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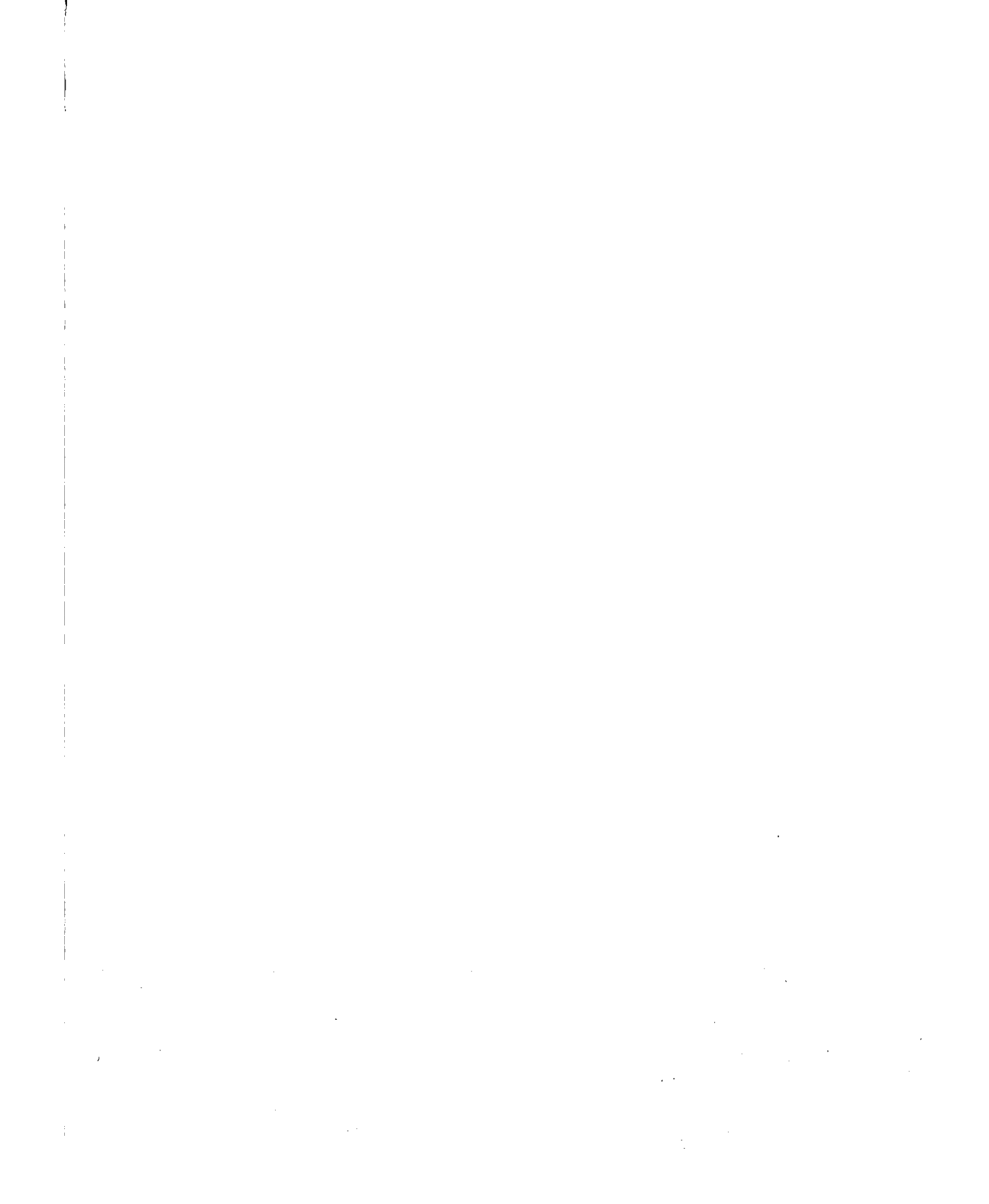
**International Organizations and Domestic Policy Reform:
The Case of Basic Education in Egypt in the 1990s**

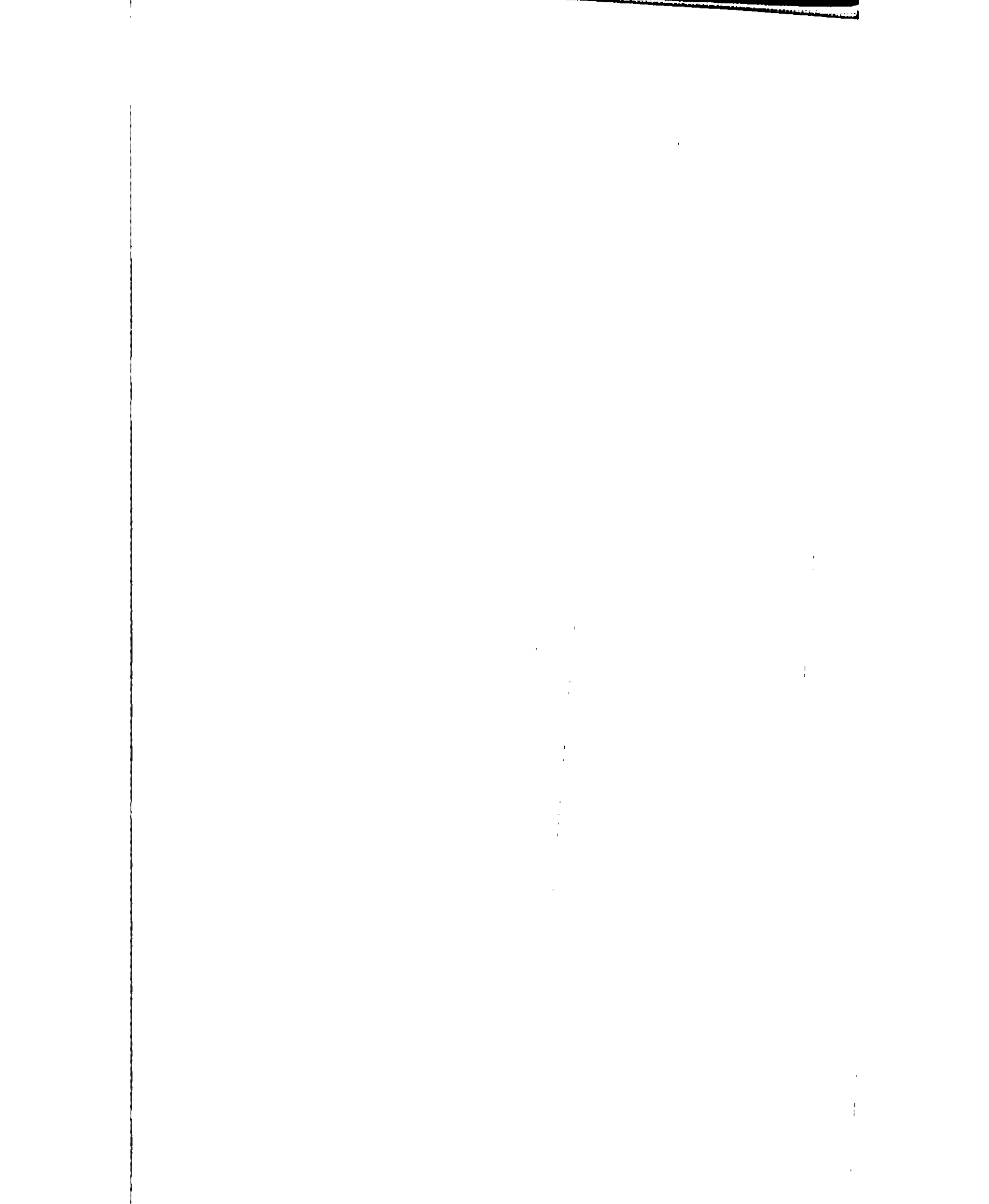
By

Fatma El-Zahraa Hassan Sayed

Thesis submitted for assessment with
A view to obtaining the Degree of Doctor of the
European University Institute

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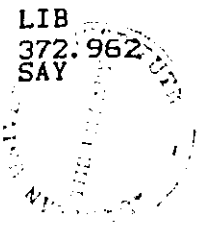
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Florence, June 2004

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Thesis Abstract

Described by the world bank to be essential for building democratic societies and competitive economies, basic education headed the agendas of development agencies in the 1990s. The 1990s is also the decade when Egypt topped the lists of recipients of development assistance and proclaimed education to be its national project.

This Study seeks to explain how domestic policy making interacts with and reacts to international development assistance directed to reform issues that involve cultural and institutional normative change. Those reforms required institutional changes that were inconsistent with the functions, structures and culture of Egyptian educational institutions and have operated in a climate of suspicion surrounding foreign aid to education.

The analysis looks at how issues of reform are specified, problems diagnosed, and then reforms are implemented and evaluated. I analyze the process of international socialization of reforms through which external actors endorsed a set of values in order to internalize and habitualize them within Egyptian educational institutions. Throughout the analysis I examine the communication style adopted by the state and development agencies to persuade and raise moral consciousness during the various stages of the policy cycle, so as to investigate the level of engagement of domestic elites and development agencies in the institutionalization and persuasion processes. In the course of the study I look at how the norms of the international community interact with domestic policy development and the conflict of ideas that surrounds donor-sponsored reforms. I explore the impact of development assistance on the domestic policy process (initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation) as well as the participation of civil society.

The main argument is that the low level of ownership and consensus among the various domestic actors and the failure to establish domestic strategic coalitions in support of reforms result into poor implementation of these reforms and their incomplete internalization. Policy makers did not succeed to achieve the minimum level of 'domestic resonance' essential for embedding the values and administrative cultures advanced by reforms in institutions or publics. Therefore, domestic actors inside and outside the educational establishment resisted reforms at both the social and administrative levels.

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Bibliography

Acknowledgments

First of all I want to thank my professor Martin Rhodes who was the main source of inspiration for this thesis and whose guidance, unlimited support, encouragement and endless patience helped me complete this research. I also am deeply grateful to professor Yves Mény for his continuous academic support, enlightening observations and constant advice. To professors Ilya Harik and Ghassan Salamé, I want to express my sincere appreciation for their constructive comments on earlier drafts of this thesis and priceless encouragement.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, professor Hassan Sayed, whose personal integrity, dedication to academia, perfectionism, passion for art and creativity steer my steps and stimulate my inquisitiveness and ambition. I also want to thank my mother, Nabila Okashia, whose love, unconditional support for all my life decisions, liberal and positive outlooks and deep spirituality gave me the strength to dare, grow and materialize my dreams. My mother meticulously monitored all the Egyptian daily newspapers and mass media to collect, classify and register dates and references of news articles, press releases and editorials related to my research work and mailed them to me on regular bases. Besides, She worked very hard to collect all school-textbooks of the 8-years of basic education to enable me to conduct the content analysis of school curricula. To Azza Karam, my closest friend, I owed the courage to leave a secure employment and an established life in order to pursue an academic career and capitalize on my desire for personal and professional growth. Azza has been a major source of sustenance all through this work and a driving force behind my most significant undertakings.

My beloved husband and soul mate Simone Umiliani, my sweet nephews Adam and Maria Letizia, my brother and best friend Sherif and my cherished friend and sister in-law Salma Taher have been the main source of absolute love, constant reassurance and, most of all, joy throughout the writing of this thesis. I am most blessed and grateful for having them all in my life. I also am obliged to my mother in-law, Maria Teresa Morozzi and the Umiliani family for their kindness, affection and for being a valuable point of reference. Thankfulness is also due to my friend and former boss, Dr. Mohamed Feteiha, who encouraged my career development and sustained me all the way through my path.

I also wish to convey my sincerest recognition to the valuable input and help of Dr. Nader Fergany (international expert and lead author of the UN Arab Human Development Report), Dr. Robert Springborg (former director of the American Research Center in Egypt and present Chair in Middle East Studies and Director of the London Middle East Institute at SOAS), professor Salwa Gomaa (professor of public policies and director of the Public Administration Research and Consultation Center at Cairo university), Nagwa Farag (senior expert at the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood), Essam Assaad (community education advisor at CARE International), Magdy Mehanni (capacity building and community schools' expert), Dr. Kamal Mogheeth (senior researcher at the National Education Research Center) and Dr. Mahmoud Mahfouz (former head of the Education Committee at the Shura Council). They highly contributed to enriching my insight and were valuable sources of information and references for the field work and in-depth interviews conducted for this study.

Last but not least, I want to thank all my friends for the companionship, affection and for sustaining me throughout the past years.

Introduction

The Research Question

"Egypt is the black-hole of development assistance," was the informal comment of an official working with an international development agency, when I mentioned that I was conducting my study of the impact of development assistance on basic education policy making in Egypt during the 1990s. Similar statements have been repeatedly disputed by the Egyptian state and development agencies and probed by academics and developmentalists. The main question is why does development assistance work or not work? The failure or success of aid has engaged public discourse in Egypt for many years and the debate was often oriented towards the conspiracy theory, claims on the corruption of the government and/or development agencies, or local cultural values that get in the way of reforms. Very few academic works include comprehensive research on the political, administrative and normative context within which policy reforms, supported by development assistance, are introduced.

Therefore, it is important to understand what happens in the black box of policymaking level and how the domestic policy process interacts with and reacts to foreign development assistance. It is also essential to identify the contextual variables (political, social, economic conditions, and normative order) that affect the domestic policy process and its interaction with foreign development assistance. This is particularly true for a sensitive policy issue such as basic education. This study explores the previously mentioned issues and examines how policy reforms (which entail cultural and institutional normative changes) are decided and how issues of reform are specified and problems diagnosed, then implemented and evaluated. Also, this analysis will look into the relative weight and influence of the various actors (external and domestic) on basic education policy process in Egypt. But most important of all, the analysis looks

at how policy reforms are communicated and socialized on the domestic level among domestic actors, taking into consideration that communication style is a major element in the process of institutionalizing and internalizing policy reforms.

I examine the process of the international socialization of basic education policy reforms through which development assistance agencies have endorsed a set of values in order to internalize and habitualize them within Egyptian educational institutions and integrate them as daily operational procedures. For this analysis I adopt Finnemore and Sikkink's definition of international socialization to be "the process by which actors internalize norms and habitualize them in the daily institutional practices." (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998) These norms represent the collective understanding and expectations about appropriate behavior by actors that share a specific identity.

B. Why Study Basic Education Policy Making in Egypt?

The critical decade of the 1990s witnessed the end of the Cold War and the reshuffling of the world economic and political order. This brought about political and economic change that has increased the significance of development assistance as an important mechanism affecting international relations. Nevertheless such change forced policy makers in donor countries to rethink the destination and agendas of assistance. The concept of development itself widened to give more weight to human development criteria such as the eradication of poverty, socio-economic equity, achieving universal basic education and individual empowerment as central to development. Hence it is important to stop and take a careful and comprehensive look at the interaction of development assistance with national development policies during the decade. Retaining the welfare of human beings to

be the ultimate purpose of development implies that the formation of human beings makes up a large part of the development process. This highlights the importance of education and empowerment for individuals in, both as a means and an objective of development. Basic education in particular headed the agendas of development agencies throughout the decade and is defined by the World Bank (the largest donor for education during the 1990s) to be "a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well-being, and laying the basis for sustained economic growth." It is also held by the World Bank to be essential for building democratic societies as well as competitive economies. (World Bank Press Release; 2002)

Egypt is an ideal case study of development assistance since it has topped the lists of development assistance recipients for the past two decades after it signed the Camp David peace treaty in 1978 and has been second to Israel in receiving USAID. It also topped the list of recipients of European Union (EU) development assistance at 5.5 percent in 1997/98. (Commission of the European Communities; 2000) Development assistance to Egypt in 1991 amounted to US \$ 4.6 billion, which represents around 10 percent of the total development assistance in the world. (DANIDA; 1996)

Being among the group of countries that receive large amounts of development assistance, Egypt is also influenced by the same trends of development assistance around the world. Therefore, parallel to the economic reform programs indicated by international organizations (IOs) and supported by donors, more programs were planned to bring about more social welfare and sustainable development. Areas such as basic education (especially girls' education), civil society, the preservation of the environment and basic health services, attracted more attention from the donor community in Egypt. Large donors such as the United States, The World Bank, The African Development Fund, the

European Union, Germany, France, Canada and others, allocated some of their assistance budgets to basic education and recognized it as a fundamental element of human capital formation. Numerous programs addressing educational reform in Egypt have been planned and implemented by various international assistance agencies both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Nevertheless, human development in Egypt remains an important challenge given that its working population amounted to only 25 percent of a total 64,000,000 inhabitants during the 1990s. More than 20.4 percent of Egyptians live below the absolute objective poverty line of 190 USD/year and the per capita income has been well below that of the neighboring countries, according to Sophie de Caen, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Egypt. (UNDP press release; 2003) It is worth noting that Egypt ranked 112th out of 173 countries on the Human Development Index (life expectancy, nutrition, education and literacy, infant mortality rates, and others) in 1998 and 120th out of 175 countries in 2003. (Egypt Human Development Report: 2003)

My choice of the 1990s as the time frame of the study is not only justified by the fact that it is the period when Egypt received most development assistance. It is also the decade in which basic education was launched as Egypt's national project and became the focus of attention of international organizations working on development. Furthermore, international organizations obtained more sway in the field of national development plans seeking to achieve universal basic education, eradicate absolute poverty and create socio-economic equity during those years.

C. The Analytical Approach

The analytical approach in this thesis employs a number of concepts from the constructivist and the rationalist arguments of international relations' theories. I maintain that they can both be employed in this analysis, and are not necessarily in contradiction with one another. The rationalist approach purports that domestic actors may adopt reforms that are sponsored by external agencies in order to achieve other political or economic benefits and not because they genuinely believe in the validity of those reforms. The constructivist explanation does not exclude the rationalist interpretation but maintains that throughout the instrumental adoption of reforms the domestic normative order reacts to the externally sponsored reforms and espouses them in different degrees. The degree of internalization of reforms in the existent normative order, according to the constructivist approach, is linked to socialization mechanisms and the interaction between international development agencies and domestic elites.

The rationalist approach helps understand why and how domestic policy actors (decision-makers and state elite) resort to international organizations and external assistance for policy guidance and espouse specific reforms on domestic policy issues. On the other hand, the constructivist approach provides sufficient tools for analyzing how domestic actors, institutions and groups put into effect reforms in a way that could either lead to their internalization or carry out reforms only on the ceremonial and official level without internalizing them.

According to the constructivists, the successful implementation of reforms requires three sequential phases; (1) ceremonial conformity; (2) persuasion and moral consciousness; and (3) internalization and

sustainability. (Risse and Sikink; 1999) In this context I also conduct a classical policy analysis of the basic education policy cycle in its various stages (initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation). In the course of the classical policy analysis I examine the communication style used in the process of persuasion and moral consciousness and the degree of internalization of basic education policy reforms. This inquiry seeks to verify whether the socialization process was successfully carried out in its three phases - achieving a sustainability of reform at the ideational, institutional and structural levels - or if reforms were limited to ceremonial and formalistic conformity only.

Throughout my analysis I also examine the communication style adopted by the state and development agencies to persuade and raise moral consciousness during the various stages of the policy cycle. Therefore, I also investigate the level of engagement of domestic elite and development agencies in the institutionalization and persuasion processes which are intended to generate sufficient consent amongst domestic actors and institutions for reforms and embed them in the existing normative order.

In the course of my investigation I did not find any other study on the impact of development assistance on basic education policy making during the 1990s in Egypt. Some, less extensive, academic work has been conducted on donors and education in Egypt, but was mainly focused on specific projects conducted during the late 1980s and none covered the period of the 1990s.

Unlike other studies, this thesis goes beyond the evaluation of the success or failure of individual development projects or specific policies. I do not intend to assess the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of development assistance to basic education. This study

seeks instead to shed light on how domestic politics, institutions and social and cultural factors interact with external assistance in the field of national development. It aims at explaining how reforms are carried out in such a way as to modify the normative order of domestic political, administrative and social institutions as well as their formal and informal cultures. It aims to identify the main domestic actors and the critical phases that condition the delivery of reforms and the eventual internalization and sustainability of the norms advocated by those reforms.

Other studies of international development assistance and domestic policy reforms have a general tendency to concentrate on the technical aspects of project design and implementation. They rarely analyze the complete domestic policy process or the conflict of values and ideas or the dissonance of donors' and recipients' organizational structures and cultures. Alternatively many studies of foreign development assistance adopt the perspective of Dependency Theory. These studies tend to investigate external influence on domestic policy making through the influence of forces in the international realm on domestic elites but do not sufficiently consider the importance of normative change at the institutional and societal levels.

D. The Argument and Structure of the Thesis

The main hypothesis is that an inadequate implementation of reforms sponsored by development assistance in basic education and incomplete internalization are directly related to the absence of strategic coalitions and the low level of consensus among the various local actors in support of planned reforms. In this context local actors are the Ministry of Education technocracy, the civil society, parents'

associations, education experts, legislators, the teachers' union, political parties, mass media and public opinion.

Corollary one: the absence of active participatory communication between the leaders of reform (development assistance agencies and the Ministry of Education) and local actors in education at various levels inside and outside the educational establishment is a contributing factor to unsatisfactory implementation results.

Corollary two: the more cultural dissonance there is in the ideological backgrounds of the contracting parties, the greater the friction in relations between them and the greater the need for participatory communication.

The first chapter attempts to define the 'international community', its prevailing developmental thought and the role of education in achieving it. It then looks at the definition of state 'domestic interests' in the light of international norms and the 'master plan' for educational reform policies around the developing world. The last part of the chapter explores the use of constructivist and rationalist approaches to analyze basic education reforms in Egypt, considering the conditions and mechanisms of socialization and the importance of achieving domestic resonance or consensus over reforms.

Chapter two explores Egypt's historical background, foreign policy orientations, and the domestic security issues that condition domestic policy in basic education. The chapter presents a brief historical review of foreign influence on education policy agenda setting in Egypt from the Mohamed Aly era to the British occupation and up until the 1980s. The first part of this chapter reviews the influence of foreign powers on Egypt's basic education policies in the past and their goal of reinforcing their domination over the country. For that

reason, Egyptians have a historically ingrained collective belief that the contribution of foreign powers to Egyptian education is not altruistic.

The second part of chapter two examines how the issue of national security influences the state's decision-making process in education policy and how the type of foreign cooperation, interaction and/or involvement in education reflects Egypt's foreign policy orientations and its stance on various strategic security issues. I will explore the various definitions of national security, and how and why education has always been considered a national security issue and how national security is interpreted differently by domestic actors, the state and foreign donors. I examine how education relates to national security and the impact of Islamist-fundamentalism on education policies in the 1990s; as well as how other major national security such as territorial integrity and the Arab-Israeli conflict issues influence the education debate.

Chapter three sets out how international debates between the different viewpoints of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism are translated into the domestic Egyptian context, so as to show the ideological influences at work in the policy cycle. I examine the concept of development espoused by international organizations and how its philosophy and norms guide basic education reforms. I then investigate the influence of neo-liberal ideas on the waves of policy reform advocated by international development assistance agencies. I discuss how education reforms have been linked to human capital theory and how the international community's "master plan" for education reforms is based on the conviction that such reforms contribute positively to social transformation, economic development and democratization. Neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism are two faces of the same coin. Both contested existing political and social ideologies during the decade

of the 1990s and both have affected the international and domestic debates on basic education reform.

