



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

## **Challenging the Transition Paradigm:**

**The impact of *arenas of democracy* on comparative transitioning processes in Communist Poland and contemporary Egypt.**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in  
Middle Eastern Studies

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the status of *socio-political society*, *rule of law*, and *economic society* in Communist Poland and contemporary Egypt prior to their respective transitions. After establishing a status of aforementioned *societal institutions*, this thesis will aim to show the influence these institutions had on a transition process in both of these cases. In order to achieve this task, the thesis at hand will employ a multiple case study design. This thesis addresses various peer-reviewed academic sources, as well as reports by various international organizations as its sources, gathering data from a variety of academic, political, civic, and historical accounts. The results of this research show that the socio-political cohesion, mirrored in Solidarity's oppositional potential in Poland, and lack of similar organization in Egypt, vastly surpass the importance of both *economic society*, as well as *rule of law* on transition build up process. As a result, this thesis argues that underlying structural differences in these two cases, mirrored most explicitly in oppositional activity of Solidarity, challenge the preconceived notions of generalization that fuel the transition paradigm.

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## Abbreviations

PR – Proportional Representation Electoral System

MAJ – Majority Rule Electoral System

MENA – Middle East North Africa Region

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GNI – Gross National Income

PPP – Purchasing Power Parity

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

MoSS - Egypt's Ministry of Social Solidarity

CSO – Civil Society Organization

GFA – General Federation of Associations (Egypt)

UN – United Nations

WB – World Bank

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## Introduction

It was August 17<sup>th</sup> when Lech Walesa, followed by his colleagues from the “*Solidarity*” put forward 21 demands to Communist Poland’s government. Walesa and his fellow strikers demanded a free and undisputed liberty to organize, govern trade unions, and freedom from communist censorship. It is within this historic momentum that Lech Walesa hoped and fought for a better tomorrow. He and his fellow strikers represented the future of Poland, an outcry for a better, more representative society. They came from different families, cities, towns, villages, political ideas, classes and heritage. They had different dreams, ideas, desires, yet, they were all joined in a single great cause – to create a better, more equal future.

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, the government gave in to strikers’ demands, leading to an unparalleled situation where citizens of a communist state had received freedom to organize independent trade unions, govern themselves, and finally have the legal right to strike. *Solidarity*’s fight did not end then and there, and many years had passed until Poland became a genuinely free society. However, this first step, this pivotal moment in European history, this today’s widely celebrated event, had paved that way.

Fast-forward to 2011 and the tides of uprisings have shaken the seemingly impenetrable balance of things yet again. This time however, a few thousand kilometers south, in Egypt’s capital – Cairo. Tahrir square became a second home to more than two million Egyptians demanding a better, freer and more equal society. Their resolve was unparalleled, yet their story ever so familiar. Just like Walesa and *Solidarity* before them, and many in between, the Egyptians demanded to finally have a say in the future of their country.

In the following months, Egyptian president Mubarak resigned, only to be succeeded by Morsi, a seemingly good choice for the protesters, yet someone whose policies and decisions provoked yet another wave of protests and dissatisfaction. Just like in Poland during the 1990s, the path of Egyptian people to a better tomorrow is unclear, and contrary to the popular belief it is not as easy as a one-two-three textbook example. Were these two revolutions really that different, or were they essentially the same, with a small twist that regional momentum always inscribes.

Many authors rushed to compare the events in Egypt with those in Poland, or better yet events of the Middle East with those in Eastern Europe (Tucker 2011), (Voeten 2011), (Freeland 2011). This comparison often yielded interesting results. In fact, the mere reason why Egyptian and many other Middle Eastern democracy movements are titled “the Arab

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Spring” stems from this exact comparison between the Eastern European experiences, particularly those of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian uprisings with that of the Middle East.

This thesis will take a different approach to said problem. It will build upon a theoretical idea of *five arenas of democracy* proposed by Linz and Stepan, and explore the statuses and influence these *arenas* had on the transitioning process in Poland and Egypt. Linz and Stepan define their *arenas of democracy* as “five other interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions... for a democracy to be consolidated” (1996). The authors argue that these *components* play a major role in democratic transition and consolidation. The five arenas of democracy present five societal institutions - *civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy and economic society*, which Linz and Stepan assert exist and operate ideally within consolidated democracies<sup>1</sup>. This thesis will explore the status of *arenas* in pre-transitioning Poland and Egypt. Furthermore, after exploring their status, this thesis will try to assess to what extent *arenas* helped or hindered the transitioning process in Poland and Egypt. Through examining two largest, and in certain ways most representative countries of Eastern Europe and Middle East, this thesis will offer some new insight into the field of comparative political study.

Due to the limited scope of this master thesis, the theoretical framework established by Linz and Stepan will be limited to only three out of five arenas. The three *arenas* will include *socio-political society* – a combination of civil society and political society, *rule of law*, and finally *economic society*. I have chosen to combine some like-minded arenas, taking the total count down from five to three – making it possible to examine and discuss the arenas in relation to both case countries within the scope of this thesis. Through examining the status of these three societal institutions through the lens of my research question, I will try to illustrate how complex every revolution is, and how futile it is to create generalizations which we paint the struggles of entire societies with. The logic behind amalgamating five *arenas* into only three will be explained further in theoretical framework section of this thesis.

The term *arenas of democracy* will be used interchangeably with the term *transitional components*, as well as *societal institutions*.

These five institutions, or *arenas* as Linz and Stepan name them are crucial to a sustainable, consolidated democratic society. What is important to understand though is that

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<sup>1</sup> Democracy becomes consolidated only once it becomes the “only game in town” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). More about this in Theoretical Framework section of this thesis.



Linz and Stepan define these five *arenas* as consolidated products – institutions that exist in consolidated democracies. The authors assert that *arenas* do not simply appear out of nowhere, but instead have a historical account. For instance, Linz and Stepan argue that different forms of non-democratic regimes have different implications on the importance of the *arenas* within these regimes, as well as upon democratically consolidated polities that occur in the future. However, they restrict their analysis to a theoretical level, creating ideal type scenarios through which they generalize their findings. This thesis will try to dig into the actual cases, exploring the actual status of these *components* outside of a purely grand theoretical spectrum.

### Why Egypt and Poland?

The reasons why Egypt and Poland were chosen for this comparison are twofold. Firstly, both Egypt and Poland are the largest countries in their regions that have undergone transition during and after the fall of Communism. In 1990 Poland had a population of 38.11 million inhabitants, and was the largest Eastern European country transitioning, followed only by Czech Republic and Hungary who were closer to a number of 10 million<sup>2</sup>.

As for Egypt, the data shows that it had close to 79.392 million inhabitants in 2011<sup>3</sup>, at the moment of Tahrir Revolution's start. This makes it the largest Middle Eastern state – especially in terms of Arab Spring momentum. Another important factor is that there is a very apparent population growth dynamic in Egypt, with the population expanding by more than 23 million inhabitants since 1990<sup>4</sup>. An estimated population growth rate in Egypt is very high 2% on a yearly basis<sup>5</sup>.

Being the most populous countries of their region, Egypt and Poland present the most fertile ground for ideas to grow and spread. Setting in motion a country of 2 million people is not the same as one of 40, let alone 80 million. For this reason alone, it is not a coincidence that the revolutionary upheaval became very much true for the entire region once Egypt and Poland became parts of that same revolution themselves. Revolution moved from being evening news to reality. An image of tens of thousands marching is powerful, that same image of millions instead is breathtaking.

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank Data: World Bank Database accessed on 32.03.2015 at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx#>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Secondly, both Egypt and Poland have been perceived as regional leaders in the past. Positioned in a very important geopolitical location within Europe, bordering political mastodons such as Russia and Germany, Poland has played an important role in establishing a Slavic identity outside of Russian territories. It is also the only Slavic Catholic country, making it a bridge between the two supposedly opposite worlds – Orthodox and Catholic one. Egypt on the other hand had acted as a regional leader for the entire MENA expanse. With its immeasurably rich history and culture, this Mediterranean country has expressed its leadership through both political but also social phenomena. Its leaders, especially Nasser, shaped the landscape of the Middle East, paving a path to a unique style of socio-political development that many neighboring countries followed. Meanwhile, the ideas of Pan-Arabism flourished, and it was in Egypt that these ideas started becoming something more than a mere wish for many.

Consequentially, both Poland and Egypt have been placed in the spotlight in regards to the revolutionary events they underwent. In early 1990s, during the ending years of the cold war, followed by a Berlin Wall collapse, all eyes were turned towards Poland. Being the largest, historically very important and often perceived as the most notable Eastern European state, the world has created a very peculiar interest in the events that were to unfold in Germany's eastern neighbor. Same could be argued for Egypt. Although the Arab Spring was already in motion, it wasn't until it reached Egypt that the world started to understand how massive this event is. After all, suddenly having an 80 million people country enter a state of rewriting its social contract – transition; is an event that is bound to turn many eyes, which it undoubtedly did.

The relevance of Poland and Egypt obviously does not stop here. However, the reader will have an opportunity to understand the correlation between the choice of these countries and topic by reading through the literature review, theoretical framework and findings, where portions of this correlation will be presented alongside its use.

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### Research Question:

This thesis aims to answer a two-part research question:

**Firstly, what are the statuses of the three *arenas of democracy* presented above, in Egypt and Poland's pre-transition periods, and secondly, in what way do their statuses influence the transition process itself?**

### Significance of the Research:

The research presented in this thesis contributes very interesting insight to existing institution-transition dynamics knowledge when it comes to states transitions to democracy. This thesis offers a fresh take on the comparative study due to its pragmatic and state-level approach to the transitioning debate, as opposed to being based on hypothetical, or 'ideal' case constructs.

### Disposition

Chapter one of this thesis introduces cases of Egypt and Communist Poland, while rendering the resemblance between the two cases. Furthermore, chapter one will also include this thesis' research question.

Chapter two will offer the reader a substantial literature review on issues of democratization, transitioning and institution building in transitioning countries. This chapter serves as a stepping stone towards this thesis' research.

Chapter three will provide a reader with an understanding of a theoretical framework this thesis will utilize. Through presenting Stepan and Linz's work, I will explain how I modified their ideas, and how I intended to use them in this thesis.

Chapter four will discuss methodology this thesis will pursue. Through presenting my research approach, research strategy and data collecting methods, I explain to the reader in a precise manner how I have conducted this study. This chapter will also provide explanation for any limitations I have encountered during my work.

Chapter five will discuss my findings. Through examining these two cases, I present the reader with the status of *arenas* in both Egypt and Communist Poland.

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Chapter six will feature my analysis, with a discussion subsection. Here, I will try to explain what I have concluded from my study, but also discuss my findings through potentially different lenses.

## Literature Review

### Introduction:

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze and compare the status of three *arenas of democracy* as they existed in Egypt and Poland in their pre-transition periods, in order to uncover the impact these *components* had on the transitions themselves. Before one embarks on this exploratory journey, it is important to introduce contemporary debates that shape the field of transitionism, and transition-institution dynamics in particular.

The structure of following paragraphs and subchapters will be set as follows. Firstly, I will introduce the debate between Sequentialists and Universalists, and their take on the contested notion of transitionism. Then I will present a contemporary discussion about a ‘transition paradigm’. Finally, after exploring these two broader narratives, I will delve into existing work about both the Polish transition, and Egypt during and after the Arab Spring. Here I will examine more closely how institution-transition dynamics worked in these two cases. The idea is to establish a solid overview of academic contribution to the topic, and by doing that exemplify where this thesis could offer innovation.

### Achieving Democracy:

The debate about transitions is probably as old as ideas of democracy itself. Historically, great minds have always discussed what an ideal society should look like, while many of those debated extensively what democracy in itself should be<sup>6</sup>. As the debate progressed, it led to contested sides usually being divided into two opposite camps, Sequentialists and Universalists. The Sequentialists believe that democracy must be achieved through a step-by-step process, where certain institutions will slowly be introduced into a society, allowing it to have a more of a gradual transition to a democratic system. The Universalists however argue that democracy can be achieved in a much simpler fashion. They claim that it is a result of people’s urge for freedom and their desire to be in charge of their own lives, and that it does not require a substantial institutional framework to flourish.

Both of these ideas have had their representatives. The Sequentialist approach was pioneered by early European scholars, some of whom include Montesquieu and Max Weber. The Universalists are represented by American forefathers and Alexis de Tocqueville, for instance, later to be embodied in Wilsonian political ideology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ginsburg

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the greatest minds in history of our civilization have written about societies, states and democracy – Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Voltaire, John Stuart Mill, Alexis De Tocqueville, and many others.

2008). The difference between their representatives is also very apparent, since the political and historical heritage, as well as circumstances, usually dictate one's belief in democracy. It is not by accident that the greatest propagators of Universalist ideas are those who have lived their entire lives in creating polities based upon notions of universal liberties. It is also not uncommon that the greatest agents of Sequentialism are those who have lived through a long and tedious process of sequencing, observing their societies become more and more democratic by every step taken.

Coming back to contemporary times, the debate continues. It is not surprising that both camps are to this day equally dominant in democratization and transition literature. Starting just after the end of World War II, the debate shifted sides and both groups enjoyed a period of established belief. The two most impactful periods though happened in the early 1960s with Seymour Martin Lipset and in the late 1980s with Samuel Huntington leading the debate forward representing Sequentialist and Universalist arguments respectively. These two periods marked the greatest utilization of these respective ideas, thus making them most impactful.

Seymour Martin Lipset is the creator of modernization theory. In his work, Lipset establishes that a suitable way for societies to democratize is to launch a working economy, one where means of production will be readily available and as a result economic growth will be assured. In this scenario, Lipset claims, a society will become wealthier, and as a result, will require better education, infrastructure, etc. This newly founded "middle-class", established in its economic security and educational safety, would eventually ask for democratic rights, urging the country to shift towards a full-fledged democracy (Lipset 1959).

Lipset's ideas had many supporters<sup>7</sup>. His theory was widely accepted around the world, where countries would shift their policies from pursuing left-wing ideologies of socialism and communism, towards economic growth hoping to achieve societal growth and stability with it. Certain policy makers and social scientists still believe that Lipset's paradigm is useful and ever present in contemporary environment. With the use of advanced statistical methods, Londregan and Pool (1990) have established that there is a very strong correlation between poverty and authoritarianism. If reversed, this argument could also be conceptualized that poverty moves transition processes backwards (Geddes 1999). Limogni (1997) follows a similar tone, arguing that for democracy to become consolidated, a certain level of economic

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<sup>7</sup> For more ideas about modernization theory consult: Jackman RW (1973), Bonnet (1979), Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994)

development is required. Below this level of development, there is a risk that the polity will reverse into authoritarianism<sup>8</sup>. Just like Lipset, these authors understand economic development as a precursor to political and social development.

