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AT THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

The relations between Egypt and the EU before the revolution of 2011

ABSTRACT

AT THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:
The relations between Egypt and the EU before the revolution of 2011
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In this paper I attempt to examine the relations between the European Union and Egypt until the revolution on 11th of February 2011 chiefly through the analysis of the bilateral agreements and an elite interview, conducted in Egypt January 2011. This study was a qualitative evaluation study using a semi-structured method. I am also presenting conditionality as a driving force in the EU-Egypt bilateral relations. The sources used to this paper have been mainly scientific research, newspapers and literature about the European Union and contemporary Egypt. My main research question is: As the EU is the most important partner in the Middle East and they are approaching the bilateral relations through conditionality, how do the Egyptians see the relations and how effective has the democracy and human rights promotion been in Egypt?

For analyzing the interview answers I have used typecasting as a method. In the beginning of the thesis I give an overview on the bilateral relations. In the next chapter I will introduce conditionality and I will also shortly present the elite theories, aiming to explain why the Egyptian elite have been chosen for the interview. In chapter 5 the elite interview answers are analyzed and in the next chapter I aim at tiding the theory and interview results together.

I have come to the conclusion that the Egypt sees the European Union mainly as a trade partner and the conditionality has not been successful enough. The United States dominance in the Middle East lowers the EU possibilities in succeeding.

Key words: Egypt, European Union, international relations, elite, conditionality

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1   Starting Point and Research Question

On November 2009 I took part in a course in Cairo, organized by the Finnish Institute in the Middle East and the American University in Cairo. In the course we focused on the Middle East in the international political system. During the course we got to meet Egyptian political researchers, professors, former ambassadors and known media persons. We visited the Arab Center for Research and Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. During the course I got interested in a certain question that was formed during our visit to the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt headquarters. When I asked counselor Michael Bryan about the European Union's influence in Egypt, as a response I got laughter and a statement that the EU sadly is not that important of a player in the area. The same attitude was also visible in some other discourses during the course weeks.

In this paper I attempt to examine how the European Union was seen in Egypt and Egypt in the EU until the revolution on 11th of February 2011. For the EU, Egypt is the most important partner in the Middle East and they are approaching the bilateral relations through conditionality. But how do the Egyptians see the relations and how effective has the democracy and human rights promotion been in Egypt? This paper attempts to research the relations between Egypt and the European Union chiefly through the analysis of the bilateral agreements and an elite interview, conducted in Egypt, January 2011. I chose to interview Egyptian elite members as there was not enough research done about the Egyptians' views towards the European Union. I will present the interview in chapter 5. The sources used in this paper have been mainly scientific research, newspapers and literature about European Union and contemporary Egypt. I will present my research material and the research method in more detail in chapter 4.

I consciously avoided reading material that was focusing on the impacts of the February 2011 Revolution and the Arab Spring as I did not want to let the events affect my research. My aim is to focus solely on the politics before the revolution and I fear the knowledge about the current situation would take me to a more comparative direction.

The Middle East and North Africa have been seen as the "backyard" of the European Union when being physically very close. It is natural that developments in these regions impact upon Europe. The international relations in the Middle East continuously take shape by the domestic, regional and international forces. The international systems and institutions in the Middle East have been flimsy, mainly because the week interdependence between the countries. The region has long external dependence history. It is important to notice, that not any single theory and the level of analysis can satisfactorily explain the politics in the area.

1.2   Structure of the Work

I will start the research by giving on overview on how the relations between the European Union and Egypt have formed since the 1952 July Revolution. I will move on to demonstrate the politics of the European Union to Egypt in the 1990s and the 21st century. I will focus more on the EuroMediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Next I will show why trade with the EU is considered important in Egypt and why migration is an issue in the bilateral relations. I will expose the relations between the United States and Egypt as it is considered the biggest actor in the Middle East. In chapter 2.5 will introduce the Egyptian political elite`s views on the European Union.

In chapter 3 I will move on to introducing conditionality as a driving force behind the EU-Egypt relations. The term "conditionality" will first be defined and then put into the EU context. I also will unveil criticism against the effectiveness of conditionality. In the second part of the chapter an overview on elite theory will be given, focusing more on the classical elite theory and Gaetano Mosca. With this I aim to explain why I have chosen to focus on the elite views on the bilateral relations.

In chapter 4 I will speak more about my research material and the chosen analyze method: typecasting. I also want to introduce the semi-structured interview, the method of how I conducted the elite interview in Cairo 2011. Chapter 5 of this thesis will be based on analyzing the interview answers aiming to proof my research hypothesis. In chapter 6 I will discuss my own opinions regarding the subject and I aim at tying the theory and interview results together.

2 OVERVIEW ON THE EU-EGYPT BILATERAL RELATIONS

2.1 History of the Relations

Europe and Egypt have always had good relations. In the aftermath of the 1952 July Revolution Egypt and the European countries worked towards improving their relations. (Egypt State Information Center) Egypt has always been an important cooperation partner for the West and an important player in the peace and security issues in the Middle East. Europe in the same way has been an important partner for Egypt due to its geographical nearness and historical relations. The European Union is Egypt`s main trading partner and the main investor. The EU is also the second largest aid donor in Egypt after the United States. (Gülce Kumrulu 2008)

The European Economic Community (EEC) began diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1966 during Gamal Abdel Nasser`s reign. In the 1970s Egypt focused on strengthening the relations with European countries. The situation was bilateral, as the EEC also discovered the importance of the Mediterranean area during the same time as starting to see challenges in the future. The Arab-Israeli crisis was seen as a security issue and another challenge was culminated with the oil shock in 1973. Both of them touched the EU-Egyptian relations indirectly. (e.g. Seeberg 2012) The community still did not have specific strategy towards the Mediterranean area. The EEC started concluding bilateral agreements also with other Mediterranean countries as they also wanted to establish relations with the EEC. (Shaheen Zafar 2010-2011)

In the year 1972 the EEC launched the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP). It focused on trade and aid regulating relations between the non-European states in the Mediterranean area and the EEC. Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) followed the GMP and aimed at establishing dialogue with discussions about political, social, economic and cultural issues. In 1976 the first Cooperation Agreement was signed, in a bid to promote cooperation between the two sides. The agreement included a financial protocol, with the amount and details of the EEC contributions to Egypt. These were given as loans and grants. (Seeberg 2012)

The European Union continued to add soft-power elements and democracy promotion on its approach in the becoming decades. (Seeberg 2012) The term "soft power" was originally conceived by Joseph Nye and it means the ability to shape the preferences of others. Soft power has become common parlance for diplomatic, social, and cultural as opposed to military leverage (Fawcett 2009, 339) The European Union believes that democratic states would be the most effective in dealing with international security. This view has been emphasized in official documents and by leading EU spokesmen. Equally the Middle Eastern states have been interested in forming a security environment across the Mediterranean. (Seeberg 2012)

Europe relies more on exercise of influence than use of force, even though it has been claimed that they retain the lead in the exercise of influence by inspiration. It is still very visible that the European aim is to bring neighbor economies and political systems closer to the European ones. (Fawcett 2009, 339) It is for Europe`s own security to have a ring of peaceful neighboring states. The EU seemingly tries to adapt to developing the given conditions rather than influencing in the area. (Seeberg 2012)

The Egyptian foreign policy on Europe was based on two axes under President Hosni Mubarak (president during the years 1981-2011). Egypt aimed in gaining the European support for the development process in Egypt and pushing the European countries play a robust role in the Arab-Israeli crisis. The economic side of the relations has always been featured high. President Mubarak valued the relations between Egypt and Europe (evident in the repeated visits to Europe) the EU and Egypt had reached in 1992 on rescheduling the Egyptian debts owed to the Paris Club of Creditors. The Paris Club had under these agreements written off half of the Egyptian debts and rescheduled the remaining. (Egypt State Information Center)

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been very important for the European Unions since the Venice-declaration in 1980 was presented. This is due to the strategic reasons. The Venice declaration was the first attempt of European foreign policy towards the Middle East. The EU is often considered pro-Arab and it supports the two-state solution. As such it is an important building stone in EU foreign and security policy and as Egypt has a calming role

in the area the EU sees it important the Egypt looks at the situation in the same way. (Seeberg 2012)

2.2   The Bilateral Relations in the 1990s and the 21st Century

In the 1990s the European Union started working on a new initiative for relations with the Mediterranean countries. They aimed at creating a Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area that would ease the trade in manufactured products by dismantling tariff barriers between the EU and neighboring states. Also trade in agricultural produce was increasingly liberalized with the provision of cross-border services and capital movements. (Fawcett 2009, 340)

From 1977 until mid-2004 the European Union and Egypt bilateral relations were governed by a Co-operation Agreement that offered economic cooperation and established provisions for non-reciprocal trade liberalization and market access. Egypt enjoyed industrial exports to the European Union area and privileged treatment on accessing the EU market through e.g**.** tariff quotas and export calendars for its traditional flows. Under the Co-operation Agreement funding has been provided for different programs and projects in Egypt. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, Egypt & the EU)

In 1995 a Euro-Mediterranean project of security cooperation was launched in Barcelona with the EuroMediterranean Partnership (EMP) agreement, including political, social and cultural cooperation. (Attiná et al. 2004) It combines the bilateral and regional dimensions. The most important bilateral activity is the negotiating of Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements (EMAAs) whereas the regional dimension refers to regional cooperation dealing with problems common to the partners. (Baracani 2005) The process is fostered through MEDA aid programs, Euro-Med association agreements and multilateral dialogue. (Attinà et al. 2004) In the Barcelona Declaration three main objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partners are being established. First the common area of peace and stability are being defined through political and security dialogue, second constructing a free-trade and shared prosperity area. This is done through the economic and financial partnership. Third one is to encourage understanding different cultures and exchanges between civil societies through a social, cultural and human partnership. (European Commission, Barcelona Declaration)

The European Union and Egypt started negotiating the Association Agreement in 1995 including democracy and human rights clauses. (Attiná 2003; Bayoumi 2007) The Agreement entered into force on 1st of June 2004 and following its signature, the Association Agreement was ratified by the Egyptian People`s Assembly and all the EU member states. (Bayoumi 2007) Egypt and the EU signed an exchange of letters allowing the trade provisions. This was done to pace the implementation of the Association Agreement and 1st of January 2004 it became effective. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, Egypt & the EU)

In July 2008 at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was re-launched as the Union for the Mediterranean with new network of relations. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, EU, Mediterranean and Middle East) It was aiming to establish the Mediterranean Free Trade Area by the year 2010 and calls in cooperation a wide range of political, social and economic affairs. (Attinà 2003) All the 27 European Union member states and the 16 partners from the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East are included in the Partnership. Through the re-launching was hoped to achieve new activity to the Partnership and to raise the political level of the relationship between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean. The Union for Mediterranean aims to offer balanced governance, more visibility to its citizens and commitment to concrete regional and trans-national projects. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, EU, Mediterranean and Middle East)

The definition of abroad has changed by time and the group of neighboring countries with no membership perspective has emerged. Enlargement may impede the previous cooperation that has existed between members and non-members and cause tensions. (Attiná et al. 2004) The power of the Process is doubted to meet the Barcelona goals. Analysts and experts take the initiative skeptically and question the appropriateness to apply analytical and conceptual tools of regionalism to the area. Social homogeneity and consistent commonality of political institutions are important in political science theories in order to create regional institutions to deal with the problems of political and economic interdependence. No commonality means instability and conflict. (Attiná 2003)

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 aiming to avoid the differentiation between the EU member states and its neighbors. It aims at strengthening the prosperity, stability and security in the area. Sixteen of the EU`s closest neighbors belong to the ENP framework: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. (European Commission, The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?) The ENP policy was first introduced in a Commission Communication on Wilder Europe in March 2003 and Strategy Paper on the European Neighborhood Policy followed in May 2004. It is presented clearly how the EU proposes working with the ENP countries. The Commission also proposed how the policy could be strengthened in December 2006 and Decemeber 2007. (European Commission, The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?)