In brief, the purpose of this chapter is to examine how reforms reflecting neo-liberal ideas have been introduced and how the state has failed to engage in a mode of 'argumentative persuasion' with the ideological alternatives prevailing on the Egyptian intellectual scene. It has therefore failed to achieve 'domestic resonance' and embed the values advocated by reforms in the domestic normative order.

The influence of conditionality on domestic views of international cooperation in the field of basic education is discussed in chapter four. The successful implementation, internalization and sustainability of basic education policy reforms is not merely to be explained by the actual design of education policies. It is also conditioned by the social, cultural and political contexts of the policies. A major contextual variable that influences international cooperation in the field of basic education in Egypt is the conditionality aspect of development assistance and how it generates a 'conspiracy theory' and amongst certain important domestic actors. This chapter begins by defining the concept of conditionality as a tool of international socialization that capitalizes on the concept of utility maximization adopted by the 'rationalist' international relations theorists. I then review the provision of development assistance to Egypt during the 1990s, its political motives and how the conspiracy theory originates and spreads. I also examine how the conspiracy theory is applied to the case of basic education and how it is linked to donor conditionality. I then conduct a content analysis of the educational curriculum and examine the validity of the conspiracy arguments based on actual donor programs and policy outcomes.

The main argument is that education reform programs operate in a climate of tangible cultural and political sensitivity and fear. This hinders not only the implementation and internalization of programs but also the flow of potential bilateral assistance that otherwise could have been allocated to basic education. The analysis in this chapter indicates that those adhering to the conspiracy theory are often excluded from the decision making process. Lack of political participation as well as various political and economic frustrations tend to be projected on a public debate that is often used as the safety valve to release the dissatisfaction created by other public policy issues.

An analysis of the basic education policy cycle during the 1990s is conducted in chapters five, six and seven. The analysis of the basic education policy cycle in its stages of initiation and formulation, implementation and evaluation traces the mechanisms of socialization and the extent to which basic education policy reforms have been internalized. The investigation seeks to discover whether the socialization process was developed throughout the three phases and whether it produced internalization and sustainability or whether it stopped at the ceremonial level.

Chapter five examines the impact of development assistance on the initiation and formulation of education policy. Here I analyze the socialization process of basic education policy reforms sponsored by foreign development assistance and cooperation with the various domestic actors (Ministry of Education and others). I examine how policy reforms that entailed a cultural and institutional normative change have been specified, and how problems have been diagnosed assessed the relative weight of the influence of the various actors (external and domestic) in this process. I undertake a two-step analysis of policy sponsored by foreign development assistance and the

processes by which they are institutionalized and internalized. The first involves a rationalist examination of the utilitarian motives of MOE compliance with consultant-driven policy reforms based on tangible incentives. The second adopts a constructivist approach to understanding how far and how successfully the Ministry of Education (MOE) and international development agencies established strategic coalitions and domestic resonance among the domestic actors that were involved in policy initiation and formulation.

I argue that the analysis of the initiation and formulation processes reveals a low level of MOE internal research unit involvement in the process of identifying policy issues. Policy initiation has mainly originated outside the MOE and involves the ceremonial participation of other domestic actors. Policies were negotiated between top MOE officials and donors on a utilitarian basis without engaging in 'argumentative persuasion.' This indicates the absence of active participation by domestic actors in identifying issues, setting agendas, and formulating policy.

In chapter six I conduct an organizational analysis of MOE and other actors involved in the policy implementation process in order to examine the degree of reform institutionalization and internalization. I also investigate the interaction of foreign development assistance agencies with domestic actors at the various levels of policy implementation and its direct and indirect influence. By examining the legislative and bureaucratic structures and contexts as well as formal and informal organizational cultures, we can assess whether policy implementation was confined to ceremonial conformity or reached the internalization stage.

Foreign development assistance agencies have been heavily involved in the implementation process at many levels. The parallel administrative

units sponsored by donors, were not institutionalized within the existing educational system but were nonetheless responsible for the implementation of reforms. The dissonance between domestic organizational structures and cultures and those of external actors has led to a recurrent collision, frequently causing deadlock in the implementation procedures. The active participation of domestic actors in the implementation process was not promoted and the lack of any sense of 'ownership of reforms' among significant actors led to a considerable degree of administrative resistance.

In chapter seven I analyze the policy evaluation process and how far it adopted external versus internal evaluation parameters. I also examine the issue of the accountability of evaluation and how it is directly linked to the publics targeted by the evaluation reports. The analysis emphasizes how the evaluation process has conformed to the norms promoted by the 'international community.' And employs a rationalist approach to explain how the evaluation of reforms served both to legitimize for policies in the eyes of donors so as to secure access to more foreign funds, and reinforce the domestic legitimacy for these policies. Constructivist arguments are adopted to show how a formalistic and ceremonial evaluation that does not actively involve the various domestic actors, alienates them further from the policy process.

Chapter eight examines the impact of development assistance on the activation of civil society associations in the field of basic education. I link the analysis to a process of international socialization and ceremonial adjustment to externally advocated norms which does not achieve internalization and sustainability. In the first part of this chapter I examine the external pressure on the MOE to acquiesce in adopting models of democratization, decentralization and governance. I explore how international development agencies have

promoted the community participation model in primary education and assess the level of institutionalization by reviewing the legislative frames and organizational structures and financial sustainability of local associations active in basic education.

In the second part of this chapter I present a brief case study of the UNICEF Community Schools as an instance of development assistance and community participation. In addition to examining the cultural contexts and bureaucratic politics that influence the community participation model promoted by UNICEF and other donors, the case study reveals how external actors promote and implement foreign models that require structural and normative changes within domestic contexts. I then discuss how the program officers work to achieve local political support for the project and attempt to form strategic coalitions with, and therefore domestic resonance in, local communities.

In the conclusion I re-examine my original research argument that the failure to successfully implement and internalize policy reforms sponsored by development assistance in the field of basic education results from the low level of domestic consensus among the various actors and the failure to establish domestic strategic coalitions in support of reforms. This is a failure that occurs mainly in the phase of communication and persuasion in the socialization process. Domestic actors that are not properly co-opted in the reform process increase their resistance to reforms on both the social and administrative levels.

This resistance is reflected in the high degree of ceremonial adoption of reforms and formalistic proceeding of the assistance programs as well as a biased evaluation of results. The core of my argument is the following; problems of implementation and incomplete internalization

result from the scarce achievement of 'domestic resonance.' and the failure to establish domestic strategic coalitions. This is largely due to the lack of active participatory communication with all domestic actors both inside and outside the educational establishment that increases social and cultural resistance to reforms (including the conspiracy theory) as well as administrative resistance in the educational establishment itself. The conclusion is that democratized development is necessary for success in achieving both domestic internalization and the long-term sustainability of internationally promoted reforms in basic education.

Part One

International Norms and
Domestic Policy Development

Chapter 1

The International Socialization Of Basic Education Reforms In Egypt in the 1990s

Introduction:

The influx of foreign development assistance to Egypt has expanded considerably during the 1990s, especially with regard to basic education. The aim here is to analyze the socialization and sustainability of policy reform in the area. It is particularly important to investigate the interaction of international development organizations and donor agencies with the various domestic political and social actors in Egypt. This will allow us to assess how such reforms are internalized and extended on a wide institutional and societal scale and over time. The cooperation between foreign development agencies and the Egyptian Ministry of Education has aimed at 'shaping the vision' of reforms in this critical policy area. Assisting the MOE to implement, internalize and sustain these reforms in a delicate political and cultural climate and a contested domestic policy context. The direct and indirect impact of foreign development assistance on education policies has been critical in placing specific issues on the policy agenda and specifying policy objectives. In addition, development assistance sponsored the restructuring of the administrative apparatus of education so as to internalize and sustain reforms. International agencies have had to adjust to local political, cultural, and administrative conditions in Egypt.

The rationalist approach maintains that domestic actors embrace externally inspired reforms only to benefit from international economic and political support. This however, does not contradict with the constructivist conviction that the normative order of the domestic context interacts with these changes and embraces them to a greater or lesser extent, depending on socialization mechanisms and the interaction between international organizations and domestic elites. The socialization mechanisms specified by constructivists require that the implementation of change goes through three stages starting with

ceremonial conformity, leading through persuasion and moral consciousness, and leading finally to internalization and sustainability.

A careful analysis of the processes of implementation and degree of internalization of basic education policy reforms in Egypt, is essential for understanding the extent to which they have been limited to the ceremonial and formalistic levels of conformity on all the ideational, institutional and structural levels. I also examine the style and level of engagement of domestic elites and international organizations in the institutionalization and persuasion processes that are practiced in order to create a sufficient degree of consensus among domestic actors for policy reform.

The frequently reported problems of implementation and incomplete internalization result from an inadequate level of 'domestic resonance', or domestic consensus and the failure to establish domestic strategic coalitions. This is largely due to the lack of active participatory communication with all domestic actors both inside and outside the educational establishment, producing further resistance to reforms from those who support the conspiracy theory of international development and from educational administrators. Both the constructivist and rationalist international relations models will be employed in the analysis of the international socialization of basic education reforms. I explore the contrast between the developmental philosophies of international organizations and the domestic normative order. In addition I examine the influence of the conspiracy theory on the introduction of normative change especially when sponsored by foreign agents. I investigate how far domestic resonance has been achieved on both institutional and societal levels.

Later in this study, I examine the interaction of international organizations and bilateral donors with domestic actors (the state represented by the Ministry of Education and the civil society associations and organizations). The analysis will focus on three stages: policy initiation and formulation, implementation and evaluation.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the theoretical framework of the analysis and examines the concept of 'international community', its foundations and objectives. It also introduces the concepts of 'international socialization' and 'domestic resonance'. I look at the prevailing developmental ideology of the international community and the role of education as an agent and a subject of international socialization. I then investigate how the international community aims to achieve its development philosophy and vision of globalization through international socialization, in other words, how socialization is used to spread the vision of development held by the international community. In this context, I look at the plan for education reform policies devised by international organizations and donor agencies for the developing world. I also investigate how the professional training and selection of key technocrats and decision makers in the developing world is a major factor of international socialization.

In the second part of this chapter I present an overview of the thesis and how international relations theories can be employed to analyze the international socialization of education reforms in Egypt during the 1990s. I use the rationalist approach to investigate the motives and approaches of espousing the 'Education for All' master plan in Egypt. I then explain how both the rationalist and constructivist approaches can complement each other to analyze the process of reform socialization, moving from initial instrumental adaptation through

persuasion, institutionalization and then to internalization. In light of this analysis I emphasize how restructuring the education establishment and revitalizing civil society organizations and associations have both been used to institutionalize and internalize reforms.

I. Development Assistance and the International Socialization of Reforms

A. The International Community: What It Is and What It Wants

Democracy, liberalism, the free movement of capital and labor, universal human rights, peace, and welfare, these and many other material goods and normative values were the promises of globalization in the early 1990s. The liberal, democratic and capitalist West had just won the Cold War and a new world order was to be established. This entailed that the ideological references were to be revised in line with the winning norms. Defined by Finnemore and Sikkink as the "shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors," we can assume that it has been necessary to create a new set of universal norms in order to establish a new political and economic world order. (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998) A new order that seeks universal legitimacy needs to be instituted upon a set of shared convictions, given that such universal norms, common value systems, shared terms of discourse, and social structures are more likely to make uniform behavioral claims upon dissimilar actors. (Finnemore; 1996) These universal norms and value orientations "occupy the analytic dimension that lies between deep philosophical beliefs about human nature and more narrow beliefs about what set of policies will maximize short-term interests, and they therefore serve to guide state

behavior and shape the agenda from which elites choose specific policies." (Ikenberry and Kupchan; 1990)

It is at this juncture that international socialization is practiced by the external actors that steer a secondary state to internalize a set of key beliefs and institutionalize specific practices. These are seen by the external actors to be consistent with their vision of what should be the universal norms that generate policy outcomes in these secondary states. (Schimmelfennig; 2000) Contrary to rationalist theories which see actors' behavior as mainly motivated by utilitarian and cost-benefit analysis, constructivist theories maintain that political actors are often influenced by social norms, shared knowledge and beliefs, and inter-subjective understanding. In reality, constructivist and rationalist approaches are not necessarily incompatible. Numerous studies reveal that nation-states are not solely motivated by normative considerations in adopting policy reforms suggested by international organizations or other external actors in the international community. In the majority of cases, norm promotion is accompanied by economic and/or political incentives that are linked by the international community to the recommended policy reforms, especially during the early phases of socialization.

The most influential actors with regard to norm-reconstruction have been international organizations. It is they who have provided policy advice, technical assistance, expertise and various forms of funding for the former-communist and developing countries in reconstructing their socio-economic and political institutions. According to Groom (1988) an organization is defined to be international if: "its membership, its finance and its field of operation involves three or more countries." International organizations vary in their types:

(IGOs, INGOs, BINGOs, and others)¹; competence (general, functional, and specialized); and their categories (universal, regional and selective). International organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, The European Union, and the League of Nations, replaced by the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations in addition to many others, were mainly instituted after international turmoil following the end of devastating wars. They were established by the winning hegemonic powers in order to re-establish some economic and political order. And even though all of them currently encompass almost all the nation states of the world, most of them have been conceived by Western ideology and reflect Western hegemony. In his sociological approach to institutionalism in international relations, John Meyer maintains that the international system of social structures is not constituted by the international society of states but rather by the expanding world culture that derives its core values from the Weberian and Western understanding of Rationalism. (Meyer; 1977) The rational and scientific approach, according to Groom, had given the major hegemonic powers at this time a "self confidence in their ability to define, elaborate and impose upon international society a code of acceptable behavior." (Groom; 1988) International organizations, even non-Western regional ones, such as the African Development Bank, the Arab League and many others, are instituted on Western operating procedures and reflect many Western values and convictions. After all, the very concept of the nation state, upon which international organizations are founded, is a western concept inspired by the French revolution. As a matter of fact, the functional foundations of the League of Nations (established after the First World War) lay within the administrative tradition of

¹ IGOs refer to International Governmental Organizations; INGOs are International Non-governmental Organizations; and BINGOs are Business International NON-Governmental Organizations

the British Secretariat.¹ The same can be said about the formation of the United Nations after the Second World War and its relationship with the American civil service model. In other words, international organizations emerging after situations of armed or ideological conflicts embody the spirit and structure of the winning, or the new hegemonic power. Most international organizations provide forums for various nation states, regardless of their stage of development, to participate in decision making process, in line with their relative strengths.

Yet the ideological references, discourse and organizational structures are all modeled upon Western norms. The most important international organizations (supra-national organizations) which have their head quarters in Western capitals, depend financially on the rich industrialized West, and use English and/or French as their main working languages. So, when we talk about the *international community* referring to the international forums of the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and other IOs, we can not dissociate it from Western ideological frames of references. International 'community' therefore refers to the states and the international organizations that act as international socialization agencies. (Schimmelfennig; 2000) International Organizations have proven to be the most influential 'norm entrepreneurs' in promoting the 'universal norms' which establish the economic, political and philosophical basis of the desired new world order.

¹ The British Influence was dominant, and even though Lord Hankey (the official responsible to establish the League of Nations) opposed the concept of carrying over the model of strong centralized secretariat into a multinational organization, a model of national administration originating from Britain's imperial role in protecting its dominions (independent states) and colonies, became an important contribution to the development of a form of international administration designed to help prevent a recurrence of armed conflict among the industrial states of Europe. (Jordan; 1971)

International organizations, which were conceived as global forums and mechanisms for crisis management and international development, have become think tanks for public policy making around the world. The OECD defines itself as an international think tank that assists governments to "shape their policies by exerting influence through mutual examination by governments, multilateral surveillance and peer pressure to conform or reform. Thus the OECD works through persuasion as a broker of policy ideas linked some way or other to economic concerns." (Lingard, Burbules and Torres; 2000) In the present world where nation states are liberalizing financial markets, there is more space and need for international organizations to perform a larger regulatory role and establish the rules of the international economy.

B. The Prevailing Developmental Ideas in the 'International Community' and the Role of Education as an Agent and Subject of International Socialization

Globalization is a term popularized in the late 1980s to describe international market integration, the expansion of trade and flows of capital and the extended role in production and distribution of multinational companies. Through the 1990s, international organizations have promoted globalization as an opportunity for growth. That is, an opportunity to increase the economic, political and cultural harmonization necessary for the flow of capital, technology and labor among countries required to generate development in the third world and link it to the advanced world. Supranational organizations see themselves together with multinationals as the agents and regulators of such growth. The privatization of public production and service sectors was advocated to optimize and rationalize economic development as well as to improve the quality of services and goods.

An interventionist state was maintained to be a synonymous of authoritarianism, autocracy, corruption, economic deterioration and administrative inefficiency, while the market has been promoted as a means of correcting state failures in development planning and administration. The market was not only expected to promote economic growth, but also to support and reinforce the consolidation of democracy. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provided debt-relief programs and soft loans from the International Development Association (IDA) to developing countries on the condition that their governments carry out structural and economic reforms. It is important to clarify the difference between IDA, ODA (Official Development Assistance), and debt relief programs. While IDA (World Bank/multilateral development assistance) offers soft loans provided to developing countries with a per capita income below USD 1'305 and scheduled for around 40-years repayment with no interest rates, the ODA are bilateral assistance programs that take the form of non-refundable grants. Another potential form of ODA is debt relief, where donor countries forgive the debt of indebted countries, provided that the amounts payable are redirected to development programs, often co-supervised by debtors. (Richardson and Kirton; 2001)

Structural adjustment and economic reforms entail privatization, removing protectionist trade barriers and labor laws, cutting down on untargeted consumer subsidies and encouraging export-oriented industries, as well as downsizing state bureaucracies. The purpose is to reduce the role of the state in the economy. Still, national security, regulatory functions, basic services (health and education), the preservation of natural environmental resources and cultural heritage are considered social goods that cannot be transferred entirely to the market.

Thus, the idea was not to soften the state, but to confine its functions to security, regulatory issues and the provision of essential services. The idea was that the efficient functioning of the market relies on efficient governments and development requires an effective state that encourages and complements the activities of the private sector. Consequently, the positive functions of the state should include: "establishing a foundation of law; maintaining a non-distortionary policy environment ('getting prices right') and assuring macroeconomic stability; investing in basic social services and infrastructure; protecting the vulnerable; and protecting the environment." (Craig Murphy; 1999) The main purpose is to establish a favorable environment for an active market economy that integrates developing countries into the globalization of social and private goods and encourage the flow of information and capital around the world. The International Monetary Fund recipe for catching up with the benefits of globalization suggests that an improvement in living standards results from the accumulation of physical capital (investment) and human capital (labor), assisted by technological progress.

"Economic stability, institution building, and structural reform are at least as important for long-term development as financial transfers, important as they are. What matters is the whole package of policies, financial and technical assistance, and debt relief if necessary." Ingredients of such development packages, are recommended by the IMF report to include:

- "Macroeconomic stability to create the right conditions for investment and saving;
- Outward oriented policies to promote efficiency through increased trade and investment;
- Structural reform to encourage domestic competition;

- Strong institutions and an effective government to foster good governance;
- *Education, training, and research and development to promote productivity;*
- External debt management to ensure adequate resources for sustainable development." (IMF Issue Brief; 2000)

The above-mentioned priorities of the IMF list education and training as the fourth ingredient of development, after stimulating the market economy and good governance. Besides, education is mentioned in the context of productivity and not under social or human rights or as a means of empowerment. The provision of soft loans, development assistance and debt relief programs to indebted developing countries suffering economic strains have been directly tied to the countries' will and commitment to structural adjustment programs. Another leading organization contributing to the design of public policies for attaining development through globalization, is the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, OECD. The Organization could be described as the legitimate child of the Marshall Plan. The OECD views education policies as a major component of human capital formation, which in turn is a major component of economic growth and social welfare.

On September 5th 2001, at the 46th session of UNESCO's International Conference on Education, Koïchiro Matsuura (Director-General of UNESCO) said the following:- "The leitmotif running through the next Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) is the following: 'Contributing to peace and development in an era of globalization through education, the sciences, culture and communication'. For UNESCO, the unifying theme shaping all of its programmes and activities is the challenge of humanizing globalization so that it works for everyone, not just for a privileged few. Central to the process of giving globalization a human

face is education, especially in terms of globalizing the right to education so that good quality basic education is available to all." (Matsuura; 2001)

In the UNESCO Info-Ethics conference in October 1998, Derrick L. Cogburn, Director of the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (an INGO sponsored by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and associate of UNESCO-Orbicom) maintained that: "globalization is affecting all of the social, political and economic structures and processes that emerge from this global restructuring. One critical issue that emerges from all of these restructuring processes is the central role of knowledge, education and learning for the success of the Global Information Society (GIS) and global information economy. Knowledge is becoming an increasingly important factor of production. More important, some analysts would argue, than land, labor and capital." (Cogburn; 1998)

In this perspective, education policies (mainly basic education) have been acknowledged as the cornerstone of international socialization. Education is expected to facilitate technology transfer and the diffusion of communication skills as elements of cultural integration and harmonization. Those skills are believed to be the necessary steps towards breaking down the physical, political and cultural barriers that impede the flow of information, capital, technology and labor. Therefore, a satisfactory result of a national education system is measured by its capacity to produce citizens who enjoy the communication, negotiation and marketing skills that allow them to become effective market actors. According to this vision, education would economically and politically empower individuals and promote critical and rational thinking along with decision-making skills.

C. How does the 'International Community' Aim to Achieve its Development Philosophy and Vision of Globalization?

Identifying basic education as a fundamental agent of social and economic development and poverty alleviation in Third World countries had attracted increased attention from the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), development assistance agencies and Third World governments by the beginning of the 1990s. Third World developmentalists made two main accusations against these institutions. First they are criticized for planning structural adjustments that cut down on public investments and expenditures. Second, they are accused of having recommended economic policies that in many cases were not integrated with social policies, thus sacrificing the poorest of the poor in developing nations. (E.g. Watkins; 1999 and Weiss and Wurzel; 1998 and George; 1999)

In March 1990, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP convened key decision-makers from all over the world including ministers of education, multilateral and bilateral donors and international and local NGOs in Jomtien, Thailand for the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) Conference. The conclusions of the Jomtien EFA produced what has been considered to be the handbook of basic education policy making throughout the world during the 1990s. The Jomtien Declaration's Ten Commandments are: -

"(1) Meeting basic learning needs; (2) *shaping the vision*; (3) universalizing access and promoting equity; (4) focusing on learning acquisition; (5) broadening the means and scope of basic education; (6) enhancing the environment for learning; (7) strengthening partnerships; (8) developing supporting policy context; (9) mobilizing resources; and (10) strengthening international solidarity." (The Arab Framework for Action; 2000)

True enough, the most important outcome of the conference was the unanimous pledge of all major international organizations, donors and nation states to achieve universal primary education and reduce illiteracy before the year 2000. (UNESCO Press; 2000) Consequently the 1990s was proclaimed to be the 'education decade'.