So does modernization theory, a primary banner of Sequentialism actually predict democracy? Two contemporary examples serve as a great counter argument to the notions of modernization theory. First of the two examples is modern day China - who, contrary to the popular belief of the time, has managed to bridge its communist, or better said autocratic governance with early 20<sup>th</sup> century capitalist economy (Peerenboom 2007). The real question is whether China will democratize, and if so when. China is obviously not the only Asian country facing this dilemma, having had the opportunity to witness the rise of many Asian Tigers who, pursuing their economic development not only failed to democratize, but instead moved even further away from liberal societies, many of them becoming semi-democracies or illiberal democracies in process (Zakaria 1997).

A second counter argument to modernization theory comes from a Middle Eastern perspective, that of Gulf States. This region is populated by countries who possess excessive natural resources, oil and natural gas primarily, and have, as a result, built their entire economies around these resources. They are called *rentier states* (Richards and Waterbury 2007). The rentier state model has proven that although economic modernization may occur, it does not necessarily establish consolidated democracy. Rentier States are often used as a prime counter argument against the modernization theory, especially in the natural resource rich regions.

Regardless, it is necessary to emphasize that modernization theory does not equal sequentialist theory. In fact, it only serves as a part of it; a very important part, but a part nonetheless. Sequentialism is a much broader term than democratization, encompassing different elements of a society, such as rule of law, civil society, freedom of speech, and many others (Linz and Stepan 1996). In fact, sequentialists are often first to argue against total and frontal democratization, simply because they understand the difficulties and challenges that this long a process brings. Sometimes, even a semi-democracy (Zakaria 1997), a state of governance paralleled with light authoritarianism (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) is better than a quasi-democratic regime, one where electoral rights exist, but institutional mechanisms of keeping those rights do not.

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<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed outlook on recent history of Modernization theory consult (Geddes 1999).

Meanwhile, Huntington's Third Wave (1991) is a clear example of how a Universalist addresses democratic change. Believing in inherent liberties that every man shares, Huntington created a body of work that centers on a primary notion of democracy as a worldwide phenomenon, and not just a Western principle. Furthermore, it is on the trend of Huntington's third wave ideas that the Western policy makers and politicians alike have proclaimed democracy as the "only game in town" (Linz and Stepan 1996).

Of course, once again one must look into the historical, sociological and political circumstances upon which these ideas were being based. Huntington's work has been paralleled by the fall of Berlin Wall, collapse of Communist ideas and lastly the final demise of the Soviet Union. Many Western authors raced to the imaginary goal of formulating ideas that would enunciate the success of Western Civilization and its achievements, its final triumph.<sup>9</sup> Some went to even such lengths where they would declare the fall of Berlin Wall, as the ultimate victory of the humanity himself, the "End of History" as they would call it (Fukuyama 1992). These ideas, although widely accepted at first, quickly turned into no more than a phase in social science history, where contemporary international circumstances, as well as different authors have argued otherwise.<sup>10</sup>

The primary critique of the universalist approach is their idealist belief in preliminary institutions of democracy, instead of democratic institutions. Universalists argue that a weak state, built upon the rubble of an ex-authoritarian government should provide no more than formal prerequisites for elections to take place (Carothers 2002). However, formal prerequisites are all that a society needs. After that, the idea is that once the elections do take place, people would express their will democratically (Huntington 1991). The problem with this type of approach is that it does not count in all the perils a society may encounter in its path towards democracy surrounded by weak institutions and, even more importantly, rule of law (Przeworski 1991) (Zakaria 1997). Simply put, hoping that elections alone could be a sufficient guarantee of a democratic governance ignores many other challenges democracy as a system of governance carries.

The counter argument for this is that the alternative to this rapid democratization is supposed to be the sequentialist approach. Here, a transitioning society should base their hopes

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<sup>9</sup> The entire concept can be tightly connected with a political ideology of neoconservatives, pioneered by the Reagan administration, and still very popular today. Focusing on American political and military dominance of the world, neoconservatives have welcomed Fukuyama's essay with joy, finally receiving an academic approval of realpolitik they were ever so viciously advocating.

<sup>10</sup> See "The Return of History and The End of Dreams" by Robert Kagan (2009), and "World Order" by Henry Kissinger (2014), amongst others.



on nothing more than a good will of the authoritarian ruler to establish a rule of law, one that, once respected, would allow a stronger state, and as such, better institutions to emerge. Universalists argue that this is, of course, not the case, and that instead the society gets nothing else than a prolonged authoritarianism (Carothers 2007). In fact, the question arises as to why would an authoritarian ruler embark on establishing democratic institutions in the first place (Carothers 2007).

A counter argument disputes these claims, providing examples of institutional wastelands, where no rule of law and extremely weak institutions have only propelled sectarian violence as well as ethnic divisions, instead of allowing them to flourish under democracy (Mansfield and Snyder 2007)<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, “once a country starts on an illiberal trajectory, ideas are unleashed and institutions are established that tend to continue propelling it along that trajectory” (Mansfield and Snyder 2007, 7).

### Deconstructing the Transition Paradigm

As one might notice, the scholarly debate about what constitutes a democracy, and what a true transitioning, or better yet democratizing path should be will never be over. Both sides have equally valid arguments. Yet, it must be acknowledged that this debate also entrenched itself in real-life events. In fact, it goes both ways since the international reality shaped the scholarly thought on the subject just as much as the scholarly thought had shaped the international reality. This has created an academic and a policy phenomenon called ‘transition paradigm (Carothers 2002)

For instance, some of the most important work written on the topic of transitions has been produced during peak years of democratization – the famous “third wave” (Huntington 1991) – (a period between the 1960s and 1990s). O’Donnell, Schmitter, Linz, Stepan, Levitsky, Przeworski, and others have all created their respective work throughout a period of worldwide democratic movements. They have defined, postulated and refined transitioning ideas, both universalist and sequentialist alike.

Striking similarities between some of these works do appear. For instance, Both Linz and Stepan (1996), as well as O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) write with a preconceived notion that in the heart of their term transition lies an actor, a single unit that is the principle agent of change. This self-determinism, fueled by the unfathomable intricacies of change which transitions ever so gladly entail, relieves the researcher of any possibility of prediction.

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<sup>11</sup> Cases of 2005 Iraqi elections, as well as Afghanistan elections of 2005 and 2009 come to mind.

It also presents a challenge to a structuralist dominated field of political science, when actors are given a stronger role than institutions.

This “excessive voluntarism” (Bratton and Van de Walle 1994) has obviously found many critics. The idea that people interact with events unfolding in a process of transition or revolution without incorporating the societal and historical complexities such events carry is problematic, to say the least. “Even in the midst of tremendous uncertainty provoked by a regime transition... the decisions made by various actors respond to and are conditioned by the types of socioeconomic structures and political institutions already present” (L. T. Karl 1990). This portrays a variance between how different authors understand transitions. Either as a separate process from what precedes and succeeds it, or as a social phenomenon that cannot be separated.

The differences between authors do not stop here however. As (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) note, democratic transitions, perceived as peoples' struggle for a freer and more liberal society usually do not guarantee democratic outcomes. They might lead to it, but certainly do not guarantee it. What they can guarantee is political volatility. However, regardless of the political turmoil, transition can end in one of the three ways. The society will either democratize, fall (back) into authoritarianism, or eventually radicalize, leading to a revolution (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Some contemporary ideas argue against this, de-radicalizing popular movements and further exploring (non)violent approach to transition (Way and Levitsky 2010). Drawing from real life examples, Way and

Regardless of the differences, there is an underlying understanding as to what a transition should be – the transition paradigm. The ideas do differ, but in their essence all correspond to the same dynamic. For instance, many authors would agree that a good first signal of transition is the softening of political repression that has been in effect up to that point – a term also known as liberalization (Huntington 1991) (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) (Linz and Stepan 1996). Liberalization is a process of “redefining or extending rights” (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Unlike democratization, it does not include a change of government. In fact, it is often attributed to the regime at hand, defining it as a process of “opening up”, or “softening” the nondemocratic government's reach (Linz and Stepan 1996) (Huntington 1991). Most often, a process of liberalization is used as an economic indicator, tying this preconceived idea of transitions further with ideas of modernization. Regardless, liberalization can be seen as first in many steps of a sequential move towards democracy. It can also be seen as a signal of a birth of universal democratic values. Depending on the

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approach, different authors would argue differently. However, both groups of authors would agree that liberalization is an obvious signal of transition. This type of thinking is what constitutes a *transition paradigm*.

This form of discussion was, and to a certain extent still is very popular among scholars and especially policy makers around the world when it comes to transitionism (Carothers 2002). The problem this type of unified approach to transitions is that it leaves almost nothing to alternatives. This type of approach is, some would argue, directed by its own political agenda (MacEwan 1988), it is a service to itself, created by people in order to reaffirm the cultural and societal norms and rules researchers possess. Simply said, it mirrors the political agenda of the authors.

Thomas Carothers offers a critique of this kind of attitude. In his work “The End of Transition Paradigm” (2002) he highlights five paradigms that he then debunks in an attempt to show a different side of the democratization/transitionism debate. The first, one that serves as an umbrella to the others is particularly interesting. Carothers claims that “any country moving away from dictatorial rule can be considered a country in transition toward democracy” (Carothers 2002, 2) is a common assumption of transitioning theory. He continues by explaining how dangerous this kind of discourse can be, stating that: “Once so labeled, their political life was automatically analyzed in terms of their movement toward or away from democracy, and they were held up to the implicit expectations of the paradigm” (Carothers 2002). So instead of actually trying to exceptionalize cases, understand them separately and uniquely, both media, policy makers and researchers alike were too quick to make assumptions regarding certain social and political tides in them.

Carothers’ ideas become even clearer once backed up by those of fellow academics. As Lisa Anderson states so well in her work “Demystifying Arab Spring” (2011):

In Tunisia, protesters escalated calls for the restoration of the country's suspended constitution. Meanwhile, Egyptians rose in revolt as strikes across the country brought daily life to a halt and toppled the government. In Libya, provincial leaders worked feverishly to strengthen their newly independent republic. It was 1919.

She continues:

The important story about the 2011 Arab revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya is not how the globalization of the norms of civic engagement shaped the protesters' aspirations... Instead, the critical issue is how and why these

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ambitions and techniques resonated in their various local contexts. The patterns and demographics of the protests varied widely. (*L. Anderson 2011*)

Contrasting these different ideas and views of the transition paradigm could offer many interesting points and pose many interesting questions. For instance, should one ignore the complexities of individual, exceptional cases of transition and negate the cultural and social peculiarities that regions or states transitioning have? Or, conversely, should we entrench ourselves into this stasis where it is hard to conceptualize any kind of grander narrative by the sheer uniqueness of the cases at hand?

The answer is, somewhere in the middle. A certain research paradigm does exist, but the peculiarities of different cases and regional exceptionalism should make researchers extra careful when making conclusions. Therefore, taking a middle ground, although challenging, might end up being quite rewarding. Larry Diamond's (2002) take on hybrid regimes, as he calls them, is a good starting point to unravel the intricacies of previous work on transitions, from both the transition paradigm and its critics' perspective. Others have focused on acknowledging complex realities, where they analyzed governments' policies, and how they relate to party monopolies (Way and Levitsky 2010). Finally, some authors have managed to move the debate further outside of the electoral spectrum, and encompass both institutionalism transitionism and democratic theory in their pursuit of knowledge (Schedler 2002), while other have, utilizing a mixed method approach offered alternative understandings to democratization processes around the world (Teorell 2010)

### [Egypt and Poland through the Lenses of Institution-Transition Dynamics](#)

Both Egypt and Poland have had extensive body of work written on their respective cases. They have also had a history of grand events that shaped not only their futures, but the futures of the entire regions. Therefore, understanding early 1990s transition process in Poland, and the Arab Spring fueled transition in Egypt should not be tackled lightly. This is why one must be careful in what work (s)he explores, and how these works must be approached.

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## Poland

In August 1980 the Lenin Shipyard workers in Gdansk, gathered in protest to show support to Anna Walentynowicz, a crane operator that was illegally fired earlier that year. Their demands were simple – bring Anna back to work without further escalation of the worker-state consortium conflict. After the Polish communist government responded negatively to their demands, the protesters did what little they could – they continued their protest and aggregated around their demands. The state’s reaction was swift, threatening with firing the protesters and shutting down the production. The government was spreading its propaganda as a way to back these claims up. The protesters did not back down, but instead got even more adamant. A form of leadership was born, and while support for the protest was coming from both domestic and foreign sources, Lech Walesa, a thirty something year old welder from Gdansk became an informal leader of the protest. Quickly thereafter, the protest contextualized and institutionalized as a union – *Solidarity*, and its demands rapidly got extended. Solidarity sought better representation, freedom to organize and govern itself, and finally stronger position within the communist system. This marked the first move towards a freer and a more democratic society in Poland, and stood as an unprecedented event in the Communist world.

Although this particular protest was successful, it took Solidarity and Walesa 10 years to finally achieve their life-long dream, political and civil freedom in Poland. During these 10 years, Communist Poland had experienced a time of martial law, a number of massive riots, illegal imprisonment of civil society actors, including Lech Walesa, and much more. Finally, the year of 1989 brought some hope for the Polish people, since this was the year when the communist government had decided to hold the first free and fair elections in modern Polish history. Walesa became president of Poland in 1990, while the civil and political society actors of the previous decade finally received the opportunity to enter parliament and take the fate of their country in their own hands.

There has been an extensive body of work done on the topic of electoral and constitutional institutionalization of new democracies, especially in relation to Poland. As previously mentioned, Poland was one of the first Eastern European countries to “democratize”, therefore the body of knowledge discussing Eastern European transition can usually be connected with the Polish case effortlessly. In fact, large parts of this work were written by having precisely Poland on mind. Lijphart’s (*Constitutional Choices for New Democracies* 1991) and Linz’s (*Perils of Presidentialism* 1990) come to mind as specifically

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relevant to what this thesis explores. Discussing issues of electoral engineering and constitutional varieties, the two works offer a good summary of what the newly democratic Eastern European states should keep in mind in their pursuit of democracy. Electoral and institutional engineering was tackled by other authors as well<sup>12</sup>, but for the sake of the clarity these authors will not be addressed in greater details.