The European Union offers preferential relationship for its neighbors. It aims at a mutual commitment to common values of democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development and offers political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts. The bilateral Action Plans between the EU and ENP partners are essential. They are the main instruments to implement the ENP. (Baracani 2005) In March 2006 the Joint Action Plan between Egypt and the EU was adopted at the EU/Egypt Association Council in Brussels. It aims at strengthening relations and bringing greater stability and prosperity and is based on mutual interests and priorities. (European Commission, The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?)

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner emphasized:

> "I am delighted that we have today adopted the EU-Egypt ENP Action Plan, which places Egypt among the closest partners of the European Union. The Action Plan opens a new chapter in our relationship, deepening our partnership in a number of key fields of interest to us both, such as the judicial and political areas, economic and social programmes, as well as cultural and people-to-people dialogue." (Europa Press Releases 6.3.2007)

She added:

> "It is important now that the Action Plan achieves concrete, measurable results, and is seen as relevant to all elements of Egyptian society. Implementation is therefore a key priority on which we will be working together in the years ahead." (Europa Press Releases 6.3.2007)

The joint Action Plan aims at further liberalization of trade in agriculture and services and more prospects in the EU`s market. It calls for cooperation in environmental issues (like pollution control and cleaner Mediterranean Sea) and nuclear safety. The Action Plan offers also e.g. networks for Egyptian scientific institutions and political dialogue and support for the political and judicial reforms in Egypt. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, Egypt&the EU)

The European Commission has agreed on a €558 million financial support package for Egypt for 2007 to 2010. The package supports implementation of the Action Plan and reforms in democracy, human rights, education and health sector. It also aims at enhancing economic competitiveness. Egypt will be encouraged to investments, cross-border cooperation and sustainable development. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, EU and country overview; Shaheen Zafar 2010-2011)

In December 2010 Marc Franco, the head of the delegation of the European Union to Egypt, expressed in Al-Ahram newspaper:

> "Our bilateral support to the Egyptian government's reform agenda seeks to create the right conditions for economic growth and prosperity. It is important to overcome poverty, hunger and disease as a first step in moving towards the enjoyment of civil and political rights. On the other hand, our direct support to civil society organizations aims to strengthen their ability to play an active role in shaping and implementing the reform agenda. In a nutshell, we seek to encourage a balanced dialogue between duty-bearers and right-holders.

Looking back over the last few years, it is only fair to say that Egypt has made courageous steps towards promoting a culture of human rights at all levels of Egyptian society. Allow me to flag some key developments of note.

Firstly, from an institutional perspective, Egypt has set up three new bodies that are powerful agents of change in the field of human rights: the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women, and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. Secondly, from a reform perspective, Egypt has enacted legislation to improve the status of women and children in society, including a ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) and an active policy to protect vulnerable children, notably street children; the minimum age of marriage for women rose from 16 to 18 years and allowed women to obtain a birth certificate for their child without listing the father's name; the opening of 64 new seats in the new People's Assembly for women candidates is now a reality; important legislation on human trafficking was adopted in May 2010, as well as a new law on organ transplants that was enacted after a long standing debate on the issue." (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1026)

The Action Plan`s agenda is visibly ambitious, but the EU`s role regarding democratization and human rights in Egypt after singing the Action Plan has been mostly declaratory and reactive. EU`s weak Presidential Declaration considering constitutional amendments generated both wide domestic and international criticism. The EU has been using the classical tools in its foreign policy and focused on strengthening its conception as a civilian power. (Gülce Kumrulu 2008)

2.3 Trade

Since the 1957 Treaty of Rome the EU external trade policy has been exclusive EU competence. In other words the 27 EU Member States rely heavily on the European Commission to propose and to conduct the EU common trade policy. The EU-Egypt Association Agreements trade provisions were signed in 2004. The European Union has a delegation in Egypt and its Trade Sections works to facilitate EU-Egypt bilateral trade of agricultural and industrial products and of services. They work towards ensuring the

smooth implementation of the trade provisions of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and to enable effective contacts to important national authorities   (e.g. the Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry), professional organizations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) and private sector players. In close cooperation with the EU, the Trade Section also assesses and helps to solve trade disputes**.** (Delegation of the European Union to Egypt, Trade)

Egypt takes part in the Euromed process that aims at creating a free trade area in the Mediterranean. The EU and Egypt have made significant progress in freeing up trade between them and the EU offers duty free treatment to the Egyptian industrial products. By the year 2019 the dismantling process will be completed. As for agricultural products, some 90% of exchanges of goods are fully liberated in both directions, since 1st June 2010. (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, Trade)

According to Gamal Bayoumi (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 835) the economic track was, in reality, the only successful track. Bayoumi asserts that Europe has always been a soft power or "a political dwarf" that never managed to impose its political will on any partner state. However "as an economic giant", it tried to establish economic partnerships with many Mediterranean states.

The EU-Egyptian bilateral trade grew by nine per cent in 2010. Egypt also rose to 28th place as a trade partner from the 34th place in 2007. (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1026) In 2008 the total amount of the trade volume between the European Union and Egypt amounted to €20.66 billion. The EU was Egypt`s first trading partner in the same year with the total percentage of 35 of the country's trade. The same year Egypt`s exports to the EU rose by 13,1%. (Comelli 2010) "This is basically because EU exports to Egypt have grown. The Egyptian domestic market is growing in all directions in terms of consumption and investment by companies and this fuel imports." says Sherine Nasr at Al-Ahram newspaper on December 2010. (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1026)

The Euro debt crisis has had its impacts on the Egyptian pound, as its value has spiked. Egyptian products are becoming more expensive in the EU market. On the other hand the European products in Egypt have become cheaper. Alaa Ezz, secretary-general of the

Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations (CEEBA) sees the Euro debt crisis as positive:

> "People think our competitiveness in the European market is at stake because our products became highly priced and competitors will provide cheaper goods, but that is not correct. The competitiveness of Egyptian products remains the same, because the Euro plummeted against the dollar and the yen as well, so competing products will not necessarily be cheaper." (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1001)

He also added:

> "Since Egypt's imports from the EU are more than its exports, we are making more profits overall." (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1001)

Also the head of the Importers` Division at the Cairo Chamber of Commerce Ahmed Sheiha see the Euro crisis as a good thing for the importers, but downplays the extent of profits:

> "Importers are definitely making more profit than pre-crisis, but it's not that much of a difference. The Euro slide is about 10 per cent only; it would have been of a serious effect if the slide was 30 per cent or more." (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1001)

Hossam Kamel, manager of the Cairo International Exchange Company, says in the same interview:

> "Some Egyptians hold onto every Euro they have, believing it would surge soon. The demand on Euros has become very weak; buying and selling of the European Union currency is very rare, never like before the crisis." (Al-Ahram newspaper, Issue No. 1001)

Egypt needs to focus on branching out exports further to rise from its isolation and to take maximum advantage from the growth potential offered by trade globalization. (Dessus et al. 1998)

2.4 Migration

The Egyptian migration to Europe has started already after the Nasser`s revolution in 1952 due to the political unrest and the implementation of nationalization schemes and socialism. During that time migrants were more educated than those who stayed. In comparison, nowadays most of the migrants to Europe are less educated than before. (Zohry 2006)

The migration to European countries is caused by poverty, economic difficulties, and improper socio-economic policies. Also the rapid population growth is one substantial problem. Today Egypt`s population is approximately 82,5 million (Trading Economics, Population) which means that the population doubled in the last 30 years. There is also a high level of unemployment. (Zohry 2006) The unemployment rate in Egypt remained at 12.5% in 2012. In Egypt the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labor force (Trading Economics, Unemployment). Egypt needs to achieve a sustained real GDP growth rate of at least 6 percent per year in order to control unemployment. Also the government needs to form around 800 000 new jobs each year. The level of overemployment in the public sector and the size of the informal sector add more complexity to the issue. (Zohry 2006)

The main reasons behind the current stream of Egyptian migration to Europe are (1) the increasing severity of unemployment; (2) the competition on jobs faced in the Arab Gulf countries due to the cheap South East Asian labor; and (3) nearness of Libya where most of the boat journeys to Europe start. (Zohry 2006)

It is understandable that the issue of illegal immigration is important for the EU as Egypt is one of the largest emigration countries in the Middle East. It is also worth mentioning here that Egypt is also the recipient of a large amount of transit migrants coming e.g. from

Sudan and Somalia. The relations are focusing on legal aspects and practical issues of migration flows and they are described in the ENP Action Plan. (Seeberg 2012)

2.5   Egyptian Political Elite's Views on the Bilateral Relations

The Egyptian government has valued strengthening the relations with the European Union in its foreign policy and it has seen the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a cornerstone. The Egyptian government has repeatedly been willing to constructively and actively cooperate with the European Union and its member states and aiming to achieve the Barcelona Process principles and objectives. Since the Association Agreement entered into force in 2004 the relations between Egypt and the EU has seen a qualitative leap both bilaterally and regionally in the Barcelona Process context. The Egypt-EU Action Plan formed within the European Neighborhood Policy has opened up new possibilities for dialogue and deepened cooperation in different fields and thereby has supported the implementation of the Association Agreement together with the Barcelona Process. (Bayoumi 2007) European foreign policy representatives to the Middle East are valued and their presence in the area is seen as positive. The activities and visits of the European officials are covered, especially when it comes to questions about Israel or the US. (Ebeid 2004)

The Egyptian government sees European Neighborhood policy as a way to deepen the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and notes that it should be seen as an enhancement of the Barcelona process and not replacing it. They also see the ENP as a way to take care of the benefits that the Egyptians can achieve. The Egyptian government has seen it necessary to form working methods for the bilateral negotiations. Multilateral negotiations between all the Euro-Mediterranean partners need to be conducted and common follow-up procedures need to be invented. They hope for peer-to-peer relations instead of EU`s surveillance process over the Southern Mediterranean countries achievements. Still, in many political issues, the Egyptian government has shown itself as highly rigid. It can be seen, that they have not followed the Action Plan completely in cases such as e.g. the independence of the media and human rights issues. (Bayoumi 2007)