The interesting aspect about the promotion of a set of prescribed education policy reforms in the international arena is that it is not only about promoting a set of norms and institutions related to education. Education is itself the major instrument for setting norms in a society. Education is a means of creating consensual knowledge and collective perceptions that contribute to the establishment of domestic resonance, which is defined as the "embeddedness of a particular belief or preference in a domestic setting." (Epstein; 2002) Domestic resonance occurs when domestic political and social actors behave in conformity with the value system advocated by the international community, allowing them to acquire an incontestable authority in domestic matters. The main purpose of promoting basic education reforms all over the developing world, that aspires to be integrated in and benefit from the process of economic globalization, as pointed out by the IMF and the EFA Jomtien Declaration, is to shape the visions of nations. Such synchronous visions would establish a set of shared beliefs in a normative order that reinforces the ideology promoted by the international community. In other words, promoting specific education policies that shape the educational establishment and inspires its contents is like installing an automatic pilot to steer the formation and choices of future generations. Issues such as peace, environment and industrialization in developing nations are considered priorities for the World Bank, the United Nations and its satellite and subsidiary agencies. Many such organizations strive to influence educational curricula through a variety of transnational

curriculum developments connected to a number of teacher professional development projects.

D. Defining State 'Domestic Interests' in the Light of International Norms: International Organizations as Policy Teachers

Supranational organizations have gained a considerable sway over national economies during the 1990s and international organizations have often acted as policy teachers. They diagnose the problems of domestic policies for secondary states, present the solutions and suggest policy reforms. This consultant-driven policy reform has often been linked to either technical or financial assistance or to the approval of the supranational organization in question. But, in many other cases policy reform recipes were demand-driven; that is, international organizations and other external actors have responded directly to the requests of national ministries for aid and institutional reforms. International relations theorists maintain that demand-driven policies often follow a phase of policy failure, or specifically following policy crisis that reveals a domestic deficiency in technical and financial resources to overcome the crisis situation. (Ikenberry; 1990) In such cases, local elites agree to import foreign policy models that had proven effective in similar contexts in other countries in order to strengthen their fragile decision-making structures and grant some legitimacy to their policy choices based on the claim that they have already worked for others. (Jacoby; 2000) Especially when the 'others' were the developed and industrialized countries that enjoy a high level of per capita income and rank high on the Human Development Index.

Promoting the "Education for All" objectives and translating them into domestic education policy has not been the most difficult task for the international organizations because the new set of educational norms advocated by the international community did not encounter a normative vacuum. On the contrary, educational reforms, more than others, were introduced within highly contested normative orders where they are heavily disputed and measured against other deeply rooted social values and political ideologies. The biggest challenge is to cultivate a strategic coalition and persuade domestic actors from specialized sectors that seek reforms and the state bodies that negotiate directly with the international organizations and bi-lateral donors. This would be necessary to ensure that the advocated reforms are coherent with and in support of the domestic interests of the state. (Epstein; 2002) Given that in most cases the state's positions, public policies and procedures are the product of consensual knowledge produced by the formal educational system and national and domestic interests, in order to transfer a policy model to a secondary state, the international community needs to persuade local political actors in charge of policy formulation and implementation of the value of its goals. Persuasion is thus defined as "a process by which agent action becomes social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes inter-subjective." (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998)

In international socialization, persuasion takes place at different levels and not only in international relations. In fact, the most critical phase of the persuasion process (essential for a successful internalization and sustainability of the advocated change) is the persuasion which occurs in the domestic sphere. However, several case studies have revealed that it is often the communication style and the performer of communication, and not the absolute validity of the argument, that are critical for a successful persuasion process. Thus

"the most morally compelling or logically correct argument may matter little if it is advanced by a weak debater, or is presented to an individual with deeply held and countervailing beliefs." (Checkel; 2002)

International socialization, according to the rational choice model, results from the secondary state's desire to acquire and consolidate a status of legitimacy in the international arena. A state is considered legitimate by the international community if; "its institutional form, its organizational goals and its behavior correspond with the constitutive beliefs and practices institutionalized and highly valued in its environment." (Schimmelfennig; 2000) Gaining legitimacy on the international level does not simply translate into prestige. It also guarantees the state's right to sovereignty, security and autonomy as well as access to international platforms of decision making, development and military assistance. Under these conditions, it becomes much more advantageous to define domestic interests as coherent with the norms of the international community. This is especially true if the norms entailed in the policy reforms are consistent with the very same principles of the state; that is, universal basic education for all.

E. The 'Master Plan' for Education Reform Policies in the Developing World

Agreeing on the importance of basic education for all, however, did not mean agreeing on a definition of basic education. While the World Bank, the largest development financier working in the area of education, adopts an operational definition of basic education which

is confined to formal primary schooling, other donors favor the wider concept of basic education that covers the knowledge and skills that people use in their daily life. Accordingly, the second comprehensive definition encompasses the following: early childhood education, primary schooling, non-formal literacy and other programs for adults that provide basic life skills. (Bennell and Furlong; 1998) Obviously, dispute over what is and what is not basic education creates conflict over what is and what is not a priority for resource allocation. Targets were defined and budget increases were promised, but no coordinated action plan was devised, and allocations were not dispensed as promised. As a matter of fact, "total aid for the education sector from bilateral donors was lower in the mid-1990s than before the EFA." (Bennell and Furlong; 1998) Consequently the education decade ended up with 125 million children of primary school age out of school and a rise in the number of illiterate adults. (Watkins; 1999) The UNESCO organized Dakar Forum of April 2000, reviewing ten years of aid to education after Jomtien 1990, indicated that basic education continued to receive only 15 percent of aid to education and education in general and did not receive more than 2 percent of development assistance. (The Dakar Framework for Action; 2000) As a matter of fact, sixteen donors of the OECD reported that 1.3 percent of their official direct assistance was spent on basic education. Only Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden allocated more than 2 percent of their aid budgets to basic education. (Watkins; 2000) On the other hand, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Cairo office stated that in 25 years (1975-2000) of financial assistance to Egypt, the USAID dedicated 2.7 percent of its aid to education and training. (Al-Ahram Weekly; 2001) Generally, the total percentage of the bilateral aid budget for education dropped from 10.2 percent in 1989/90 to 8.5 percent in 1991/92, and increased slightly to 10.1 percent in 1993/94. (Bennell and Furlong; 1998) A UNDP report illustrates that, even though the

"Education for All" objectives were ambitious, they were not financially out of reach. EFA needed an extra US\$ 8 billion to be invested in basic education annually for 8 years, while annual toy spending in the US only is US \$ 15 billion; and annual military spending in the world is US \$ 740 billion. (*New Internationalist*; 1999)

Our question is the following; if all donors and governments are convinced of the importance of basic education and if the financial obstacle is considered surmountable, what were the impediments of achieving Education For All? Several analysts attribute the problem to the lack of bureaucratic and political commitment of several bilateral donors. This did not apply to all donors. For instance Germany, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands carried out comprehensive reviews of their education aid programs soon after Jomtien in 1990, while other donor countries such as Australia, Canada, France and Japan completed their policy reviews by 1994. (Bennell and Furlong; 1998) A lack of political and bureaucratic may reflect some donors' uncertainty in participating sufficiently in basic education policies in developing countries. "Japan has found it difficult to support basic education in the past because it involves people's morals, values, and customs, and accordingly aid in this area touches on a nation's culture and sovereignty because basic education targets huge populations, spread out over vast geographical areas." (JICA; 1998) Because of the potential cultural dissonance, political sensitivities and the complexity of implementing long-term, nationwide development projects that may have minor visibility, bilateral donors prefer to approach basic education through large multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the EU Commission, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations. Ever since the Jomtien Conference, UNICEF has devoted its entire education budget to basic education programs, while UNESCO dedicates more than

one-third of its education expenditures to basic education activities. It is worth mentioning that on many occasions the EU Commission itself preferred to direct its aid allocations to basic education through other international organizations, especially the World Bank. (Watkins; 1999)

The international organizations specialized in basic education are the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO. However, the World Bank is the largest financier of education in the developing world. It was not until 1962, after the creation of the IDA, that the World Bank started its education project. Basic education did not enjoy significant attention as an area of development assistance until the 1960s. The higher social mobility and change of political and economic orders resulting from the independence of many developing countries led to a growing demand for education. Therefore education attracted more attention from domestic policy makers and international development agencies.

Presently the World Bank is the largest source of policy advice and external funds for education as it provides around 30percent of development assistance to basic education. (Lockheed; 1990) Large donors such as the US Agency for International Development, the European Union and the Canadian International Development Agency direct their official development assistance to education reform programs in developing countries through the World Bank. Evidently, World Bank education policy planning reflects the philosophy and vision for development of its major financiers. The education policies of the World Bank have reflected its economic theory, in terms of human capital theory and were directly linked to the structural adjustment and economic liberalization programs in the developing world. "The Bank's preconditions for education can only be understood as an ideological stance, promoting an integrated world economic system along market lines ... in painting a picture of the preconditions

for successful educational development, the Bank is in effect depicting its view of the ideal economy." (Jones: Stromquist and Monkman; 2000)

Two of the Bank's leading education specialists and the engineers of policy planning have been Marlaine Lockheed and Adriaan Verspoor, who have supervised and co-written the Bank's study *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Ann Hamilton, (who was at the time director of the Population and Human Resources Department in the World Bank), considered that this study was based on a comprehensive reviews and original research conducted in the World Bank division of Education and Employment. She also added that the study benefited from consultations with policymakers in developing countries, representatives of donor agencies, and experts in the field. This study was the basis for World Bank primary education policies of the education decade of the 1990s, and was published in a World Bank Policy Paper on Primary Education written by Marlaine Lockheed in 1990. It is important to analyze the World Bank policy paper, especially given that the policy priorities suggested by this study have been the Bible of basic education policy reforms of most developing countries receiving official development assistance and soft loans from the World Bank.

Proposing the improvement of educational effectiveness as a target for educational reforms, the World Bank policy paper sets the policy strategies to be the following:

1. "Enhancing the learning environment (this includes curriculum reform, instruction materials and improving learning capacities of students)
2. Improving the preparation and innovation to teachers' training
3. Strengthen educational management
4. Improving equitable access

5. Strengthening financial support for primary education*

(Lockheed; 1990)

However, a number of critical analyses of the international influence on educational policy making emphasize that the presence of external donors may lead to a process of public policy planning through marketing, rather than rational public choice and planning. This would imply selecting the kinds of projects more likely to be financed by external donors and making them the central components of a given public policy. Such critical studies examine how the presence of external agencies such as the World Bank or UNESCO condition or even determine the way educational reform is conducted, priorities are assigned, research is designed, implemented and used in educational reform, and policy initiatives are selected, evaluated, or set forth. Certain public policy options have been granted such widespread legitimacy and financial support that they have become virtually hegemonic. (Morrow and Torres; Burbules and Torres; 2000) In his study of the external influences on contemporary universal primary education in Papua New Guinea, Thomas Webster confirms the concern for the substantial duplication of policy decision making that may cause further implementation intricacies. "Due to the paucity of research information available in many developing countries, donor and international development assistance agencies have been heavy handed in analyzing country situations from a global perspective. Such analyses and policy prescriptions made by donor agencies and their personnel (often flying in northern consultants) with little input from local specialists, often do not take into account the contextual factors specific to that country." (Webster; 2000) Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor express similar views on the problem of foreign expertise and state that a United Nations study conducted in the late 1970s illustrated that foreign experts were often sponsored by international organizations and have shaped their programs, but that,

such programs were often met with resistance in recipient countries and did not reflect their own priorities. "Sometimes local education professionals resented foreign experts who were invited to do jobs that they were supposed to be doing." (Rondinelli et. al.; 1990)

On the issue of globalization, state sovereignty, and education policies, Reimers and McGinn suggest that nation state governments no longer determine national education policy. "The changes in the composition and strength of the state are already affecting education systems, especially public education systems around the world. In many countries of the world, governments are less able to raise the funds required to finance expanding demand for education. Governments are under pressure from both national and international sources to devolve power to smaller units of governance, to decentralize education, and to permit the participation of actors that previously had no voice in decision making. In some instances, international assistance agencies and transnational corporations have significant influence over decision; in even more cases, private interests have increasing involvement in deciding about the allocation and disbursement of public funds." (Reimers and McGinn; 1997)

At a time when developing countries strongly depend on international investments and financial assistance, the desire to obtain any benefits from the flow of capital and technology transfer around the globe is increasing. Investment laws are modified, fiscal deficits are trimmed and internal policies strive to match the suggestions of foreign donors and investors. Yet this attempt by developing countries to match their internal policies with donors' recommendations cannot be explained as a direct result of globalization. It is true that the influence of donors on the internal policy planning of developing countries has been mainly attributed to globalization by many developmentalists. The broad international harmonization of structural

adjustment programs has been used as for the evidence to support this claim.

However, the reliance of developing countries on the financial assistance of donors and the conciliation of internal public policies and plans to the development views of international organizations has been true ever since the post-colonialist era after the end of the second world war. In his book *Education and Foreign Aid*(1965) Philip H. Coombs, described the donors' influence on education planning in developing countries during the 1950s and 1960s, as follows: "to meet the formal requirements of various donors and lenders, many developing nations in the last few years have felt obliged to go through the hasty and superficial exercise (often with the help of visiting experts) of putting a 'plan' and 'priorities' down on paper. More often than not, however, such 'plan', fashioned by a few technicians in a back room of the Ministry of Education or planning commission, have had few if any real links to the practical administrative, political, budgetary, and decision-making realities of the country. Too often also the 'priorities' have simply reflected someone's best guess as to what the potential donor agency thinks is the right answer." (Coombs; 1965)

F. Domestic Technocrats as Actors of International Socialization

The international community also contributes to the creation of a political elite (politicians, intelligentsia and senior officials) in secondary states that have an academic and professional preparation that provides a mechanism for socialization and a medium through which the values and norms of the international community penetrate domestic political and administrative cultures. The fact that most national elites log into the same information networks, many of them have

received their education in Western educational institutions, such as Harvard, Oxford, and the Sorbonne; sets some common grounds of their mind-frames (even when they color their rationale with various political and/or religious tones). A large majority of the ruling elite in Latin America, the Middle and Far East has received their education in the West.

"Ideoscapes refer to the rapid global flows of ideas- in our case, of educational policy ideas, contributing to the Diaspora of key policy terms and concepts re-contextualized in different national and local contexts. Taken together these scopes indicate the emergence of post-national educational policy community, consisting of globalizing bureaucrats, senior public servants, policymakers, policy advisers, and policy intellectuals (and entrepreneurs). The policy ideas flowing globally are also linked to international political organizations." (Lingard: Burbules and Torres; 2000) Creating a 'globalized' bureaucratic class that acts as a socialization entrepreneur for the advocated policy reforms facilitates not only the transfer of policy models to the secondary states, but enables their implementation and contributes to their internalization in the long run.

II. The 'International Socialization' of Education Policy Reforms in Egypt

A. Adapting the Education for All 'Master Plan' in Egypt

Policy failure and the persuadee's desire for the respect of the international community and the economic and political benefits of being part of the 'free' world, are among the most important factors that facilitate the promotion of an externally suggested policy reform in a secondary country. This has been the case for Egypt from the

early 1990s. Along with the rest of the world at the end of the 1980s Egypt was facing a serious economic crisis, characterized by large deficits in budget balances and international trade, and huge foreign debts. Such external and internal imbalances threatened the economic, social and political stability of the country. Egyptian education, like most other sectors, suffered from this crisis. Education had been suffering from a policy failure for at least the past thirty years that resulted in an illiteracy rate of 49.6 percent in 1986, an unemployment rate of 14 percent in 1992 and the rank of 128th on the International Educational Scale. (Egypt Human Development Report 1997/98; 1998) As a result of this situation, Egypt has topped the list of development assistance recipients in the 1990s, and has had several education policy reforms set aside due to lack of financial resources.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in concordance with other major donors, suggested a number of structural reforms as the condition for providing more development assistance and relief of foreign debt. These reforms were designed to restore internal and external economic balance and increase economic efficiency. Macroeconomic reforms were deemed crucial for the promotion of economic growth and basic education has been the cornerstone of human capital formation, essential for the desired economic and political development.

International organizations and donor agencies have worked closely with the Egyptian state on basic education policy formulation and implementation during the 1990s. The influence of donors on education policies has been evident in placing specific issues at the top of the policy agenda, identifying priority areas for development assistance, and to some extent, influencing the appointment of top decision-makers in the political and administrative apparatus of education.

Interestingly, donors exercise various degrees of leverage on policy implementation and formulation vis-à-vis each other at different levels of decision making.

World Bank loans addressing basic education directed to the developing world have the following unanimous objectives;

- 1) achieving universal coverage in an expanded eight-year basic education cycle
- 2) improving the quality and relevance of basic education
- 3) achieving gender equity and increase environmental awareness.

(World Bank Press Release; 1998)

However, public finance barriers make these objectives more difficult to achieve. Reviewing the budgetary reports of developing countries illustrates that large percentages of Gross Domestic Products are dedicated to education. These, however, translate into poor absolute figures that seek to cover the meager salaries of teachers and recurrent costs of educational institutions. Thus policy makers cannot aspire to carry out any comprehensive improvement in the educational institutions' structure or pedagogical processes. For instance, Egypt's educational expenditures ranged around 3.9 percent of the GDP and around 9.8 percent of the Egyptian budget during the 1990s, which is not very significant because of its low GDP. (Mohieddin; 1994) Even though efficiency and equity in resource allocation are even more important than resource mobilization, most developing countries are unable to raise the necessary funds to operate their national educational systems. In this context, educational reforms and innovations are achievable only if they receive international development assistance. Therefore, Third World countries compete for the limited pool of development assistance provided to basic education by donors and international organizations. They bid for assistance projects, tailor their reform programs and write their project

proposals to meet the expectations of donors. Proposals have to include the 'right' priorities and cover the 'concerns' of the 'international community.' Accordingly, bilateral and multilateral organizations (most importantly in education the role of the World Bank and UNESCO) have a strong presence in the formulation of educational policy, and even more so in conditions of financial austerity and economic structural reform.

Most of the basic education development programs applied by the World Bank and other development agencies are not unique programs conceptualized, designed and implemented to suit the Egyptian case. They often have parallel models implemented throughout several other countries in the developing world. They usually address the 'Education For All' objectives and target similar sections of populations of recipient countries. Parallel to the Jomtien conference of 1990, the World Bank published its major studies on basic education that elucidate its master plan for basic education reform around the world.

Reading through the executive summary of the Egyptian Government education strategies of the decade of the 1990s we read the following:

1. "Improving access to basic education
2. Improving education quality (this includes curriculum reform, improving teaching quality and facilities, developing decision making systems, and students' capacity)
3. Improve gender equity in education" (Ministry of Education; 1997)

A glance at a third policy document, the 1993 and 1996 Staff Appraisal Reports on the Education Enhancement Program, co-financed by World Bank (in terms of IDA soft loans) and the European Union (in terms of ODA 'grants') reveals the objectives of the program are listed to be:

1. "Improve access to basic education

2. Improve quality of student performance
3. Reduce wastage
4. Improve quality of teaching and learning
5. Improve system efficiency"

(World Bank Internal Documents; 1993 and 1996)

Interestingly, the outline of the Education Enhancement Program document and its objectives and strategies are identical to the programs conducted by the World Bank in Sri Lanka (1996), Indonesia (1996) and China. (World Bank Internal Document; 1996) Going through the previously mentioned official documents and analyzing the policy strategies designed to meet the educational reform objectives, it is clear that the blueprints of the education policy reform strategies have been devised by a World Bank master plan.

B. The Ceremonial Adaptation of Policy Reforms and Strategic Bargaining

The distance between ratifying an agreement, implementing a policy and internalizing and sustaining the advocated change involves a long-term and sophisticated process composed of various phases. International relations theorists suggest that the socialization process aim to internalize the policy change advocated by international organizations. This process is composed of three main causal mechanisms; instrumental adaptation and strategic bargaining; moral consciousness and persuasion; and institutionalization and habitualization (Risse and Ropp; 1999. Basic education policy reforms suggested by development assistance agencies and bilateral donors were consistent with the vision of the Government of Egypt (GOE), such as universal basic education for all, achieving gender equity and improving educational quality. Yet they involved institutional changes

that have not been consistent with the functions, structures and culture of Egypt's centralized and hierarchical education. This inconsistency could have compromised the established and critical balance of power on the institutional, societal and cultural levels. In due course, the Government of Egypt largely adopted several policy recommendations at the ceremonial level applying *cosmetic changes* that altered some aspects of the formal educational structure but not actual day-to-day work activities.

Ceremonial conformity is defined by Meyer to occur when "organizations reflect institutional rules and buffer their formal structures from the uncertainties of technical activities by becoming loosely coupled, building gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities." (Meyer; 1977) The Ministry of Education joined the EFA programs of international organizations after the education policy failure and economic crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover the Egyptian Government was driven by the need to be accepted and approved of by the international community and the super powers. This approval was considered vital in order for Egypt to integrate into the global market systems and obtain other forms of financial and political assistance and support, as well as to attract direct foreign development assistance.

C. Internalizing and Sustaining Reforms

Internalizing and sustaining change and achieving domestic resonance are indeed arduous tasks that require the internalization of advocated change in a country's collective ideological creeds and normative order. The communication, argumentation and persuasion of advocated education policies have been the biggest challenge of the Egyptian MOE. A close analysis of the policy reform process indicates that the

Egyptian government has often 'talked the talk' of development agencies and international forums, but has not managed to engage the various groups of critical actors (particularly the intelligentsia) in national dialogue.

In official reports addressing donors and international forums, the Egyptian minister of Education Hussein K. Bahaaeddin states the following; "we have no other choice but peace as a basic concept of the educational curriculum. A peace that is institutionally based on justice, socially based on equity and economically based on welfare for all peoples and individuals. This should be projected regardless of the boarders of fear, prejudice, and/or selfishness." (Bahaaeddin; 1997) While the Egyptian Country Report of Education for All 2000 quotes President Mubarak on the issue as follows: "Education and its progress is our path and gate to the new world map. Education is the cornerstone of our national security in its broad context, covering economy, and politics, our intellectual role which precedes other nations and which leads to stability, development and welfare. Education as such is our way to local and international competition." (Egypt National Report; 1999) Both views expressed by President Mubarak and the minister of Education on the necessity to orient national educational policies towards the capacity to compete in global markets, and the predisposition to international peace, reflect the impact of economic and political globalization on national policy making in Egypt. These statements were entirely consistent with the discourse of donors and international community.

However, the MOE has not taken seriously the importance of the concept of identity transformation through dialogue, communication and persuasion as a means of internalizing new policy norms. From a constructive perspective, norms and values are closely linked with identity. They are adopted initially for instrumental reasons and are

later sustained and ingrained as part of systems of belief and identity. Reforms that clash with long-established value and norms pose a threat to identity and require a process of complex socialization and internalization to succeed. (Risse and Ropp; 1999) In this study, I argue that basic education reforms of the 1990s have not been satisfactorily internalized because of the failure to communicate with and incorporate the various bureaucratic, political and intellectual domestic actors in an active participatory communication process. Thus, many of those actors have resisted such changes as threatening to their identities on various levels. Consequently, administrative, political and cultural dissent produces formal and non-formal constraints on the success of development assistance in the field of basic education in Egypt.