Possibly the greatest impact on understanding transitioning process in Eastern Europe has been provided by Stein Rokkan (1975) in his book “Citizens, Elections, Parties”. Here, Rokkan explores the process that shaped the electoral and constitutional systems of (Western) European countries. Authors and policy makers then used this knowledge in order to build arguments for either a Proportionally Representative<sup>13</sup> or Majority Rule system<sup>14</sup> - especially in regards to Eastern Europe, and Poland in particular.

Rokkan’s ideas extend beyond pure electoral mechanisms. In his work, he touches upon both the logic behind having certain constitutional elements, such as a presidential system for instance, as well as explaining the necessity of acknowledging the old political elite, namely, in the Eastern European case, the Communist Party. Rokkan was one of the pioneers of *institution-transition* dynamics research. This is especially important in the case of Poland, since Polish round table talks included both the Solidarity, but also the old political elite who still clung to power. Rokkan presents various ideas, but summing them up in a most simple fashion, completely aware that this type of simplification does not correspond to the upmost complexity of Rokkan’s work, I would argue that there are three main ideas Rokkan establishes.

Firstly, Rokkan claims that every country that is a democracy must go through a process of becoming a democracy, therefore must embark on a path of institutional engineering. Secondly, he argues that both old and new parties are rational actors, looking to maximize their own potential, realistic about their future prospects. Finally, Rokkan argues that the most common and logical outcome of a democratization process is a Proportionally Representative system with presidential elections and a bicameral structure of the parliament.

Rokkan’s work, although considered to be canonic, has not been unchallenged. More specifically, authors usually found ways to build upon it, using potential criticism as bridges

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the context of electoral institutionalism and its influence on societies, including Eastern Europe, please consult (Hermens 1941); (Lakeman and Lambert 1955); (Finner 1975); (Horowitz 1990)

<sup>13</sup> PR in the remainder of the text.

<sup>14</sup> MAJ in the remainder of the text.

to a more perfected versions of Rokkan's theories. One of the best critics and upgrades of Rokkan's work comes from Lijphart (1992). Lijphart argues that Poland is an example that shows that Rokkan's initial hypothesis is actually accurate (Lijphart 1992, 213). Polish semi-presidential system and an extreme PR are a result of early round-table negotiations, as well as a realistic, rational choice decision of a now-reformed Communist Party to enter politics. A division of power between the old and the new elite guaranteed a smoother transition into a completely democratic arena, one where that same power would have eventually been contested<sup>15</sup>

Apart from Rokkan's institution building theories, Poland's path to democracy has been analyzed extensively in the past 25 years. Due to the scope of this thesis, only a number of themes will be mentioned. For instance, many authors focused their research on Communist Poland's economic policies, and how these policies might have influenced the transition, as well as post-transitory period (Saxonberg 2001) (Simatupang 1994) (Cox and Powers 1997). Others focused on political what? (Bloom 2013) (Fowkes 1995), while some on institution of leadership (Goodwyn 1991). Regardless of the topic, Poland's path to transition, especially its transition-institution dynamics have been extensively debated and discussed.

## Egypt

It was January 25<sup>th</sup> when large masses gathered around Tahrir Square to protest against Mubarak's government. Some of them knew, then, on that exact day, that exact moment that the revolution had started. Others were simply there to voice their discontent. Regardless of whom it was, their desires and requests were the same – down with the regime that had brought that situation in the first place.

The massive protests in Egypt did not start on their own. The dissatisfaction of Egyptian population was widely known before *the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution*, as it is called in Egypt. Massive unemployment combined with poor infrastructure and extremely high corruption levels offered little to no hope for a better future. The three presidents, Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak ruled like kings, and while their population was getting poorer by the minute, their cronies and families were getting richer by the day.

This ever so familiar bond between corruption, high capital and political elite was destroying Egypt from within, and has taken its biggest toll during the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For a more specific outline on how this process unfolded consult (Lijphart 1992), page 213, and page 220-222

century. Extensive neo-liberalization of Egyptian economy created vast disparities among the population (Dorman 2013), and soon enough many Egyptians felt like the state has never been there for them. The revolution did not come out of nowhere. Instead it was brewing within the Egyptian society for years, waiting for the perfect moment to appear. Just like in Poland, every protester had a different idea about what the revolution should be about, but in the end, they all had this one thought in common – Mubarak and his regime are the root of all problems, and only with them gone can Egypt become a better society.

There are those who would argue that Arab Spring, and Egyptian revolution as it is are simply impossible since Islam is generally incompatible with democracy (Fish 2002) (Kramer 1993) (Kedourie 1994) (Tessler 2002). These allegations were rebated numerous times in academia<sup>16</sup>, and will not be a subject of this thesis since they do not add to the debate in any significant way. Simply put, with all due respect to differences between the cases, a certain level of similarities exist, and literature, aiming to show that level or not, offers a great insight into it.

The debates about Arab democratization<sup>17</sup> have been quite extensive in the past. For instance, during a period of the transition paradigm, the academics discussing the Arab World were very optimistic about the democratization potential of this region of the world (Salame 1994). The resilience of autocratic governments throughout the coming decades though, has moved the transition paradigm discourse that shaped the world of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into an “almost impossible” transition discourse that dominated the Middle East (Pace and Cavatorta 2012). The beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century marked a complete switch in scholarly work, where pessimism about Middle Eastern democratization flourished once again (Schlumberger 2007) (Schlumberger and Albrecht 2004). It was thought that the region simply does not possess institutional mechanisms to withstand a transition to democracy. Regardless of the duality of discourses and the (im)probability of a major event happening, the Arab Spring caught many off guard (Gause 2011). Although the event started in Tunisia, it quickly escalated all around the region, reaching its peak in Egypt.

The first area of scholarly research is the importance of middle class in Egyptian revolution. Contrary to the popular belief, it was the middle class who took to the streets and started shaping the future of Egypt. Professors, doctors, dentists, students, public servants, all those who were supposed to have a decent way of living. Historically the socioeconomic

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<sup>16</sup> See (Bayat 2007); (Arjomand 2013) among others.

<sup>17</sup> And here I talk about a process of “democratization” and not that of Islam’s compatibility with democracy.



conditions of the Egyptian middle class ranged from good to inadequate (Kandil 2012). Yet, with the start of the neo-liberalization of Egyptian economy, it was thought that the middle class should be tamed in its pursuit of individual benefits and accumulation of wealth (Kandil 2012). The opposite happened, with neo-liberal economics creating a sub-elite of government cronies, who would then use their positions to accumulate massive amounts of wealth, removing every other social group out of their way, including the middle class (Springborg 2011) (Pace and Cavatorta 2012).

According to Linz and Stepan (1996), the middle class usually serves as the main pillar of civil society. Furthermore, it is often the number one supplier of state's bureaucratic apparatus. This means that the middle class represents an important element in crafting two very significant *arenas of democracy*. Therefore, it is safe to say that the middle class may be observed as an institution itself, connecting the debate about itself with the one about *institution-transition* dynamics as a whole.

A second important aspect of these revolutions is their global outreach. I have already shortly covered the differences between transition paradigms used in describing Middle East – ranging from those of utter democratic pessimism to those of complete liberal optimism. What is more important to understand about these ideas is that they always include an entire region instead of an individual state. It seems that scholars were on a right trail, since it is not by accident that Arab Spring quickly spread throughout the entire MENA region, and as such became the most important global event of 2011 and 2012 (Pace and Cavatorta 2012).

The problem with this approach is that contextualizing the Arab Spring as a regional size event, instead of a state level phenomenon, usually results in hasty conclusions. For instance, the logic that many followed was similar to that of the fall of Berlin Wall. The Cold War encapsulated the entire region of Eastern Europe – the Arab Spring encapsulated the majority of the MENA region. Just like the fall of Berlin Wall signaled the end of a cold war paradigm, the Arab Spring was supposed to signal an end to a certain type of thinking – most notably that of autocratic resilience, oil-fueled security, and many others (Pace and Cavatorta 2012). Finally just like the fall of Berlin Wall, the Arab Spring led to a lot of “soul searching” throughout the region (Jung 2011). This analytical position can be perilous since it ignores the reality in favor of broad generalizations. A quick look into the consequences of the Arab Spring shows that every state in the MENA region is at a different position than where it used to be before the events started. This means that individual institutional frameworks in these states play an important role, one that should not be overlooked in pursuit of generalizations.

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Finally, a number of researchers and analysts approached the events of Arab Spring through observing the relationship between social movements and technology. The increased availability of internet and its social media tools had allowed protesters to organize and mobilize in an easier fashion (Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2012). Contrary to government's attempts to cut off internet access, Egyptians fought hard to retain their means of communication, since they were the most direct route to organizing, but also aggregating interest and support of people abroad (Lotan, et al. 2011).

However, one must be extra careful when talking about new social media. The reason for this is that it could be very easy to lose focus on actual events of the revolution and move the debate entirely in the direction of advanced tools of communication. As Lisa Anderson argues, this type of social cohesion is not foreign to the region, and similar images of massive organized anti-government protests could be seen around the region as early as immediately after WWI (L. Anderson 2011).

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## Theoretical Framework

### Linz and Stepan's approach to transitions:

This thesis will use Linz and Stepan's approach to notion of transition-institution dynamics. The theoretical paradigm used will be *arenas of democracy*, a term established by Linz and Stepan (1996). As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the notion of *arenas of democracy* which they propose, are a set of five institutions – *civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy and economic society* that Linz and Stepan believe to be necessary in order for democracy to consolidate. This thesis however will try to explore what the statuses of these *arenas* are during a pre-transitioning process, and additionally, in what way these statuses influence the transition itself. Furthermore, for the sake of remaining within the scope of a master thesis, five *arenas of democracy* will be merged into three. Before explaining the logic behind this amalgamation, some more attention will be turned towards the original five *arenas* Linz and Stepan postulated.

Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that in any consolidated democracy, the polity must be able to establish five mutually interacting and reinforcing conditions that would offer support to each other, as well as balance each other out. These conditions – *arenas* as they call them, include “Free and lively civil society; relatively autonomous and valued political society; a rule of law, a state bureaucracy and finally an institutionalized economic society” (Linz and Stepan 1996).

Five *arenas* exist in their ideal form only within a consolidated democracy. Democracy becomes consolidated only once it becomes the “only game in town” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). What this means for Linz and Stepan is that three particular things need to happen. Firstly, there must be no significant political group which would seriously attempt to overthrow the democratic regime, or secede from the state. Secondly, even when facing extreme crisis, either political or economic (or both), people still believe that any change must “emerge from within the parameters of democratic formulas”. Finally, democracy becomes the only game in town when all the actors in a society acknowledge the fact that political, social and any other differences must be resolved through constitutionally guaranteed democratic institutional instruments (Linz and Stepan 1996).

Only when democracy becomes “the only game in town” can their *arenas of democracy* start interacting. Therefore, democratic consolidation is a prerequisite for their *arenas* to exist. *Arenas* are independent, yet interconnected. As a result, the better the status of

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one of these arenas is, the better the status of others will be. In an ideal type situation, all *five arenas* would have a similar status, functioning independently, but also complimenting each other. In an un-ideal type situation, these statuses can vary.

However, Linz and Stepan argue that their *arenas* can exist in non-democracies as well, yet that their existence is far from their ideal form. The state's 'regime type'<sup>18</sup> is an element Linz and Stepan note as being an important factor in transitions. The transitional path of a given state takes, is shaped by its 'regime type', in which Linz and Stepan list five: *semi-democracy, totalitarianism, post-totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and sultanism*. The authors list four characteristics that define all regimes; *pluralism, ideology, mobilization and leadership*.

Exploring a path that Stepan and Linz have established further, we move to a section where authors discuss how democratic institutions, or *arenas*, transform into 'conditions', and in what way these conditions influence transitions and post-transition periods. Simply put, the authors believe that *arenas*, since they do not operate in their ideal capacity, condition the potential course to democracy. I direct the attention of the reader to a model of classification Linz and Stepan use. For comparison I will present how Linz and Stepan see the *rule of law* arena as a condition for democracy in totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes.

In case of totalitarian states Linz and Stepan argue that "A paper constitution may exist that, when filled with democratic content, might lead to perverse consequences, since it was not designed for a democratic society. The making of a new democratic constitution will be necessary but difficult due to an inchoate political society, the lack of constitutional culture, and the legacy created by the verbal commitments of the previous constitution."<sup>19</sup>

In this quote, Linz and Stepan show that constitutional aspect of *rule of law* may exist in non-democratic regimes, yet that its existence can be very problematic. The difficulties do not end here, since the making of a new democratic constitution will consequentially be more challenging due to inapt democratic culture of citizens living in a totalitarian system.

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<sup>18</sup> "Regime type" is a term used to categorize different forms of state governance.

<sup>19</sup> (Linz and Stepan 1996), table 4.3., page 62 - 63

Post-totalitarian states on the other hand are different. “Given the fictive character of the constitution, there are serious costs to using these institutions, and the making of a democratic constitution should be a high priority”<sup>20</sup>

Here Linz and Stepan show that unlike in totalitarianism, post-totalitarian regimes do have a chance of creating a working constitution in future, albeit, this task should be their high priority. In this exact example, one can see that Linz and Stepan compare the two examples through a prism of generalization. The authors pertain their views of what each of these regime types should be to their work, crafting views of generalization instead of unique explanations.

It is evident that Linz and Stepan follow a certain pattern of academic thinking, bordering between sequentialist and universalist ideals. This way of thinking entrenches their research within the transition paradigm field of work. Linz and Stepan establish an entire narrative that gladly embodies the transition paradigm. Because of this, my thesis will build upon Linz and Stepan’s argument through examining two very specific cases; more precisely, examining the statuses of *arenas* in these cases, and how this status helped or hindered the transition process; however, this thesis will in this process dissociate itself from Linz and Stepan’s work, including the generalizations comprising, and resulting in academic transition paradigm. This way, the thesis will bridge the resulting research gap in Linz and Stepan’s work, and move it outside of the transition paradigm spectrum, while still relying on its basic postulates, i.e. *arenas of democracy*.

### Arenas of Democracy:

In this section, I will offer a deeper insight into the arenas of democracy, focusing on what the original authors consider to be crucial whilst coining the terms. After that, I will present the argument for using only three *arenas* instead of all five, as well as explaining the logic behind choosing the three. Five *arenas of democracy* are *civil society*, *political society*, *rule of law*, *state bureaucracy* and *economic society*.