From 2005 elections until the Action Plan was adopted, the EU criticized the Egyptian governance on its practices towards e.g. Muslim Brothers, journalists and judges. Only a

few days after the Action Plan was concluded, the Egyptian opposition boycotted the comprehensive constitutional amendment package adopted by the parliament. Even though the amendments were seen crucial in the Egyptian government, many domestic and even international circles rejected it as an attempt to control the Muslim Brotherhood in the future and to maintain the status quo. It was a considerable thing to ban the political activity based on religion and the amendments made the elections harder for independents. Also the erosion of full judicial supervision in the election was criticized along with the given powers to the executive to fight against terrorism. They were seen concerning what comes to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Comelli 2010)

From the EU side the implementation of the EU-Egypt Action Plan has not been very encouraging when it comes to the reform potential. The Egyptian regime has always feared anyone "interfering" with the domestic political system and also the relationship with the EU has been seen as a threat in that sense. The political elite in Egypt is mainly interested in improving the trade and economic cooperation with the EU, but unwilling to cooperate on political reforms. (Bayoumi 2007) The ENP reforms have not been discussed with the opposition and civil society and have adopted only those reforms not threatening the status quo. (Comelli 2010)

As the relations are mostly seen through the trade and political prism, the Egyptian security imperatives and European defense policy impacts are not often mentioned. The Arab-Israeli peace process and the war in Iraq have been a troubled backdrop, but the political aspect debate of the EMP has demonstrated two contradictory ideas: the EU as a natural benevolent political ally and Europe as a former colonial power. The predominating view depends always on the political context. (Ebeid 2004)

The US is from a strategic point of view the most important partner for Egypt. Still the importance of the relationship is not highlighted by the Egyptian regime. Interestingly, the relations with the EU are stressed more publicly, but they are seen as mainly concerning economic and trade matters. Egyptian government rather deals with the EU countries bilaterally and has formed important relations with e.g. France and Italy. Still also the trade, cooperation and regional integration with the EU are seen consequential as in contrast with the cooperation with Arab countries. (Ebeid 2004). The Egyptian press sees

the European role as a balanced broker in the Arab-Israeli crisis as the European judgments are highlighted. (Ebeid 2004)

The EU`s role in the Middle East and through the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation has gotten official criticism. It is seen, that through Barcelona Process it has mainly tried reducing instability. The EU`s security and political goals are seen as dominating instead of as regional cooperation. The EU tries to avoid "crises arising from the south" and the allusion is made directly to questions of immigration and terrorism. It is feared that the aim of the EU would not be the cooperation with the Southern Mediterranean countries or to help them solving their problems, but to help them within their borders and not exporting to the EU countries. (Bayoumi 2007)

The Egyptian press does not tolerate EU policies that go against perceived Arab positions. For example, the EU list of terrorist organizations was strongly criticized when Hamas was included. This led to condemning the EU positions as compromising the Palestinian rights. The EU was also seen to crack under American pressure and to support Israeli state terrorism. These kinds of statements cause a rise to the anti-Western views in press. (Ebeid 2004)

The Egyptian government is in favor of the enlargement of the EU as it will create more trade between Egypt and the EU, even though the fear of the EU`s focus turning more to the east from the south has been brought up as well. They remind the EU to keep their focus on the cooperation with the Southern Mediterranean from the accommodation of the new member states. (Bayoumi 2007) Sadly there are only very few sources regarding Egyptian political parties`s views on the European Union. There are almost no references in the parliamentary electoral programs about the EU; those few notions normally relate to the more global aspects of the relations. Still there has been an inclination in the support to strengthening Egyptian relations with the EU. It is a fresh counterbalance to the US relations. These kinds of notions can be found in party newspapers, such as Al-Wafd (right wing party, liberal), Al-Ahaly (left wing party) and Al-Araby (Nasserist party). (Bayoumi 2007) The EU is somewhat seen as a model for Arab regional integration. The successful European integration is put in contrast to the Arab disintegration and EU enlargement is seen in a way as "lessons" for Arab integration. (Ebeid 2004)

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As there is already impressive literature conducted on the opportunities and successes as well as obstacles and pitfalls of both the European Neighborhood Policy and the Euro-Mediterranean relations it might seem unimportant to have a theoretical embedding to the subject. Still it needs to be noted, that a theoretical focus on the relations can form new perspectives. In this chapter I will introduce conditionality as the driving force behind the EU-Egypt bilateral relations. In the second section of the chapter I will introduce elite theories for defining the term "elite" and in order to explain why I have chosen to interview only Egyptian elite members for this thesis.

3.1 Conditionality

3.1.1 Defining Conditionality

Political conditionality entails the linking, by a state or international organization, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, political contacts, or international organization membership), to the fulfillment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles. Positive conditionality can be loosely defined as promising the benefit(s) to a state if it fulfills the conditions; negative conditionality means that if the state violates the conditions, those benefits will be reduced, suspended, or terminated. (Smith 1997)

Conditionality aims at determining a process`s outcome through external pressure. Conditions or preconditions are specified in exchange of support and a promise of either material aid or political opportunities have been involved. Many international and European organizations have adopted conditionality. The term has originated from the international financial or aid organizations (such as the International Monetary Fund) demanding conditions. (Grugel 1999, 62) It can refer to actions, outcomes or processes. Conditionality uses some kind of incentive to increase probability of actions and for encouraging outcomes in demand. It should still be kept in mind that the essential results can be hard to identify, measure and verify and they can lag behind actions. (Koeberle et al. 2005, 30)

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Political or governance conditionality can be called process conditionality. It aims at building capacity and requires that a process be implemented or certain institutions be in place enhancing the transparency and representativeness of governance. (Koeberle et al. 2005, 31) It focuses on promoting good governance instead of specific actions, policies or outcomes. Through conditionality it is hoped to produce better actions, policies and outcomes through accountable, transparent, responsive, representative and democratic government institutions. (e.g. Grugel 1999). One example of this is making aid available for those countries where governments and institutions are most effective or meet certain international standards. Benchmarks can be defined or minimum standards for freedom of the media, independence of the courts, freedom to organize and register independent political parties and labor unions, the rights of peaceful assembly and protest, and the right to strike. (Koeberle et al. 2005)

3.1.2   The European Union and Conditionality

The European Union has adopted the role of a promoter of reform and democracy to the neighboring countries, particularly to the Arab states. The EU attempts to offer a more attractive model for democracy promotion than the United States, as the US relies more on the negative conditionality, such as sanctions and aid reductions. The EU model relies on positive conditionality with incentives and rewards. (Smith 1997) Still, as for the European Union the Mediterranean has shown itself as an area of conflict and tension and it fears Islamic fundamentalism and illegal migration and is concerned about security. The downturn of the economic situation and the slowing economic development drive the security threats. Especially after the terrorist attacks of 11th of September 2001 the EU changed its position towards the Southern Mediterranean countries and security and democracy became important factors. The EU has believed that democracy promotion can materialize through a "spillover effect", which can happen when the uprisings in the authoritarian countries start challenging the regimes. (Khaled el Molla 2009)

This kind of interaction also reflects that the international actors have become more deliberate in their democracy promotion. They don´t just rely on the indirect effect of democratizing influences in the international environment. Conditionality can adopt an even more concrete form when figures of transnational collective action are considered. It

should be considered whether these interactions are sustained and integrated or temporary. (Grugel 1999, 60)

Conditionality was clearly defined and used in framing the accession process and negotiations. Positive conditionality was defined to complement negative conditionality. Soon after this the Commission noticed, that conditionality, negative and positive, work only on individual base. The success depends always on the national context and the will to cooperate. More compromising measures were added to conditionality, e.g. commitments to common values, a philosophy based on differentiation, mutual agreements or joint-ownership (partnership), participation and deconcentration/decentralisation, as well as by innovative ways of controlling and evaluating the meeting of the accession criteria or commitments. (Kratochvíl 2006) This is still not new to ENP. Political conditionality subsequently entered the debate on democratization and became common in the 1990s. All ENP partner countries have been a subject to political conditionality at some point. It has acquired quasi-official status in the EU. (Schimmelfennig 2005; Grugel 1999, 68) The EU seems to agree that democratic principles and promotion of human rights in foreign policy are a legitimate objective and conditionality can help to achieve that. (Smith 1997)

Conditionality involves multilateral pressure which is seen more acceptable than coming from another foreign government. Member states can also reduce or suspend aid and in this way loosen the relations. (Smith 1997) Eventually it deals with international legitimation. The EU`s offer of an official relationship is considered as an approval on a country`s new democratic credentials. Early recognition of democratic credentials does help the transition process, but certain preconditions should be met before it is granted. To enter the European Union is a long process where the EU observes the democratic conditions in the applying country. Even though the EU has always been clear that membership is only for the European states that are liberal democracies it has defined the necessary conditions gradually over time. (Grugel 1999, 68)

In the past decades the EU has moved from formal criteria (e.g. free elections, rule of law) to conditions of "substantive democracy". This means the quality of democracy, including the social function of constitutions and the way human rights are perceived, how far political parties provide a means for political participation, the role of the media and

whether they represent broad political debate, the transformation in public administration and the existence of an active civil society. (Grugel 1999, 68) The European Union has had the most effective policy and comprehensive approach in democratic conditionality.

NATO can be seen as more powerful organization than the EU when it comes to the security framework, but it has been loose when it comes to the democratic conditions. The EU`s political weight and economic attraction gives influence over new democracies. (Grugel 1999, 68)

3.1.3   Criticism against Conditionality

There is also criticism against conditionality. It is seen as illegitimate interference of other states' domestic affairs and as a challenge to the states' sovereignty. Human rights on the other hand are a universal principle and spreading democracy is important in that light. As more than a hundred states have ratified the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the European Council has declared that expressing concern about violations of human rights and requests for securing those rights cannot be taken as interference in the domestic affairs. (Smith 1997)

When the effectiveness and use of political conditionality has been researched it has been visible that the EU has trusted the attractiveness of the EU membership or cooperation to increase progress in democracy and human rights. It still hasn´t been adequate, as high domestic political power costs of adaptation to the conditions that the EU has diminished the interest. As the ENP countries do not have membership possibility and they are mainly authoritarian regimes, it can be suggested that the ENP will not have a significant impact on the human rights and democracy in the area. (Schimmelfennig 2005)

The EU has been inconsistent with its politics and it has caused the political conditionality to suffer from conflicting functional goals. (Schimmelfennig 2005) Even though positive measures might be an inadequate response to human rights violation or problems in the democratic process, the negative measures are disputable for many reasons. Outside pressure can be effective, but sometimes governments cannot respond to outside pressure. Sanctions can damage and anger the population or drive them towards the government`s support. On the other hand, what comes to the positive conditionality, it is unlikely that aid

allocation would increase. But if the EU wishes to use conditionality, the amounts allocated to states should be based on their human rights and democracy situation. Within EU there is criticism against strict conditionality because it can seal off some countries that would need the most aid and ties with the EU. (Smith 1997)