The task of achieving domestic resonance has been rendered more difficult by the deeply rooted conviction in the collective memory of the Egyptian masses that foreign (westernized) influence on education creates a disassociation from the national and religious identity of the nation and many construe foreign education as a form of cultural colonialism. Therefore, there is a degree of skepticism with regard to the motivations behind foreign assistance to education, especially when it is related to the contents of the curriculum and the values advocated by it. This skepticism has been amplified by the lack of committed efforts to formulate 'concrete norms' of reforms that correspond to the social, political and economic values and ideologies prevailing in Egypt during the 1990s. Moreover, the ideology behind the reforms was not successfully communicated, because the communication and persuasion efforts of the government marginalized major current trends of thought and numerous significant domestic actors. The reforms failed to achieve 'domestic resonance' because they were seen by many as donor-driven and divorced from national visions or actual needs. Given that education is also a sensitive

policy area in terms of political legitimacy of the state, national identity, national security and economic performance, this clash has produced a widely accepted 'conspiracy theory' of western influence.

D. Re-Structuring the Educational Establishment

The socialization of policy reforms is not limited to the standard implementation of reforms. It is embedded and sustained by the institutionalization of such reforms, that is, restructuring domestic institutions and reformulating the organizational mission statement, structure, culture and goals. Most important of all, it is vital to internalize change in the standard operating procedures of the educational establishment. In other words, it is necessary to reconstruct and harmonize the formal and informal structures and cultures of the educational establishment in order to implement policy reforms effectively and durably. An institution is defined by Finnemore and Sikkink to be "a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations." (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998) Taking into consideration this definition of institutions and analyzing the educational institutions responsible for the implementation of basic education reforms suggested by development agencies in Egypt, we can trace the procedural flaws in the institutionalization of such reforms.

There have been several efforts by the MOE, guided by donors (World Bank, EU, USAID and others), to restructure educational institutions in order to internalize and sustain reforms and make them part of the MOE's standard operation procedures. Yet, this occurred through 'external' donor-instituted units superimposed on the MOE's existing hierarchical structure and administrative culture. Therefore, there

was no 'institutionalization of reforms.' This is evident from analyzing the education policy reform process in its various stages: policy initiation and formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation, an analysis that reveals that there has been an 'instrumental' and formalistic implementation of reforms without a successful institutionalization and internalization. I will argue that this problem is related to the authoritarian and top-down political and administrative culture of the MOE. However, I do not suggest that there was a total failure of reforms because 'internalization is matter of degree' (Schimmelfennig; 2000). I will, however, maintain that the degree of internalization is low, and consequently that there is a risk these reforms are unsustainable.

- **Administrative Dissonance**

The different patterns of administrative structures, power distance within organizations and organizational behavior among development agencies, politicians, and administrative apparatuses of the government create friction at various levels of decision making and implementation. Cochran (1986) argues that in order to adapt foreign aid it is important to consider the bureaucratic structures of the host country and establish some familiarity with formal and informal administrative systems. This goes especially for those foreign aid programs that have operated outside the educational administrative structure and are used to different degrees of centralization, communication patterns and cultural values.

However, administrative and political conflicts over development programs are not only related to clash between foreign and Egyptian models. They also occur in relations between assistance agencies and

political decision-makers back in the assistance agencies' home countries as well as between politicians and bureaucratic apparatuses in Egypt. On the one hand politicians in the donor countries cater for their voters and dedicate most of their concern to political and strategic objectives. On the other hand, development specialists working for development agencies have different targets and evaluation parameters, over and above the strategic ones. Developmental objectives do not always prevail over political objectives. As discussed by Chloe O'Gara in a USAID program and operations' assessment report published in 1999, there were inconsistencies between USAID development commitments, and the changing nature of USAID's internal politics. O'Gara used the example of directing higher funds to massive school construction in Egypt and Pakistan as opposed to cutting the budgets of education projects in Guatemala. She explains that this inconsistency reflects political interests rather than the development priorities and commitments set by USAID itself. (O'Gara et. al.; 1999)

This internal conflict also occurs on the level of policy implementation in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. The multiple actors involved in the implementation of education programs often struggle for control over local level implementation between general (territorial) regional government branch offices of centralized ministries and development organizations, thus constraining the performance of these programs. (King; 1995) This also goes for inter-ministerial discord. For example development assistance directed to school building may be delivered in cooperation with the Ministry of Housing and Construction and not the Ministry of Education, thus creating a conflict over technical specifications, and executive details. Such administrative conflicts are more likely to occur in the middle level bureaucracy, who may not represent the decisive policy makers but are critical instead for policy implementation and are

capable of improving policy effectiveness. "When different organizations work together for the same goal but use different approaches to achieve that goal, it may be difficult for them to achieve it. When the goal itself is perceived of in very different terms, implementing it is unlikely to result in success. When the number of different organizations increases, the result can be an administrative nightmare." (Sullivan; 1991)

Reviewing the projects' documents and going through the objectives of various projects, we find that the ultimate objective of many programs is to internalize the programs within the existing administrative system and sustain their operation and results. This however, has often failed as such agencies have not integrated the local elements of administration in planning and implementation phases, which often also do not benefit from the programs. Another problem is the lack of financial and administrative commitment of the governments of host countries (Valsan; 1997). In many cases programs collapsed as soon as donors or development organizations pulled out. Often the assistance programs are the *raison d'être* of various development agencies and like any bureaucracy, the agencies want to maintain and expand their functions. Therefore they are against cash transfers or internalization because it weakens their policy leverage over the Egyptian government.

E. Revamping Civil Society as a Tool for Institutionalizing Education Policy Reforms

Many developing nations that have lived under the authoritarian rule of a one-party system, a totalitarian economy and political systems where the common economic order is dictated by state-dominated corporatism, have a weak civil society that fails to perform the

function of societal interest mediation (Schimmelfennig; 2002). Egypt has such a situation where centralized, top-down political and economic structures have discouraged grass-roots participation, and systematically weakened civil society for decades. These conditions have reduced the negotiating power of civil society in the policy formulation process and allowed it to exercise very limited pressure from below on the state in the policy formulation process. Limited competence within civil society is related to an insufficient institutionalization and improbable sustainability of policies. (Epstein; 2002) Participation could reduce systematic resistance to change and persuade the various groups involved in the policy implantation process that the policy changes are consistent with their collective and individual goals and not a threat to their identity.

In many cases where civil society organizations and associations are considered weak, international organizations, cooperating with a secondary state, contribute to build and revamp non-state actors in order to speed the internalization process. "Private western foundations and western states promote and even simulate structures of civil society in secondary countries until actual societal actors are strong enough to articulate interests of their own." (Jacoby; 2000) This support to domestic civil society is often welcomed and encouraged by secondary states on the ceremonial level, but is seen as a threat to the sovereignty and control of the state over the domestic arena. Civil society groups act as domestic pressure groups that challenge the top-down structure of the state, and thus weaken its negotiating power with international organizations and donor agencies. Therefore, many states encourage civil society groups superficially, but reinforce legal limitations on the formation and operational procedures of such groups and tighten the financial regulations on such groups in order not to lose control.

Conclusion:

The following parts of this study investigate how international development assistance has interacted with domestic policy making in Egypt to implement basic education reforms in the 1990s. I examine how domestic policy development has interacted with the norms of the international community and the consequent conflict of ideas triggered by donor-sponsored reforms. The analysis will look at how reform policies were initiated, formulated, implemented and evaluated, focusing on the communication style adopted by the state and development agencies to persuade and raise moral consciousness during the various stages of the policy cycle. Throughout the analysis I investigate the level of engagement of domestic elites, civil society and development agencies in processes of institutionalization and persuasion.

Chapter 2

External and Internal
Security Pressures
and Their Implications for
Decision-Making in Basic Education

Introduction:

It is essential to understand the contextual variables connected with the historical background, orientations of foreign policy, and national security issues that influence domestic actors in the field of basic education in Egypt. Such contextual variables have a bearing on education policy initiation and formulation, and urge domestic decision-makers to prefer a specific course for reforms over others. Thus they have important implications for why decision-makers do or do not choose to accept a donor policy advice. By identifying and assessing these variables, we can also understand whether these specific reforms were entirely inspired by donors, dictated by the state's political and economic orientations, or both.

Moreover, collective beliefs about the historical role of foreign powers in setting education policies in Egypt, as well as current external and internal security concerns influence the socialization of policy reforms. The communication style used by the state with domestic actors to socialize policy reforms is both a cause and effect of the contextual variables influencing the domestic scene.

In the first part of this chapter I assess how various foreign powers had direct or indirect influence on Egypt's basic education policies in the past, and how far this power was exercised to reinforce their dominion over the country. In the second part of this chapter I examine how the issue of Middle East regional stability continues to attract the interest of the international community concern with basic education in Egypt. I look at how the issue of national security has affected education policy decision-making and how far foreign policy orientations and the state's position on various strategic security issues are reflected in the field of education. I investigate how and why education has always been considered a national security issue and

review the various definitions of national security and how they are interpreted differently by domestic actors, the Egyptian state and foreign donors.

I. A Historical Review of the Agenda Setting of Education Policies

Who places an issue on the political agenda is a very important question to investigate in the process of policy analysis. "Agenda setting is a political activity that illustrates the amount of control various parties have over policy choices." (Gomaa; 1997) Understanding how a policy agenda was set may help explain how political power in Egypt is exercised and by whom.

Basic education has always been considered by Egyptian rulers to be a major mechanism of progress and modernization. Literacy, the acquisition of numerical skills and conformity with predominant social and civic practices have always been deemed by rulers (national or foreign) to be important factors for the modeling of industrious and 'good' citizens. As a matter of fact, education has been the tool through which Egyptians absorbed their numerous conquerors and evolved with them throughout ancient and modern history.

Education has always been used by the regimes as a source of legitimacy and indication of patriotism and commitment to the masses. Education is such an important public opinion issue that the National Egyptian Newspaper *Al-Ahram*, in its issue of August 21, 2000, published an article accusing the minister of education of inflating the results of the secondary school exams in order to appeal to public opinion before the October 2000 parliamentary elections. Public opinion has, for a long time, withheld that sovereign and competent governments are the ones that acknowledge free education as a basic

social right for all citizens and provide it. (Said; 1996) The eradication of illiteracy had been set as a national objective ever since the era of Mohamed Ali.

"Egyptian education is the past and present architect of economic and social behavior in the Middle East and throughout the Muslim World" (Judith Cochran; 1986). Kuttabs (religious primary education provided through informal tutoring in Mosques) were the prevailing forms of schooling received by young Egyptians from the year 642, when Muslim Arab forces took over Egypt. Kuttabs facilitated the spread of Islam and the Arabic language among Egyptians. Soon after the Fatimids took power in 969, they established the first university in the world, Al Azhar, which has been a major center for Islamic learning until the present day. Al-Azhar made of Cairo (the Capital of Egypt established by the Fatimids) the cultural and religious education center of Islam. Many of the leaders of the Arab and non-Arab Muslim world have received their education in Egypt at some point of their lives.

Religious education was the only form of education received by lay people. The agrarian mode of production as well as the oppressive and reclusive authoritarian style of the Ottoman Empire that ruled Egypt from the thirteenth century until the early nineteenth century had no interest in changing those conditions. This remained the case until Mohamed Ali introduced formal education in the early nineteenth century. Mohamed Ali (1811-1849), the founder of modern Egypt, introduced agricultural development, cash crops and expanded irrigation and was mostly interested in constructing a civil bureaucracy and an army to conquer Arabia, Greece, Sudan and Syria. Religious education, received in Muslim and Coptic (Egyptian-Orthodox-Christian) Kuttabs, did not prepare Egyptians to operate the administrative systems, the modern army and the agricultural and structural projects engineered by Mohamed Ali.

The new institutions were replicated after the model of Western Europe were superimposed on a traditional socio-economic structure in Egypt, that had been cut off from the rest of the world by the Ottomans for more than half a millennium. In order to prepare a cadre of bureaucrats and competent army officers with technical skills, Mohamed Ali selected a group of promising Egyptians and sent them on missions to France and England to be educated in modern physical sciences, administration and law. In 1838, Mohamed Ali established the Ministry of Education 'Diwan of Schools.' (State Information Services; 1989) The upside-down educational pyramid system established higher education before elementary schooling and continued recruiting students from the existing religious education system, Kuttabs and Al-Azhar. Later, elementary and secondary schools were added to the educational system.

Empowering the Egyptian people and developing the socio-economic structure was not the objective of the educational system established by Mohamed Ali. He only wanted to produce a skilled workforce to operate the economic and military structures to expand his patrimony and aggrandize his empire. In a letter he addressed to his son and heir, Ibrahim, Mohammed Ali said; "What Europe is suffering from is the result of generalizing education among all levels of society . . . they have no chance of avoiding what happened. So if this is an example in front of us, our duty is simply to teach them how to read and write to a certain limit in order to encourage satisfactory work and not to spread education beyond that point." (Moursi; 1974)

A. Education Under the British Occupation (1882-1919)

The British had the least interest in providing education to the masses, because they were mainly concerned with restraining public

spending and balancing the deficits and foreign debt. However, later, when economic reforms were achieved in 1889 and there was a surplus in state budget allocations for education did not exceed 1.3 percent of state spending (Metwally; 1986). In the meantime the British had established a Technical and Administrative Commission for educational matters in 1887, headed by British advisor Douglas Dunlop, who formulated all significant educational policies and decrees (Aly; 1999). Proposals for education reform and the eradication of illiteracy were designed, but never implemented. Not only did they pay little attention to public education, but the British incorporated the Ministry of Education into the Ministry of Public works in 1894, and in 1907, they abolished free public education all together (State Information Services; 1989).

An elementary or secondary school certificate was necessary to obtain a civil service job and therefore more and more people were eager to obtain an education. Since the main purpose of education was to staff the British civil service conducting Egyptian affairs, the education system concentrated more on producing English-speaking, subservient middle-class bureaucrats and little attention was given to technical and vocational education or to integrating females into the educational system (Metwally; 1986). Foreign and missionary schools continued to flourish and provided the only quality secular education to the privileged few.

B. Education Policies After the 1923 Constitution (1922-1952)

The nationalization of education and recuperating the sense of a national Egyptian identity were major concerns in the period after the 1923 Constitution. Achieved after the long political struggle for independence from Britain, the constitution reconfirmed free education

as a basic right for citizens and made basic education compulsory until the age of 12. Arabic became the major language of instruction (Metwally; 1986). Universal basic education and the eradication of illiteracy were the goals of the education policies, but were endangered by the lack of basic facilities, qualified teachers and concrete objectives. (Shura Council; 1994) Education had been oriented for a long time towards the needs of the urban and centralized civil service and poorly linked to the agrarian activity of the majority of the population. These new education policies were implemented during a very volatile period of Egyptian history, with internal political instability, a massive presence of British military forces further intensified by a World War II, and Egyptian engagement in the Palestine War in 1948. Both internal and external factors were destabilizing the country, capturing the full attention of politicians and leaving very few resources to social welfare policies including health and education.

The problems identified as hindering educational achievement were described to be: a lack of schools compared to the number of students, a lack of teaching facilities, the poor quality of teachers, an inconsistent curriculum, an imbalance between urban and rural areas in educational levels, a high percentage of drop outs, a gender gap and others. It is interesting to note that all of these problems identified in the 1930s and 1940s are the very same ones in the 1990s!

C. Education Policies After the 1952 Revolution

As a consequence of the Free Officers' *coup d'état*, which was supported by a large part of the population, in 1952, Arab nationalism, the redistribution of wealth and national development became the determinants of state policy in the early 1950s and 1960s.

The centralized state took upon itself to provide for the masses, employ all university graduates, subsidize basic goods, redistribute agricultural land amongst small farmers, provide services and establish heavy industries and construct the high dam, a colossal infrastructure project to regulate the Nile and extend irrigation. The motto of the state was the eradication of poverty, illiteracy, and disease. Education became tuition-free throughout all its stages up to postgraduate studies, and was used as a means to reinforce national identity, the pan-Arab Nasserite socialist ideology and consolidate the republican military order. The enlarged role of the state required the expansion of state bureaucracy. Besides, the expulsion of expatriates from key positions conducting economic activities, increased the need for more nationals to fill those posts.

The reliance on free education up to the university level, the hope for prestigious employment in the growing public sector, and dreams of social mobility in a previously hierarchical and class oriented society, encouraged more and more people to send their children to schools. The educational system became highly centralized and standardized on both secular and religious education levels. Private and foreign schools (except for American and Vatican schools) were put under strict state supervision. The number of student enrollments in public education increased, as opposed to private and foreign schools that were regarded as elitist institutions in a socialist system.

The Revolution was addressing the masses and assigned an Egyptian leader to preside over Egypt for the first time in many centuries. The nationalization of the Suez Canal, firm resistance to the French-British-Israeli invasion to the Canal in 1956, free education and the land reform (redistribution) policies, reinforced the popularity of the Free Officers, led by President Nasser. After the Nationalization of the Suez Canal, his position in the Yemeni civil war, and the

Egyptian lead taken in the Arab Israeli Conflict, Nasser was perceived to be the leader of the Arabs. To solidify this image, Nasser granted free secular and religious education at all levels to all students from other Muslim countries and reassigned Egyptian teachers and school administrators to the rest of the Arab countries. "They set up and staffed schools and universities on so large a scale that Egyptians can claim to have shaped the secular and religious leadership of most of the Arab countries" (Cochran; 1986).

However, the developmental goals were too ambitious, especially given that resources were scarce and the concerns of the totalitarian regime were mostly directed to the military budget and foreign politics while internal policies and national development schemes received no much more than glamorous and rhyming slogans.

As aspirations were raised, demand for education increased but school facilities and construction did not match demand, and the number of qualified teachers decreased after their relocation to other developing countries. Considering the limited budget drained by military expenses, untargeted subsidies and curbed taxation, the quality and extent of basic education were both sacrificed in order to provide free-education up to the doctorate level. No new investments could be afforded to build schools, reform administration, and train and remunerate qualified teachers, or review the curriculum. Education suffered from the same ailments as the rigid, inflated, centralized and inefficient state-bureaucratic apparatus. After the euphoric promises of national dignity and prosperity, the defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war put into question all of the internal and foreign policies of the state. Education was further marginalized and attention and resources were directed instead to rebuilding the army and revising foreign policy and strategies.

D. Education Policies in the 1970s and 1980s

Despite the recovery of national self esteem after the military accomplishment in the 1973 war, and the end of the state of war concluded by the Camp David agreement in 1978, the 1970s and 1980s were not much more prosperous than previous decades for the masses, notwithstanding the open door policy launched by Sadat at the end of the 1970s that encouraged foreign investments in Egypt and the adoption of a mixed economy. The profits and benefits of economic liberalization and foreign investments have enriched only the privileged few and have not been equitably distributed. The country at this point suffered from a collapsing economy, a disintegrating infrastructure, and substantial foreign debts. Education remained an issue of vital importance to the state and was regarded as a precondition for development, but never received adequate human and capital resources. Aspirations for social equity and national economic independence had proven to be illusions, and dreams of prestigious public sector employment turned into nightmares. The very small salaries provided to university graduates employed in the public sector hardly sufficed for basic subsistence, at a time when many subsidies were cut off and luxury consumer products were launched into the Egyptian market for the new elite.

"The educational system now reflected the mixed economy and divided culture," according to Cochran (1986). Once more, private and foreign education, and education in foreign languages had become the privilege of the well-to-do segments of society. Thus, they acquired lucrative employment in the private and foreign investment sectors, while public education remained the alternative for the masses, which could not afford quality education. As population growth increased, enrollment rates in basic education increased accordingly, but the limited capacity of the system could not catch up with this growth. Therefore,

increasing enrollment in basic education (primary and preparatory) had little effect in reducing illiteracy rates on the national level, limiting student drop out rates, and narrowing the gender gap in access to education and scholastic attainment. In summary, we can say that even though basic education has been recognized as an important element of national development and human capital formation and was declared to be a policy priority, it has received insufficient attention in terms of real resource allocation and linkage to other development plans.

Reviewing the background of basic education policies in Egypt, we see three persisting trends. First, basic education has always been present on the agenda of internal politics in Egypt since the nineteenth century and reflected the political disposition of the regime in power. It has been used to reinforce the expectations and tenets of the regime and serve its needs for the workforce that operates its institutions. Besides, education policies had often been dictated by the need to build consensus and instrumentalize the members of the community, rather than empowering them to actively participate in the decision making process on the various levels (personal, social and political) of their lives.

Secondly, there is the influence of foreign powers over the country's basic education policies. This is evident in both cases of the policies of Mohamed Ali (an Albanian affiliated to the Ottoman Empire) and his heirs as well as during the British occupation. While Mohamed Ali was primarily interested in establishing his own empire and using Egypt and its resources as its nucleus, the British were interested in controlling the country in order to maintain complete access to their colonies and control who set national interest. National progress and human development were not on their agenda; on the contrary, they opposed them, because revolt and defiance against foreign rulers were

often initiated by the educated middle class. Thus, there is a deeply rooted conviction in the collective memory of the Egyptian people that foreign (westernized) influence on education creates a disassociation from the national and religious identity of the nation. Consequently, many define foreign education as a form of cultural neocolonialism. Moreover the education system has often been divided into two categories, a private (often foreign one) providing quality education for the elite to prepare them for leading positions; and a poor quality public one provided to the poor masses. As a matter of fact, foreign education has always been the subject of a love-hate relationship among Egyptians, since affording it meant socio-economic mobility and status, yet it was also viewed as a challenge to inherited social values. Hence, there is a degree skepticism with regard to the aims of foreign assistance in the field of education, especially when it is related to the contents of the curriculum and the values it advocates.

Third, the controversy of providing universal free-tuition education at all levels as opposed to the quality of education provided has been a major issue for Egyptian education. This debate has existed ever since the 1930s. Free basic education has been viewed as a right for every citizen since the 1923 Constitution. This perspective was crystallized in 1950 by Taha Hussein (the eminent Egyptian intellectual and minister of Education at the time) who defined education to be like "water and air, the right of every citizen." After the 1952 Revolution, the entitlement to free education extended to doctoral levels and also to students from other developing countries. As ideologically virtuous as it sounds, it was not feasible, considering the very limited resources of the country. Egypt had been in a state of political turbulence and war from the thirties until the mid-1970s. Consequently education received inadequate human and capital allocations that did not allow it to perform its

developmental role during those five decades. Universal education versus quality education is a dilemma that still dominates internal Ministry of Education debates and donors' project documents.

II. Education, National Security and Political Stability

A. Defining National Security

In order to emphasize its importance, basic education in Egypt has always been referred to as a matter of national security in every single presidential speech, ministerial press release and official governmental statement addressing the topic, ever since the beginning of the 1990s. To declare an issue as a security issue means to place it at the top of the political agenda, that is, to position it beyond the ordinary rules of the political game, as Michael Sheehan maintains in *National and International Security*, and allocate to it high capital and human resources. (Sheehan; 2000) To define education as an issue of national security meant to indicate the political commitment of the Egyptian state, which always expressed good intentions regarding education reform and specified goals and objectives, yet failed to address the issue appropriately by dedicating sufficient state resources to it. In our previous review of the history of education policy making in Egypt we saw that education had always been mentioned as a national priority but this did not necessarily lead to a significant political and economic commitment to such a target. Therefore, by defining it as a national security issue, the state intended to declare that this time it is determined to carry out the proposed reforms. "The Egyptian state can no longer afford to consider education as a service commodity, since it touches upon all aspects of national security," as the Ministry of Education stated in one of its *Mubarak and Education* book series. (Ministry of Education; 1999)

Interestingly, this was also the view of several donors and international development agencies who saw education as a stabilizing socio-political factor that contributes to maintaining a necessary national and regional equilibrium. In order to understand how education as a national security issue has affected the direction of education policies and how it has conditioned state interaction with donors, we need to examine how national security is defined by the state, its constituents and by donors and how they relate it to the role of basic education in society.

