some members of the Society were sent to the Gulf countries, which represented a prototype of an external *hijra* (i.e., the flight of Muhammad to Medina in

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[245] Rajab Madkur, *al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra: Wijhan lawajh* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Din al-Qiyam, 1975), 193-194.
[246] Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 85.
[247] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, 86.

622). While a large part of the income earned by the "muhajirun" was spent on the needs of the Society, Shukri procured wives for them. As Kepel describes,

> In their furnished rooms the Society's members created a tiny, genuine Islamic society of their own based on their understanding of Islam. Here they married young, housing was immediately available, and the values of the Egyptian society no longer applied. Diplomas were considered mere scraps of paper, the mosques of the Ministry of Waqfs temples for worship of medieval annotators and Israel an enemy on the same footing as the iniquitous prince and his administrations.[248]

Other public places monopolized by the Islamic Associations (*Jama'at Islamiya*) were university campuses. These were the *spaces*, where "regular daily prayers, ideological training, an apprenticeship in the skills of the preacher and the tactics of proselytism, socializing with the group, and more"[249] took place. By providing minibuses and modest Islamic garments for female students, reproducing cheap study materials for the students, organizing study groups at the mosques where cadres for the Islamist organizations were recruited, and so forth, the *Jama'at* criticized "the regime's failure to deal effectively with education, housing, transport and inflation"[250] and create the feeling of belonging and social affiliation. They promoted their own counter-narrative, imbued with symbols that resonated within the university milieu. For instance, another extremist organization, *al-Jihad*, organized its own training camps where members of the group memorized the Qur'an, trained in various sports and self-defense, performed collective prayers and listened to the preaching of their *murshids*, imbued with political messages. Such *spaces* were "micro-cosmic experiments in Islamist utopia, past and future. These

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[248] Ibid., 89.
[249] Giles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 81.
[250] Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 17.

camps were meant to be a model of the future Islamic society,"[251] which of course differed dramatically from the foundations of the state that Sadat was proclaiming.[252]

The discourse of the "victors" that celebrated the "civilian *'ubur*" and the socio-economic accomplishments of the state and the nation under the wise guidance of the leader was meaningless for the Islamists. According to Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, the spiritual guide of *al-Jihad*, Sadat "instituted non-Islamic personal status laws, aided Zionists, constructed an ecumenical house of worship,...and avowed that there was no religion in politics and no politics in religion,"[253] the state and its institutions, as the shaykh deemed, lost efficiency and legitimacy. Activists in the Islamic movement "saw the world as a society in crisis, moral and spiritual degradation,"[254] therefore, the glorious military parades that cultivated the sense of progress, security and achievements were perceived as absurd. They coincided with military training in the Islamist camps, which "satisfied people's need for inner security in the face of uncontrollable disaster."[255]

Official government holidays with effect-oriented spectacles and Sadat playing the leading part, were celebrated in parallel with the traditional religious holidays organized by the *jama'at*. A hundred thousand people assembled in front of the president's 'Abidin Palace in Cairo, wearing white *jalabiyyas* and black '*abayas*, and performed a public prayer. The choice of the place was not fortuitous: this prayer served as a reminder that the ruler had to govern according to the principles of justice and to

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[251] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, 139.
[252] Such camps are described in Alaa al Aswany's novel *The Yacoubian Building*.
[253] Jeffrey T. Kenney, *Muslim Rebels: Kharijites and the Politics of Extremism in Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 137.
[254] James Toth, "Islamism in Southern Egypt: a Case Study of a Radical Religious Movement," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 4, (2003): 551.
[255] Hinnebusch, 199.

"what God has revealed" (*bi-ma anzala Allah*).[256] Such famous speakers as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Muhammad al-Ghazali honored the celebrations with their presence and their lectures.

In his essay *Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field*, Pierre Bourdieu argues: "The symbolic subversion of symbolic order can affect the political order only when it accompanies a political subversion of that order."[257] Indeed, with their meaning-making practices and texts, the radical Islamists impinged upon the authority of the "traditional" religious structures that legitimized and conserved political order. By giving new meanings to religious symbols and projecting them onto the current political arena they tried to create a counter-discourse that undermined the existing political order. They initiated and imposed their own schemas of perception of both political and religious realities on their constituency.

This chapter has demonstrated how semiotic practices that unfold in particular *spaces* and time convey meanings, tell stories, and evolve within a particular context, serving as a means of discourse formation and transformation.

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[256] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, 145-146.
[257] Pierre Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," in *Comparative Social Research. Religious Institutions* Vol. 13, ed. Craig Calhoun (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1991), 31.

CONCLUSIONS

This work has analyzed the formation and transformation of the official political discourse in Egypt during Sadat's era and explored the counter-narrative of the radical Islamist groups that flourished in the second half of the 1970s. It has shown how ideas emerge, take verbal forms and lead to political actions, and how socio-political structures can also produce discourses. The relationships between social structures and political agency expressed through language are complex and not self-evident. The correlations between political action and language are often imbued with contradictions. Nevertheless, an analysis of these relations can contribute to a better understanding of a particular political event and explain social action.

The research has illustrated how discourses compete for audiences and resources and often mirror each other despite the visible differences between them. Thus, the radical Islamist discourse in Egypt in many ways reflected the main themes, structure and the nature of the official narrative, but the presentation took a different form.

This paper contributes to the debate about authoritarianism and the use of language for political and ideological purposes. It has shown how opposition movements utilize language to challenge the dominant discourse of an authoritarian government. Language illustrates which values inform the political field and shape political culture in a country, for every discourse creates its audience and followers.

The paper has demonstrated that discourse consists not only of written texts or intended and meaningful utterances, but also includes meaning-making practices that contribute to the formation and the development of a narrative. Semiotic practices become reservoirs of meanings and locuters of particular political messages. Words and actions that are repeated over time and are invested with meanings are powerful instruments for the construction of social realities. They create semantic fields and notions, construct norms and values, and address audiences. However, discourses are not infinitely powerful. Thus, in the case of Egypt, neither the official discourse nor the radical Islamist counter-narrative managed to dominate the political field and take hold: contrary to the expectations of the radical Islamists, their discourse did not produce a revolution once Sadat was assassinated, and the transition of power took place surprisingly smoothly. Sadat's discourse and later his legacy were also marginalized after Hosni Mubarak took office. Rigidity and the exclusive and undemocratic nature of these discourses prevented them from producing a new reality or acting upon the existing one. Both of them used and abused words in order to promote their utopian projects, which were detached from the socio-historical realities of Egypt. In his discourse Sadat offered a civilizational model based on the principles of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and institutions, peace and developments. Inspired by Western conceptions, this discourse was transplanted in a rigidly regulated form into the "political soil" of Egypt. The modernizing but authoritarian state placed constraints on social debate around these new notions, and eventually the discourse failed together with its creator against the backdrop of socio-economic degradation. The radical Islamist discourse was based on seemingly familiar but rather vague notions that have waned and waxed in different periods of time

in the Islamic political thought. It also attempted to produce a symbolic socio-political order, which contested the one promoted by the official discourse. However, the counter-discourse drew distinct frontiers between the followers and the "masses" and was antagonizing. The fixing of identity that the discourse demanded could lead to the dichotomous division of society into opposing camps, a society which had already been polarized by Sadat's unsuccessful socio-economic policies. Hence, both discourses failed to create a hegemonic project that could cut across societal divisions and produce floating signifiers or mobility of frontiers.[258]

[258] Howarth, *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis*, 225.

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