Can we expect the ENP to have a positive impact on the partner countries when it comes to democracy and human rights? In the ENP framework democracy and good governance occur together with stability and as a specific issue-area of cooperation. Stability is one of the most important goals in the policy and a condition for cooperation. As the search for efficient cooperation might compromise political conditionality, there is a potential inconsistency within the ENP. (Schimmelfennig 2005)

Conditionality over all has generated combative discussions around the world. It is difficult to invent appropriate counterfactuals and attribute outcomes when evaluating the conditionality effects. Due to this, the assessments of conditionality have been mixed or inconsistent. Conditionality faces critique especially in efficacy and enforcement. Conditionality is seen having failed to promote reform and growth. When donors engage in defensive lending the utility diminishes even more. Conditionality also is seen to infringe on the sovereignty of lending countries. Also the content is criticized as the main problem is suggested to be the content of conditions, not conditionality itself. It is also seen that the too numerous, detailed and intrusive conditions micromanage the recipient countries. (Koeberle et al. 2005, 60)

Conditionality is in a way a part of a cycle. It is most effective when a policy dialogue and capacity building follows. In the policy dialogue the people should discuss the relevant issues and talk about the way to compensate for the constraints in the domestic capacity. It should be addressed in the future that the capacity building links to a country`s ability to monitor and implement reforms. At the moment not enough is done in the multilateral as well as in the bilateral institutions about country capacity. (Koeberle et al. 2005, 259)

3.2 Elite Theory

3.2.1 Overview on the Elite Theories

In the 17th century the word "elite" was used to describe commodities of particular excellence. Later the word was broadened to superior social groups, i.e. prestigious military units or nobility. In Europe the term became widely used in the 19th century, notable in the writings of Vilfredo Pareto. (Bottomore 1993, 1) The elite theory, alongside with pluralism and Marxism, has formed one of the main frameworks in the research of the use of social power. The doom of the elite theory has been – especially after World War II – to be left in the shadows of Marxists class theory. To the classics of the elite theory can be named Vilfredo Pareto`s (1848-1923) The Mind and Society, Gaetano Mosca`s (1858-1941) the Ruling Class and Robert Michel`s (1876-1936) Political Parties. (Ruostetsaari 2003, 40)

In the mid-1980s and 1990s the elite theories experienced a kind of a renaissance. This is much due to the transformation processes in Latin America and former socialist countries. Especially Michael Burton and John Highley have done research on the elite relations (consensual, fragmented and divided) and regime types. The emerge of consolidated democracies require "unity in diversity" which means a situation where the elites agree on the rules of the game. (Perthes 2004, 2)

The connotation of elitism and superiority has prevented the elite theory to spread, just as the interest in Marxism as a theoretical approach has been diluted by the identification to real socialism. It is often thought that since the elite theory deals with the elites, it must also be elitist. Though it has been like that from time to time, in the elite theory elitism is not inevitable. As elite theory is not irrevocably tied to dichotomist understanding of the power structures, it is neither inevitably committed to the elitist perception of those power structures. Elite theory focuses on the irrefutable fact that in all societies there are particularly influential minorities. By contrast, the elite theory is ideologically neutral. (Ruostetsaari 2003, 41)

The core of the elite theory can be roughly reduced to the claim of Gaetano Mosca, that in all societies, there are two classes: the class that dominates and the class that is being dominated.

> "Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies – from societies that are very meagerly developed and have barely attained the dawnings of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies – two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism." (Mosca 1939, 50)

Mosca explained the rule of minority over majority with the fact that the former is organized.

> "In reality the dominion of an organized minority, obeying a single impulse, over the unorganized majority is inevitable. The power of any minority is irresistible as against each single individual in the majority, who stands alone before the totality of the organized minority. At the same time, the minority is organized for the very reason that it is a minority." (Mosca 1939, 53)

He continues:

> "– members of a ruling minority regularly have some attribute, real or apparent, which is highly esteemed and very influential in the society in which they live." (Mosca 1939, 53)

In other words in all societies there is a small minority of the population, which makes the important decisions. Since these decisions are wide-ranging (have impacts in most of the areas of the society) they are normally considered to be political decision, even if the minority that makes them does not consist just of politicians. (Ruostetsaari 2003, 42) This is the situation in virtually all of the organized societies in the modern world, also in Egypt.

The elitist concept of power is close to the one of Hobbes, where the power is seen as the current way to something good in the future. Power is a way to acquire other social goods, such as wealth, economic influence, social status, education, children, etc. Hobbes sees them turning into power. Both the wealth and the possibilities of education maintain the dominance of the elite from one generation to another and convert it to hereditary cast. (Ruostetsaari 2003, 44)

It is almost impossible to discuss politics or society in general without comparing the power of different persons, organizations or institutions. It is rather a rule than exception that the elite and the people differ from the attitudes of each other. The resignation of the elite views from the public opinion can be explained in different ways. As the elites are better informed and educated than the public, they should have cognitive requirement to understand complex things, also for the future. On the other hand, elites are mostly of higher-income, even privileged in many respects, so the social reforms or the failure not to make them will affect them differently than non-elites. (Ruostetsaari 2003, 256)

3.2.2   Elites in the Middle East

Most studies on elites in the Middle East were carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, but almost no research has been conducted later. These studies focused mainly on how the broad range of young elites was formed and how it reflects the revolutionary political and socioeconomic transformations in the mid-1950s. Even though they might be analytical, they tend to be more deprecatory than critical. (Perthes 2004, 3) The interest in political elites of the Arab world declined at the end of the 1970s due to the long Arab regimes. Studies from this time stayed valid until the end of 1990s, but at the moment they only offer a basis for comparative studies. There has now emerged a younger elite that position themselves for substantive political roles. (Perthes 2004, 3)

In the discussions of the problems and prospects of "developing countries" the idea of elites has been invoked frequently. As there is a profound association between changes in social structure and the rise and fall of elites, this should cause no surprise. When economic, political or other changes appear, they first modify different social groups` authority and power. At the same time other groups intend to increase their power and to take control of the changes. Whenever complex or difficult social changes happen, the need for "charismatic" leaders and elites appear. (Bottomore 1993, 72)

All of the Arab countries have unique features due to their histories. The graphical situation and relations with other nations also have their impact on their development. But there are also common features to be found from all the countries in the Middle East. Many of them have been under colonial rule and have had independence struggles against conquerors, but some have been independent already for a while and instead have been resisting the foreign power controlling their economic resources. In these countries the political issues come from fighting against feudal and autocratic systems that have caused unequal and inflexible class systems. (Bottomore 1993, 72-73)

The general problems in the developing countries are caused by the accelerated pace of industrialization. This is sought by already industrialized countries by their own example. The rapid growth of population and the social and political conditions take their part as well. It needs to be understood, that the conditions of the Western countries were more favorable when the industrialization took place. The economic organizations, political cohesion, stability and psychological preparation were different and the process itself was more gradual. The situation in developing countries is completely different at the moment. The countries in the Middle East face economic difficulties and the fact that the surrounding world has advanced industrial countries dominating world production, trade and investment. The developing countries also have to face the political instability and need for improvements and welfare as well as sometimes powerful opposing forces. (Bottomore 1993, 74)

In these kinds of situations the need for elites and leaders to control and inspire is enhanced as Bottomore continues:

"It is further enhanced by the lack of experience in social and political organization of the mass of the population who have in many cases been kept in a condition of subjection by autocratic rulers, either indigenous or foreign." (Bottomore 1993, 74)

In some countries of the Middle East, the elites have attempted to introduce social and economic changes from above. Sometimes this has happened under foreign but as well as under internal pressure. Their actions are confined by their own interest in maintaining the existing state of society. For performing their reform policies they should allow and even encourage more social mobility, extend education and make their own positions more accessible to lower class individuals or groups. It is still questionable if they want to do this or even can with the speed that should in order to fulfill the demands of economic growth. They also have to face the influence of the new elites, rising from the labor movement. (Bottomore 1993, 75)

The change inside the elite is seen in the Arab countries. (Perthes 2004, 15) In Egypt, younger officers are often open to participating in public policy debates and they are seemingly less antidemocratic and suspicious about the outside world, whereas for the elder generation the isolation of military from civil society is normal. (Perthes 2004, 13) There are less military personnel, medical doctors and teachers among the elites than earlier. Engineers used to be an important part of the elites, and even though they are still found, their professional experience is increasingly in the private sector instead of public sector. There are also more representatives of the liberal professions and people working in management and business. Overall the Arab elites come nowadays largely from urban middle-class. (Perthes 2004, 15)

3.2.3   Defining Egyptian Elite

For the purposes of this paper, the Egyptian elite is taken to be those professional, business and government elements of the upper and upper-middle income strata, who have received Western education (have been taught in English speaking private schools). This group has provided much of Egypt´s socio-economic elite since modernization began because those with Western education have possessed the skills needed in the enterprises, and those with superior resources have had greater access to such education. The elite members are among

the most socially and politically influential forces in Egypt. They are seemingly pro-Western and liberal and through them assumptions about the opinions of other social groups in Egypt can be done. (Hinnebusch 1982)

The use of the English language in Egypt dates back to French and British colonialism. During those times the Egyptian elite members preferred education in French or English. Lately English has become more widely used than French and the elite members use English as their second language of additional communication. (Haeri 1997; Warschauer et al. 2006) Learning English starts already in the kindergarten. The elite normally continue to post-secondary education in English, either abroad (mostly in the United States or England) or in Egypt (mostly in the American University in Cairo). There are also English-medium departments in the Egyptian public university. (Warschauer et al., 2006)

The elite usually continue their post-secondary education in English, studying either abroad (e.g., in the United States or the UK), at an English-medium university in Egypt (the most established being the American University in Cairo), or in an English-medium department of an Egyptian public university. Niloofar Haeri has written widely on the language and power in Egypt and she argues that Egyptian elites' ties to Arabic are not very strong. (Haeri 1997) This is due to many different factors. The elite members normally occupy positions where the use of English is necessary (e.g. international banking, medicine and research) and they are distant from Islamic fundamentalist movements that try to defend Classical Arabic as a religious language. (Haeri 1997)

I believe it is also about the way the education is carried out. In January 2011 in Cairo, the interviews that I carried out about the relationship towards Europe revealed that in the English kindergartens children are prohibited from speaking Arabic and the teachers do not respond to them if they speak Arabic. It is interesting to see, that the use of English in everyday life could be seen as a threat to the national language and to culture, but when it comes to my own studies it seems that the Egyptian elite that has been immersed in an English language environment for years do not express any concern about the future status of Classical Arabic vis-à-vis English.

4 RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this chapter I will introduce the research material and the method used for this study. First I will present why I have chosen to conduct a qualitative research. Next I will introduce the research material and also present the elite interview. In the next section I will present semi-structured interview as a data collection method. In the end of the chapter I will focus briefly on the qualitative analysis method, typecasting.