Ever since the emergence of the concept of the nation state after the Westphalia Congress and especially after the French Revolution, national security has been defined in a military context and its scope has been to protect national territorial and state sovereignty against potentially threatening external actors. (Jean; 1998) In a militaristic context, national security is accomplished using armed forces and the threat is either an external power or internal actors instigated by outside conspiring powers. This militaristic vision of national security prevailed in security studies until the early 1980s (1983) when Richard Ullman redefined security to include non-military aspects. He suggested that "security is threatened by an action or a sequence of events that: - (1) threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to a private non-governmental entities." (Sheehan) This definition was further elaborated by the 'Copenhagen School', especially by Barry Buzan who broadened the concept of security to include political, societal, economic as well as environmental security. According to Buzan; political security is related to the organizational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that legitimize them; while economic security is achieved by securing access to the

resources and markets that provide necessary welfare and state power. As for societal security, Buzan holds that it is related to the achievement of sustainability within "acceptable conditions of evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and both religious and national identity and customs." (Buzan; 1991)

Having reviewed the narrower and broader definitions of national security, we can move on to examine how this applies to the Egyptian state's vision of education as a national security matter and how the state's perception relates to donors' and development assistance agencies' views of the role of education as an element of security at both the national and regional levels.

B. Education and National Security

In almost all his official statements referring to education, President Mubarak links education reform to national security, espousing the broader definition of national security that encompasses the political, economic as well as the military dimensions. Political security, according to an MOE publication, is achieved through democracy and 'social peace'. On the other hand, economic security is to be achieved through the growth of human capital resources and the economic productivity of individuals. Military security, in MOE publications is achievable through a scientific and technological progress that can be achieved only through an information technology 'revolution' linked to education reform. (Ministry of Education; 1991) In fact, the Egyptian Ministry of Education has defined national security in relation to education in a way that highly corresponds to Buzan's definition and which states that: "Education is closely related to national security as national security in its simplest definition is 'the potentials, facilities, systems and procedures that

provide protection for the citizen before any predictable dangers, threatening his stability, welfare, independent decisions and land integrity.' In this context the Egyptian state defines war to be "a war in mathematics, electronics and technology" and military supremacy to be the outcome of education. (Ministry of Education; 1995)

However, one needs to read carefully between the lines, beyond these rhetorical statements, and examine MOE policies on the ground within the wider socio-political sphere so as to understand what the state considers a threat to national security. Also one must pay attention to how education reform is put into action to deal with such security concerns, and how this is related to donors' and development assistance agencies' views.

Talk about national security has always dominated the political discourse in Egypt, especially after the 1952 revolution, when the authority and legitimacy of the 'Free-Officers' (which were the Revolution's Ruling Council) were challenged on both the internal and external fronts. The 'Free-Officers' had to struggle with diverse underground and overt movements in order to consolidate the new Republican Socialist rule and, in doing so, almost every internal issue became a matter of national security. Within this frame, national security is perceived as the survival and reproduction of the ruling political system. (Ibrahim Awad; Personal interview; August 2002) Communism, Islamism, monarchism, liberalism and other political movements, then banned by the 'Free-Officers', continued their secret operation and challenge to the absolute power of the Revolution's Council. Indisputably, the strongest among the underground groups that contested the *secular* and *progressive* 'Free-Officers' have been the Islamist-fundamentalists, which later turned militant. On the other front, Egypt's territorial integrity and national sovereignty was actually threatened by Israel, Britain and France in the 1956 war

after the nationalization of the Suez Canal, as well as in the subsequent wars of 1967 and 1973, and until the signing of the Camp David peace treaty with Israel in 1978.

Throughout this time, education continued to play its role as a homogenizing and conforming factor in mobilizing the masses, especially the new generations, to embrace the socialist ideology and participate in the national cause of territorial sovereignty and fight against foreign colonial threats. Educational curricula assumed a more chauvinistic character introducing military education and enlisting school patrol officers from amongst the students. In addition, hailing the flag and singing the national anthem became the daily practice for all school children. (Mogheeth; 2002)

This militaristic mobilization of education faded out by the 1980s with the signing of the peace treaty and the relative political opening after the settlement of a social and political pact that allowed a degree of political participation for previously delegitimized political parties. Nonetheless, the Egyptian state has had a complete hold on power for the past five decades (until the present time) and it is very unlikely that any of the contending underground opposition movements will get close to power, especially Islamist-fundamentalist movements which have always been considered a threat to state security. And even though Mubarak reconfirmed the Egyptian commitment to peace with Israel and established better relationships with the Libyan and Sudanese neighbors, fear of potential threats to territorial integrity were not reduced to a historical concern. The stability and reproduction of the current republican political system and territorial integrity continued to be the two major security issues dominating the political agenda.

The Egyptian state's reaction to the reemergence of the Halayeb and Shalatin border conflict between Egypt and Sudan in 1992 is an example of the use of security criteria for basic education decision-making. This border conflict was settled by the intervention of the Egyptian army, and the Egyptian state reacted by confirming its territorial sovereignty by establishing more primary and preparatory schools, extending health services to the two villages and providing other state services. The aim was clearly to reinforce a feeling of Egyptian citizenship amongst villagers, strengthen their national identity by integrating their children into the formal educational system, and give more weight to the subject of Halayeb and Shalatin in the school curriculum.

However, the two main issues that have particularly conditioned the education policy agenda during the 1990s, and which have also dominated the political and public discourse in relation to education, have been Islamist fundamentalism and the Middle Eastern conflict. These two issues touched upon the concerns of donors and development assistance agencies, and in some cases motivated some of their education development programs.

C. Islamist-Fundamentalism and Education in the 1990s

The first half of the 1990s was a period in which Islamist militant fundamentalism manipulated the internal political scene and raised fears concerning the stability of the current Egyptian state, as well as the stability of the entire Mediterranean and Middle Eastern region. This fear was fueled by the Algerian crisis of 1991. The ultimate fear of world powers (mainly the Western world) was that the model of the Iranian revolution would be replicated both in Egypt and Algeria, thus reshuffling the entire regional and world order.

Islamist militant fundamentalists are underground groups that base their political, social and economic doctrines on a specifically rigid interpretation of Islam. Distant from sanctioned political channels, they seek to obtain power by incapacitating the current political system in Egypt through militant attacks on the political, economic and social institutions of the state. Militant fundamentalists started their campaign against the Egyptian tourism industry in 1992, causing substantial economic losses in the sector. In the same year, militant fundamentalists assassinated several political and intellectual figures and organized a militant sedition in Imbaba proclaiming it the 'Imbaba Republic'! Imbaba is one of Cairo's poorest slums, has a very high population density and lacks sanitary, education and health services. The sedition was soon terminated by a forceful intervention of the state security forces composed of 10,000 police officers. (*The Economist*; 1992) Other terrorist assaults were carried out against tourists in Upper Egypt (again the poorest region in Egypt) and an assassination attempt against Mubarak took place in Adis-Ababa/Ethiopia in 1997. Over seven years (1992-99) and since the Islamist fundamentalists started their militant campaign against the Egyptian state, approximately one thousand persons have been killed and twenty thousand arrested. (*The Economist*; 1999)

The common conclusion established by leading Egyptian social scientists and development specialists was that militant fundamentalism has been drafting its militants mainly from the poorest regions in Egypt, areas where most residents live below the poverty line and the actual presence of the state is minimal in terms of services (sanitary, health, education) and investments (infrastructure and communication). Many of those areas are dominated by the various forms of social violence that lie beyond the control of the state and create informal relations of power among residents. In such forgotten and overlooked territorial spots, family feuds, vendettas and honor

crimes are often outside the control of state institutions and the rule of law. Militant fundamentalism has recruited most among the young and frustrated inhabitants of the poorest regions, where basic services were undeveloped and security meant state control rather than state protection of citizens.

All assessments of the geographic distribution of poverty in Egypt have established that BeniSuef, Assiout, Menya, and Sohag (all located in Upper Egypt) are the poorest parts of Egypt with the least access to health and education services, as well as employment, capital and state institutions. (Assaad and Rouchdy; 1999) It is worth mentioning that BeniSuef, Assiout, Menya, Fayoum, and Sohag are the very same regions that have witnessed the most frequent episodes of violence generated by fundamentalist groups during the 1990s. It is important also to recognize that militant groups have not only capitalized on the high level of frustration resulting from this poor quality of life, but they have also succeeded where the state failed. In many urban slums and rural areas, Islamists have established charity clinics and private tutoring centers with minimal symbolic charges and direct contact with the population. In many cases they provided cheap garments and free books for students and established tight networks of solidarity with the local populations. The final image was that they were groups that had a sincere concern for the population with whom they shared and reinforced conservative religious values as opposed to the state, which has been perceived as unresponsive, incompetent, unjust and corrupt. The constant message given by fundamentalist groups to the populations living in absolute poverty has been that the answer to the long-standing developmental and political crisis and failures is an ethical revolution. And since ethical in a conservative traditional society means religious, then "Islam was the solution" to all developmental crises.

In due course, if regional and national security were to ensure the survival and reproduction of the ruling political system, then the state had to reconsider its health and education services and investments in such areas. The security situation in the first half of the 1990s risked disturbing both the national and geopolitical balance in the Middle East. Thus, it is no coincidence that during the second half of the 1990s all bilateral donors (USAID, CIDA, DANIDA and others) and international development agencies working in coordination with the Egyptian state have directed all their development programs to Upper Egypt. The Social Development Fund, which is a poverty net supported by Donors and the World Bank, allocated most of its resources to programs targeting poverty.

The same applied to the basic education reform programs that targeted mainly universal access of basic education all over Egypt and focused mainly on rural Upper Egypt, in addition to dedicating special attention to the under-serviced urban slums. Recent news about the construction of more than 150 schools in Imbaba by 2002 confirms this trend. (Al-Ahram; June 29, 2002) Reviewing all the donors' documents on Education development programs, we can conclude that they all target under-serviced areas in the South and the majority of them have social equity as a major objective. The same applies to basic education reform policies. During the second half of the 1990s, the Government of Egypt's education policy together with foreign development assistance has aimed at providing basic education in the remote and long forgotten areas that are deemed to be fountainheads of potential militants. The purpose has been to confront and challenge the fundamentalist grip on peoples' minds and souls.

Islamist private schools and tutoring centers established in urban slums and rural areas are only one side of wider phenomena of the Islamization of private education. Islamist private education is a

growing phenomenon that represented only 7 percent of private education in 1999, yet was more significant in real terms as it represents an organic education movement resulting from a combination of local and global conditioning. (Herrera; 1999) Religious fundamentalist movements invested in the spontaneous social counteraction to the fast changes caused by globalization as an attempt to maintain the value-identity of a specific society. The adoption of conservative and reserved stances has been a byproduct of confronting the interaction of the community with foreign cultures and value systems. Education was therefore the right starting point, providing three types of Islamic private education; fundamentalist, commercial, and foreign language Islamic schools, and it is the fundamentalist type that the state has been trying to downsize.

Fundamentalist schools have a "non-conciliatory or conflictual relationship with the government and as such represent a kind of education of protest." (Herrera; 1999) They are owned and run by politically active Islamists (mainly Moslem Brotherhood) who utilize such schools as a means of cultivating and channeling the expression of political opposition. The main objective of this type of education is to form a generation that endorses a religious and not a secular state assuming that the rule of religious values will suffice to achieve social justice and equity through fraternity and compassion. (Mina; 2001) The fundamentalist scenario, like all other forms of populism, refutes the various forms of globalization (cultural and political and economic) based on the fear of losing one's identity and sovereignty and unites the masses behind charismatic forms of leadership, which derive their charisma from their presumed piety.

The state reacted either by shutting down the private tutoring centers run by the Islamists, in the name of its campaign against abusive private lessons, or by providing an alternative formal state education

that absorbs the students and guarantees loyalty to the state including its doctrine and its version and interpretation of religion. Extending universal access to basic education, increasing the quality of education to maximize retention and internal efficiency and curriculum reform, have been proposed by both the state and Western development agencies as a long-term policy solution to the challenge of the penetration of fundamentalism into the education sector and as means of control over the ideological indoctrination of future generations.

Given the cultural and political sensitivity of this subject, foreign development assistance never acknowledged and publicized it as a formal objective of their educational development programs. Islamist fundamentalism often came up as a security objective under the category of social unrest, social violence or social and political instability affecting overall regional stability. Even though it was the state that took upon itself the mission of weakening the fundamentalist grip on the education sector, it has been clear that it could rely on the financial and technical support of foreign development assistance to achieve this. Besides imposing stronger control on private education and Islamist civil society associations and NGOs that established Islamist charity schools and private tutoring classes, the Ministry also removed schoolteachers advocating religious fundamentalism from their teaching jobs and transferred them to administrative jobs. Moreover, the MOE has introduced stricter controls to prevent some school administrations (mainly in rural areas) from pressuring their female students to wear the veil to school. (Mogheeth; 2002)

The MOE aimed at reforming the curricula so that it conveys a moderate, tolerant and flexible interpretation of Islam, an Islam that advocates values of cultural diversity, tolerance, social peace,

individual initiative and hard work. (Bahaaeddin; 2000) The general MOE strategy for curricula reform has been to emphasize the Koranic verses that promote religious tolerance towards Christians and Jews (as monotheistic religions) and add more knowledge about the Coptic/Christian role in Egyptian history to the formal curricula. A more recent aspect of reform is the intention to gather both Christian and Moslem primary school children within values and ethics lessons so as to emphasize the common values of both religions and promote ethical norms and citizenship. The values and ethics curriculum is to be compiled by Moslem and Christian theologians belonging to both Al-Azhar and the Coptic Church, together with other academics, declared Kouthar Koutchok, director of the Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development. (Al-Ahram; May 14, 2002)

The degree of piety of the Egyptian state was then called into question. Many Islamist writers led campaigns accusing the Ministry of Education and minister Bahaaeddin of being anti-religious and seeking to secularize education in favor of westernized cultural influence and undermining Islam as a religion and civilization. Being anti-religious is an accusation that the Egyptian state could never afford to take lightly, especially under current local and international conditions. The state has tried to refute this accusation by attempting to highlight its religious character whenever possible, while also tightening its grip on fundamentalists. This stance has often led to inconsistent and contradictory messages in the educational process. An example can be found in the Social Science school 2000 curriculum for the third grade. The book portrays the relief of the famous ancient Egyptian female musicians and dancers of goddess Hathor (originally illustrated undraped). Yet their image in the schoolbook is illustrated covered with long sleeved dresses in order not to provoke criticism from the Islamists! Besides spoiling the original aesthetic quality of the ancient Egyptian relief, this misrepresentation also

distorts the conception of primary school children regarding the characteristics of Pharaonic civilization. The state had already managed to contain fundamentalist expansion in the basic education sector during the second half of the 1990s. However, this was also achieved by implementing their programs. (Salloum; 1997) This leads us to wonder, whether the objective of education policy is to enlighten and empower new generations, or rather to contain Islamists and achieve a degree of national security and stability by restraining their activities and appearing more 'Islamic' than the Islamists.

D. The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Territorial Integrity and Education Policies

Territorial integrity and national sovereignty have been identified by the various state institutions, including the educational establishment, as the main objectives of national security for many decades. The Arab Israeli conflict looms large. Even though both Egypt and Israel have respected the Camp David peace treaty for the past twenty-five years, the Arab-Israeli conflict still strongly dominates the concerns of Egyptian strategists and intellectuals. This strategic security concern is further reinforced by the precarious situation in the Palestinian territories in the adjacent Gaza strip. The eastern borders have been the strategic gate of Egypt ever since the Pharos. It was the passage through which the Hyksos in Pharaonic Egypt entered, later followed by the Persians, Tartars, and the Crusaders until the emergence of Israel in the twentieth century. Discussing national security in relation to Israel, Egyptian ambassador and presidential advisor, Mustafa El-Feki, reproached the "repeated offensive declarations of some members of the Israeli government against Egypt and its national symbols, starting from the pyramids to threatening to bombard the High-Dam." (El-Feki; 2002) Even if the

cold-peace between Egypt and Israel has endured for the past twenty-five years and neither country has expressed any intention to interrupt it, the common sentiment recommends caution and vigilance.

Almost all Egyptian intellectuals of almost all stripes (liberal, leftist, Islamists and others) communicate this request for watchfulness. Although some are more optimistic than others, it is a dominant feeling that Israel may violate the peace treaty if it were to gain significant and disproportionate power over its neighbors in the Middle East. Therefore, the idea is not to mobilize the new generations to start a war, but rather to remain vigilant in terms of national security. According to Said I. Aly in *A Political Vision of Education*, a country capable of winning a war is a country that can mobilize, organize and synchronize all of its human, technological, and strategic resources in a moment of security crisis. Crisis management cannot be haphazardly improvised by a society, as it is achievable only if the state has fully developed all of its human and capital resources and achieved efficient administration and employment of such resources. "We can not claim to be a modern nation just by purchasing foreign technology, relying on using such technology, as we need to have creative brains competent to develop such technologies and not simply trained to operate imported technology." (Aly; 1999) The main objective is to catch up with the Israeli economic and technological progress in order to achieve a strategic balance of forces in the Middle East to guarantee peace and national security. Consequently, education is given the major responsibility for contributing towards this strategic regional balance. Education is expected to optimize the development of human resources and scientific research in order to construct a modern and strong Egyptian state able to safeguard Egypt's territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Donors, however, rarely refer to the Arab-Israeli conflict in their documents, despite the fact that the achievement of political and

regional stability remains a long-term objective and an important criterion of evaluation in their development assistance programs. Most USAID documents confirm that development assistance to Egypt aims to achieve a level of economic, social and political development that constrains political unrest and maintains peace and stability in the region. What donors generally mean by regional stability is not necessarily the achievement of a strategic equilibrium in economic and military terms between Egypt and Israel, but the achievement of an internal stability in Egypt in order to contain Islamist political unrest. Internal instability could provoke a potential change of regime or political system, and may bring to power a new regional actor with uncertain intentions towards Israel. In that light, basic education is expected to contribute to increasing literacy, life skills, and productivity. These factors are expected to reinvigorate the market economy and link it to the global market system. The ultimate objective would be the establishment of a regional interdependence that links the economic interests of the Arab world (led by Egypt) with Israel's and minimizes any potential eruption of armed conflict.

As a matter of fact the educational process in Egypt has been gradually demilitarized in content and form ever since the ratification of the Camp David agreement in 1978. For instance, Israel was no longer referred to as an enemy in schoolbooks, and the concept of peace has dominated the educational curriculum. 'Fair peace,' as a positive value achieved by the powerful and wise, has been a prevalent concept in all Arabic reading, grammar and poetry, as well as Islamic religious schoolbooks. The 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars are mentioned in history books as facts and further confirmations of the state's tenacity and resolution to guarantee Egyptian territorial integrity. The Peace Treaty and the following reappropriation of Sinai and Taba are mentioned as diplomatic victories and signs of the

strength and wisdom of Egyptian leaders. Besides, educational institutions have been significantly demilitarized. Military education is no longer part of the curriculum and the morning salute of the flag and singing of the national anthem have become a daily practice that aims more at reconfirming internal control and order inside the schools rather than mobilizing a general sentiment behind a major national cause.

In short, we can conclude that even though the achievement of a long-lasting 'Fair Peace' with Israel has attracted the attention of policy makers in the field of basic education as a security issue, it has been considered a long-term strategic objective and not an immediate one. The Government of Egypt, bilateral donors and foreign development assistance agencies all recognize education as an important agent of political stability on the internal and regional levels. Yet, this objective was not retained to be the most urgent and proximate one. On the contrary, the Ministry of Education has mobilized most of its resources and activities to contain the phenomena of militant fundamentalism as a present and urgent threat to internal political and economic stability. In cooperation with foreign development assistance agencies, research was conducted to identify the poorest regions in Egypt (believed to be the fountainheads of potential militants) and policies were designed and resources were mobilized to make up for a developmental crisis that provoked social and political unrest. The actual threat to national security during the 1990s was not external, but internal and the solutions of the educational establishment have been as follows. First, to contain and block the penetration of Islamist fundamentalists in the present formal and informal educational system. This was to be achieved by fastening the central grip of the MOE on the educational system and exercising more control on horizontal and vertical levels. Second, to reform education and achieve higher reach, equity and efficiency in order to decrease

the vulnerability of the underprivileged segments of society to fundamentalist influence and thought. This was to be achieved by revolutionizing educational institutions with the technical and financial assistance of international organizations and bilateral donors. Yet, in pursuing this objective, the state has been eager to appear more profoundly religious and pious than the fundamentalists in order not to lose its credibility as a sponsor of Egyptian national values and culture. Moreover, the state has been keen to downplay the significance of the involvement and propensities of donors and development assistance agencies in order not to give credit to persistent voices advancing the conspiracy theory.

Again, reexamining education policy decision making in the light of national security, we can see that it has always reflected the general political and economic direction of the state. A careful reading of the educational curricula and analysis of MOE statements and various investments gives significant indications of the state's position from what it deems to be important and urgent security matters on both the internal and external levels. Likewise, the level and type of cooperation, interaction and/or involvement of the West in education has always reflected Egypt's foreign policy and its position on various strategic security issues.

Conclusion:

An assessment of the historical influence of foreign powers over education policies in Egypt demonstrates how basic education policy reforms sponsored by foreign donors are introduced in a climate of wariness. Egyptian collective memory recalls that historically foreign (Western) influence has created a cultural dichotomy in education and aimed at disassociating young Egyptians from their national culture

and identity, a belief that reinforces the conspiracy theory (discussed in detail later on in this thesis) that is a major obstacle to the implementation of donor-sponsored education policies. Yet, the incessant economic constraints that have stalled the attainment of the long aspired for universal access to quality basic education demands external financial assistance to basic education. The security dimension of education policies further complicates this state of affairs.

A thorough investigation of political statements and policies of the MOE officials reveals the state's position on external and internal security matters that can be directly or indirectly related to education. The state's official and non-official orientations have determined the direction of reforms and dictated the communication style utilized by the state to socialize such reforms. The delicate balance of national security and its implications on basic education policies is further complicated by internal and external security pressures. These national security issues encompass political and economic strategic issues, but most urgent of all, the issue of militant religious fundamentalism and regional stability of the Middle East. These security matters preoccupy both the Egyptian state and the international community at various levels.

Part Two

Development Assistance
Versus Domestic Opposition:
The Conflict of Ideas

Chapter 3

The Philosophy of Development and Its Impact on Development Assistance Directed to Basic Education

Introduction:

The various concepts of development and the normative orders competing to influence education reform plans during the decade are investigated below in order to assess the level of domestic consensus regarding internationally promoted educational reforms. The existence of such a domestic consensus on the core concept of development and values of the reforms is crucial for the effective implementation, internalization and eventual sustainability of reform. Such a consensus would lead to a high level of 'domestic resonance' among domestic political and social actors and increase their likelihood to accept the value system inherent in reforms. With a high level of domestic resonance the reforms would acquire an incontestable position and face lower resistance on both the ideological and day-to-day practical levels.