Linz and Stepan describe *civil society* as an institution that includes a state level opportunity for citizen led, self-organizing groups who can engage in public interaction, advocate their interests, beliefs, organize and mobilize. Their existence must be independent from the state, although state guaranteed. The social strata (or class) which would constitute

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

civil society is not important in this case, since civil society may incorporate labor unions, trade unions, NGOs, think-tanks, and many other forms of social enterprises.

As for *political society*, it is a somewhat simple extension of aforementioned *civil society*, whereas civil society can be observed as a starting step and political society as a finishing one in a democratic consolidation process. In general, Linz and Stepan argue that political society represents a political setting where legitimate and institutionalized mechanisms of state governance exist, allowing free and fair political competition for power, followed by a legitimate right to exercise that power, within the constraints of the rule of law set by the state, followed by the two aforementioned arenas.

The *rule of law* is a third and also a very important arena, since it encompasses historical as well as contemporary perspective. Historically, rule of law is important since as some researchers claim, its previous presence tends to facilitate transition and in general assure some level of control over nondemocratic regimes (Ginsburg 2008). Contemporarily, a working, respectable constitution, empowering the parliamentary legislative duties and correspondently laws the parliament votes for, is an extremely important trait of a consolidated democracy. It supports the political and civil society in their respective goals of reaching a democratic dialog that assures representation of everyone's interest. Furthermore, a strong rule of law guarantees a strong justice system, one where individual freedoms are well respected, and justice is preserved on a state level, instead of on a personal as non-democracies tend to promote. Finally, a well-established rule of law guarantees the state's right and duty to deliver basic services its citizens need, as well as effectively exercise legitimate force over its territory.

The fourth arena of democracy is the *state bureaucracy*. Without a suitable and well organized state bureaucracy, the citizens would not have the institutional nor formal ways of exercising their reserved rights as citizens. Bureaucracy's role is to establish a system which would offer services, as well as help the state execute its power, collect taxes, commission censuses, etc. The debate about the magnitude of bureaucracy continues, but one thing is certain, its need is one of the pillars of a democratic political system.

Finally, equally importantly, a consolidated *economic society* must be developed. Linz and Stepan argue that *economic society* encompasses a vast array of political, social and economic policies that integrated formulate an economic atmosphere of a state. It requires a combination of state level efforts to create solid economic policies, ones that would allow

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people to find jobs, create jobs, and, in total, generate wealth. Economic growth can be achieved through different measures, obviously, but regardless of the economic preferences, certain pillars of just economic system must be established, such as a right of possession, free flow of capital and goods, an open market, etc. Although some may claim that these ideas correspond to those of liberal economic scientists, the author of the thesis would argue against it, stating that aforementioned elements of an economic society serve as a guarantee to a fair and inclusive existence of individual economic wellbeing, and as such, correspond with the remaining four of the Arenas of Democracy.

### Melding the Arenas:

I have decided to meld the aforementioned five *arenas* into three. There are two reasons for this kind of approach.

The first reason is the limited scope of a master thesis as a research document. In order to achieve a satisfactory level of research whilst remaining within the official length proposed by Lund University, I had to decide which arenas to analyze and which ones to exclude. It was also very important for me to select arenas that would correspond to both cases, in order to reach a satisfactory level of resemblance between them.

The second reason is the overlap that often occurs in real world examples of said *arenas*. The reason for this is simple – *arenas of democracy* are imagined as theoretical components of a larger study. As such, they exist within a world of theory, basing their resemblance upon ideal type real life examples. Since reality is often far more complex and intertwined than what any theory can explore, it is not seldom to see certain *arenas* intertwining between each other, reaching into each other's characteristics and features.

This is why I have decided to amalgamate and reshape the *five arenas of democracy* into *three arenas (transitional components)* – ***socio-political society, rule of law, and economic society***. The logic behind this melding is as follows.

Linz and Stepan's *civil society* and *political society* have been combined into a *socio-political society*. First of all, these two arenas often reach within each other's scope, and as a result it is very difficult to differentiate between the two. Civil society leaders often become political leaders, and many civil society organizations end up being very political in their actions. In fact, some civil society actors, whether institutional or personal, often directly pursue political change, especially with weak, or non-existent opposition in place (Saxonberg

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2001) (Fowkes 1995). Additionally, it is quite usual that an actual division between the civil and political society starts to clear up only once a country becomes a consolidated democracy.

Secondly, the cases explored in this thesis both feature a very vivid civil society which arguably carried the biggest weight on its shoulders in both cases (Bloom 2013) (Beinin 2014). Additionally, both of these cases feature a very weak political society, at least as defined by Linz and Stepan. Since neither Poland nor Egypt possessed any actual electoral or politically competitive dynamics<sup>21</sup>, it is downright impossible to discuss political society as described in Linz and Stepan's work. It is however, as previously mentioned, rather reasonable to combine it with civil society, thus creating a unit of analysis that incorporates the entire oppositional spectrum in both of these cases.

Therefore, I define **socio-political society** as *arenas* whose social and political actors, norms, formal and informal institutions exist and act within a socio-political spectrum of both Poland and Egypt, with an effort of either maintaining or changing the status quo.

My second arena – **rule of law** – corresponds entirely with that of Linz and Stepan's. This *arena* will include all the elements of Linz and Stepan's definition, since I believe that understanding how *rule of law* worked in a transitioning country is one of the prerequisites of understanding why a transition happened in a way it did. Therefore, I define *rule of law* as an arena that includes both explanations about constitutionalism, judicial systems and other formal institutions of *rule of law*, as well as information on informal institutions such as corruption levels, human rights, etc.

I have decided not to include Linz and Stepan's *state bureaucracy* for two reasons. Firstly, the impact state bureaucracy had is tightly connected with already established arenas, especially with *rule of law* and *economic society*. Through examining these two, I will try to incorporate the aspects of state bureaucracy within them, offering readers an understanding how these two worked together. Secondly, state bureaucracy does not play as strong of a role during a pre-transition period, as much as it plays one during a consolidation period. As a result, the role that state bureaucracy did play will be examined through other *arenas*.

Finally, my third *arena* corresponds to Linz and Stepan's fifth *arena* – **economic society**. I will use Linz and Stepan's understanding of what constitutes an economic society, since I believe its impact is equally important in a transitioning society as much as it is in a

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<sup>21</sup> Apart from quasi multi-party elections Mubarak held in 2007/2008. More information about this can be sought in Findings chapter, Egypt section, Rule of Law subsection, Page 52.



consolidated democracy. As a result, I define *economic society* as a set of institutionalized and informal norms, procedures and policies that dictate economic development, growth and strategy, both on a personal as well as on a state level of each of my cases.

To summarize, Linz and Stepan offer *five arenas of democracy* which I have modified into *three arenas of democracy (transitional components)* – *socio-political society, rule of law, and economic society*, as defined above.

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## Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the status of three *arenas of democracy* in pre-transitioning Egypt and Poland, discovering the impact these *arenas* had on transitioning process itself. As a result, a matching methodology must be established in order to support this type of research. This chapter will be divided into sub-sections, each corresponding to a certain level of methodological approach, as reflected in (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009) research diagram. To clarify – the research diagram is divided into six layers that correspond to different parts of research, starting from philosophical stances, approaches, strategies, to choices, time horizons and techniques and procedures in research.

### An Inductive approach:

Since this thesis aims to explore and understand rather than prove anything, approaching a research question through an inductive approach comes naturally. The purpose of this work is not to look whether Polish transition is the same as the one in Egypt, and by doing so prove a certain way of approaching research. Instead, the purpose of this thesis is to uncover the status of *transition components* in these two states, and how this status influenced the revolutionary upheaval in them.

Furthermore, my research question is formulated in a way that offers a very broad narrative. I do not try to advocate any of aforementioned approaches to transitions or democratization. Instead, I try to level my study with uncovering the new, and by doing so create knowledge that does not necessarily need to be attributed to any of the pre-established camps. This broad narrative calls for an approach that is open-ended. As (Bryman 2012, 24) explains “...the researcher infers the implications of his or her findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise. The findings are fed back into the stock of the theory, and the research findings associated with a certain domain of enquiry.” Following this narrative, thesis findings could serve as a supplement to the *arenas of democracy* framework.

### Pragmatism:

This thesis will assume a philosophical position of pragmatism. Philosophical positions that one assumes while conducting research contain important assumptions about one’s view of the world (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). Thus, deciding what philosophical position one assumes can also decide what direction his or her research will follow. Unlike objectivism, constructivism or positivism, pragmatism does not exclude any type of approach to the problem at hand. Instead, it tries to bridge differences between the

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said approaches, and examine a problem from a realistic, pragmatic perspective. Pragmatist philosophy tackles problems with understanding that social phenomena and social actors are indistinguishable from one another.

To simplify things, pragmatism will allow this research to capture all of the intricacies of institution-transition relations. Since this relation is extremely complex, including different stakeholders, actors, dynamics and social constructs, pragmatism will allow for an all-around discussion of said affairs. Being able to use pragmatism also offers an opportunity to distinguish important factors in this research from those that exist, but lack same level of influence.

Finally, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009) state that using pragmatism often goes hand in hand with using mixed method as a data collection approach. Using pragmatism “mirrors a theme” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009) of using mixed methods – that of utilizing combinations of different approaches is highly appropriate in one study. Finally, as Tashakori and Teddlie (2003) say: “pragmatism is intuitively appealing, largely because it avoids the researcher engaging in what they see as rather pointless debates about such concepts as truth and reality.” And although I would argue that debates about truth and reality are anything but pointless, this particular thesis explores different topics, those more suitable to a philosophical position of pragmatism.

### Research Strategy:

This thesis will use a case study for its research strategy. Yin (2009) defines case study as the “empirical inquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

In other words Yin adds, a case study should be used if a researcher aims to understand a real-life phenomenon in-depth, but also needs to understand important social and contextual conditions to such phenomena (Yin 2009, 30).

This definition fits an overall research design my thesis is utilizing. *Arenas of democracy*, a set of three societal institutions that this thesis explores, embody a massive set of growing social and contextual conditions. As a result, these *arenas* can be explored in a most efficient

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way through a research strategy that understands and effectively deals with challenges ever shifting social and contextual conditions present.

Furthermore, the case study strategy “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result; relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result; benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (Yin 2009, 31). This type of approach parallels the goal of this thesis yet again, acknowledging a vast array of “variables of interest” and “multiple sources of evidence” for its research.

This thesis will utilize a multiple-case study design, more specifically multiple embedded case study design (Yin 2009, 58). What this means is that this thesis will analyze multiple (Egypt and Poland) cases, through researching multiple embedded units of analysis within each of these cases (three *arenas of democracy*).

This moves the discussion to what method of collecting data I will be using in my thesis.

#### Data Collection Method:

I have decided to pursue a mixed-method approach for my thesis. The term mixed-method: “is the general term for when both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are used in a research design” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). In this particular thesis, I will be using a subtype of a mixed methods approach – a mixed model approach. This subtype of a mixed method combines both the quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures, but also combines both quantitative and qualitative approach to other segments of one’s research, creation of a research questions for instance (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). As a result, a researcher may use this method to qualitatively present its quantitative data, turning numbers into narrative segments, but also quantify its qualitative findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). This thesis will follow the first approach, qualitising both its quantitative but also its qualitative findings. The reason for this is twofold. As will be discussed in the next sub-section, defining what may be considered plausible data in particular *arenas* can be challenging. These challenges come from both the fact that very often quantitative data is not available, but also from a fact that quantifying every type of data would simply not be useful enough for the purposes of this particular research. This is why every bit of data will be qualitised – described and explained – through the use of a mixed-model approach.

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Finally, since this thesis is pragmatic in its core, as well as inductive in its pursuit of answers, a mixed method will go a long way in following in the footsteps of these philosophical ideas since it will utilize best of both worlds. Given that this research will not only try to uncover reality, but also accept reality as a significant part of research, mixed method will allow for a varied approach to what constitutes data for this research. Instead of pursuing solely numbers, or perhaps solely historical accounts, using mixed method would allow me to pursue both, and then in the light of pragmatism combine the two for an added effect.

### Defining Data:

Three *arenas of democracy* that I have chosen for this thesis are *socio-political society, rule of law and economic society*. Every arena must be properly defined in order to make sure it doesn't include anything that might not have direct correlation with what that *arena* represents.

In case of *socio-political society*, I will be looking into the existence, number and frequency of conduct of worker's unions, non-governmental organizations and religious groups during pre-1989 Poland and pre-Arab Spring Egypt. I will also include political mobilization, both formal (existence of legal and legitimate political parties – including anti-systemic parties) and informal (dissident groups, domestic and foreign, etc.). Additionally, I will shortly present electoral legislature and electoral results (if existent). As a result, I will use secondary sources that discuss the role of these actors in both transitions. These secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles and books written on the subject at hand. Furthermore, I have obtained certain numerical data which will contribute towards establishing a clearer picture of both cases, most notably civil society membership numbers, electoral results, a number of political parties, etc. Finally, I have acquired a set of legal documents regarding the political situation in Communist Poland. Due to my inability to read nor understand Arabic, I was unable to access Egyptian legal documents to the same extent as I have done with Polish ones. Combining these two data sets through a use of mixed-model approach will offer me a way to create a comparative narrative thread between the two cases. I have limited data acquisition to a period of 10 years; In case of Poland from 1980 to 1990, while in the case of Egypt from 2001-2011.

*Rule of Law* is the second *arena* which will be discussed. A well-defined rule of law usually guarantees a well-defined state. This thesis will offer an analysis of formal institutions

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of rule of law, such as constitutionalism, judicial structure, as well as informal indications speaking to the status of rule of law, i.e. corruption levels, state of human rights, etc. The data was collected through secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles and books discussing aforementioned issues, but also policy reports, human rights reports and international organization's accounts. In case of Poland, I have acquired a primary source in a form of a Communist Poland's constitution that I was able to use in this thesis. My lack of Arabic skills has once again prevented me from acquiring documents of a same kind in the Egyptian case. I have limited data acquisition to a period of 10 years; In case of Poland from 1980 to 1990, while in the case of Egypt from 2001-2011. I have decided to limit the time span to 10 years in both cases in order to achieve correspondence between the cases, and also because this time frame was most important in both cases of the transition process.

Finally, *Economic Society* will be defined through readily available economic parameters. I have decided to use GDP per capita inflation adjusted<sup>22</sup>, gross GDP<sup>23</sup>, annual GDP growth<sup>24</sup>, and finally GNI per capita<sup>25</sup> (also known as Purchasing Power Parity) for my dataset. I have limited my dataset at three years. In case of Poland, I will be looking at 1990, 1991 and 1992, while in case of Egypt I will observe years 2010, 2011, and 2012. The data has been collected from the World Bank database, since this institution serves under a banner of United Nations, and as such possesses the most legitimate data set. Although economic data is very often numerical, this particular transitioning component encapsulates the entire economic society and not just the statistical data. As a result it would be very important to include information on economic power dynamics, untaxed economics, corruption, but also

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<sup>22</sup> GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current U.S. dollars.