4.1 Qualitative Research

Always before starting the research, the researcher needs to think through whether to use a qualitative or a quantitative research. Considering the nature of my research problem, I decided to use the qualitative research. My research questions are not based on numbers, but on a description and interpretation of facts. I focus closely on the history of the relations between the European Union and Egypt, the intentions and meanings of them. I approach the research questions through the research material and the research is based on theoretical frame. These are seen as key factors in the quantitative research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 131)

The definition "qualitative" research can be criticized, as it can seem misleading and can give an impression of better, "softer" research compared to the superficial and "hard" quantitative research. All research is always just "scratching the surface" – it is not possible to reach the phenomena completely. But with profound research, meaning well planned and conducted research, repeating the research and approaching the examined phenomena from different angles it is possible to get versatile information and add understanding of the cause-effect-relations of the phenomena. (KvaliMOTV)

Induction (material orientation) is often juxtaposed with qualitative research and deduction (theory orientation) with quantitative research, but this kind of separation is quite simplifying. Qualitative research is not purely material oriented – not even its material oriented forms. Quantitative study is not purely theory oriented. Induction and deduction should not be seen as opposite to each other. Both of these are sometimes needed in the

same research. Research cannot completely be "one way", based on just a theory or material. (KvaliMOTV)

The aim of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena through the perspective of the subject, actor. Researcher takes part in the research process and isn´t just the "outside observer". The research process is flexible and can change during the research process. It is typical that the research material is collected in real context and situations and through the qualitative research method the process nature of the phenomena can be reached. The researcher's own observation is more important than the measured data. Through the qualitative research complex phenomena and processes are being explored. Theory, in qualitative research, works as a way and as an aim. Theory as a way helps with conducting the research as through the theory it is possible to construct interpretations. Theory as an aim focuses on developing the theory and moving from scattered observations towards general. (Järvenpää 2006)

Christine Daymon and Immy Holloway note in their book Qualitative Research Methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communications:

> "To some extent, qualitative researchers work 'at the edge of chaos', which is at the point of balance where the research has some structure but the researcher may not be totally in control if they are open to spontaneously following up on new and interesting ideas or experiences which may not have been anticipated when the research began." (Daymon et al. 2011, 7)

Qualitative researchers try to understand their research participants' views and meanings for understanding the research phenomena in their terms. It should be acknowledged that research is not only a collaborative process but also a creative one. Qualitative research aims to capture processes that happen over time instead of aiming to capture them. (Daymon et al. 2011, 7-9)

It is needed to take in consideration also the criticism of qualitative research. It can be seen as too impressionistic and subjective. Subjectivity is about critical self-awareness as the researcher needs to state and examine their own location in the research. Qualitative

research is also difficult to replicate, as qualitative investigators are the main research instrument. There are often also problems with generalization, even though qualitative research studies are not supposed to be representative of a larger population. The research might also have a lack of transparency. The audit trail has to be described so that readers can follow it. (Daymon et al. 2011, 10-11)

4.2 Research Material

4.2.1 Written Sources

The sources used in this paper have been mainly scientific research and literature on the European Union and contemporary Egypt. Also the EU publications of Egypt and research on the European foreign politics have been used in this paper. Many of these are based on the democracy and human rights promotion. I have used a few internet sources, mainly the websites of the European Commission and the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt. I have also used the Al-Ahram newspaper and Europa –press releases in some quotations. I decided to also search critical research on the European Neighborhood Policy. In my thesis I have referred also to some Egyptian newspapers written in English and the European Union's own publications, Europa Newsroom. My research material has been in Finnish and English.

Referring to Hirsjärvi et al. (1997, 101) research material includes many possible sources of errors. It is important to examine the research question from multiple different sources and to apply source criticism. It is important to be critical both when selecting the sources and when analyzing them.

4.2.2 Elite Interview

It is important to notice that the existing material on the image of the European Union in Egypt is still very limited. This is due to the relatively narrow space occupied by the EU in the local media compared to the one of the United States. The US is an important foreign actor in Egyptian politics. There are also only few opinion polls conducted about the public opinion towards the bilateral relations and those polls are rarely adequately filed. This might be due to the rather low politization of the population. (Bayoumi 2007; Ebeid 2004)

Therefore I decided to conduct an interview for nine members of the Egyptian elite in January 2011. I aimed at researching their opinions regarding the European Union and its role in the region. I was also interested on their views on the regime and the Arab-Israeli crisis. The interview was a qualitative evaluation study using semi-structured method and I will present it in the next section of this chapter.

Three of the interviewees were women, six of them were men. I wanted to limit the amount of interviewees to fewer than ten, as with bigger amount of material there would have been the possibility of not exploring it fully. All of them had a degree from a private university and they had been studying in English. The interviewees were aged from 23 to 32. I selected the interviewees with help from my local friends. Some of them I had met before, some of them were unknown to me. All the persons asked to participate in the interview agreed. I interviewed only one person at a time, but in addition I also sifted through a group discussion from the same topics. Before starting I told all the interviewees that they will be kept anonymous. I will only reveal the gender and the age of the interviewees.

Interview number	Gender	Age
1	Male	23
2	Male	28
3	Male	32
4	Female	25
5	Male	26
6	Female	24
7	Female	25

8	Male	29
9	Male	26

I wanted to conduct the interviews in Egypt and by talking, as through writing it would have been possible to structure their thoughts. I also believe that by writing it would have been even harder to bring out the critical point of view towards the subjects. I wanted to interview especially the members of the elite as they are, in a way, the antennae of the nation while having access to largest amounts of information.

The interviews to survey the elite views towards the European Union and the Egyptian regime were conducted in Cairo in January 2011. The interviews were carried out in the homes of the interviewees and in quiet cafes. The interviewees seemed to like participating in the interview and many of them had familiarized themselves with the subject, even though they did not know the interview questions beforehand. Some of the interviewees were asked to be interviewed already beforehand, but the questions were not revealed to them in order to avoid answers that were too prepared. Some of the interviewees were asked to be interviewed suddenly, but it did not affect the interview in any way. Most of them gave meandering answers, only one of the interviewees gave one-sentence answers. Talking next to the subject often gave fruitful answers, so I did not interrupt the interviewees' speech or guide them in any specific way.

My role as an interviewer was very neutral and accommodative, not so much critical or challenging. I did not present my own opinions and I also told that to all the interviewees before starting the interviews. The interview was "interview-like", not free discussion. All the interviews lasted on an average from 10 to 15 minutes. I had prepared 22 questions concerning the European Union, Egypt and the future, but already in the very first interviews I realized the amount of questions being too big and concentrated on presenting only certain questions from each of the themes. I do not see this as a problem as sticking to my interview frame could have produced too many similar answers.

All the interviews were conducted before the January 2011 revolution in Tunisia and February 2011 revolution in Egypt. The last interviews were conducted only two weeks before the demonstrations started in Cairo (25th of January 2011). The dissatisfaction towards the president Hosni Mubarak could be seen in some interview answers, but from most of the opinions an understanding came through towards the regime. The forthcoming revolution could not be seen in any way from the interview answers.

All the interviews were recorded. The interviewees were asked permission for the recording beforehand. When transcripted, the material was around 15 pages with line spacing one. I transcripted the interviews word by word. I did not pay attention to non-verbalism, but I marked the pauses in the speech with three dots. In addition to the nine interviews used in this thesis I conducted one more, but I decided not to use it, as during the interview it came up that the interviewee worked in the Egypt State Department with foreign relations. I felt that it was not possible for her to bring out her own opinions concerning the subject.

I was also offered a possibility to interview one of the officers working with the European Union related issues in the Egypt State Department. I would have used this interview in this research to base the view of the political elite of the European Union. Unfortunately this interview was cancelled due to the weather conditions in the Sinai during my visit to Egypt in January 2011.

In chapter 5 I will analyze the interview answers.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Interview is a basic method that works in many different occasions. When it comes to scientific research, interview needs to be seen as a systematic way to collect information. I had certain goals and aimed to collect as valid and reliable material as possible. (Kajaanin AMK, Opinnäytetyöpakki) Interview is an interesting way of collecting data as the researcher is in interaction with the subject under examination. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997. 193)

To start this chapter I need to note, that there is no one complete definition to semi-structured interviews. Research interviews have been classified by their structure. The method that I chose for the interview, semi-structured interview method, is placed in its formality between form interview and unstructured interview. It is partly a planned and partly an open way to conduct an interview. In occasions when it is important to get information concerning certain factors, it is important not to give too much freedom for the interviewees in the interview situation. For these kinds of occasions the semi-structured interview method works particularly well. The interviewees are all asked the same questions in the same order or they are talking about certain themes in the same order. In some definitions of the interview method it is said that changing the order of the questions is allowed, like i.e. in theme interview. (KvaliMOTV)

There are both benefits and disadvantages in using interview as a data collecting method. Semi-structured interview gives significant flexibility both to the interviewer and the interviewee. (See Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 193; Tilastokeskus, Virsta) The interviewees become part of the study and they are reachable if there emerges a need to supplement the material or if there is a wish to conduct a follow-up-study. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 195)

It still needs to be noted that the analysis of the interview material takes considerable amount of time when there are many interviewees. This means, that it needs to be taken into concern how many open questions to give and to be already very critical when planning the interview and the form of the questions. (Tilastokeskus, Virsta) The planning of the interview also takes its time and the interviewer needs to familiarize with the role. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 195)

The reliability of the study is weakened by the fact that the interviewees tend to give socially desirable answers. The interviewees might want to present themselves e.g. as a "good citizen". There are cultural differences between the countries and sometimes also within a country. The interview material is also bound with the context and the situation. This causes the interviewees to speak in the interview situation differently than in some other situation. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 195-196)

4.4 Method of Analysis - Typecasting

In the next chapter when I move on analyzing the interviews, I use qualitative research method: typecasting. Through analyzing the interviews my aim is to bring out the most important and recurring themes. Typecasting is an analysis method where themes are being formed, grouped and viewed more specifically. (Jyväskylän yliopisto, Koppa) Typecasting is a natural way to analyze semi-structured interviews. Themes are formed normally by searching the texts (or in my case interviews) for certain themes that combine or distinguish them. These themes are easily found in all the interviews. The interviews after transcribing can be organized in themes. Sometimes those themes look like the interview structure, but sometimes themes can be something else, as the subjects people have talked about do not follow the order and parsing the researcher has formed. (KvaliMOTV) While analyzing the interviews, I am trying to be as open minded as possible.

The elite interview was divided under certain themes, but they were not revealed to the interviewees. It felt logical to continue the analyzing with typecasting. The analysis started with combining observations and loose themes. The meaning of certain themes started forming bigger nets. I read the transcribed interviews through many times and aimed at questioning my own interpretations. I would have wanted to take distance to my research material, but due to the tight schedules, I needed to carry out the analysis within a short time period.

5   THEMES IN THE ELITE INTERVIEW

During the analysis I will refer to interviewees with the letter "I" and the interview number found from the table presented in chapter 4.2.2. In the same table are also the interviewees` gender and their age. All the analysis in this text is based on the interview answers.