It is essential to look at how the international debate on the rationale and final aims of development and the contested positions of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism are projected and reproduced in the Egyptian context. The analysis below illustrates the ideological influence of international development assistance agencies (external actors) on the domestic education policy cycle and domestic debates, by examining the notion of national development as understood by development assistance agencies and its impact on basic education policy reforms. Both the neo-liberal and neo-conservative approaches have in contest in the international debate during the 1990s, proposed alternative to communism and the classical Fordist model. Both approaches have a particular vision for the role of basic education in achieving their advocated models and they have both influenced the domestic Egyptian policy process and public debates on basic education.

In brief, the analysis of this chapter illustrates how the Egyptian state has adopted elements of the neo-liberal approach in its education reforms but has failed to link them to the main ideological trends dominating the domestic intellectual scene. Consequently, it has failed to embed the values advocated by reforms in the domestic normative order to achieve 'domestic resonance', thereby alienating domestic intellectuals from the reform process, and producing an educational philosophy that is not properly embedded within the domestic normative order. I employ Jeffery Checkel's (2001) argumentative persuasion model of analysis in order to assess the communication style of the MOE and the success or failure of the communication process.

A. Defining Development and Identifying the Role of Education

1. The Concept of Development

"No man can reveal to you ought but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge... If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the household of your own mind...For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man." (Gibran Khalil Gibran)

It is important to understand the concept of development and highlight how it differs across time and civilizations, in order to understand how different forms of education have been employed to achieve different types of development. Various philosophies of development inspire the development objectives and strategies of nation states and the supra-national organizations that influenced their development plans.

The dictionary meaning of the word 'develop' in both English and Arabic languages indicates meanings of becoming gradually fuller, larger, better and stronger. Another meaning is 'to disclose.' 'Disclosure' is actually closer to development which is a process seeking to reveal the actual hidden potentials and capacities of the subject. In other words, development does not mean following a specific external model, but to reveal or realize the potential growth of the subject, which in our discussion is the community, society or the population at large.

Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406), the father of Arab Sociology, introduced the concept of development and maintained that the potential for growth lies in the socio-economic structures of society. Modern western thinkers in the 1940's and 1960's shared the assumption that Third World development implied that modern 'Western' economic and social organization replaced traditional structures; i.e. development equals Westernization. This Western 'Ethnocentrism' advocated a 'linear process' or "a series of successive stages through which all countries must pass in the course of their development." (Mekote and Agunga; 1996) The development of third world countries, in this case, implies 'catching up' with the advanced countries.

The concept of development and its objectives has evolved over the past four decades. The dominant view of the 1950s and 1960s started from the assumption that economic growth and redistribution would bring about other forms of progress in social and political areas. However, these concepts proved inaccurate, and by the 1970s new approaches emerged, calling for direct provision of basic goods and services targeting segments of populations living below the poverty line. The 1980s was the era of the triumph of market oriented approaches, and development assistance aimed at correcting market failures, broadening markets, limiting the role of the state and

effecting structural adjustments. Development assistance and debt rescheduling and/or relief were provided to underdeveloped and indebted countries in correspondence with the implementation of economic and structural reform programs. Consequently, development assistance was targeted to ease the socio-economic distress caused by the elimination of subsidies and liquidation of public sector enterprises. Since the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the concepts of environment and sustainable development, gender equity, active civil society, good governance, social capital and democratization have headed the agendas of the development agencies. Development programs have had to address at least one of these issues and have them as a component of the program in order to be considered worthy of implementation and funding.

The new concepts of development espoused by international development agencies focus on traditional, cultural values, self-reliance and grass roots initiatives. Enabling people to pursue their aspirations through improvements in their living conditions, according to Mekote and Agunga, is a process of development, which means that "people are helped to help themselves through a process of change, including the development of skills, positive self-image and courage. Development also involves raising expectations to new levels and striving to reach those new expectations. In this context, development is not defined only in terms of technology transfer or growth of GNP figures, but it is the enrichment of knowledge and skills, emergence of new consciousness, and uplifting the human mind and spirit. (Moemeka; Mekote and Agunga; 1994) Nobel Prize winner, economist Amartya Sen, argues that there is a need to re-examine the means and ends of development and that development has to be about enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy and can not be limited to economic growth. (Sen; 1999) According to Sen, the concept of social opportunities refers to the arrangements that society makes for the

provision of education and health care services. Such opportunities are crucial as they help people to conduct rich and unencumbered private lives and allow individuals to be fuller social persons interacting positively with the world.

The intriguing word, freedom, is also used by Ibrahim Al-Isawi (an Egyptian developmentalist thinker) to define the concept of development. However, he adds to essential freedoms society's freedom from dependency on external powers. He describes development as a process of liberation of humanity that includes freeing individuals from poverty, oppression, exploitation, and restriction of personal freedoms. Besides, he adds, development liberates society from the humility of dependence on external powers, exploitation, and the restriction of national self-determination. (Al-Isawi; 2000) Interestingly, the views of Al-Isawi reflect a vision of development that had emerged in the developing world during the 1950's and 1960's and still dominates the convictions of many Egyptian intellectuals.

Egyptian intellectuals had seen this correlation between liberation from colonialism and development as the ultimate goal of the struggle against imperialism during the liberation period of the 1950s and 1960s. This view still dominates their conception of development. The different philosophies of development raise the following issues: why develop, what to develop and in which direction to develop. Besides, different conceptions of development dictate which aspects should evolve and which should remain constant, especially regarding moral values and religion.

2. Education and Development

The dominant role of education in development according to most development agencies, governments' official documents and development economists, is that it increases productivity, national income, socio-economic mobility and leads to socio-economic transformation.

a. Education and Social Transformation

Social transformation involves the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of human individual and civic rights, as well as, achieving satisfactory social, economic and gender equity. Social transformation is usually linked to the alleviation of poverty, facilitating demographic transitions and building social capital.

The poor often have inferior access to economic resources, information and have limited earning capacities. A survey conducted on poverty in Egypt in 1995 illustrated that illiterate households whose heads attained only basic education represent the second largest category of poverty incidence. (The Social Fund for Development; 1996) Consequently the alternative is to help people improve their skills and earning abilities, given that several studies have revealed the strong link between education and income at the individual and social level. "The roots of poverty lie in the lack of an income generating job or whatever other physical asset that is needed such as a piece of land ... investments in human capital and expenditure which may not generate returns, will surely increase the future earning potentials of the individual. This policy reinforces the outcome to the extent that it emphasizes basic human development priorities, i.e. primary education, specially for girls." (Osman; 1996) Besides, basic education has a massive impact on limiting child labor. According to an UNICEF report universal, quality primary education is a big

deterrent to child labor. A comprehensive strategy to combat unsafe child labor must begin with its sensible alternative: high quality schools and applicable educational programs to which parents will want to send their children, and in which children will want to participate. "Providing compulsory education available free to all is also part of a longer term child labor prevention strategy by ensuring that new generations of children are not driven into the most hazardous forms of work." (UNICEF; 1995)

Education also has a considerable impact on demographic transitions, that is, planning population growth to decrease the percentages of population that do not contribute to gross national production and enlarge the percentages of the age groups ready to join the labor force and contribute to national productivity. Various studies reveal an inverse relationship between the education of women and the size of families. Such studies confirm that empowering women and giving them an earning capacity provides a degree of economic security making them less dependent on their fertility as a source of status and security. This is further confirmed by a World Bank study on the impact of female schooling showing that women's schooling has a high payoffs with regard to demand for child schooling, lower child mortality and the effective use of contraceptives. (Ainsworth et. al.; 1995)

Another aspect of social transformation is the consolidation of social capital, which consists of the resources of social trust, norms, and networks that people can rely on to solve common problems and reach individual and collective goals. These take the form of networks of civic engagement that include neighborhood associations, cooperatives, sports and social clubs and other such formal and informal social networks. Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as "an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals." He explains that the norms that constitute social

capital can range from reciprocity between two friends to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like Christianity or Confucianism. (Fukuyama: IMF; 1999) Social capital enriches and facilitates social and economic life and saves on formal monitoring and negotiating costs that consume time and resources. It is retained to be a major element of economic, social and political development.

Educational institutions are seen as a fountainhead of social capital. "Educational institutions do not simply transmit human capital, they also pass on social capital in the form of social rules and norms. This is true not only to primary and secondary education, but in higher and professional education as well." (Fukuyama: IMF; 1999) World Bank reports confirm that social capital contributes to and is fortified by educational attainment. Accordingly, cooperation between the family, community and the state helps to increase the relevance and quality of education by improving participation and ownership, increasing consensus among remote and disadvantaged groups, and building institutional capacity, in addition to raising additional resources. (World Bank; 2000) In addition, the World Bank reports hold that social capital can improve educational attainment, since community based schools have been shown to have lower drop out rates and higher academic attainment.

b. Education and Economic Transformation

Economic transformation is not limited to economic growth and the equitable redistribution of resources but extends to maximizing the economic efficiency that is not limited to monetary criteria. This economic efficiency can also be measured by the capacity to sponsor humanitarian, cultural, and intellectual development. Comprehensive and equitable economic growth aspires not only to cover basic needs

and reinvest in research and development of financially productive activities, but also to elevate human cultural heritage. A society that concentrates on improving its economic capacity to nourish its material components only, risks either falling into extreme waves of nostalgic fundamentalism that try to recover an illusionary lost soul, or consumes itself and erodes its very foundations.

Basic education is estimated by economists to have the highest returns on human capital formation and other aspects of development if compared to other levels of education. (Perkins et. al.; 1996) Besides, numerous examples of economic research correlate education positively with national and individual income and productivity, particularly for developing countries. Psacharopoulos's studies of the economic and social returns of education in the early eighties proved that primary education had high social returns of 27 percent for developing countries, contrasting with the lower returns of higher education of 13 percent. Therefore, economists support the idea that basic education could still make a significant contribution to economic growth and income distribution in developing countries. (Psacharopoulos; 1973)

Moreover, education is thought to energize the market economy and schooling has positive impacts on consumption behavior and asset management. "Decisions regarding consumer purchases represent an area in which skills of acquiring, assimilating, and acting upon information play an important role. There is substantial evidence that new products are often adopted relatively quickly by the more educated, which is often taken as an indication of this skill difference." (McMahon; 1982) Consequently, there is good reason to believe that universal basic education is a crucial investment for developing countries seeking economic growth through the market economy. The market economy is strengthened by a labor force capable

of operating within the information society and export economies, and consumers who are able to interact with market dynamics and financial markets. In this view, the satisfaction of basic needs and desires would allow human beings to dedicate more time and effort towards the more sophisticated goals of culture, democracy, justice, and human rights.

The Counter Arguments on Education and Economic Transformation: The Case of Egypt

An undifferentiated correlation between educational achievement and high income is disputed by the symptoms of the 'diploma disease' that attack the developing countries the most. The British scholar Ronald Dore devised the term 'diploma disease' to describe school systems that fail to convey knowledge and skills but provide certification and credentialing in order to promote participation in the labor market. Consequently, examinations are held to qualify students for higher academic levels or jobs, placing disproportionate importance on exams in the educational system, and thus diminishing the importance of acquiring knowledge and skills for their own sake. Teaching and learning become important only for passing from one level to another. Dore maintains that this distortion inflates the need for certificates and raises the economic costs of the selection process. (Dore; 1976)

The diploma disease can be found in Egypt in the '*Thanaweya Amma*' (secondary school certificate) exams at the end of every academic year in Egypt. *Thanaweya Amma* results qualify students for various faculties and higher education institutes. Students are forced to enlist in the various institutions based on their grades and not their own inclinations. The students' whole career and income opportunities depend on those results, and these exams become a lifeline both for

the students and their families. Eleanore Hargreaves, in her article about the diploma disease in Egypt, suggests that the qualification orientation and ritualized pedagogical methods are the symptoms of a larger problem of social and political structures. She explains that when the state is able to concentrate on providing for its people's social needs and engages their participation rather than on surviving and fending off insurrection over unemployment and poverty, secondary-leaving certificate may take on less significance. Then, teachers and parents might broaden their perspective about learning, and progress towards education for the all-round development of the individual and the community. "For reform to succeed there must clearly be something in it for everyone. Until this radical change occurs, radical educational reform is likely to meet continued resistance." (Hargreaves; 1997)

Educated unemployment is another feature of developing countries' educational problems. Educated unemployment in Egypt in the 1990s represented 85 percent of the total unemployment rate of 20 percent. The massive increases in educational enrollment resulting from free education and the past legacy of guaranteed public employment of all university graduates, were accompanied by a high rate of educated unemployment. This was due to a mismatch between school curricula and the job market's needs and capacities. This type of unemployment locked the doors of social and economic mobility for many students belonging to the lower middle classes aspiring for social and professional advancement and caused much frustration among the youth.

Economists attribute this to the fact that the contributions of education to economic growth vary depending on the stage of development in terms of social return rates and modes of production. In addition, the degree of modernization and mode of production of various societies have different returns from education. In non-

modernizing societies where traditional and primitive farming methods are used, four years of education was found to increase production by only 1.3 percent as compared with 9.5 percent under modernizing conditions. (Lockheed: Psacharopoulos; 1987) These findings are highly relevant to Egypt, where high education for young people did not prove to reflect any measurable benefits for agriculture. This was because most of the children of farmers study subjects that are not relevant to agriculture and the few who do hardly apply their studies in their lives, due to use of traditional farming methods. As a result, those individuals either felt overqualified to work the land or did not apply their education to their work. Moreover, many of them have been trained to become passive participants in the state machine, which failed to absorb them all. On the contrary, the privatization and structural adjustment reforms expected them to come out with individual business initiatives for small private investments.

The alternative was to find employment in the new private sector and multinationals that necessitated high levels of communication skills, problem solving, and crisis management skills as well as a good command of English and/or French. Many graduates failed to perform the newly solicited professional roles, since private initiative and calculated risk taking were alien principles to the educational process. Thus they felt betrayed by their education and the new realities for which they had not been prepared. This resulted in a general state of demoralization and social and political frustrations that were often expressed by various forms of political violence, social alienation, apathy at all levels and other mass ailments that were linked to educated unemployment.

c. Education and Political Development

Democratization, according to the prevailing thought of international organizations (World Bank, IMF, OECD, and UN affiliated specialized organizations), is facilitated by the acquisition of elevated literacy rates among the population. This is based on the assumption that education increases the predisposition to adopt political and administrative reforms based on decentralization and community participation in decision making. "A stable democracy can not coexist with illiteracy. Higher education provides the leadership for a democratic society and liberal arts education provides a broad understanding of various aspects of the sciences, literature, and arts that help in molding 'well-rounded' people who are more likely to strive for the survival of democracy." (Cohn and Geske; 1990)

The elimination of illiteracy and reforms of educational policies and curricula are seen as necessary to encourage a general sense of critical analysis, tolerance of differences and inquisitiveness in general. Political participation, democratic values and civic responsibility are not only enhanced by learning about human rights and democratic political institutions, suggests Clive Harber, but are mainly achieved by changing the classroom ethos and atmosphere across the curriculum and the everyday life of schools. (Harber; 1997) Therefore, reforming the content and pedagogic style of the education process is as important as reforming the organization of education. "Investment in physical capital and infrastructure will not achieve its full potential without investment in the people who are ultimately responsible for the successful operation of that physical capital." (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall; 1985)

Basic education is thus seen as an important tool of empowerment for political and civic participation. The orientation of educational philosophy plays an important role in empowering society and individuals on the political level and contributes to political development. But an educational philosophy that makes individuals instruments of the sustenance of the political and social system does not inspire individual initiative. (Abdel-Hamid; 2000) It may nurse blind obedience to political and religious authorities and rather than empower students, will prepare them to be a functional part of the status quo and operators of the economic and political machines of the regime. Therefore, there is reason to believe that universal free education and the acquisition of literacy and numerical skills alone do not automatically prepare citizens for economic and political participation.

Conforming to prevailing international thought, Egyptian state education policy documents cite democratic principles, civic culture, installing loyalty to the nation, family and religious values. This comes in addition to the demands on high quality education to be consistent with the objectives of the education process planned by the state. The official documents of the Ministry of Education do not clarify how education policies are to be implemented to reinforce democracy; is it by changing the educational philosophy to induce critical and analytical thinking? Or is it by providing equitable access to education driven by the hope of empowering the various social classes? Policy analysts strive to read between the lines of the official policy papers and interpret the significance of the use of the different words. For instance, Iliya Harik holds that by democratization of education, the former minister of education Fathi Sorour (1988) meant to reconfirm the principle of free and universal education. (Harik; 1997) This universal access to basic education reaffirms state commitment to the masses and the principles of social

mobility. This however does not spell out how it is directly related to institutionalized and mass political participation on all levels.

On the other hand, Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin, the minister of education since the early 1990s, refers to the concept of democracy in some press releases and says that it is reinforced by extracurricular activities, such as the scholastic parliament and student participation in the 'video conference'. (Al-Ahram; April 26, 2001) He discusses democracy in his latest book, *Patriotism in a World without Identity: The Challenges of Globalization*. Bahaaeddin describes democracy to be the 'slogan' of the present times and that it is necessary to deepen the democratic atmosphere in the educational institutions. He claims to have successfully achieved this by introducing the concepts of human rights, child rights, racial and religious tolerance, and supporting the elevation the position of women in society. (Bahaaeddin; 2000) The minister attributes the achievement of such 'democratization' activities to the reinstating of debate activity groups, parents' councils and school parliaments. He also cites the importance and usefulness of the 'video conference' a computerized network connecting the MOE and with the various directorates on the national level to as an important tool of communication and democratization. It is important to note that all these elements of participation and computerization tools are components of the development assistance programs coordinated jointly with the World Bank and the European Union.

B. The Role of Education in Neo-liberal Thought

More market and less state is the recipe for economic growth devised by the neo-liberals, according to whom, less taxation would encourage more investments, increase employment and wealth would trickle down to

the less fortunate members of society if they decide to participate in successful economic activities. The idea is to untie market forces and let the invisible and rational hands of the market accomplish welfare for everybody. Political economists such as Friedrich Von Hayek and Milton Friedman suggest that market economies pave the way not only for economic growth but also to improving educational systems and promoting participatory democracy. The argument used is that public education systems failed to provide quality education based on accurate manpower planning, thus resulting in high rates of unemployment among educated young people. Therefore, public schooling is viewed as a waste of public resources and an additional encumbrance to the huge state machinery that needs to be dismantled and reformed.

Throughout the 1990s the adherents of globalization, free trade, market economy, and economic cost benefit analysis of public policies have been labeled 'neo-liberals'. They advocate more market economy in national systems that have been long attached to the ideology of the welfare state and public goods. According to Hayek "the progress of society in material and social values depends on the freedom of individuals to make choices. Individual choices regulate the market so that those things valued by individuals will dominate. Individual choice undercuts the power of the exploitative state and its bureaucracy." (Hayek; 1994) In summary, the 'neo-liberals' perceive the public bureaucrats and politicians as an obstacle to rational decision making based on cost-benefit analysis and economic efficiency in providing educational services. They perceive politics and public bureaucracy to be inherently self-serving and interested in advancing their informal organizational agendas ahead of the public welfare and rational economic decision making, in order to maintain their large budgets and guarantee their organizational survival.

In this context the economic efficiency of public provision for education is called into question, calling either for the privatization of education, or the optimization of public investments in education. Ideas of education associated with neo-liberal thought focus on individuality, self-realization, self-cultivation, and freedom of learning. Therefore the neo-liberals criticize the state monopoly of education in terms of delivery and content. (Fujita; 2000)

Consequently, neo-liberals advocate the use of school vouchers as a means of providing school choice on the hope that quality education and equal opportunities will be promoted by competition. School vouchers are government financed, and reimburse parents for a specified maximum amount per child per years if spent on approved educational services. The idea is to enhance individual choices because "under a voucher system, supplies of education will be more responsive to the needs and preferences of heir customers," states Egyptian economist Mona El-Baradei. (El-Baradei; 2000) Marketing jargon becomes the customary language of state education policy papers; that is, education is a service, and present students are customers, while former customers (students) become human capital (economic assets).

The neo-liberal vision sees a clear role for education in achieving a successful market economy enhanced by political democracy. The function of education is to prepare members of the work force to participate in the market economy by giving them the necessary skills and information. Basic computer literacy, communication skills (multi-lingual skills) and access to market information should prepare individuals and nations to compete in the global markets and increase national comparative advantage. Education has the specific role of augmenting and enhancing human capital to increase national economic competitiveness.

The market economy does not only determine the purpose and desired product of education but also the values and norms that education ought to promote in order to create consensus for global markets. Educational curricula have the mission of spreading values that consolidate common tastes, values and norms for the global market and pave the way to allow the flow of capital and labor within the 'free market world'. Multiculturalism and tolerance are emphasized when there is a special need to consolidate free trade agreements. Multilingualism (mainly English language and the mother tongue of the country adopting the educational system) is promoted to facilitate trade and economic exchange activities and information technology skills to have access to the Internet.

- **Development, the Human Capital theory and Education:**

This vision of education as a private consumer good, however, is not shared by most international development agencies, who see public funding of education as an investment in human capital and not an expenditure. The OECD defines human capital as "the knowledge that individuals acquire during their life and use to produce goods, services or ideas in market or non-market situations." (OECD; 1996) In other words, it is the human capacity to bring about production and economic welfare, and is a vital component in the economic function of production, which counts human and material capital as inputs and economic growth as an output. Education is seen as a major road to form and augment human capital that enables political development, successful market economy, social justice, sustainable development, and the application of human rights' laws. "The newer growth models provide an elegant and compelling justification for human capital investments as efficient and growth-enhancing;" says Nancy Birdsall in her article on human capital accumulation. (Birdsall; 1997) The

Western model of development focuses on the role of human capacity, first through industrialization then through the market economy and information society, to devise and use technology and increase organizational efficacy and economic efficiency. In this prospective, national governments and development agencies both proclaim education to be the key to successful participation in the global economy. Accordingly, human capital has become a major element of the sophisticated equation of globalization.

Phrases such as 'education is a matter of national security' relating national security to economic productivity and self-sufficiency, are often used by Egyptian politicians and reflect their convictions that national economies and education are both elements of competitiveness in world markets. Minister of education Bahaaeddin elaborates further on this concept in his book. He states that productivity is the real criterion of the advancement or degeneration of nation-states, and that the real difference between the most developed and least developed countries in the world is the productivity of the citizens of such countries. He adds that this productivity is a direct result of the investment of these countries in their children and youth in terms of acquisition of productive skills and capacities. Therefore, according to Bahaaeddin, education plays a major role in the individual productivity that leads to economic development. He focuses on the importance of knowledge to increasing the added value of national production. (Bahaaeddin; 1997)

It is important to note that even though the minister's book is not an official publication of the Ministry of Education, it strongly reflects the formal state view on the subject of education. In a highly paternalistic, personalized and hierarchical political and organizational system, the leader's personal vision is not independent from the formal stance of the institution he leads. As a matter of

fact, consistent with human capital theory, state educational reform plans emphasize the role of education as an investment and not a social expenditure that could be subject to the fiscal cuts dictated by the structural adjustment programs devised by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. (Ministry of Education; 1997) The Egyptian government has systematically increased its investments in basic education and its general education budget reached its highest level of US\$ 5 billion in fiscal year 2001/2.