<sup>23</sup> GDP at purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current U.S. dollars. Dollar figures for GDP are converted from domestic currencies using single year official exchange rates. For a few countries where the official exchange rate does not reflect the rate effectively applied to actual foreign exchange transactions, an alternative conversion factor is used.

<sup>24</sup> Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2005 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.

<sup>25</sup> GNI per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP). PPP GNI is gross national income (GNI) converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates. An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GNI as a U.S. dollar has in the United States. GNI is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad. Data are in current international dollars based on the 2011 ICP round.

other parameters, such as the export-import dynamics, industrialization capacities, food prices, etc. This is why I have decided to employ secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles and books that look at these particular issues, as well as historical accounts on this specific *transition component* as well. Finally, as already discussed, using the mixed-model approach I will qualitise the numerical data presented, combining it with secondary sources in an effort to provide a narrative thread of my thesis.

### Limitations:

There are three main limitations to this thesis that I would like to address in this section.

The first and most important limitation comes from the fact that this thesis project relies solely on secondary sources. The reason for this lies within a fact that this thesis is a part of a masters studies curriculum, and as such falls within the same scholarship conditions that were imposed throughout the duration of my program. One of the conditions of my Erasmus Mundus scholarship is that I was to remain within the borders of the EU during my two-year academic period. As a result, I was not able to embark on a field study which would have invariably enriched my research and allowed me to take a closer look into the problematics of Egyptian transition. Another consequence of this is that my word count is large due to an extensive bibliography.

Furthermore, the topic of this thesis, as well as the research question postulated offer very little opportunity for any type of field work research due to the fact that much of it looks at conditions that existed in the past. As a result, this work is a literature based thesis, which required a consultation of a wide range of sources (peer-reviewed journal articles; books; etc.). In order to mitigate against biases, and ensure the validity of the information by cross-referencing I have included a wide variety of secondary sources mirrored in both peer-reviewed journal articles and books, but also in journalistic articles, public policy reports, international organization reports and other. Furthermore, I have also decided to include both domestic and foreign authors discussing the particular subject, hoping that this way I would shed some light on different approach people have regarding these topics. This way, the variety of sources should prove sufficient in combating the limitations set by using only secondary sources for my data. As a result, the nature of this thesis and research included dictated the length of this document.

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### Ethical Considerations and Case Study Selection:

I have decided to research cases of Egypt and Poland for two reasons. My previous scope of research regarding the Middle East revolved heavily around the Gulf States, more importantly their democratic capacities. I have done research on cases of democratic participation, economic modernization and socio-economic diversification in this region. As a result, I have gotten to know the region very well, but also feel a certain level of bias towards specific socio-political trends in it. This is why I have chosen to research Egypt instead, a country with which I had only an intermediate level of familiarity and not any particular previous personal nor professional involvement with.

As for Poland, this choice was even more straightforward. Since I come from a part of the world that would most likely be described as the “Eastern Europe” I felt the need to portray a case that is different from the one I lived in, yet similar enough in order to understand its complexities. This is why I have chosen Poland, and not any of the Ex-Yugoslavia countries for my comparison. I should also mention that there is a certain trend of common identity among the Slavic nations, therefore it might be suspected that I could potentially share certain sentiments towards Polish struggles. With all respect to what this “Slavic Identity” is supposed to entail, I have approached research about Poland from an ultimately objective standpoint, firmly believing in putting science ahead of any potentially personal biases I might have.

As a result of these choices, I will be able to detach from my emotional or professional bias, approaching this topic through as objective research as possible.

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## Findings

### Poland:

#### Socio-Political Society:

I have researched Polish *socio-political society* by going through a number of sources, namely peer-reviewed journal articles, theses and books that discuss the existence of *sociopolitical society* during Poland's communist era. My focus spanned across both domestic, but also foreign authors. I tried to get a variety of sources to offset any potential biases. Furthermore, I have included statistical data, most notably that of Solidarity's membership, which I have numerically presented in a table 1.1. I have also looked into electoral data (illustrated through election results) in order to portray the official mechanisms of political power competition. Election results are presented numerically, while political participation and political institutionalism is presented through secondary sources. Although the election results are presented numerically, they have been qualited in order to follow the narrative thread of the thesis.

Just like any other communist country, immediately after WWII Poland entered a process of massive societal reorganization. The complete rewriting of the social contract meant that people living in Poland were to pledge their allegiance to a form of government unknown to them up to that point (Krzysztof 2000).

Regardless of this, Polish civil society was still one of the liveliest in all of Eastern Europe at the time (Kubik 1994) (Goodwyn 1991). Considering the communist ban on free public organization, Communist Poland saw a rise of a number groups and organizations who acted in deep privacy and secrecy from the state. Samizdat publications, book clubs, literary forums, academic circles, some of whom have bordered on dissident like behavior all painted the Communist Poland's civil society picture. Raina (1981) Bloom (2013) and Fowkes (1995) provide a good outlook on the extensiveness of Polish civil society, naming a number of organizations that took part in Polish civil life during this time. These organizations include the likes of Farmers' Self-Defense committees, The People's University, the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights, Students' Solidarity committees, Believers' Self-Defense Committees, Young Poland Movement, etc.

And while the civil society was secret, but stable regardless, formal political participation was heavily succumbed, controlled and finally manipulated by the Communist Party. Snippets of liberal movements did appear, but organized, structured and institutional

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plural participation did not exist in Poland until the mid-1980s (Davies 2005). In fact, any type of political participation that did exist in Poland of the time is tightly connected to civil society.

Two socio-political organizations stand apart from the others in their oppositional struggle against the regime. These are Solidarity – a working class union that attracted many members throughout its existence, later to play a pivotal part in Polish first democratic elections, and the Catholic Church, an institution that served as a bond between Poland and the rest of the world, but also a channel of communication and perseverance of Polish identity.

Solidarity owes its existence to a number of movements before it, but most notably to Worker's Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotnikow; KOR), an organization founded in 1976 by Polish intellectuals and dissidents (Fowkes 1995). The motive for establishing KOR was a violent response to a wave of worker's protests in Poland, which occurred in the first place as a result of a dire economic situation in Poland at the time (Krzysztof 2000) (Fowkes 1995). KOR acted by offering legal, financial and logistic assistance to the families of workers who suffered from the hand of the government. After a couple of years, KOR attracted a vast number of followers which prompted it to issue a declaration of worker's rights in 1979. The government's continued failure to provide basic economic services to its people ushered worker's movements into a new era (Andrew 1994). Next year, following another massive wave of protests throughout Poland, KOR activists managed to enter negotiations with the government, advocating their declaration of worker's rights. After successful negotiations, the KOR activists met and decided to create an integrated union, one that will have its reach throughout the entire Poland – Solidarity (Bloom 2013) (Fowkes 1995).

Probably the best illustration of Solidarity's success and importance is its membership. According to the official Polish archives, Solidarity managed to attract a vast number of members during a very short period of time. Table 1.1 offers a good perspective on Solidarity's membership.

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Solidarity Membership			
November 1980	December 1980	March 1981	September 1981
5.5 Million <sup>26</sup> members	6.9 Million <sup>27</sup> members	7.7 Million <sup>28</sup> members	8.9 Million members

Table 1.1

As seen in table 1.1, Solidarity's membership exploded during a period of only one year. According to these numbers, one can calculate that Solidarity attracted more than 50.000 new members daily<sup>29</sup>. This number is not an accident, since Solidarity's growth only coincided with increasing dissatisfaction of Polish citizens with communist rule<sup>30</sup>. Since political parties were not allowed, and those who had the opportunity to organize politically were pro-government supporters anyway, Solidarity did not only represent another labor union, it represented the strongest political opposition in Poland as well.

Polish Catholic church was the second most important civil society actor due to its very strong presence in Polish national identity (Kubik 1994). During the entire reign of Polish Communist Regime, the Polish Catholic Church retained an unparalleled level of autonomy (Piotrowski 2012). The church used its autonomy as leverage. Polish communist leaders knew that the Catholic Church should not be trifled with, therefore they were more than willing to enter negotiations about public sphere – everyday life of people in Poland with it. Meanwhile, assuming a position of power, the Polish Catholic Church used this position to support Solidarity and aggregate the interests of opposition (Padraic 2002). This resulted, for instance, in an unorthodox decision to allow religious education in public schools, as well as not to interfere with church's press.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the Polish Catholic Church offered a very important outlook into the outside world. Its connection to the holy chair, which resulted in a number of Papal visits (most notable ones of 1979, just before the formation of Solidarity, and

<sup>26</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/1316, Wykaz KZ i MKZ oraz szacunkowa liczebność NSZZ „Solidarność” według stanu na 30 XI 1980, pp.50-51.

<sup>27</sup> Institute for National Remembrance (AIPN), BU 0236/315, vol.1, Charakterystyka głównych ogniw „Solidarności,” pp.184-185

<sup>28</sup> 7 AIPN, BU 0236/315, vol.1, Wykaz ilościowy KZ i MKZ oraz szacunkowa liczebność NSZZ „Solidarność”. Stan na 20 III 1981, pp. 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> All of the numbers were retrieved from (Tomasz 2011).

<sup>30</sup> I use the term citizens here aware that people living in Poland at the time had no civil rights often pertained in the word “citizen”. Invariably, I decide to use the term as a way of delimiting the population attached to it.

that of 1987), proved to be crucial to the internalization of the Polish struggle against its communist regime. Papal visits were closely followed around the globe, bringing international attention to the Polish case. It is also extremely important to mention that the Holy Roman Pope of the time – John Paul II was Polish, therefore his connection to the Polish people was both religious but also ethnic. Frentzel-Zagorska (1990) argues that: “The election of a Polish Pope provided an enormous boost for the hope and morale of Poles in their opposition to the imposed socio-political system.” Additionally, the Polish Catholic Church sustained the Polish national identity. Christians or not, people would move towards the Church simply as a protest against the Stalinist government (Rotchild 1989).

The Catholic Church and Solidarity played the most pivotal part in ordinary Pole’s oppositional efforts. Elections, although officially existent, did not make any actual difference. The first elections occurred in 1946, and proved to be a proto-type of what Polish people were to expect in future. Dominated by the Communist Party, the election mechanics were deeply flawed while the opposition was under a constant barrage of direct and indirect pressure.

The following elections were not very different. The elections that took place in 1952 set the course for the remainder of the communist rule in Poland in particular. Completely dominated by the ruling party, these elections were rigged, served to establish a pragmatic proof of electoral laws and a new constitution, and overall set the course for the country. The Front of National Unity, a coalition bloc consisting of a Communist Party and its satellites, which ever so ironically described itself as unitary, won an astonishing 98.8% of the votes (Nohlen and Stöver 2010). The following years were no different, and elections of 1957, 1961, 1965, 1969, 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1985 followed a similar pattern of rigged results and one-sided ballots<sup>31</sup>.

It was in 1989 that Polish oppositional struggle finally reached a formal political result. First free and fair parliamentary elections were organized, and after the Round Table talks, Solidarity went on to win these elections and usher Poland into a new political era (Davies 2005) (Fowkes 1995).

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<sup>31</sup> Numerical primary data regarding electoral results in Poland can be found in ParLine Databases available at the Inter Parliamentary Union Website – [www.ipu.org/parline](http://www.ipu.org/parline)

### Rule of Law:

It is very challenging to talk about *rule of law* in non-democratic countries. In its ideal type, the state is the sole protector of its *rule of law*, while *rule of law* guarantees state's legality and legitimacy. Contrary to this established historical praxis, *rule of law* in Communist Poland was there to serve the state, and in Communist Poland the state was the Communist Party. In this section I will be discussing formal and informal institutions of *rule of law* in Communist Poland. Formal institutions include constitutional and judicial systems. Informal include human rights and social justice – the way people were actually treated in Poland. Data-wise, I have looked at secondary sources – peer-reviewed academic journals and books. I have also obtained a digital copy of 1952 Polish constitution – a document that served as a guiding principle of Polish communist rule. In an effort to research informal *rule of law* institutions, I have looked into Amnesty International country reports from year 1980 to 1989, since these were the pivotal years in Polish pursuit of democracy, and as such feature the most cases of human rights violations. I decided to choose Amnesty International since this non-governmental agency has an extensive archive of yearly reports widely available online. Additionally, it is one of the most highly regarded institutions of its kind to date, and is a legitimate choice as such. Finally, as for the social justice system, I have mostly consulted books and academic articles discussing ordinary life in Poland at the time.

During its communist era, Poland did have a certain level of rule of law, yet it was perverted by ideological convictions. For instance, the Polish constitution featured a wide array of socially inclusive rights and guaranteed benefits on paper<sup>32</sup>. These ranged from social welfare pledges, to universal health and dental services (Linz and Stepan 1996). However, the structure of Polish society at the time, vastly divided between those who served the party – nomenklatura, and those who didn't – meant that these constitutionally guaranteed services were not utilized in a reasonable fashion (Hardy 2009). Partisanship became increasingly important, borderline essential in Poland. Soon enough being a member of the party could not only warrant an easier approach to constitutionally guaranteed rights, but could potentially ease up the judicial and legal processes one might face too (Hardy 2009).

All of this led to many human rights violations. The power discrepancy between the nomenklatura and communist elites on one side, and ordinary Poles on the other, created a sense of us vs. them mentality within the society (Kubik 1994). In this type of atmosphere,

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<sup>32</sup> Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej z dnia 22 lipca 1952 r.: <https://maopd.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/konstytucja-prl-1952.pdf> accessed on 06.03.2015.

*rule of law* stopped being an instrument for the people, and became an instrument of the party. The rights abuses would usually be connected to corruption (Grotsky 2009), but other, more direct problems existed as well. For instance, Di Palma (1991) argues that many people living in communist societies were ready to exchange their political and civil rights for legal protection. Poles were no different of course. This led to a situation where many Poles were ready to accept limited personal freedoms, simply in order to have at least a hope of a systematic legal security.