Three themes were discussed with the interviewees: the European Union, the Egypt and the future. In the section of the European Union, background information about their overview on the EU was gathered and how Europe is seen in Egypt. In the next section they were asked about their views on the political activity of the Egyptians, the governance and the Arab-Israeli crisis. In conclusion the role of the European Union as a role model for democratization was discussed with the interviewees and the changes they would wish for the politics in Egypt. My intention in this analysis is to analyze the interview answers and introduce the recurring themes. I do not give my own opinion on the subjects, but intend to bring out the interviewees` voice. In the next chapter I will combine the results of the analysis with conditionality and the presented relations between Egypt and the EU. I have aimed at making it easy for the reader to follow how I have formed the conclusions.

When planning my interview I hesitated with some of the questions I was planning to ask. I had been talking about the political issues with some of the Egyptian elite members earlier, but mainly concerning other topics than their domestic issues. I was aware that they were following world politics and especially Middle Eastern politics quite actively, but it was a big concern whether they would be willing to take part in an interview and how "openly" they would be willing to talk. I had a hypothesis, that there was a lot of criticism towards the regime and about the foreign politics "under the surface".

In a sense my hypothesis was proved both right and wrong. The interview situation and the interview places might have caused "diplomatic" answers, but it was also visible that the Egyptian elite members understood the different sides on each political issue under discussion and they were willing to talk openly on them. The need for change was visible, but still not put into words.

5.1 Talking About Politics

During the interviews, I found out two different views on talking about the political issues. According to the interviews it was forbidden to discuss domestic political issues previously in Egypt and this still has its reflections to this day. Some Egyptians do not feel comfortable discussing political issues. (I8) During my visit to the Sinai area in January 2011 I got to talk with some of the locals outside the elite group. They revealed that people criticizing the regime and president Hosni Mubarak are still being arrested. I also got to speak with a person who had been interrogated but unfortunately I did not get permission to record the conversation.

> "Here in Egypt we don't talk about the politics because in the old days it was forbidden to talk about the politics. There was three guys in a place talking they maybe got arrested. So the people are afraid to talk about the politics in any place." (I8)

The political discussions are still often colored with jokes and rumors. (I2) This was visible also among the elites. During the discussions I had outside the interview situation, jokes were presented even though the discussion might have been intense. The frustration towards the current political situation in Egypt is clearly seen in the poorest socio-economic group, but referring to the elite, they do not see a possibility in making a change. In this way, political discussions might also be seen as futile.

> "They are afraid. They are afraid to talk about the politics. But not like in the old years. Now it`s better. But they talk like they think it as a joke. They talk politics as a joke." (I2)

On the other hand, in some interview answers it was suggested that at least in Cairo, people nowadays speak about the politics incessantly. This might be due to the high unemployment rate as the elite also brought up that too much free time causes the criticism towards the regime to come up. (I6)

5.2   Mubarak and the Regime – The Need for Change

I discussed with the interviewees about their views on President Hosni Mubarak and the way he leads. (Attachment 1) My hypothesis before conducting the interview was that there would be statements against him. Unexpectedly there was almost no criticism against Mubarak and the regime. When reading through all the answers it seems clear, that the interviewees see the president as the most powerful figure in the whole country. Other politicians were not brought up, neither were political parties.

> "Some people don't like his way. But I like his way. He can control the country now and if he is going to leave it`s not going to work easy for any new president." (I2)

Only one of the nine interviewees directly brought up that he does not like the way Mubarak leads. This is due to the need for change, renewal of the domestic politics, which is not currently happening. The world is changing around Egypt, but Egypt is holding back. (I5) Also the side effects of the long reign of Mubarak were brought up once. In this comment it was made clear, that the problems have to do with the whole regime, not only Mubarak.

> "Personally… there is nothing personally against him, but being long time as a president, it has its drawbacks. He has the same actions, the same system, the same idea or vision, and he doesn´t change, so we have to go with the change in the world." (I5)

All of the interviewees said, that it is impossible or hard to lead 80 million people. Mubarak was seen as controlling, but a controlling way to lead was on the other hand seen as a good thing. They saw, that even the smallest thing could trigger a crisis in Egypt. Four of them added that Egypt should be lead with power; otherwise it will be "complete chaos" (I8). Apart from the controlling, the interviewees´ comments concerning Mubarak`s style of leading were mainly negative.

> "Maybe some decisions are not the best but maybe for the circumstance it's perfectly fitting. So it´s like we have to keep our country a little bit dormant because any small thing can trigger a bad crisis. I think he is controlling and that´s the most important part." (I1)

Even though the elite did not agree with all of Mubarak`s decisions, they still gave him understanding. A wish to concentrate on the good things was brought up and some of the lately conducted reforms. One of the interviewees after the mentioned reforms said: "Wise politics. Otherwise it would be seen as a disaster. It´s keeping the people satisfied." (I7)

> "Mubarak left a lot of things to go, like the problem with the fanatics in Egypt and the high poverty level but at the same time he did a lot of stuff. He really did, if you just look at the roads that are being constructed now, they really are trying to do stuff, at least the major cities they really are working on them. And I think he is really trying or at least like now he opened a lot of room for foreign investments." (I4)

When I asked the interviewees about the biggest threat to Egypt, the domestic issues were raised. Still surprisingly, the need for democracy was not mentioned and neither were foreign issues. Three of the answers referred to the "rising fanatics", meaning the Islamic Brotherhood. The religion was seen as the biggest risk in five answers with the increased conservatism. Religion has started to spread to business life and often workplaces have official "prayer-times". (I9) Referring to the interview answers, the religion spreads particularly well within the poorest socio-economic groups, as they are often "driven forward by their own anxiety" (I5). Religion is seen as a way to control this. (I6)

> "Religion. I think that´s the biggest problem in Egypt right now. Because you really can control anybody anyway you want but like this is right and this is wrong. And of course the poverty. You can control anybody and when you are so poor to the point you can start riots." (I4)

Corruption was mentioned as a problematical domestic issue. The problem was said to be, that even though people do know that corruption happens on the top levels of the society,

they cannot point a finger on the exact person doing it. Corruption "in the street level" was not seen as problematic. Egyptians have become more aware of the issue lately and that these problems were not seen to exist a few years ago.

When the interviewees were asked what would happen after Mubarak`s reign, not one of the nine interviewees even wanted to make a guess. It is important to notice here, that the demonstrations against Mubarak started only 2 weeks after the interviews were conducted. Still, the interviewees saw clearly that only Mubarak`s death would end his reign and he was said not to "go down voluntarily" (I5). The imaginary situation of Mubarak giving up the power was seen mostly negatively. One interviewee described the situation even with the word "disaster". Mostly the interviewees saw that the regime could handle the situation even if Mubarak would give up the lead position. It was still visible, that none of the interviewees had thought about it. The thought seemed completely new for them.

> "I don't like to think about Egypt as the president only so I think there is a regime and I believe this regime already learned and can handle stuff so I would think optimistically that even if president Mubarak leaves I think the regime will still handle it and I think we do have options maybe In the main party but still I think they know the strategies and so forth" (I1)

> "So I´m actually afraid of what will happen when Mubarak, well eventually he is going to die, so I really don´t know then what`s going happen in this country because we have a lot of conflict now you know between the rising fanatics, the Islamic Brotherhood and the current parties. So I really don`t know what`s going to happen afterwards." (I9)

The need for change was visible in the interview answers, but it was said out loud only in one answer.

> "It´s the same that has been for several years, but now it´s becoming… calling for change." (I5)

When asked if they saw any change coming, the answers were noticeably quiet. The president and the regime were brought up again and their aim for reforms. The answers were pondering the good and the bad effects of the regime.

> "Well I think we are always having political changes but it has nothing to do with our president and the opinions of the president. But other than that we have lots of changes in our parliament, we have changes in our politics and yeah we have things changing because it's a dynamic country and whenever there is a problem with the religion or something they add more efficiency to the parliament. So yeah, it`s politically dynamic other than the president and the opinions." (I7)

My last question concerning Mubarak and the regime was: "If you could wish, what kind of changes would you want to Egypt's politics or to Egypt as a country?" (Attachment 1) Most of the answers started with: "Anything?" The interviewees hoped for a more open way at looking at the domestic political situation. Acceptance was brought up many times, how everyone should be accepted not depending on their financial situation. They wanted to change Egypt to a direction where "low standard people" would be better accepted in other levels of the nation.

> "There is a lot of stuff. The most important thing I would like for Egyptians and for Egypt and its politics is to have a broader mindset and to broaden our political horizon. Not to change our traditions but to accept others and that's the major problem because we have a problem of acceptance. We need to accept everyone. We need to accept other. We would be very great if we could do so." (I1)

5.3 Political Activity

To start analyzing the political activity of Egyptians, I will refer to one of the answers:

> "But it´s like I said, it´s 3 categories, the smallest percent is aware of everything, bigger percentage has knowledge and information and the biggest part is not.. you get my idea.. in hold. " (I6)

The issue of poverty was presented by many of the interviewees. Poverty is considered a huge domestic problem. The number of people living in poverty threatens Egypt´s economy. (I4) The interview answers also brought up, that as children often inherit poverty from their parents, it cannot be stressed enough how important it is to give opportunities for employment. Privatization and overpopulation are the two major causes of unemployment, as the rate of the labor force has increased without increasing the amount of jobs offered in the market. (I1) Poverty is widely seen as the governments fault, even though the government has done some progress with e.g. the birth control program. Poverty`s direct adverse effects have been recognized, especially in those with no physical assets. (I4)

Education and poverty are not just issues of human development, but also of the welfare of the state. If these issues are not solved, discontent inside Egypt will grow. People feel less secure about being able to meet their basic needs. (I7) Most of the Egyptians have never been outside of their cities and they have no access to the internet or television. It is apparent that they are not exposed to the "influence of Europe". (I4)

> "A lot of Egyptians have never went out of their town and a lot of them don´t have access to internet or to television. No, now people have access to television but they usually don´t watch any, like we are not really exposed to Europe in a sense."(I4)

Pointedly it was said in the interview answer that political activity is seen to rise within the citizens with the "financial situation". Still the low political activity within the poorest socio-economic group is understandable, when "you need to focus in getting fed" (I3). The

people living in poverty are instead more interested in the "lighter subjects", like sports, music and celebrities. "It feeds the dreams." (I3)

The interviewees pointed out that when there are plenty of domestic issues, the foreign politics are not the priority. The Egyptians were said to be "obsessed about local issues as Egypt is a very dynamic country that can alter and change in a day" (I6). It was pointed out that the Egyptians recognize the difficult economic situation, which has been exacerbated by excessive inflation, high unemployment rate, as well as low salaries of workers and civil servants in both state-run and private sectors. Many people have opinions, but the interviewees were somewhat concerned about the level and accuracy of the knowledge. (I3, I6)

5.4 "Israel Is the Enemy"

Before conducting the interviews my own thought was, that the Arab-Israeli crisis would still widely control the politics in the Middle East and in this way also affect the EU-Egypt bilateral relations. For the question whether the Arab-Israeli crisis still affects the region, I got the longest answers of all. I still could notice that the young members of the elite did not see the crisis as a central issue. Still Israel was widely disliked among the interviewees. Together with Israel was always the words "enemy" or "hate".