Human capital theory has not been without its critics. The main argument runs as follows: if it prioritizes becoming competitive in information technology and other markets associated with economic and social status, then education becomes a mechanism to produce human resources guided by market requirements, and becomes subject to a supply and demand equation. In a market economy, everything has to have a calculable monetary value, and human knowledge becomes a means of production. In this context, says Joel Spring; "human life is primarily viewed as a benefit to economic organization of society. Human life becomes instrumental for economic growth. Humans are simply cogs in the corporate machinery. The concepts of human capital and human resources render education primarily instrumental to economic prosperity. These concepts dehumanize people and place them in the same category as raw materials such as minerals." (Spring; 1998) Development economists like Gills Perkins contest a strict cost-benefit analysis of education and say that if education is to be simply considered an investment that must compete for scarce resources with other commodities and infrastructure projects, it must be justified in terms of its fiscal contribution to national output. (Perkins et. al.; 1996)

While these arguments contesting human capital theory are raised on a global level, leftist intellectuals from developing countries add

another dimension of disagreement with the neo-liberal view of human capital. The criticism is that such educational systems sustain and institutionalize North- South inequality and allocate resources to benefit the production process at the expense of education for individual betterment. This intensification of 'post-Fordist' production processes and strengthening linkages between the education system and the labor market, emphasize the role of schooling as a servant of the dominant capitalist order, explains W.T.S Gould. "Education in these terms must be closely associated with colonialism and neocolonialism as a means of social control. In politically independent but economically and culturally dependent countries of the global periphery and semi-periphery, education and expansions of schooling have assisted the development of both indigenous capitalist production and the penetration of multinational companies. The costs of labor force are borne by the state and by individual consumers, but the principle beneficiaries are capitalist producers." (Gould; 1993)

The purpose of education is therefore deeply contested. Is it to bring about economic growth, establish political empowerment and participation, or provide the instruments to seek self-fulfillment? Is it about some or all of the above mentioned objectives? The most important development and refinement is the one that occurs inside human beings, the one that empowers them and increases the quality of their lives, and places human dignity at the top of the list of priorities. Amartya Sen, the originator of the concept of 'human capability' versus 'human capital' points out that while human capital concentrates on the role of human beings in increasing productivity, human capability focuses on people's ability to lead a fulfilling life and enhance their own life-choices. Sen explains that; "the two perspectives cannot be related, since both are concerned with the role of human beings, and in particular with the actual abilities that they

achieve and acquire. But the yardstick of assessment concentrates on different achievements." (Sen; 1999)

C. The Neo-conservative View of the Role of Education

Like neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism does not contest the new market economy. As a matter of fact, "neo-conservatives want the priorities and perceived needs of the market place to shape education, and they preach endlessly about the virtues of life in the global economy. And so we have new courses in business and technology, the return to streaming, academic credit given to students for part time jobs, and standardized testing, so that performance can be measured and competition encouraged;" explains Paul Axelrod. (Axelrod; 2001) In his analysis of neo-conservative reform policies in Japan during the 1990s, Hidenori Fujita states that neo-conservatives emphasize the necessity for deregulation and the improvement of education to cope with socio-economic changes like globalization. (Fujita; 2000)

The neo-conservative issues at stake are those related to state control over educational content to reinforce the sense of identity, whether national, ethnical, religious, cultural, or all together. Neo-conservatives speak out against what they perceive as the homogenizing powers of the market economy that strive to standardize consumer taste, values and sources and references of information as well as language. Neo-conservatism warns against what is feared to be the loss of identity and national pride, the loss of the sense of 'Us' versus 'Them'. Neo-conservatives distrust the ideas of multiculturalism, multi-lingualism, and ethnic and or cultural heterogeneity because of the fear of diluting and losing their identities (national, religious and/or ethnic) and lifestyles. These collective waves of fear are

translated into populist political parties, fundamentalist movements, and separatist groups all over the developed and developing world.

Education and especially basic education is the major battleground for neo-conservative thought. The state has the important role and duty to reproduce cultural, religious, national and or ethnic identities. The state is conferred the sacred role of socio-cultural reproduction that reinforces such identities. Education policies thereupon constitute a cornerstone of the identity politics of neo-conservative thought. Again, like neo-liberals, the neo-conservatives do not see the state as a supplier of education, but as a regulatory agency that does not regulate only market mechanisms but also perceptions, ideas and thought.

The educational subjects that are often seen as conveyors of identity are history, language and religion. Actually, the history, language and religious curricula are those that attract the most heated media and academic debates. Which historical events to emphasize, which language is used for instruction and which religion is recognized as a religion are the subjects of intense legislative debates and campaigns led by interest and pressure groups. As defined by Noel Gough, history is the collective story we convey to future generations about the past, present and how they should envision their future and therefore shape it. (Gough: Stromquist and Monkman; 2000) The ride of Kemal Ataturk towards the de-Arabization of the Turkish language and rewriting of the Ottoman history is a clear example of reinventing national identity using history and language educational curriculums. History is considered to be important because it traces a nostalgic sense of social consensus and assumed certainties in a world that proposes indefinite diversities, relativity and ceaseless technological, social and lifestyle changes. "Behind this complaint rests an entire set of historical assumptions about 'tradition', about

the existence of a social consensus over what should count as legitimate knowledge, and about cultural superiority." (Apple: Burbules and Torres; 2000)

Neocolonialism and cultural imperialism fuel neo-conservative fears calling for a firmer role of the state in cultural, national and official religious protectionism in the Third World. Globalization, is feared, will eradicate the national identities of third world countries. After all, free trade and missionary educational institutions were major elements of the colonialist projects of the eighteenth century. (Mitchell; 1991)

Fifty years after obtaining national independence, the populations of former colonies are still haunted by the obsession that regards everything local as inferior and everything foreign (mainly western) as inherently superior. This is a common notion in Egypt that is labeled the 'Foreigner's Complex.' It is illustrated by the increasing tendency to consider every thing foreign (especially when it is American) as indispensably fashionable; such as costume, life styles, music, fast food, etc. Moreover, it has been a sign of belonging to the *high class* to learn English, to use it as the language to communicate among friends or business meetings and communications among local companies. It has become crucial for social mobility to send children to foreign schools and universities, where the main language of instruction is English, French or German. Some even boast that their children do not speak correct Arabic, which is their mother tongue that may not be taught in their foreign schools. All of these centrifugal socio-cultural forces are encountered by strong centripetal neo-conservative forces struggling for socio-cultural dominance. "The core feature of an economic conceptualization of globalization is that the forces of flows of capital sweeping the world and sucking up difference and diversity originate principally in

the 'West'. That is to say, there is a sense that globalization is isomorphic with a kind of high-tech, multi-mediated economic and cultural imperialism that in an earlier age might have been termed 'Westernization'-read Americanization- or else a postmodern mutation of colonialism." (Luke and Luke: Burbules and Torres; 2000)

Neo-conservatism; however, is not a phenomenon that is unique to developing countries obsessed by the legacies of the colonial past. It is an ideology that was conceptualized and gained much ground and many votes in the leading Western democracies. The leading example is drawn from the United Kingdom where Thatcher's government's Education Reform Act of 1988 instructed the creation of a history curriculum to focus on celebrating Britain's past recalling the civilizing role of the British Empire. The nationalistic history curriculum does not include the multi-cultural history of its present population; says Spring. (Spring; 1998) Conservative governments in Britain, Canada and the US have all indicated education to be an instrument of increasing national competitiveness and their ideas to achieve this competitiveness is more and more similar. Neo-conservative perception of the role of education, prevailing in the education policies of US, British and Canadian education policies are to:

- "(i) Uphold traditional morality;
- (ii) Maintain standards and transmit elements of traditional high culture; and
- (iii) Instill business values and a respect for enterprise." (Elliott; 1994)

To sum up, we see that identity politics divide neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism but that the free market unites them, and that education is understood, in both contexts, as a major agent of the transfer and sustenance of cultural values and social norms as components of national, ethnic or religions identities. Neo-liberalism

promotes multiculturalism and multi-lingualism to guarantee an environment of openness for the global flow of information and economic exchange. On the other hand, neo-conservatism emphasizes religious, national and cultural identity issues and the concept of 'Us' versus 'Them' in order to affirm supremacy, sovereignty and maintain a leading economic and political position in the world market through competitiveness.

- **Neo-conservative Responses to the Challenges of Globalization**

The absence of a clear educational philosophy is the one common thread among the various and often opposing trends of thought engaging Egyptian intellectual, political and public discourse. "The absence of an Arab educational philosophy and the stalemate in the search for its components, has led our societies (Arab societies) to import a foreign educational philosophy that does not fit with our past and does not prepare us for the future" says Arab-nationalist thinker, Abdel Kader Yousef in his article about the Arab theory of education. (Yousef; 1982) This theme was also expressed by Gregory Starret who quotes Russell Galt as follows; "In Egypt, the educational wheels of indoctrination are all set up, but there is no national ideology to be indoctrinated. The wheels grind on for their own sake." (Starret; 1998)

Neo-liberals (pro-Western and secular), Arab nationalists (secular and socialist) and Islamists (neo-conservative) all seek to promote their socio-economic and political doctrines by filling this presumed 'empty educational wheel' with their philosophies and visions. It is important to clarify the difference between the terms, 'Moslem' and 'Islamist.' A Moslem thinker is one that is Moslem by religion and belief but who

can have various visions of identity (for example, nationalist or ethnic) and a secular interpretation of political and social life, that is are not tied to a particular interpretation of religion. On the other hand, an Islamist thinker is a one who bases his/her political, social and economic concepts on a specific interpretation of Islam and uses religious rationalization to support his/her arguments.

"Are we a head or a tail in this world?" This question was proposed by Islamist Egyptian thinker Yousef El-Karadawi, regarding the issue of the search and consolidation of an Egyptian independent identity. El-Karadawi states that Islam should be the main reference for identity and that while it constitutes a religious identity for Moslem believers, it is a civilizational and cultural identity for Christian-Egyptian and Arab citizens. He supports his argument by referring to the statement of the prominent Egyptian political leader, Makram Ebeid, who defined himself as; "An Egyptian Christian by religion and faith and Moslem by nation." (El-Karadawi; 2000) This vision of identity largely represents the ideology of the Islamist discourse in the Egyptian society. The importance of starting with religion as a central argument of the neo-conservative view, is that it gives a significant reason for the central role given to the Arabic language curriculum and the history curriculum teaching Moslem Arab civilization. Dieter Weiss and Ulrich Wurzel comment on this difficult search for genuine identity as follows; "having been exposed to Arab Nationalism, Pan-Arabism, 'Arab-socialism' and Sadat's turn to the West, many Egyptians seek a sense of identity in Islamic concepts, amidst rapid change and declining living standards." (Weiss; 1998)

As usual the Egyptian Ministry of Education tries to accommodate all lines of thought in its policies by maintaining a median position. MOE policy documents try to address issues of patriotism and nationalism,

attempting to appease Islamists and keeping a fixed eye on the pro-western liberal direction. The curriculum development section of the education reform plan lists fourteen objectives under the development philosophy of primary education. The first three objectives are:

- a. "Deepening the child's affiliation to his homeland its history and civilization, and affirmation and upholding national loyalty.
- b. Faith, religion, divine and social values, and respecting others' creeds, sanctities and rites.
- c. Acquiring the basic skills of reading writing and counting in a way conducive to the attainment of a simple and effective communication, carried through the national language between citizens."

(Ministry of Education; 1995)

The eleven remaining objectives set out by the MOE include democracy, scientific thinking, computer skills, environmental awareness and creativity. Even though the first three objectives are close to the main concerns of neo-conservatism, they do not clearly state nationalism (they mention patriotism) and do not specify Islam because the emphasis is on respect and tolerance. In other MOE publications, religious instruction and the study of languages and history are all mentioned as priorities that have a different agenda to the neo-conservative one. For instance, religious education is mainly addressing morals, values and tolerance, while the study of languages prioritizes Arabic as a mother tongue for formal communication and English as a second priority necessary to enter the information society. The main orientation of the study of history in the MOE document is on building up children's knowledge of and pride in Egyptian history and civilization since ancient times and its importance to 'tourism as a major modern industry.' (Ministry of Education; 1999) Ethnicity, religion and language are among the major

components of identity, mentioned by minister Bahaaeddin in his book on the challenges of globalization. Compatible with MOE documents, Bahaaeddin portrays Egyptian ethnicity as originating with the Pharaohs, and holds religion to be a fundamental moral and spiritual resource whether Coptic (old Egyptian Orthodox Christian) or Moslem. He also describes the contribution of language to national identity to be a harmonious conglomeration of the rich Egyptian history and linguistic wealth that encompasses the transformation from Hieroglyphic to Coptic to Arabic. (Bahaaeddin; 2000)

The MOE agenda, therefore, adheres to the priorities of religion, history, and language from a clearly *NON*-conservative position. The MOE has a clear neo-liberal direction that tries to remain relatively low key in order not to provoke antagonism from the 30-years heritage of socialist ideology that still resides in the minds of intellectuals and at the heart of state institutions. However, the socialist legacy of the Egyptian state is not the only current that the MOE avoids to provoke. Amongst the other groups that the MOE tries to appease, are the neo-conservative Islamist ideologists that manage to attract the support of a large proportion of public opinion. For instance, Minister Bahaaeddin acknowledged that education has a major role in 'strengthening' the immunity system of future generations against globalization culture. He describes globalization culture as, 'a culture that glorifies consumerism, that aims only to increase the appetite for consumption, violence, individualism, and moral decadence.' He confirms the importance of a 'religious education that teaches tolerance and morality', a 'civic education that reinforces patriotism and loyalty,' and finally 'a history instruction based on objectivity and analytical thinking that increases esteem of the national heritage.' (Bahaaeddin; 2000)

Still, the MOE position does not satisfy the neo-conservative opinion leaders who are more inclined to accentuate an institutionally and culturally existing dichotomy (Islamic versus secular) in the Egyptian educational system. While the MOE is responsible for secular education, Al-Azhar (an education institution that follows the Ministry of 'Al-Awqaf' Religious Endowments) is responsible for Islamic religious education. The educational system and curricular of Al-Azhar basic and secondary schools is identical to the general secular one with regard to ordinary subjects. The difference is that Islamic studies are emphasized and are given more importance in the general evaluation system. (Mahrous, 1995) Al-Azhar primary schools enrolled almost 2 percent of the total number of students while the Al-Azhar preparatory schools enrolled around 2.5 percent of students by the mid-1990s (State Information Services, 1997). The 1997 Yearbook of the MOE states that the state education plan gives special attention to Al-Azhar educational institutes, valuing its increasing role in devising preachers and Koran reciters. Therefore it dedicated around US\$ 200 million to Al-Azhar pre-university education in 1997. Official Islamic (Al-Azhar) and Islamist (private or community based) basic education has attracted increasing enrolment in the 1990s with an increase of 77 percent from 1982 to 1995 and another 16 percent increase from 1995 to 1997. (State Information Services: Year Book 1997; and State Information Services; 1999) Increasing public interest in Al-Azhar may be related to its lower economic costs, increasing manifestations of religiosity within Egyptian society, and the poor quality of public schooling. Despite the increasing inclination of the MOE to put Al-Azhar education institutions on line with other criteria of public education, Al-Azhar refuses to be considered as part of the MOE, since it seeks to maintain its independence as an institution reporting to the Ministry of Religious Endowments. Therefore, Al-Azhar has not been a beneficiary of development assistance provided by Western donors or international 'secular' organizations. Foreign funds

directed to Al-Azhar have been supplied from Arab Islamic countries and Islamic funds in the form of donations and not development assistance.

The Islamist thinker El-Karadawi criticizes the dichotomy of the Egyptian educational system and describes it as a symptom of a general social and political schizophrenia. "Education in this country needs a clear philosophy... Many graduates are specialized in modern sciences but are ignorant of their original cultures, heritage and identities." (El-Karadawi; 2000) Most neo-conservative as well as Nasserist (Socialist-Arab-nationalist) stances are skeptical about foreign intervention in basic education in Egypt and relate it to the old imperialist ideology and neocolonialist schemes that aim to eradicate national and religious identities and create total economic, political and cultural subordination. The conspiracy theory (discussed in the context of education in later parts of this study), that is fed by the Arab-Israeli conflict, is emphasized in their arguments.

USAID education specialist, Judith Cochran, shares this concern with the dichotomy of the Egyptian educational system and attributes some of the responsibility to foreign aid. The educational system, according to Cochran, has created a country whose people are in conflict with themselves. "On the one hand are those who have been trained toward obedience and conformity to the religious and cultural heritage of the past. . . On the other hand are those who have been trained toward the expression of change and, for want of another word, technology. Those graduates have been supported by the World Bank, USAID and other foreign resources which have provided alternate models of survival." (Cochran; 1986) This argument lies in the context of concern about Islamic militants, especially given that sociological studies portray them to be greatly nationalistic, and coming from middle class backgrounds with modern secular education. "Only when the

reconciliation of the cultural dichotomies are begun will the educated Egyptian feel secure and survive well in his society," she concludes.

This appraisal of the position of the MOE amongst the various views and ideologies tells us that the MOE approached its pro-neo-liberal educational reform plans of the 1990s while trying also to recognize the neo-conservative and nationalist concerns; while failing to obtain their support. MOE policy documents rather reflect the recommendations of donor agencies that adopt human capital theory in their development philosophy, endorse the increase of private funds for basic education, and emphasize multi-culturalism and bilingualism. In this context the MOE is an organ of the Egyptian state that strives to take part in economic globalization and win over its skeptical domestic constituents to that goal.

D. Free Education: The Leading Subject in Egypt's National Educational Debate

Most developing countries embrace free education policies and Egypt adopted this system in 1923. Although in certain countries only primary education is free, in Egypt free education extends to university as well as post graduate research. When asked about the government's policy on subsidizing education, minister Bahaaeddin, said: "A policy of free education is stated in the constitution and the ministry has to abide by the constitution. Moreover, basic education is a matter of national security and can not be left to the financial capabilities of individuals." (Nessim; 1994) Furthermore, in an article of *Al-Ahram*, published on February 6, 2001, minister Bahaaeddin reconfirmed that free education guaranteed to all social groups, irrespective of income, is an indisputable principle. He also

emphasizes that instilling national pride and patriotism is a major objective of education.

Free education has been ingrained in the minds of the masses as a basic right that extends to university and postdoctoral levels. It is considered to be one of the major achievements of the 1952 Revolution, from which the regime still earns its political legitimacy. It is widely accepted that for the state to go back on free education extended to university levels would be to renounce social equity and turn its back to the masses. The current Egyptian Constitution dedicates at least five articles to free education and social equity, which are two, repeatedly associated principles. The Constitution states education as a basic right in the following articles:

Article 18:

"Education is a right undertaken by the state and it is compulsory at the primary stage. The state attempts to extend compulsion to the other stages and it supervises all levels of education. It undertakes the independence of universities and scientific research centers. This in turn will link education to the production sector and society's needs."

Article 20:

"Education in all the state institutions is free at all its different levels."

Article 21:

"Eradication of illiteracy is a national duty which necessitates the mobilization of all the people's potentialities to realize it."

Free education is considered by many Egyptian intellectuals and the public as an issue of basic human rights and social justice, and not only a financial duty of the regime in power. According to the

Egyptian economist Hazem El-Beblawi, education is related to citizen's rights and state responsibility, and is closely connected to the future of society and its perception of the elements of progress. It is a philosophical, political and economic. (El-Beblawi; 1989) The government supplies most funds for education as part of its major responsibility for providing social goods and redistributing resources to help low-income groups climb the economic ladder.

Even though the Egyptian state has a free education system, education is not completely cost-free for students and their families. According to Al-Iktesadi Magazine, seven billion Egyptian pounds are spent annually on private tutoring in Egypt. If we compare this figure to the annual government budget for education, which was around ten billion Egyptian pounds in 1996, we find that education is not actually free of charge. Another cost of education in Egypt, often neglected by policy makers, is the opportunity cost of withdrawing students from the labor market. Knowing that the per-capita income in Egypt is very low, most families find it very difficult to support their children and send them to the labor market in order to at least cover their own expenses, or even support the family. This means that free tuition education is not really free education, because families would still have to bear the costs of feeding students, buying them books and clothes as well as giving up the income they could otherwise generate.

This is further confirmed by Aida Seif El Dawla in her article "The Prevalence of Poverty," who says that the cost of sending a child to school for villagers in upper Egypt was around 1000 Egyptian pounds per year during the 1990s. (Seif El Dawla; 1996) In the light of increasing unemployment and rising costs of living resulting from budgetary cuts to subsidies under the economic reform program, poor households may be forced to withdraw the children from education. This

is also reflected in gender gaps of education since families often prefer to send boys to school and not girls if resources are insufficient. Seif El Dawla states that the rising costs of education have unfairly affected the poor more than the well off. Real free education would require that the government provide some allowances for students, that is, provide free books, meals and school uniforms. 'Real free education,' according to Economist Mona El-Baradei, requires the abolition of all costs related to government education. Thus according to El-Baradei, real free education would include exempting poor children from the costs of health insurance, and providing school meals, textbooks, stationary as well as increasing the efficiency and quality of education. (El-Baradei; 2000) Correspondingly, the MOE implemented a medical insurance plan for students and devised a school nutrition program in disadvantaged areas as an incentive for families to invest time and energy in sending their children to school.

El-Baradei roughly estimated that in order to reach 'real free quality basic education' by the year 2007, the Egyptian state needs to invest around sixteen billion Egyptian pounds (approximately US \$ 4.8 billion). The general trend among decision makers in the MOE and reinforced by the donor community, is to not cut the costs of education, but rather to solicit more private funds in order to help the state dedicate more funds to the underprivileged. The argument in this case is that providing total free education to all segments of society is not equitable.

1. Is Free Education Equitable?

Even though it is widely agreed that basic education is a fundamental citizen and human right, current neo-liberal debates about free education express reservations about equity and ineffective

allocation. Other issues of debate are up to which stage should education be free; and how to allocate the limited education budget among different levels of education? These debates raise questions of social justice, economic feasibility, the cost-benefit analysis of different levels of education, and the efficiency of the educational system.

In other words, is it really equitable to provide real free quality basic education to all citizens regardless of their economic means? Is it an equitable redistribution of wealth to provide free education to the rich and poor equally at the expense of taxpayers and public funds? Many voices inside and outside the MOE suggest that free public education should be provided only to those who cannot afford it, and the rich should pay for their own education. They also maintain that free education should be a means and not an end in itself. Therefore private education should be encouraged in order to relieve the strain on the public budget and allow greater investment to provide real free education to disadvantaged groups of society. This view is harmonious with the trends of market economy and privatization dominating public policy discourses in the 1990s. The idea is to allow for private supply to help cover the huge demand for education. Consequently, those who are not satisfied with the quality of public schooling and can afford private education have the right to invest in their own education.