Major human rights issues and violations occurred in the beginning of the 1980s when Communist Poland's government issued a state of emergency – martial law across Poland (Paczkowski and Byrne 2007) (Davies 2005). Martial law led to a wave of political arrests, and Poland quickly entered a state of legal chaos. Dozens were killed, airports and main roads were closed, while many telephone lines were simply disconnected. Solidarity was banned (Paczkowski and Byrne 2007), and its members quickly incarcerated, including Lech Walesa who was sentenced to jail overnight. This event, which would go on for two years, politically defined the decade in Poland, and although it officially ended in 1983, many of the political citizens were not released until 1986 – while the ban on Solidarity was not lifted until 1987 (Fowkes 1995).

Amnesty International claims that a multitude of human rights violations occurred in Poland during this five year period. In their reports, Amnesty International claims that more than 1000 prisoners of conscience were being illegally held captive in 1983<sup>33</sup>, after the martial law ended. Furthermore, Amnesty International reports numerous other violations, such as ill treatment of prisoners of conscience, political executions and legally dubious death penalties<sup>3435</sup> Furthermore, legal practice encountered massive obstacles, especially for those attorneys at law who wanted to represent Solidarity members<sup>36</sup>. Finally, although the martial law was lifted on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1983, many of its features were permanently or provisionally incorporated into an already existing Communist Poland's legal body, namely the constitution and other legislation, most notably that with political or civic association in its scope.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Amnesty International Annual Country Report 1984. Document retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1000041984ENGLISH.PDF>. Accessed on 20.03.2015

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Amnesty International Annual Country Report 1985. Document retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1000021985ENGLISH.PDF>. Accessed on 20.03.2015

<sup>36</sup> Amnesty International Annual Country Report 1984. Document retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1000041984ENGLISH.PDF>. Accessed on 20.03.2015

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

In conclusion, Communist Poland's rule of law was in a weak state under communist rule. Personal connections, social capital and most importantly a position within the party power structures assured a level of benevolence with the legal system. Those less fortunate were to find their way around, often trading their personal rights for what little legal protection they could receive.

### Economic Society:

*Economic society* encompasses both numerical economic parameters, but also economic policies, price levels, citizen's welfare, etc. In this section I will present Poland's Gross Domestic Product per capita, Gross National Income, Gross Domestic Product cumulative and annual Gross Domestic Product growth. I will present this data for the years 1990-1993. All of the data has been taken from World Bank databases, accessed in March, 2015. I chose the post-transition years as an example simply because there is no World Bank data for Poland prior to the 1990. The reason for this is that Poland was a communist country, and as such did not share economic growth metrics with those of the World Bank. This is why I have decided to consult secondary sources, books and peer-reviewed journal articles discussing economic development in Poland at the time. Additional numerical data will address certain economic trends in Poland during the 1980s, with the World Bank graph addressing the immediate post-transition period. I chose to include the post-transition years as a way of portraying a more accurate picture of Polish economic society. This way, the 1980s information will work together with the immediate post-transition year's information.

During the entire span of the 1980s, Poland was suffering a very harsh economic situation. The soviet inspired five year plans did not work as suspected, and the country and its people were entering a dubious state of economic hardship (Saxonberg 2001). The reasons were numerous, ranging from the systematic problems with State-Planned communist economies (Simatupang 1994), to the 1970s oil-crisis and its consequences (Szelenyi and Balazs 1994). Food prices rose (Bloom 2013) (Fowkes 1995) while the economic situation of many, including the top level government representatives remained on the same level as Western European's lower middle class people (Saxonberg 2001). Economic disaster was imminent.

The strongest reason for the decline of Polish economy, and with it Polish economic society are the changes in technology, be it production or research and development technologies (Saxonberg 2001). Polish economy simply stopped being competitive, which combined with its inadaptability resulted in wasted production and people capital. An

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evidence for that comes in terms of a number of economic indicators. Due to the scope of this thesis, I have decided to present trade patterns as one of these indicators.

Here is an example of trade patterns between Poland and other OECD countries. During the first half of the 1980s, imports of “moderate to high-level R&D imports from OECD countries” rose more than 7%<sup>38</sup>, while simultaneously capital-intensive exports to these countries dropped an astronomical 15%<sup>39</sup>. The reason for this is simple – the Polish government had to import more high-end machinery in order to replace its capital production capacities. Additionally, Poland did not lose its own capital production capacities alone. Instead, it lost its capital production export capacities. Therefore it is not surprising that according to Muller (1987), Polish exports of electrical engineering products plunged by 36% between 1980 and 1985. This meant that Communist Poland was not producing technologically advanced machinery, which affected its ability to become competitive on the world market. Consequentially, it had to import not only every-day products, but also had to stop exports as a whole, since its products were not competitive. Finally, it had to import machinery and electrical engineering products on top, in order to satisfy domestic demand. Combined with previous economic crises, and emphasized by a very apparent power decline of the Soviet Union, 1980s brought a very clear message that Polish economy was basically doomed.

Polish *economic society* was very similar to other communist, centrally planned economic societies of the time in this regard. Yet, certain nuances did exist that made Poland stand out a bit. Firstly, unlike in other communist countries, Polish agricultural producers possessed a level of integrity which led to the creation of a quasi-free market economy for agricultural products (Paramio 2002) (Linz and Stepan 1996). This integrity was mirrored in the fact that many small time agricultural producers remained owners of their own land, and as such could capitalize upon their own production – a practice completely opposite to that of a typical communist society. Additionally, growing travel capacity of Polish citizens meant a higher level of interaction with the outside, most often western world. Influenced by the ideas of the West, people would start to realize that communism did not in fact offer welfare as advertised (Padraic 2002). This truth became even more apparent once foreign loans and funds which once flooded Poland and other Eastern European countries in an effort to

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<sup>38</sup> Data collected from (Saxonberg 2001), original source by Wienert & Slater, 1986.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



reinforce the democratic capacities there, stopped flowing into the country (Piotrowski 2012), which resulted in many economic crises that, later on, fueled civic unrest (Andrew 1994).

After the transition happened many western economists and policy makers applauded Polish switch to a neo-liberal model. However, Polish drastic economic policy switch left parts of the society in ruins (Ost 2005). As shown in table 3.1, Poland has embarked on a road to transition with grim looking economic indicators. Yet, GDP growth percentile was on the rise only one year after the change of regime. As shown in the table 3.1, GDP per capita was also on the rise, while the PPP indicator followed. And although the annual growth of GDP per capita varied, PPP growth was more stable, showing that the purchasing power of ordinary Polish citizens was indeed on the rise. Two parameters are missing though. First, there is no PPP data for year 1990, as well as GDP growth indicator for the same year.

Series Name	1990	1991	1992	1993
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)	..	5600,00	5790,00	6180,00
GDP (current US\$)	64,712,371,654	83,861,124,789	92,527,771,036	94,201,159,958
GDP growth (annual %)	..	-7,02	2,51	3,74
GDP per capita (current US\$)	1698,01	2192,67	2411,86	2449,24

Table 3.1 – Poland's economic indicators from 1990 to 1993. Data from database: World Development Indicators – World Bank: Last Updated: 01/30/2015

However, economic parameters are only one side of the story. Although numerically, Polish economy was recovering, the neo-liberal switch brought unparalleled problems to parts of the society. Widespread corruption, entrenched in the former nomenklatura elites found its way back embodied in a new social class – modern businessmen (Hardy 2009). The economic hardship was so heavy on people, that many have decided to vote for parties that were led by previous communist elites (Cox and Powers 1997) while others decided to turn their dissatisfaction and inability to prosper towards the far-right (Saxonberg 2001).

Egypt:

Socio-Political Society:

Egyptian’s *socio-political society* was one of the most diverse and complex *societal institutions* in the MENA region during the events of Arab Spring. Its existence is multi-dimensional. Thus, researching *socio-political society*, especially for a limited study such as this one, calls for a level of limitation in order to remain within the scope of the research question. I simply could not include every aspect of *socio-political society* in pre-2011 Egypt since there were so many aspects to consider. Because of this, I decided to approach this *arena* from a similar angle of that in Communist Poland. I will describe the most important *socio-political* events, institutions and actors in a decade leading to a 2011 Revolution. For this reason, I have consulted peer-reviewed journal articles and books discussing socio-political organizing in Egypt during the 2000s. I have also acquired certain policy documents describing the state of civil society organizations in Egypt during this time.

To start this section off, I will address the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt. There was a large number of NGOs in Egypt. Their exact number before the revolution is somewhat unclear. The reason for this is that Egypt’s Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) and its General Federation of Associations (GFA), the two governmental institutions in charge of registering NGOs, provide different numbers. For instance, MoSS states that in year 2007, 21.500 NGOs were operating in Egypt. On the other hand the GFA states that this number was 15.151.<sup>40</sup> The difference between the two numbers is significant; 6.000, and this leads to a very unclear and confusing picture.

Table 2<sup>41</sup>

Distribution	No of Associations	% Share
Cairo	2,788	18
Upper Egypt	3,465	23
Giza	1,399	9
Lower Egypt	6,894	46
Frontier Govs	608	4
Total	15,154	100

Source: Results of the survey conducted by the General Federation of Associations, 2007.  
 Note: Statistical analysis was conducted by the Arab Network for NGOs in 2007.

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<sup>40</sup> Data taken from “Egypt Human Development Report: Egypt’s Social Contract – The Role of Civil Society”, p 67  
<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

The level of social involvement has also been in a constant rise in Egypt. Once again looking at NGOs, one can see a stable trend of increased interest for social involvement. As portrayed in Table 3, the number of registered NGOs has been in a constant rise since early 1960s.

Table 3<sup>42</sup>

Time Period	No. Established	Average/year
1964-1973	3,161	316
1974-1983	2,304	230
1984-1993	2,441	244
1994-2003	4,788	479
2004-2006	1,694	850

Source: Various reports and statements by the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

By 2008 about 43 per cent of Egyptian NGOs were Islamic organizations, 9 per cent were Coptic associations, while the 25 per cent were quasi-governmental community developed associations (Beinin 2014). This rise of NGOs did not however guarantee an increase in civil society’s role within the Egyptian society itself. The reason for this is that the MoSS is the only government institution with a right to register and monitor NGOs existence, as guaranteed by the Law on Community Associations and Foundations—Law 84 of 2002 (Abdelrahman 2004). As a result, the role of NGOs was strictly controlled by the ministry, a reality, which limited the degree of effective action space which NGOs and actors had to work within in Egypt (Beinin 2014). In fact, many of the NGOs that publicly rebelled against Mubarak’s regime during the early 2000s, such as the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (Beinin 2014), or the Cairo Institute for Human Rights, have been either repressed, or closed by government decree. As a result, the state of Egyptian civil society, although at first glance might seem established, was in fact heavily challenged by strict policies and tight governmental control as demonstrated by the treatment of NGOs.

Another problem Egyptian NGOs had is its elitist orientation, which in its essence cuts down true democratic consolidation (Plaetzer 2014). Simply put, NGOs in Egypt acted like completely autonomous agents, independent of the state, but also of the people, pursuing a detached polity that did not match the demand in society. This type of acting would *other* the

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

remainder of the underrepresented groups – meaning that people did not perceive NGOs as genuinely in service of the people, but more so in service of themselves.

But NGOs, although having a prominent role in Egyptian society, were not the only *socio-political* actor in the decade prior to the 2011 Revolution. Another element of the Egyptian *socio-political society* were the labor movements – the unions. The existence of labor unions is tightly connected to the state in Egypt (Beinin and Lockman 1992, 440,446), yet their activity was usually reactionary to the policies of the government (Kandil 2012). In an effort to assume and keep control of labor organization, Egyptian labor unions were to be registered in an Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) (Duboc 2014). This way, the state had direct control of labor union leaders and their actions, placing different non-political actors within the Egyptian political system, a trait very much familiar to many non-democratic regimes (Bellin 2000). Regardless of government's intent to keep the unions at bay and their leadership close to political pray, Egyptian labor did exhibit a level social mobilization against the government. A steady decline in living standards combined with low wages and harsh working conditions propelled the largest wave of labor protests in its history between 2004 and 2010 – when more than 2 million workers decided to voice their discontent through strikes (Duboc 2014). Some strikes started becoming longer, lasting up to several months (al-Basyuni and 'Umar 2007). Yet, probably the most important thing to understand is that labor strikes in Egypt were not anti-government strikes in their essence. Instead, they were simply a cry for help, an attempt to reach a better position within the Egyptian society as it is. A great example of this is that many of the strikes actually asked for Mubarak's help in resolving striker's problems, instead of actually asking for his resignation (Duboc 2014).

Finally, there was a vast number of non-represented members of the Egyptian society, middle-class, young, educated people. Marxists, libertarians, economists, teachers, professors, intellectuals, doctors, etc. – they all knew very well that something was very wrong with their society. Their dissatisfaction was quickly mirrored through a creation of the Kefaya movement in 2004, whose actions although exemplary and legitimate, came to an organic halt within two years of movement's life (Beinin 2014). “Kefaya revitalized associational life and created a glimpse of hope that change is possible” (El Medni 2013). The movement sparked the oppositional flame in Egypt, and resonated extremely well with the very much underrepresented youth population. In some ways, the Kefaya movement was a stepping stone towards an April 6<sup>th</sup> movement, another oppositional event in Egypt, that took place in 2008

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(El Medni 2013), yet both Kefaya and April 6<sup>th</sup> movement ended prematurely with small to medium effect on political scene of Egypt.

As portrayed above, social mobilization in Egypt very often coincided with political participation. This is no coincidence since the country's electoral laws were a result of 1952 coup d'état, consequentially leaving Egyptian citizens robbed of their civil liberties (Kassem 2004) (Langohr 2004). Just like in the case of Poland, it was mostly the civil sector that offered an alternative to citizens (Beinin 2014). Clientelist mechanisms that Egyptian presidents implemented within their state proved to be successful. A combination of high capital and corrupted public office led to a total dissonance between citizens, political elite, and wealthy individuals (Kandil 2012) (Wahid 2009). Politics became a driving force of wealth accumulation, which resulted in a rewriting of Egyptian social contract. Suddenly, it was a lot more important how close one is to the politicians, than what one is actually able to produce (Brooks 2008) (Roussillon 1998). Combined with close to no room for legitimate political participation, this turn of events left Egyptian populace alone in their struggle for better tomorrow.

#### Rule of Law:

This *arena of democracy* will follow a similar pattern of research as its Polish counterpart. I have divided this *arena* into two parts, the formal *rule of law*, and the informal one. Just like in Communist Poland's rule of law section, formal *rule of law* includes judicial and constitutional structures and mechanisms of employing law in Egypt. As for informal element of this *arena*, it will include the state of human rights in Egypt, legality of the system, etc. This division can also be flagged as a macro and a micro level perspective. I have consulted secondary sources – books, peer-reviewed academic and journalistic articles, as well as policy documents to establish context to this section.