> "Israel is our main enemy. They are our main enemy. If they are coming to us they are our enemies because they are taking a part of us. Everyone has their own interests. We are Egypt, we have our own interests." (I9)

Even though it was a common feeling in the interview answers that the Arab-Israeli crisis was not a central issue, it was still seen as affecting Egypt. The interviewees told that a few years ago the crisis was "the only thing everyone was talking about" (I2). Now it is a bit more undercover as the domestic problems are dominating political discussions. (I5) In some answers you could hear the irritation towards the subject and it was even said out loud that they do not understand why Egypt even needs to get involved in the issue. It is seen as just a crisis between the Israelis and Palestinians, not with all of the Arab-

countries. The common thought seemed to be that people from the outside cannot help them if they are not ready for it.

> "It´s still ongoing, but I don´t see that much activism right now, maybe because we have a lot of problems inside the country. I personally am a bit sick of it, because we have so many internal problems, we need to focus on our internal problems and just let them sort out their problems. But of course you have a lot of people." (I5)

> "I don´t know, they´ve been… about it for the past 30-40 years. I don´t see that much of improvement, like it´s getting worse, so I don´t know what they can do. Like Israelis think it´s right, Palestinians see their right, and I don´t know how they can bridge this. Like if someone goes to your home and says that this is my home now, I don´t think you would ever let them walk in, so what I think of it in that level, I don´t know how they can… but I really hope they`ll start working together because they´ll gain more." (I8)

When asked could the European Union help in solving the Arab-Israeli crisis, the opinions were quite pessimistic; it all starts from the inside, not from outside. If the Israelis and Palestinians would be ready to settle, the EU might as well have value in the area, but not in this specific situation. (I1) The question was also answered from the benefit perspective: if helping to solve the crisis helps the EU in some way (e.g. business, trade or vision), then it is understandable to try to help with solving the crisis. (I2) All in all, the answers concerning the EU`s possible role in the area were noticeably quiet.

> "Only, if its for sake of their own business, their trades or.. their vision they will start acting. Otherwise.. they won´t. It´s business in the end." (I2)

5.5   The Case of the United States

It was not necessary to go far into the interview answers concerning the relations between the US and the Middle East to see how strong a place the United States has in the politics of the area. Egypt occupies geographically an important strategic position between Africa

and Asia. It controls long coasts on the Mediterranean and the Red Sea in addition to the Suez Canal, so any outside power with significant interests in the Middle East would want good relations and military cooperation with Egypt. (I1)

Egypt has also had an important role in the politics of the Middle East (I2). According to an interview answer, the US wants Egypt to be a model of a modern and moderate state in the Middle East, as it plays a convening role in the region. In the same answer it was said that Egypt is also an important player in the Arab-Israeli peace process, as it has always dominated the Arab League (I7). The interviewees saw the United States using Egypt as an agent or a partner in the area, as it is profitable for them. (I2) A partner in the area helps to form a new mindset. (I3) In the interview the answers to the question about the relationship between the US and Egypt varied greatly. Some saw it as a way to control, some as partnership.

> "-- well I do think that Egypt is a powerful country in the area and when I do want to talk to the area like the United States I would think of a strong fellow. So politically in the area we are really strong and I think that using Egypt as an agent or as a partner in the area would be really beneficial for the United States" (I2)

Not surprisingly I also found negative comments about the US government. In a few answers it was said, that instead of being a partner, Egypt is under the umbrella of the US. There is also a new feeling about the US that has emerged after 9-11. It seems to be a perception that the US has entered into a war against Islam. (I5)

> "In the street level people saw the US as a devil, for the causes that happen in the Palestine and Iraq. They hate intervening in all forms. They also have started to feel that the US is in the Middle East business, even though they do not belong to the area." (I8)

Only one interviewee brought up the aid of the US and the meaning of the NGOs. He said that some people still see the NGOs intervening in Egyptian politics. The interviewees see

the reason being that in the street level it is hard for the people to understand the different culture.

> "But most of the people on the street don`t like America because of its continuous support for Israel, the war on Iraq. Like they feel that this is interference. They don´t understand the culture and usually if you don`t understand the culture you can`t really talk to them" (I7)

5.6   The Image of Europe and the European Union

The interviewees had seemingly positive image of Europe and the European Union. Some of them did not make a difference between the two in their responses, but some of them did point out a few countries that they really like. They see the standard of living high in Europe, but also the price level. Europe was described also with the words "tourism" and "shopping". It was also mentioned that in the tourist areas of Egypt the locals are not allowed to talk to the tourists. There is a clear distinction made between "the Westerns and the Middle Eastern". (I9) Europe was a relatively known area for the interviewees, as it is common for them to travel there for the summer.

There are news and information concerning the European Union for those who are interested or to put it in exact words: "We seek this information and we got it." (I1) There is news on the television about the EU and the main news topics from the EU member countries, but not every day. (I3) It was also said, that the news are often written from "Mubarak point of view". The elite seem to follow the international news (e.g. BBC) relatively well, as they often work in international companies and use English.

> "--well its classified as a knowledge so it's not available for everyone but for those who are interested and there are many either because they dream of the other side of the Mediterranean or for those who want to add value for career I think they can go and find some information and data about the European union and it's available." (I3)

The interviewees came up with both positive and negative feedback about the European Union. Most of them saw the maintaining of the cultures as positive despite the modernization. It was wondered how the member countries want to co-operate despite the different cultures. This might be interesting to see for Arabs, as it was also brought up that the European Union is in a way a model for the Arab Union.

> "Well it's a very old continent and I believe the most important in Europe is that they retain the cultures and that's very important because in modernization people tend to change the cultures a little bit." (I8)

> "To be exposed to all these different cultures and somehow they are all trying to work together now and stuff… for me it´s really positive." (I4)

As a negative side all of the interviewees mentioned the Euro-crisis. Specifically Cyprus seemed to be close to their hearts, maybe due to the Islamic part of the country. It also seems that there is quite a lot of ignorance towards the European Union in Egypt. When there is news about the EU it is normally said to be negative. (I2) The bottom of the pyramid also does not see clearly what they benefit from the EU-Egypt relations. The European Union is not so close to them. (I7)

Some of the Egyptians were said to have a dream of Europe. It is a place where you can live your dream life better than they could in Egypt.

> "Well it's a kind of a dream for poor people because you know they go to Europe directly legally and illegally because they think it´s the other side on the Mediterranean where you can find life you can get a woman to marry and make a life they dream about." (I3)

This drives Egyptians to immigrate both legally and illegally to Europe. (3) Most of the Egyptians living in poverty do not "get exposed" with Europe and this makes the picture of the European Union slightly "polished". This was mentioned as a reason for the people to immigrate.

Europe was seen to become more powerful with the European Union. Trade was emphasized as well as the importance of co-operation in the current market. Europe was mentioned to be a close area and an important co-operation partner. Only one of the answers referred to the actual agreements between the European Union and Egypt, but it was not clarified what agreements were talked about. It seems clear, that the members of the elite are more focused on the trade than the political side of the bilateral relations. They see it important that the EU adds competition in the world market. It remained unclear to me why. They also value the knowledge of the EU.

> "For Egypt, well I think, because we are like a single country in the region so any union between countries can make them strong. They add up the competition and they already have main issues with finance and economics so that makes they change" (I1)

Democracy was seen as one of the most complicated paradoxes governing EU-Egyptian relations. While the EU presents itself as a democracy promoter to the Southern Mediterranean countries, it brings up questions whether the EU is genuinely pursuing this goal. (I1) The interviewees seemed to think, that there is a lack of connection between the words and actions in the EU-Egypt –relations.

5.7   The Most Important Partner

Egypt was told to have "the most important partner" for all the different issues.

> "Everyone has its own interests. Let's talk about the relationship between the Arab countries: Saudi-Arabia is the main partner. If we are talking about us or other countries it can happen that US is our main partner. Even Libya, we can have really through Africa. Libya has a really big impact in Africa. In every issue we have a partner we can rely on." (I9)

When it comes to trade, the elite mentioned Europe and they based their opinions on the figures. They also brought up some countries above all: Italy, Spain and the UK. Eastern Europe was just slowly entering in to the trade field. The EU was seen just as one player in

the area. The power of the United States in the area was emphasized. The US was without a doubt seen as the most important partner when it comes to financial transaction and the stock market. The US was seen dominating also the EU in this way. Also the Arab Union was mentioned a few times during the interviews.

> " The transaction is by the US dollar. US is dominating by its currency that is all around." (I6)

Only one interview answer referred to the conditions expected by the European Union in exchange of aid. Otherwise no reforms were brought up.

> "Even now there is term called euro bond. It´s a type of bond that the countries sell. You know the Euro bond? The Euro bond is not in euro. It´s the US dollar, sold in euro. So the US is dominating even the European Union. For trading, they are zero. They are closed economy. But if you came to Europe to be a big player, I don't think…because it´s not their vision. They are seeking another thing. They are seeking to be number one in trading in the world. And they are succeeding in this issue. And for example if they would help Egypt or not that´s again... if it goes with their vision." (I6)

> "Now we are becoming a potential partner for European Union, we have a lot of manufacture in action trying to supply European countries with Egyptian… but in the end, just because we are potential partner they are happy." (I2)

When it comes to the EU and the aim to create democracy in the Middle East, all the answers had the same idea: in a way why not, but in practice not.

> " Well in a way we all learn from each other and for sure we have lessons to learn from the EU, but the thing is we have totally different things. It's the people are different and the history is different and it makes a hell of a difference because people always go back to their past, it`s not religion but it's the things used to. So this makes it a little bit different. So you have to

understand the core of political study and you try to fit into the Egyptian style. We have really different trends and that's making it a little bit hard but in the end we all learn." (I3)

This summarizes my hypothesis, that even though the EU tries to be an example and create democracy in the Middle East it is not succeeding in it in the eyes of the Egyptian elite. Europe is culturally different compared to the Middle East that it is somehow impossible to combine with the "Egyptian style". Change has to come from the inside, not forced from outside. It is easy to see, that the conditionality is not visible, at least in the eyes of the interviewees, as the relationship was seen to be based purely on trade and the reforms were not mentioned.

5.8   Final Notes

Even though the interview questions were organized in themes (the European Union, Egypt and the future), from the analysis of the interview answers other themes were surfacing. The themes that came up were: talking about politics, Mubarak and the regime, political activity, Arab-Israeli crisis, the United States, image of Europe and the European Union and the most important partner.

Even though the emphasis in my interview was placed on the European Union, the answers to the domestic issues gave me more material for analysis. This was also the most interesting theme for me. It was surprising to see that the need for change was put to words only once during the interviews, even though it was relatively easy to "read between the lines".