With Mubarak coming to power, Egyptian *rule of law* entered a stable domain of corruption and futility. Although the judicial branch was following a typical three-tiered structure, complimented by system of government's tripartite division of power<sup>43</sup> (executive, legislative and judicial), the system was inherently flawed by high levels of corruption (El-Dabh 2014). The corruption and structural problems did not encompass all three tiers of power equally. Executive and legislative branches were often times inseparable for an average

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<sup>43</sup> (Library of Congress 2015) – Data taken from United States Library of Congress Country Report

bystander, while the judicial branch had actually possessed at least some level of autonomy<sup>44</sup>. A good testament to this is a somewhat independent role of judges in Egypt's public life, mirrored both by their roles in society (overseeing the elections for instance<sup>45</sup>), but also with their individual and professional relationship to autocratic government (Duboc 2014). The country's legal system however, was burdened with political involvement, and contrary to the assumed division of power, it was rare to see courts functioning independently from political influence.

A good example of political involvement into legal matters on a macro scale can be found in Egyptian "political parties law", which was abused to its fullest extent. In short, the political parties law ensures that no political party can be formed in Egypt without the explicit consent of the powers in structure<sup>46</sup> - Political Parties Committee. The institution had unparalleled powers – approving or disproving political parties, newspapers, magazines, candidates, to name only a few<sup>47</sup>. PPC served as a primary mechanism of ensuring political will within electoral legislature, fundamentally controlling the entire political spectrum through quasi-legal system. And although some improvements did happen during certain years, most notably in 2005 with the political party law amendment<sup>48</sup>, overall condition of electoral legal system remained highly dominated by the executive branch.

Electoral laws only scratch the surface of Egyptian *rule of law* issues on a macro level. While these problems are easily observable and understood, other, micro level examples of misuse of *rule of law* present a bigger challenge. Human rights violations, especially during late 2010 and early 2011 present one of the direst practices of former Egyptian government. These human rights violations include cases of illegal incarcerations, beatings, cases of torture and many others<sup>49</sup>. Amnesty International notices that "Political activists, including members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood and other political opposition groups such as the National Association for Change, the 6 April Movement and the Egyptian Movement for Change (Kefaya), ... were arrested, beaten and taken to remote locations and dumped after their

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<sup>44</sup> Freedom House Country Report 2005 – Countries at the Crossroads: Egypt. Accessed on 25.04.2015. Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2005/egypt#.VUPoLfmqqko>

<sup>45</sup> Human Rights Watch – Monopolizing Power, June 2007. Accessed on 23.04.2015. Document available at: <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/egypt0107/egypt0107web.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Human Rights Watch – Elections in Egypt, November 2010. Accessed on 23.04.2015. Document available at <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/11/23/elections-egypt>

<sup>49</sup> Amnesty International Annual Reports for 2010, 2011, 2012. Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/search/?documentType=Annual+Report&sort=date&p=3>. Accessed on 02.05.2015.

mobile phones, money and shoes were confiscated”<sup>50</sup>. Violations did not stop here, but were instead institutionalized and brought to a state level in 2011, with numerous reported cases of torture, beatings and other ill-treatment, conducted, for the most part, with impunity<sup>51</sup>. The state of human rights reached its lowest point during January of 2011, when human rights violations, followed by personal freedom restrictions reached an all-time high<sup>52</sup>

As shown here, *rule of law* within Egypt was on a steady decline during 2000s, reaching its lowest point couple of years prior to the revolution. Systematic problems and challenges were followed by inherent corruption within the bureaucratic and judicial systems, all leading to an illiberal form of governance, and a constantly declining state of human rights.

### Economic Society:

Egyptian economic society is very diverse, and features a number of different classes, actors and institution within it. In following paragraphs, I have presented World Bank data in order to numerically illustrate Egypt’s economy between 2010 and 2013. Just like in the case of Communist Poland, for my numerical data I have chosen to include a short “post-transitory” period mirrored in years 2012 and 2013, in order to both illustrate the change in economy after the January 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution, but also achieve a methodological resemblance with my other case. In addition to presented numbers, I have also consulted with secondary literature – books and peer-reviewed journal articles – in order to once again offer context to the numerical data presented.

With Mubarak’s arrival to power, Egypt was already a vastly divided state. Growing bureaucracy and few landowners that existed presented a former backbone of Egyptian society (Heikal 1983). Newly developed service industry gave birth to a new breed of middle-class, one that was heavily involved in state business as well. Regardless, the new service industry could not create enough jobs, therefore the state had to assume a primary role of an employer (Kandil 2012). Although already blown out of proportions (Brooks 2008), Egyptian bureaucratic apparatus grew from 1.3 million to an astounding 4 million employees (Springborg 1989) in late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The trend continued with the beginning of 2000s, when the size of the bureaucratic apparatus was further exacerbated by extreme levels of corruption and nepotism. The vastly divided society was soon to become even more divided,

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<sup>50</sup> Amnesty International 2011 Annual Report. Document Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/001/2011/en/>. Accessed on 02.05.2015

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Amnesty International Annual Reports for 2010, 2011, 2012. Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/search/?documentType=Annual+Report&sort=date&p=3>. Accessed on 02.05.2015.

when a number of top-level businessmen switched their interest from business only, to politics as well. This led to a creation of an extremely unjust social system, where neoliberal practices were used as a justification of people's misfortunes (Mitchell 2002). This divide got stronger by the day, and only two years before the revolution, reached its peak. It is in 2009 that Egyptian elites celebrated a \$100 billion rise of GDP since year 2000 (Kandil 2012), forgetting that more than 50% of their own population lived with less than \$2 a day (Wahid 2009).

A further burden to Egyptian economic society was its deep class division. These divisions did not run across the domain of typical Marxist classes of capitalists and workers. Instead, divisions could be observed amongst many different actors, private entrepreneurs, public sector, private sector, big business, even NGOs to a certain extent. For instance, Egypt's public sector had become an increasingly independent entity during years of its growth. Half of Cairo's formal sector labor force is employed by the Egyptian state (Sims 2011) (Dorman 2013). This enormity of public sector opens an opportunity for a strong patron-client relationship model, where those employed by the government get to provide services to those who are not, in return for something else (Roussillon 1998).

According to the Transparency International 2012 report: "Transparency International's National Integrity System Assessments (2010) have found that nepotism is so rife in countries such as Egypt and Morocco that it is widely accepted as a 'fact of life'" (Transparency International 2012). As a result, Egyptian economy was not only riled with structural problems, it also faced systemic corruption and nepotism which undermined its credibility and effectiveness, especially of its public institutions (Zuhair 2011). As a result, Egyptian state bureaucracy was not only inefficient, but was also deeply corrupt in its pre-transition period. This was a very similar scenario to a communist nomenklatura as such. This offers a wide array of opportunities for misconduct and creation of gray economy within the state. Public sector employees do not only access otherwise inaccessible services, but are capable of exchanging these services for private goods and services alike (Sonbol 2000) (Roussillon 1998) (Dorman 2013).

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Series Name	2010	2011	2012	2013
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)	10,200	10,360	10,610	10,790
GDP (current US\$)	218,887,812,550	236,000,735,704	262,831,912,587	271,972,822,883
GDP growth (annual %)	5	2	2	2
GDP per capita (current US\$)	2,804	2,973	3,256	3,314

Table 4.1. Egypt's economic indicators from 1990 to 1993. Data from database: World Development Indicators – World Bank: Last Updated: 01/30/2015

Finally, table 4.1 exemplifies certain numerical parameters of the Egyptian economy. The transition did not bring any particular change on a macro-economic scale for Egypt. The PPP of Egyptian citizens has remained somewhat constant, while the GDP per capita has experienced a steady growth. Overall GDP has also featured a steady growth, although as shown in column three this growth has featured a negative trend compared to the pre-revolutionary years, moving from a 5% to 2%. These numbers obviously cannot exemplify the actual economic situation of an ordinary Egyptian citizen. These numbers do not show whether corruption has been put to bay, nor what the state of nepotism and huge class divisions is. What these numbers do show however, is continuity, and continuity is important because it shows us that Egyptian revolution, and ensuing transition, did not wreak havoc on country's economy.

## Analysis

In this part I will discuss how the statuses of *arenas of democracy* affected the nature of transition in both of my cases, as well as transition outcomes.

### Socio-Political Society:

*Socio-Political Society* played a very important role in the transition process. Its existence can be divided into two sections: governmental and oppositional activities. While the government in both countries tried its best to hinder oppositional momentum and social mobilization against it, oppositional activities did happen, and socio-political society outside of the deep state structures did exist. The real difference however comes from the organization of this oppositional socio-political society.

Both countries had illiberal political systems where free and fair political competition was not allowed. As a result, the bulk of oppositional activity had to fall on the shoulders of the civil sector. What little political opposition did exist aligned itself with the civil sector. Consequentially, both countries had amalgamated their political and civil sectors into a single

unit, where civil society actors were fighting both civil, but also political fights. Here, one sees the greatest difference between the two cases.

Solidarity was the main socio-political actor in Poland. This labor union, with its massive membership and extensive support from various internal but also external actors, was the pillar of oppositional fight. Solidarity did not simply represent workers of Poland, it represented another Poland, the non-Communist Poland. Its most significant contribution to the transition was the fact that it aggregated the interests of different classes and cultures around Poland. Solidarity also had an extremely important ally on its side – the Catholic Church. The Church had wholeheartedly supported Solidarity and its leadership. Aware that united they are stronger, the Polish Catholic Church did not challenge Solidarity’s position within the society, but had instead built upon it. It combined religious sentiments with Solidarity’s struggle; it portrayed it as holy and consequentially worthy. This combination of religion and working class, had done wonders for the Polish cause, offering many citizens a very clear and distinct alternative to that of communist regime. Finally, Solidarity had another very important element, a charismatic leader – Lech Walesa. Although Walesa was by no means a politician, he was an honest man, a worker, someone from the mass who could verbally express the sentiment of the many.

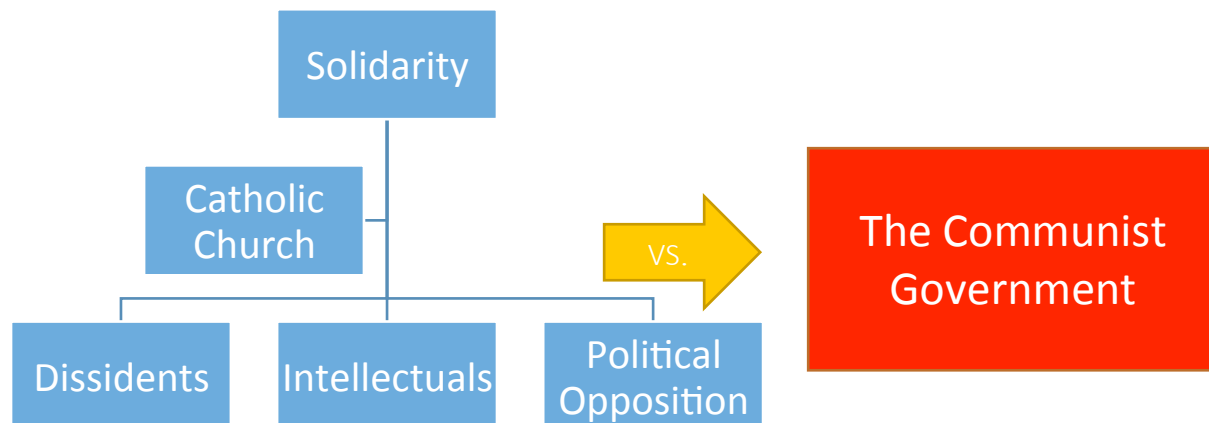


Diagram 1.1

Diagram 1.1 exemplifies this socio-political organizational structure. With Solidarity on top, and Catholic Church somewhere in between, the remainder of socio-political society oriented themselves around these two institutions by virtue of the fact that there were no

others in operation. This resulted in a focusing of the support these two institutions/organizations received and also made it more feasible to organize well.

The situation in Egypt was vastly different however. Egyptian *socio-political society* was potentially extremely powerful, yet very poorly organized. Lacking clear leadership, Egyptian *socio-political society* had been involved in numerous public protests and riots, which usually ended with little to no actual effect on situation. Divided between domestic and foreign NGOs, labor unions, religious groups, interest groups, dissidents, independent intellectuals and underrepresented youth, Egyptian *socio-political society* was not based on the same degree of intense focus empowering one or two organizations/institutions. This fragmentation affected the degree of power and influence the many organizations received who were working for change. The deeply rooted network of corruption and nepotism hindered development of a united socio-political oppositional leadership. Extensive networking capacities within the Egyptian society as a whole, meant that it would be very hard to aggregate around a common cause, simply because everyone had a different idea about what that cause was. This was further emphasized by the fact that everyone was equally incorporated within the Egyptian system, either through professional work or personal connections. As Transparency International report stated, corruption became an every-day thing in Egypt, people lived corruption.

Unlike Polish *socio-political society*, Egyptian anti-government protests were not as clear and focused. Labor unions protested demanding better rights, NGOs acted in their own dimension, while many parts of the remainder of society simply remained underrepresented. There was a clear degree of fragmentation within Egyptian socio-political society that was not the case in Poland. Only when the underrepresented parts of Egyptian *socio-political society* started protesting did the Egyptian public sphere begin to change. The Kefaya movement, The 6<sup>th</sup> April Movement, and other minor movements did not change the socio-political situation in Egypt, but they paved a path to a bigger event, that of Tahrir Square. As diagram 1.2 shows, Egyptian *socio-political society* was widely dispersed, and as such did not present a singular, clear opposition to an established system of power.