As the interviews were conducted before profound investigation on the subject, I was not able to guide the interviews towards the main point of interest, the image of the European Union. The answers concerning the EU were brief and did not offer as much research material as I would have wanted. Even though domestic situation in Egypt is an interesting research topic, it was still not the topic in this research. Because of this, I would have wanted to discuss more about the image of the European Union in Egypt with the interviewees.

Basing on this, if I would conduct the interviews again, I would have chosen another interview method than the semi-structured interview. I would have more open dialogue with the interviewees and keep the discussion more in the relations of the European Union and Egypt. The method chosen for the analysis, typecasting, worked well in the purpose. The recurrent themes were easy to find from the interview material.

I interviewed nine members of the Egyptian elite to find out more about the view of the European Union in Egypt. I could have conducted even more interviews as I did not get to the topic of saturation. I would have also wanted to interview the Egyptian political elite in order to get straight answers to some of my research questions. Instead I needed to survey the existing information as thorough as possible. It would have been interesting to explore how the relations have changed after the revolution of 2011 as a comparative study.

5.9   Relevance of the Elite Research

It is worth to note, that this analysis was a qualitative research instead of quantitative and does not support enough data to make it possible to generalize the elite views towards the European Union. Still, it is possible to give outlines on the research subject. It is also necessary to underline the importance of seeing that the interview answers reflect only the opinions of interviewees, who belong to the elite group. The interview was also conducted on members of the elite because they can be seen as the "antennae of the nation" (chapter 3).

The socio-economic position of the elite might have been reflected in the answers, as well as the professional background of the interviewees. As most of them happened to work with the international market, it might have caused the viewpoint to be more in trade. Also it needs to be taken into concern, that the interviews were conducted just in the beginning of the Arab Spring. This may have become apparent in the frustration towards the domestic issues.

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6 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this chapter I aim to answer those research questions that I made in the introduction-chapter by combining conditionality and conclusions from the elite interview to my analysis. I intend to be as critical as possible towards the research subject. In the end of the chapter I will present my own view on the EU-Egypt bilateral relations after the Arab Spring of 2011.

6.1 Questioning Conditionality

After the 9/11 –attacks the European Union aimed to promote democracy in the Middle East. The EU member countries that are dependent on the neighboring countries are understandably interested in making these areas stable. This can be seen happening with Egypt as well. There was visible hope that the ENP would offer security around the European Union borders, encourage political reforms and promote democracy by offering political co-operation, trade and aid. It is understandable that the EU has security concerns, but it should be remembered that security should not be put in front of democracy promotion.

The European Union has attached conditions to the given aid and hopes that the huge internal market attracts neighboring countries. This is definitely the most efficient policy that the EU has. Even though the EU attached conditions (e.g. human rights and governance reforms) to the aid it offered to Egypt, its possibilities in promoting democracy and political reforms in Egypt are looking slim. How did the EU end up in a situation where Egypt sees the EU only as a huge market possibility?

First of all, it needs to be noted, that even though Egypt is a country of increasing globalization, it is also a country of contradictions. It was visible also in the elite interview answers, that there is a fear that the EU does not understand the way Egypt works. The historical context causes Egypt (as well as other Middle Eastern countries) to be relatively sensitive towards their sovereignty and it is easy to see the EU as an attempt to interfere

the domestic issues. When the historical context is taken into concern, the EU foreign policies can be seen as imperialistic.

Second, the government and the opposition are preoccupied with domestic issues, which cause a loss of political interest in broader processes. However during the last years, Egypt`s government has become more tolerant towards the European inquiries on human rights violations and better governance. Opposition parties and movements are asking the EU to articulate binding reform benchmarks for Egypt, but they have concerns whether the EU is really committed to promote democracy and on the other hand; what are the "real intentions behind" the relations. Still, the conditionality, binding economic aid to democratic reforms, seems to be a clear "no no" for most of the Egyptian political actors.

It seems that the EU`s democracy and human rights promotions in Egypt are not moving forward. The European Commission reports mention the slow progress of political reforms and the Egyptian government's reluctance to fully commit. Implementation of the asked conditions depends always on how the domestic political elites` see them affecting their status. In a country with authoritarian government the prize they pay for the EU rules are high, as it requires the ruler to give up the grip on power. The EU aid has had worryingly minimal impact on the Egyptian political reforms. Sadly enough, not even the elite in Egypt see the political reforms. Not once were they brought up during the interview. Instead of the political track the EU`s focus has been in the economic cooperation.

Conditionality might not be the best way to promote democracy and human rights. Instead, it could be more effective to strengthen economy and political links, thus engendering a process of internal change. It should also be kept in mind that the EU should not expect Egypt to transform into a democracy fast. Elections should not be forced when there are more important things to concern: e.g. the rule of law. The EU should support the demands of the Egyptian civil society itself, not just what they see necessary from outside. Political reform and democratization will happen because of what Egyptians do. The will has to come from Egypt itself, as was also apparent in the elite's interview answers. The EU is an outsider, but with influence. Cutting off aid or trade links might only worsen the situation.

6.2 Policy Recommendations

While reading through the research material, it became obvious, that the EU should identify its priorities. There is an absence of a clear and unified definition of democracy. More open dialogue between Egypt and the EU and understanding of the different value systems should be stressed. Like the elite interviews proposed, there is nearly no dialogue in the grassroots level, all processes happen at the policymakers` level. If the European Union wants to stick to the use of positive conditionality, there should be more innovative "carrots" proposed for Egypt.

In a way the whole core of the EU conditionality should be reformed. The reform concerns both the EU`s ability to deliver its promises and the incentives that need to be formed more attractive in order to meet the partner states` needs. The EU should also reassess its conditionality techniques and practices.

In order to have a better assessment of the role of the EU in Egypt, and in the Middle East in general, the US factor should be added to the broader picture. This came up also when reading the interview answers. The US dominates the area. In that context, one can easily argue that the US has done if not good, then at least a better job than the EU to get Egypt on the track towards the political reforms. The EU`s success is constrained by the role of the US, as the conditionality addressed from both directions curtails the EU`s normative reach in Egypt.

6.3 The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring in 2011 is definitely one of the most significant eras in the Middle East. The revolution in Tunisia triggered uprisings in Egypt ending in a revolution in February 2011. When reading the research on the conditionality it was brought up several times as a threat, that at worst, the failure of the conditionality could help Egypt to slide into chaos, in one way or another. When reading the Middle Eastern studies published after the revolutions of 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt, I cannot help wondering how come the unpredictable was not predicted? How did the experts miss the Arab Spring in their predictions?

With the changed power structure in Egypt, the EU has to get used to political cooperation with the Islamist parties dominating the political scene. The EU financial support has increased and new policy instruments (e.g. the Mobility Partnership) have been presented, but still not enough to make a difference. The uprisings in Egypt and also in many other Middle Eastern countries offered a place for the European Union to test its foreign policy system. Unfortunately first the EU hesitated in its action, and then showed both activism and passivism. This might have been due to the incoherence of the EU member states. During the Arab Spring, on some issues the EU gave mere declaratory statements and in some cases adopted policy response. It showed that there still does not exist unified understanding of the EU`s interests in the region and deepened its role as a passive spectator.

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of my thesis was to give an overview on the relations between the European Union and Egypt. In chapter 2 I first introduced the history between the relations. Then I moved on demonstrating the politics of the European Union to Egypt in the 1990s and 21st century. Next I wanted to show why trade with the EU is considered important in Egypt and why migration is an issue in the bilateral relations. In the end of the chapter I introduced the Egyptian political elite`s views on the European Union.

In chapter 3 I moved on introducing conditionality as a driving force behind the EU-Egypt relations. The term "conditionality" was first defined and then put into the EU context. I also unveiled criticism against the effectiveness of conditionality. In the second part of the chapter an overview on elite theory was given, focusing more on the classical elite theory and Gaetano Mosca. The elite theory was introduced for chapter 5.

In chapter 4 I discussed more about my research material and the chosen analyzing method, typecasting. I also wanted to introduce the semi-structured interview, the method with which I conducted the elite interview in Cairo 2011. Chapter 5 of this thesis was based on analyzing the interview answers aiming to prove my research hypothesis. In chapter 6 I decided to discuss my own opinions regarding the subject and to tie the theory and interview results together.

As my thesis is almost finished, it is time to form a conclusion and think what could have been done differently. The biggest difficulty, since having the idea to write about the relations between the European Union and Egypt, has been cropping. I wanted to examine basically everything concerning the issue. The airiness of the subject complicated the writing process. Still, I wanted not to crop it too much. If I would have been searching for an answer to some certain topic, I might have missed some important aspects.

It was never an intention to end up writing a thesis with a lot of critique against the European Union. I do not mean to give a picture of the European Union as a "giant without hands" with aims at being only a value leader, even though it might be a personal opinion. I intended to conduct the research being aware of my own prejudice as closely as possible.

In the beginning my own idea was that the European Union was through supporting Egypt aiming at solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. In a way I was wrong. Even though this became apparent, it still was not the driving force behind the bilateral relations. I also thought of getting more critical material from the elite interview towards the regime and direct call for change. Instead of this I got understanding and even approving comments. As having grown up in a democratic state it was hard to understand the diplomatic view towards the authoritarian regime. Both during the interview and the writing process I noticed putting a lot of attention on analyzing the political situation in Egypt, instead of the main goal of analyzing the EU-Egypt bilateral relations.

I regret that I did not have the chance to study the material written in Arabic, as my level of Arabic does not allow it. I believe it would have been very interesting to see if there is a difference in the way the European Union is described in the texts written in Arabic. Still, all in all, I believe that I have answered my research questions; that I have successfully given a view on the relations between the European Union and Egypt. When the results of the elite interview are combined, I believe it can now be safely summarized that Egypt does see the European Union mainly as a trade partner and the conditionality has not been a success story. It is good to practice – but not in international politics.

Most likely, Egypt will continue further integration with the EU. In case Egypt turns democratic, the interest in closer relations with the EU will rise even further because democrats in the EU's neighborhood view the Union as an anchor for democracy.

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ATTACHMENT 1: ELITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background information
Male/Female
Age

The European Union
What do you think of Europe?
How do you think that Europe is mostly seen in Egypt?
What do you think of the European Union?
How do you think the European Union is seen in Egypt?
Is there information about the European Union in Egypt?
Is there news about the European Union in magazines or newspapers or in the media?

Egypt
Do you think that Egyptians are interested in politics? International politics? Are they active in the politics?
What do you think causes that people are not active enough in Egyptian politics? Do you think it has always been like this or is this new phenomenon?
What do you think about President Mubarak and the way he leads the country?
What do you think will happen after Mubarak?
How do you see the relationship between Egypt and the United States?
Who do you think is the most important partner for Egypt?
What do you think is the most effective or threatening crisis to Egypt right now?
What do you think about the Arab-Israeli crisis?

Future
Can the EU or the European countries be somehow an example for the Egypt for what comes to democracy?
Do you think the European Union could help with solving the Arab-Israeli crisis? Or any other crisis in the Middle East?
Do you see any change coming to Egypt's politics soon?
If you could wish, what kind of changes would you want to Egypt's politics or to Egypt as a country?