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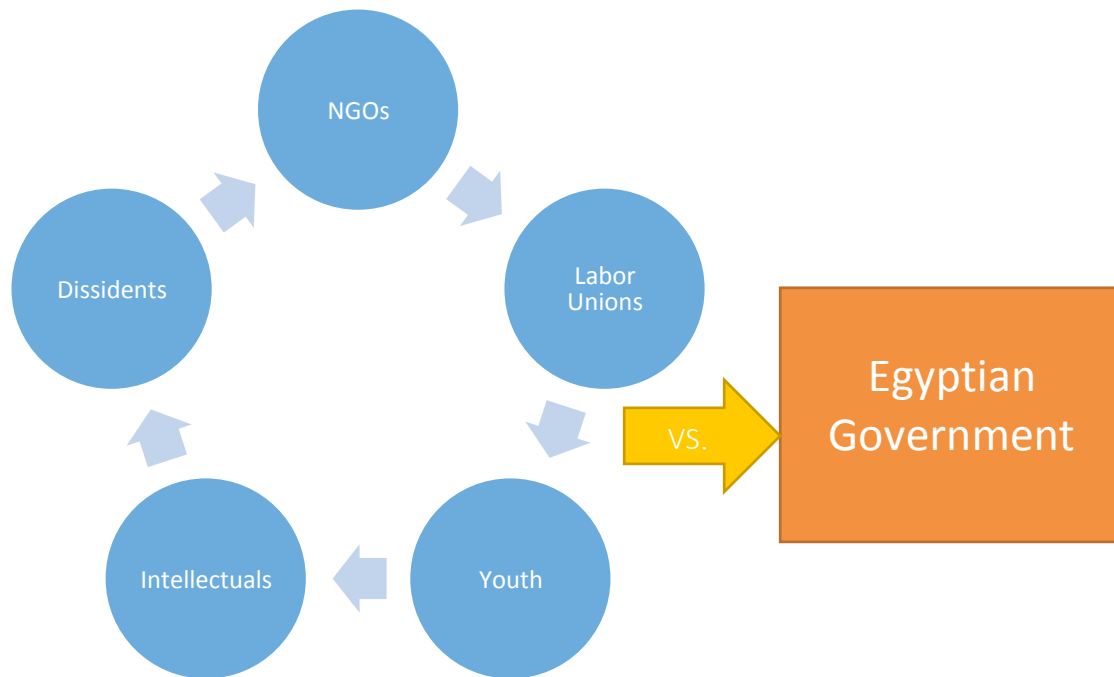


Diagram 1.2

As a result, *socio-political society* had a very strong, perhaps the strongest impact on the build-up processes to the transitions in both cases. The inability of people to formally politically organize in either of two states led to intensive civil movement momentums – such as the Kefaya movement in Egypt, and Solidarity in Poland. As a result, Solidarity’s actions in Poland, as well as civic unrest in Egypt were the foundations sprouting transition build-up in both of these countries.

### Rule of Law:

As for *rule of law*, the situation in both countries prior to their periods of transition, happens to be very similar. Poland possessed a solid *rule of law* on paper, while its execution was vastly different from what it was supposed to be. Bureaucratic elites dominated the public sector, and their professional connections and privileges warranted them an easier access to legal mechanisms of power. This made for a very corrupt system, which undermined the system’s legality and legitimacy. Diagram 2.1 shows this particular dynamic.

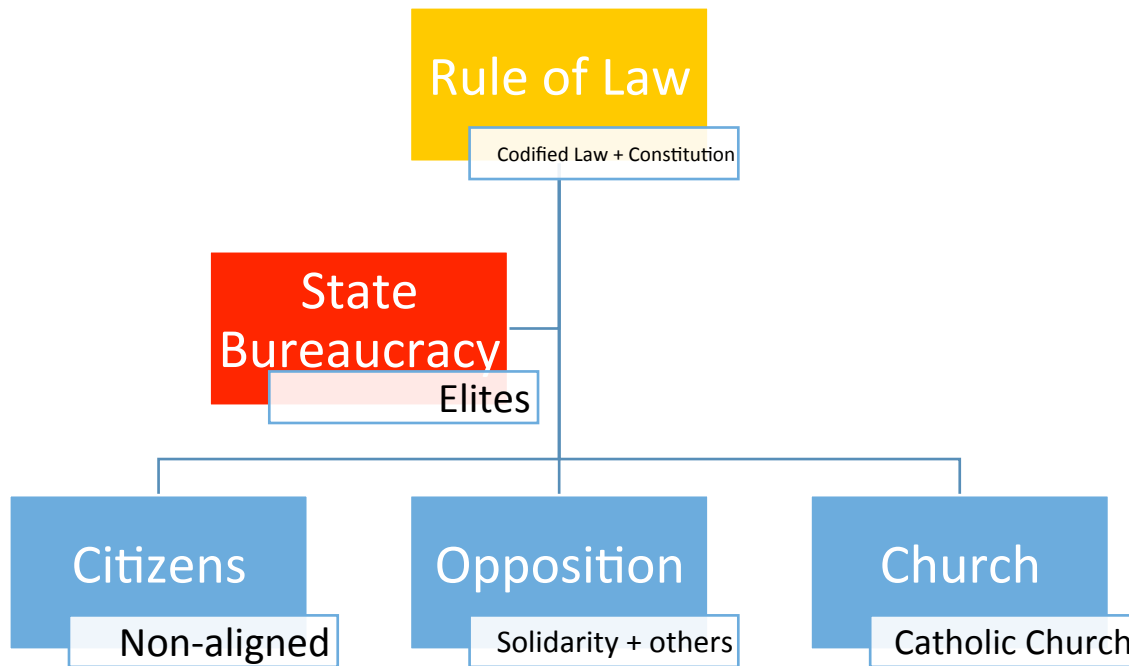


Diagram 2.1

Martial law, which had been imposed in Poland between 1981 and 1983 was a good example of this nonsensical system. Legally completely dubious, the institution of martial law was supposed to bring balance and order to Polish society. Instead, it brought even more chaos, with extreme human rights violations and severe government backlash. This position of unequal power exemplified an unequal struggle between the communist government and opposition in Poland. Hiding behind a corrupt legal system, the communist government possessed the weapon of coercion and persuasion that was very hard to combat, let alone defeat. What they did not know however, was that extreme perversion of *rule of law* can have a negative effect on the populace. This is why contrary to what the communists' intended, the quasi-legal strike did not halt oppositional movement but had instead only propelled it further.

The Egyptian situation was not that different. Findings show a level of structural similarity to Poland when it came to that status of *rule of law* in Egypt prior to its period of transition. Egypt similarly possessed a very corrupt and inherently flawed *rule of law* to that of Poland. Just like in Poland, the law did not see all of its subjects equally. Being close to the government usually meant being blessed with a legal blind eye. Extensive personal and professional networks stultified legislative and judicial independence. Additionally, a perpetual state of emergency that was in power in Egypt erased the boundaries between the

legislative and executive levers of power. This resulted in dubious laws, and most importantly, complete dominance of executive branch over the other branches and facets of the Egyptian state. A graphic representation of Egyptian *rule of law* can be found in diagram 2.2



Diagram 2.2

Still, unlike in Poland where *rule of law* did not change much over the years, but had instead made people adapt to it, Egyptian *rule of law* did see some alterations. The 2005 amendment to electoral law was a light step ahead, but a step nonetheless. What is more important is that the amendment was brought after a direct internal, but also external pressure on the government. Furthermore, judicial branch managed to hold its independence relatively intact during a long period of time, lowering the effects of state-level corruption and nepotism to an acceptable level, if such even exists. None of these elements existed in Poland, and it is safe to assume that Egyptian *rule of law* was less perverted than that of Communist Poland's. What frightens though is that the level of human rights abuse would often surpass that of Communist Poland's, especially in 2010 and 2011.

Problems with *rule of law* in both countries had a strong impact on the build-up of the transitions. Still, it is important to understand their impact through the scope of *socio-political society*. Although *rule of law* was unjust in both cases, it is the inability to politically organize and challenge the given context and the existing structures that had a bigger impact on the build-up of transitions, than the context and the structures themselves. As a result, *rule of*

*law's* impact was rather strong on the transition build-up process, but was compounded by the restrictions placed on the *socio-political society*.

### Economic Society:

Lastly, we come to *economic society* as a final, but equally interesting *arena*. *Economic society* was very complex in Poland. Being a communist country, Poland did not feature a very complex economic system. As shown in the findings section, Communist Poland's economy was suffering greatly during the 1980s. The trade deficits were growing while the wellbeing of the average Poles was significantly declining. What is even more important is that not even the elites lived well. With a gradual opening up of the country to the West, more Poles could see how much they were actually suffering under the communist regime. Certain positive trends did exist however, most notable ones including independent agricultural production and sales, but these were mere drops in the ocean of an incompetently planned economy, which was striving the country to doom. Diagram 3.1 illustrates the status of Polish economic society, including through basically two informal classes that existed.

## Communist Elites

- Nomenklatura, Party Leaders

## Everyone Else

- Workers, Peasants, Clergy, Students.

*Diagram 3.1*

This diagram illustrates that inherent inequality existed even within a communist system, yet this inequality was definitely not as substantial as some would think. After all, the findings show that there is somewhat of a consensus between the scholars that the ultimate downfall of Communist Poland's economy was not a consequence of societal inequalities, but instead macro-economic deficiencies, particularly mirrored in capital productivity capacities.

Egyptian *economic society* is vastly different from its Polish counterpart. First and foremost, it is important to stress out that a similar system of corruption occurred in both of these cases. Both in Communist Poland and Egypt there was a certain class of people who, usually through their professional involvement with the public sector, could attain certain valuable privileges. These privileges could then be traded for multitude of services and goods, which resulted in a very corrupt *economic society*. Egypt however, possesses two *differentias specificas* that set it apart from its Polish counterpart.

Firstly, Egypt was not a planned economy in the 2000s, it was far from it. Its neo-liberal practices have resulted in a vastly divided society, with extreme differences between its richest and its poorest part. As shown in the findings, more than 50% of Egyptians lived with less than \$2 a day. Meanwhile, people with strong personal connections managed to create strong business connections, becoming very rich in the process. This turn of events further propelled the patron-client culture of doing business, which again resulted in even more inequality. The radical neo-liberalization of Egyptian society created transition winners and losers even before transition ever started. Diagram 3.2 exemplifies this through a simple list of different classes within Egyptian society.



Diagram 3.2<sup>53</sup>

The second difference lies within the macro-economic indicators. Unlike Poland which had to undergo a complete economic shift from a planned economy to a liberal one,

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<sup>53</sup> Positions of classes are not necessarily hierarchical.



Egypt retained most of its economic policies even after the actual transitory moment ended. Reason for this is rather simple – Egyptian transition took place in 2011, in an ultimately connected and interdependent economic world. Simply put, Egypt has no other options than to challenge its internal problems. Poland had to create a completely new economy, from the start. This was a very painful process, but one that nowadays we know succeeded. Egypt does not need to undergo this big of a challenge, but alas needs to restructure a wide array of societal and state institutions instead.

As a result, *economic society* had an impact on the build-up process of transitions, but definitely not as much as *rule of law*, nor *socio-political society*. Once again, it is the inability to politically organize and challenge the given context and structures – inherent corruption and problematic economic policies – that was the main problem, not the corruption and economic policies alone. Still, economic hardship should definitely not be completely ignored. Many decided to march the streets simply because their economic situation was desperate, their prospect poor and their future bleak. However, economic hardship per se did not propel the transitions, inability to organize and challenge the economic policies that brought that hardship to the population in the first place did.

### Discussion:

My analysis shows that *arenas of democracy* were quite different in these two cases, and it was one particular arena that made a significant difference in Poland's lead up to a transition, which has been deemed 'successful' in existing literature. It is the *socio-political society*, more importantly, its oppositional cohesion.

The Egyptian revolution possessed a great level of disorganized social involvement and grassroots movement. Various actors aggregated around the idea of a different Egypt, yet many of them were not working together towards this particular goal. There is an inherent variety in this movement, since it attracted religious people, middle class, working class and youth alike around the same goal. Their goal was clear, although the same could not be said about their leadership. Different actors fought their own battles through many years prior to the revolution. Labor movements, unions, independent organizations, foreign and domestic NGOs have all had their clashes with the government during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was only in 2010 that this battle had become more streamlined among a larger number of these interest groups.

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In case of Poland, the entire revolution was focused on a single unit – that of Solidarity, and the social hegemony Solidarity possessed could not have been matched by anyone else. Although the fight for democracy in Poland was long and tedious, it is under a banner of Solidarity that the church, youth movements, samizdat groups and dissidents marched to victory together. This was not the case in Egypt as the disunity of the different interest groups contributed to fragmentation when it came to mobilization.

It is very often overlooked that Solidarity's struggle was not that longer than that of Egyptian people. In fact, Solidarity's bulk of activity happened between the years 1980 and 1990. This ten year period potentially corresponds to the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century, where unlike in Poland, Egyptian citizens had not had a clear oppositional organization. Solidarity's dominance becomes even clearer if one takes into consideration the class structure, or lack thereof of one in Poland. Although nomenklatura did exist, and political, and bureaucratic leaders featured as some sort of an elite within a Polish society, the rest of Poland was united under a single class – that of workers. This unity proved to be one of the crucial aspects of Polish revolution, since their working class identity helped Polish people aggregate their interest under a common banner. Simply put, if everyone in Polish society was a worker, then it was only natural to rally around the labor union's flag – that of Solidarity.

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## Conclusion

This thesis investigates the statuses of three *arenas of democracy*, and how these statuses influenced the transition build-ups in Egypt and Poland. Looking at my two cases, I provide the reader with an understanding of socio-political, economic and legal systems in both of these countries. After careful reflection, my two part research question – **what are the statuses of the three *arenas of democracy* in Egypt and Poland’s pre-transition periods, and secondly, in what way do their statuses influence the transition process itself** – can be answered as follows.

The statuses of *arenas of democracy* in these two cases were in certain aspects similar, yet crucially different in others. The similarities stem from their common socio-political structure and systems, corruption and extensive social inequality being the most prominent ones. These differences however, stem from historical, regional and cultural heritage of these two cases, which in turn resulted in a different method of *arenas of democracy’s* operation and organization.

The influence of these *arenas* on a transition process is another story however. While Communist Poland had Solidarity as its clear cut force of *socio-political society’s* main actor, Egypt could not share the same experience. The remaining two arenas, *rule of law* and *economic society* share certain resemblances, most notably those of similar levels of governmental repression and corruption, but were not essential in each of these societies’ struggle for a better tomorrow. Finally, it is worth noting that although *socio-political society’s* status played the most important role in both Egypt’s but also Poland’s road to transition, the other *arenas* supported this role thoroughly in the process. As mentioned in my analysis section, economic hardship hit many citizens really hard, but it is the inability to socially and politically organize and challenge the status quo that moved the country to transition, not the hardship itself.

Finally, this thesis challenges preconceived notions of transition paradigm, as well as democratic consolidation. Transitions do not happen instantly. They are forged and shaped by underlying factors. Transitions, and more importantly countries transitioning cannot be put in a box and categorized. One can never assume who the new leader will be, how the revolution will unravel, and what the turning point for people to finally occupy the streets and squares will be.

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The author of this thesis hopes he provided a contribution to the task of understanding these underlying notions.

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