The main argument is that the equal distribution of resources does not necessarily result in an equitable apportionment of such resources. Harik holds that "when a policy such as free education for all is put into effect, those who enjoy status, wealth, and skills are able to use or manipulate the system to their advantage and receive a disproportionate share of the available educational resources." (Harik; 1997). The wealthy can afford the costs of supplementary

books, school uniforms, and quality private tutoring that makes up for the poor teaching quality in schools. Consequently their children manage to have a high level of academic achievement that allows them into higher education. Once they graduate their family contacts and positions facilitate their obtaining reputable jobs that promote them socially and economically. In addition, the well off can afford to sustain their children for around sixteen years of formal education up to the university level, which is the only road to promising jobs. Therefore viewing free education as a path to social mobility and equity is not a very realistic reflection of reality. This is supported by a research sponsored by Cairo University, which revealed that 43 percent of the poor are illiterate as compare to around 30 percent of the better off, and that among the poor, only 1.7 percent has a University degree against 7.7 percent of the better off. (El-Laithy; 1999)

This argument is further supported by World Bank reports that argue that the present system is inequitable and expensive, since families spend around 30 percent of their disposable income on education and only the well-to-do can afford quality private tutoring. Moreover the previously mentioned privileged groups are those which can afford the opportunity costs of not sending their children to the labor market. Therefore, private schooling is recommended as a solution for the present system that is 'expensive, inequitable and untransparent.' (World Bank; 1996) This call for an increase in private contributions to education has dominated World Bank policies in the 1990s, which managed to influence the policies of many Third World countries involved in structural adjustment programs.

The growing spirit of neo-liberalism within the state is pushing for cost-effective schooling resulting in current state policies that aim to increase financial resources for education by encouraging private

contributions. "Extending greater freedom and incentive to the private sector to increase its involvement in providing basic education to segments of the population that possess the capacity to pay schooling;" is one of the agreed objectives of the World Bank and the MOE in the Basic Education Improvement Project of 1993. (World Bank; 1993) Consequently, the private sector has been encouraged to contribute to financing technical and vocational training, especially as it benefits from the skilled manpower of labor. Private education was to be encouraged, and according to decree no. 306/1993, private schools should assist in the field of primary, general secondary or technical education, and expand teaching foreign languages alongside the official curricula set by the MOE.

A form of indirect privatization is the sponsoring of public schooling, as it provides high quality education that charges fees students with financial means. These schools, labeled the 'Cooperative Exemplary Schools' provide special education in terms of facilities and language skills. (Al-Sebaili; 2001) Another MOE press release announces the MOE production of educational programs on computer CDs and diskettes and sold to public school students who can afford them, while those students who do not have the financial means can borrow them from school libraries. These indirect forms of privatization have been associated with direct encouragement of investment in education in Egypt.

Establishing private education institutions has been a lucrative business in Egypt, considering the increasing demand for education and the poor quality and limited capacity of public education. Despite the large number of private institutions opening in order to meet the huge demand, private educational institutions still represent less than 10 percent of the total number of schools in Egypt (Al-Ahram; March 18, 1996). Their limited share in supply is partially due to the

difficulty in obtaining official MOE permits and the complicated bureaucratic requirements. Most private sector activities are focused on establishing private educational institutions with very high fees (reaching up to thousands of US dollars) that do not cater for lower income groups.

True enough, private education cannot cater for the educational needs in the rural south, where the education quality is very poor, penetration is low and repetition and dropout rates are the highest, especially among the unprivileged sectors of local communities. Such groups cannot afford any of the opportunity costs of education, let alone the fees of private schools. This is where the solicitation of development assistance and special MOE programs that involve local non-governmental organizations come in. Their limited resources tie the contributions of local NGOs to education. Therefore they are often used as facilitators of community penetration by development assistance agencies and not as sole financiers or technical consultants for education programs in the rural south of Egypt.

2. The Domestic Debate on the Semi-Privatization of Basic Education

While the neo-liberal advocates of more privatization of public education claim that the steps taken by the MOE towards soliciting private funds as insufficient, several Egyptian journalists and academicians argue that such trends are inequitable. "This is a real disaster ... The state can not give up its full responsibility for education and can not cater for one socio-economic class and not the other... The state is not a restaurant that gives super meals for the rich and ordinary meals for the poor;" says Labib Al-Sebaili (Editor of the Education Page in *Al-Ahram* Newspaper in the issue of April 24,

2001) and revisits the same issue in more detail in a longer article in the same newspaper on 8 October 2002. Al-Sebail denounces the idea of providing high quality social services for the rich and low quality service for the poor in general. However, he holds a general high quality free basic education to be a major priority. He argues that by doing this, the state would be abandoning its original responsibilities towards ordinary citizens and siding with the elite, who do not need it anyway. He describes the argument that the state cannot afford high quality education for all, as 'ridiculous', especially given that the state budget comes from citizens' taxes.

The main concern of Egyptian intellectuals criticizing these 'privatization' trends regards issues of equity and social mobility. The semi-private Cooperative Exemplary Schools are designed to ensure a higher-quality education that provides better job prospects for a socio-economic class that already enjoys economic and social advantages. "Graduates of such schools generally do very well on their final secondary exams, which ensures access to what are considered the elite faculties... However, the so-called "rationalization of free education" will not take place immediately or rapidly. state involvement in education is no longer a means of promoting social goals but rather of dealing with current constraints;" says Iman Farag on the politics of education privatization in Egypt. (Farag; 2000)

3. Private Tutoring: The Positions of the MOE, Public Opinion and Donors

Highly overcrowded classrooms, poor educational facilities and often three shifts of schooling in the same school lead to very poor quality formal teaching in classes which does not prepare students for exams. Private tutoring then becomes the only alternative for families to prepare their children for end of year exams. Private tutoring could

be justified if it prepared students for exams and increased their academic achievement without straining the government budget. However, several studies have proved this not to be the case, since they serve only to help passing exams, and inflate the *diploma disease*, without expanding the learning process and experience. Finally, the crucial need for private tutoring to pass exams accentuated further the inequity of the educational system. Indeed it condemned students with limited financial means to lower chances of passing exams and consequently fewer possibilities of socio-economic mobility.

In order to cure the ailments of private tutoring and a poor learning process, a realistic examination of the educational system should be conducted, maintains the World Bank assessment reports on education in Egypt. (World Bank; 1993 and 1996) Teachers' qualification process, salaries and work conditions are good places to start the inquiry. It was not until the late 1980s that some minimum requirements were set for teachers' selection and recruitment. Until then, teachers assigned to basic education were appointed from among a pool of the lowest achievers in higher academic institutions. Often they did not have a university degree but held certificates from teaching institutes. (Harik; 1997) Unsatisfactory teachers' qualifications are obviously linked directly with their poor remuneration and compensation as well as work conditions. A World Bank report argues that while the minimum income needed to allow an average family to live decently in the 1990s was 900 Egyptian Pounds per month, the starting salary for a teacher was 100 Egyptian Pound (equivalent to US \$ 30 per month). (World Bank; 1996) Another World Bank assessment report states that basic education teacher salaries are tied to the pay scale of the civil service that ranged from 70 to 240 Egyptian pounds per annum in 1991/92. Moreover, promotions and salary increases had been highly linked to seniority and not merit. (World Bank; 1993) Limited salary raises could never catch up with the increasing costs of living, especially after the

structural adjustment and privatization waves of the 1990s that lifted subsidies from basic consumer goods.

At this point private tutoring became the only income-generating alternative for teachers to make ends meet. The majority of teachers started lowering the quality of their in-class instruction and formal teaching in order to create demand for private lessons. Qualified teachers either relied on private tutoring or aspired for work contracts in the Arab Gulf, where they were offered salaries ten times higher than their Egyptian counterparts. The mass emigration of qualified teachers to Arab and some African countries adversely affected the public education process. By the beginning of the 1980s almost 23,000 schoolteachers were officially seconded by the MOE to work in the Arab Gulf, and obviously this adversely affected the quality of teaching. (Ayubi; 1991) To a certain extent, private lessons served as a source of 'parasitic' income that allowed the formal educational system to function. It allowed teachers to pretend to survive on their basic salaries and the students to continue to work their way through the classes. This parasitic income in exchange for educational services served only to postpone the search for a solution but did not contribute to the quality of education received inside or outside the classroom. It acted as a artificial heart that pumped life into a clinically dead educational system.

Private tutoring is officially prohibited and criminalized by the MOE. But remedies such as the provision of auxiliary lessons on school property for minimal fees, changing examination styles, reforming curriculum and even officially reprimanding and punishing teachers imposing private lessons on their students, failed to curtail the phenomena. Private tutoring burdens the budgets of most Egyptian families and the situation has worsened since some teachers not only reduce their input in class to induce demand, but impose private lessons on students as well in exchange for guaranteeing their

promotion. It has become such a critical issue of public opinion that minister Bahaaeddin, has attacked teachers who give private lessons in the press and has called them the 'the private tutoring Mafia.' The argument became so dramatized in the media that the press published news about the private tutoring 'Mafia' menacing the minister in person! Since then, the expression 'Mafia' has been associated with private tutoring in the Egyptian media.

Qualifying and training school teachers may raise the quality of teaching, but poor remuneration and professional motivation pushes them to seek other jobs, especially after improving their qualifications and boosting their market value. Increasing teachers' salaries is a necessity to increase their professional motivation and prevent the most qualified ones from leaving the formal educational system in search of means of decent subsistence. According to Magdi Nasif, an NGO representative, it is necessary to increase the level of professional motivation by focusing on promotion due to merit and not merely seniority and belief in the pedagogical mission (personal interview; April 2001).

4. Donors' Money and the Provision of Free Basic Education

Facilitating the establishment of private educational institutions, increasing private sector contributions to all levels of education and pushing for the privatization of higher education are common themes that dominate the discourse of donors. Basic education however, is not among the sectors for which donors encourage authorities to cut public funding. On the contrary, European Union finance agreements with Egypt in 1997 required that the Government of Egypt increase its financial commitments to basic education. The trend is to encourage increasing public spending on education and provide free universal basic

education nationwide. (EU Commission in Egypt: Financing Agreement; 1997)

Most donors' reports assessing the Egyptian basic education system carefully assess the problems of social class, gender and geographic equity and quality of teaching and touch on the issue of private tutoring. Financial and technical assistance programs have all been directed to curriculum reform, teacher training, education facilities, girls' education and institution building of the MOE. However, the solutions remained temporary remedies that could not deal with the actual problem of poor quality in-class teaching. World Bank and USAID Reports repeatedly stress the importance of encouraging the private supply of education. An alternative solution proposed by the World Bank is that parents could pool funds to supplement the salaries of public school teachers. This is suggested to create a *de facto* performance-based bonus system. The feasibility of such a system on the national scale is questionable since affluent and powerful local groups may not necessarily use this remuneration system irrespective of their own views of the educational profession and values. They may use their economic leverage to promote or downgrade specific educational issues according to their own values or local interests through formal in-class teaching. The MOE may not be ready to give up its control on educational content.

The solutions suggested and or provided by development assistance programs do not touch upon the most crucial issue of poor remuneration. A joint UNESCO and UNDP report admits that reforming teacher training may not achieve the required objectives since the real challenge to teachers' lack of motivation has not been faced. (UNDP/UNESCO; 1996) The same report commissioned by the Egyptian minister of education to assess education reform admits that even though salary increases of 50 percent had been secured, salary

increases of at least 300 percent are needed to provide a decent living for teachers. Meager salaries were justified by the fact that the state provided free education and guaranteed public employment for university graduates, and subsidized basic goods. Mass employment in the civil service that overshot the real work requirements and low salaries became a form of disguised unemployment allowance. State salaries drove public sector employees almost under the poverty line. It reached a point where, the "Grand-Mufti" (The Head of the Official House of Islamic Jurisprudence in Egypt) declared that government employees were among the poor strata of society and were entitled to alms (charity). Charity recipients are often associated with the homeless, people living under the poverty line and street beggars.

The problem of low salaries cannot be resolved unless a general reform in the salary structure and administrative reform of the civil service is carried out. Such an overall administrative reform and modification of the salary structure on the national level is not only beyond the capacities and/or responsibilities of donors but also that of the Egyptian Government's present fiscal resources. However, the interesting point is that while 95 percent of the MOE's annual educational budget goes towards unsatisfactory salaries, the only source for investment in improving educational facilities or teacher training are development assistance funds. Despite the fact that they amount to relatively small sums compared with state budget, donors' funds are useful because they are more flexible in their allocation strategy than MOE funds. That is, they are not predestined to current costs, therefore they are more easily allocated. (Interview with WB official: 2000) The over-staffed civil service is not a characteristic of the MOE alone, but of the whole civil service, since around 50 percent of the Egyptian population lives on public salaries. Consequently, donors' money becomes the only possibility for system improvement and reform. Nonetheless, the education economist Mona El-

Baradei, proposes foreign aid to be the 'last option' for financing education, and describes it to be a 'volatile source of finance. "The benefits of foreign contributions," adds El-Baradei, "could be maximized if they are allocated within a framework that coordinates among different education sector needs." (El-Baradei; 2000)

E. Developmental Thought and Egyptian Education Reform in the 1990s: Achieving Domestic Consensus

The previously discussed conceptions of development and various perspectives on the role of education to achieve development are all present on the Egyptian intellectual and political scene. The same goes for the views of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism, which compete for the dominance of education policies and practices. Going through education policy papers, the publications and press releases of the minister of Education, policy analysis and various intellectual publications and academic papers, we can detect two major debates that reflect the contesting visions of development and roles attributed to education. The first debate concerns the provision of free education, and neo-liberal pressure (promoted by donor agencies, the World Bank and the IMF) for the modification of the role of the state in providing free universal education and encouraging private sector participation not only in delivering higher education but also basic education. The neo-liberal approach is embraced mainly by the technocratic state elite as well as the business elite. In this first debate, issues of economic efficiency, effectiveness, cost benefit analysis, equity, human rights, social mobility and political control, dominate the discussion. The second important debate, dominated by neo-conservative convictions, concern the challenges of globalization

to Egyptian national and religious identity and the long disputed dichotomy of religious versus secular education.

The above mentioned ideological controversies emphasize further how the new set of educational norms advocated by policy reforms are introduced into a heavily normative political landscape. Reforms are promoted within highly contested normative orders and are heavily contested and measured against other deeply rooted social values and political ideologies. The biggest enterprise of both the MOE and development assistance agencies is to cultivate a strategic coalition through argumentative persuasion and convincing the various actors that education reforms are (at least in part) consistent with some of their values and personal or collective objectives. Argumentative persuasion is defined by Jeffery Checkel to be; " a social process of interaction that involves changing attitudes about cause and effect in the absence of overt coercion." (Checkel; 2001) In other words, it is a communication process in which the persuader introduces normative and behavioral changes in a context where the persuadee has a significant leverage on his/her or their own choices. In this case, persuasive communication targets domestic actors from the various sectors, particularly the specialized sectors that pursue reforms and the state organs in order to convince them that the advocated reforms are coherent with and in support to their own perception of the domestic interests of the state itself. (Epstein; 2002) It is essential to communicate to the constituents of public policies that such reforms are consistent with their normative values, interests and welfare. Otherwise, the policy reforms are likely to encounter strong resistance on many social, political and institutional levels.

Domestic elites (MOE decision-makers) has striven to conciliate education reform policies of the 1990s with all the various components of the competing arguments and in the meantime, conform to the

approaches of the international organizations that have sponsored the reforms. For example, the MOE elite pledges commitment to the constitutional right to free universal education in all stages of education. However it simultaneously strives to solicit private contributions to quality education at all educational stages. Thus it establishes two types of public education: a high quality public education for the upper middle classes with economic means and another (lower quality) free education for the underprivileged majority. The MOE policies confirm the need for institutional reform, decentralization and the necessity to adopt modern pedagogical approaches and technologically advanced communication networks, but insist on centralized control over the education directorates and standardized national curricula. Likewise, they praise the human capital theory and export oriented approach, and strive to prepare new generations to partake in the global culture and economy by praising the acquisition of the technical and communication skills, and English language proficiency. However, they also denounce the '*decadent consumerism and individualism*,' promoted by economic and cultural globalization.

In his previous book, *Education and the Future*, Bahaaeddin says that the democratic style dictates that we (intending the decision-makers of the MOE) should present all ideas before the largest circles representing public opinion. He adds that the scientific method of decision making establishes that all specialists, intellectuals and opinion leaders should have a chance to voice their suggestions regarding education reform policies and afterwards we should present these ideas to the legislative and constitutional bodies of the state, so that we produce a change that reflects the desires and actual needs of this (Egyptian) population as well as its values. (Bahaaeddin; 1997) The minister's ideals expressed in his two books about education in Egypt are consistent with international research and correspond

closely with the conclusions of Cohn and Geske (1990), and Harber (1997) as well as the World Bank-sponsored research on education and democracy. However, several Egyptian intellectuals, education experts as well as some technocrats of the Ministry of Education dispute the actual democratic practices of the Ministry of Education itself. For instance, in his book *Description of Egypt by the end of the 20th Century* the Egyptian economist, Galal Amin, describes his experience of participation in the National Conference for Educational Reform as follows:

"I entered the Conference Hall of Cairo University ... to find it full of attendance, among whom several of my colleagues of the university professors... The minister of Education was seated on the podium talking with a distinctive eloquence, enthusiasm and poise, unusual for most government officials. However, he also presented his ideas as unequivocal decisions. It was clear that the purpose of the conference was not to discuss his ideas but to procure the accord of the present audience after getting over with some formal rituals... I looked at the facial expressions of some of the participants I know, among whom were professors of Literature, Philosophy, History, Law and Economy, who have contributed to the progress of this country. And I inferred that, like myself, they felt that they were invited to participate in some formal ceremony and not in a discussion. This was confirmed soon afterwards, since the conference program indicated that the duration of the session was planned for three hours that included the minister's speech and the open discussion. The minister's speech took one hour and a half, followed by a three quarters of an hour of a fancy tea break. I had hoped that I would have a chance in the remaining hour to express my point of view, however, the floor was given to the minister of Scientific Research, followed by the ministers of Labor Force and Youth, who all went on about the achievements of their ministries. Only the remaining twenty minutes were assigned to the ideas of the country's intellectuals. The floor was then give to the head of the opposition of the People's Assembly (Parliament), since he was the 'officially elected' representative of the opposition. However, the man was too moderate to confront the real criticisms to the suggested educational reform programs. At that point, it was announced that only 10 minutes were dedicated to open discussion, and they were given to a member of the People's Assembly (The People's Assembly is dominated by the National Democratic Party, which is the ruling party). At this point I reached the maximum level of frustration and decided to leave the session. I later reviewed the conclusions of the conference and found they were identical to the ideas of the minister, expressed at the very beginning."(Amin; 2000)

Amin's description of the conference does not reflect any conviction that the decisions on educational reform plans were discussed and debated with intellectuals and legislators. As a matter of fact they only establish that the presence of intellectuals and legislators was

used as a rubber stamp for the Minister's preconceived decisions. The so called intolerant attitude of the minister to open criticism is also pointed out by an Egyptian columnist who maintains that the minister has managed to stop him from writing his weekly editorial in a national weekly journal, after his writing a series of articles containing heavy criticism of the Ministry's education policies. The senior journalist holds that the MOE exercised indirect pressures on the editorial board of the weekly journal.

On tolerance to criticism, Islamist writer, Yousef El-Karadawi, states that most decision-makers are annoyed by intellectuals' criticisms of educational policies and construe them as inopportune offenses to their persons. (El-Karadawi; 2000) On the internal administrative level, an MOE technocrat states that the minister does not take their professional propositions into consideration, especially when they do not accord with his own political agenda. His deputies and the unit directors directly reporting to him also apparently follow this administrative style. This is confirmed by a senior education specialist, outside the MOE, who maintains that the minister fails to treat his assistants with respect, and does not create an organizational environment of open horizontal communication and participation in decision making and implementation. The minister's direct assistants, who describe him as an open-minded, avant-gardist, ahead of his time, do not support these views and more creative than the institution he leads. His direct assistants and internal consultants of the MOE maintain that he is hindered by the ineptitude of the inflexible and over-staffed organization (MOE) he leads.

Still, the minister's ideas on the democratization of education, stated in his both books and interviews published in some newspaper articles are not confirmed by the previously mentioned episodes with the intellectuals, journalists, technocrats and external consultants.

The educational specialist, who denounces the undemocratic practices of the minister, explains that the minister's approach is not exceptional at all. On the contrary it is quite consistent with the general stance of the state on political democratization. The Egyptian state has formally recognized the importance and need for democratization ever since the 1970s, when former president Sadat re-established the multi-party system. However, the state approaches democratization with prudence, maintaining that the Egyptian population is not yet ready to take on board a comprehensive democracy, especially as national security and political stability are endangered by fundamentalist terrorist movements and external conspiracies. In a way there is a projection of the general position of the state on the informal stance of the minister of Education. That is, both the external and internal constituents of the Ministry of Education are perceived as unable to valuably contribute to and/or intelligently contest the educational decision making process and its outcomes. In both cases the ruling elite views itself as 'avant-gardist', ruling the masses which are lagging behind.

Finally, if we agree that the most important phase of the persuasion process essential for a successful internalization and sustainability of the advocated change is the persuasion that aims to achieve domestic consensus on the domestic level, it is important to assess the communication style adopted by the domestic elites promoting education policy reforms. Argumentative persuasion, according to Checkel, is more likely to be effective in the presence of the following conditions; (1) the persuadee is inexperienced and facing a serious policy failure; (2) the persuader is an authoritative member of a group to which the persuadee wants to belong to; (3) the persuadee has few prior key beliefs that are inconsistent with the advocated change; (4) the persuader acts in consistency with his advocated principles; (5) communication does not occur in a heavily

politicized setting. (Checkel; 2001) Looking at the previously mentioned five conditions, we find that at least three of them are not present in Egypt and therefore argumentative persuasion was not necessarily facilitated. In the case of education policy reform in Egypt in the 1990s, we find that only two of the five conditions suggested by Checkel were present. Firstly, education was suffering from a severe policy failure and secondly, the Egyptian state aspired to catch up with the economic and social progress achieved by the industrialized countries. However, the other three conditions of successful persuasion were not present.

In Egypt, first, the advocated reforms have been introduced within a heavily contested ideological setting and contradicted the socialist pillars on which the Egyptian state had been based back in the 1950s and on which the republic based its legitimacy. Second, the persuader (the MOE) is not perceived to be consistent with the liberal, decentralizing and democratic principles advocated by the reforms. On the contrary the MOE is deemed by its internal and external critics to be another authoritarian, centralized and hierarchical state institution that advocates democracy only on the ceremonial level. Third, the persuasion process of education reforms takes place in a heavily politicized setting on both the domestic and international level and amidst surging weaves of Islamist neo-conservatism. This is all the more true as education is tightly connected with identity politics and national security. As a matter of fact, the communication style of the domestic elites was far more ceremonial and manipulative than it was genuinely interested in active participation. Most domestic actors describe their participation as formalistic and denounce their presence in discussions as a mere rubber stamp far from genuine consensus based on argumentative persuasion and participatory communication.

Conclusion:

This chapter investigated the various concepts of development prevailing in international development agencies and how such agencies link basic education to development. I sought to locate the position of the MOE from neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism, the two contending streams of thought that have dominated the domestic debate during the 1990s. The analysis demonstrates how the Government of Egypt defined development and its connection with basic education in relation to the positions of international development agencies and adopted many concepts from human capital theory in its official statements and policies.

The international debate between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism is reflected on the domestic Egyptian scene in debate between the three major groups of Egyptian intellectuals: Islamists (neo-conservative), neo-liberals (pro-Western and secular), and Arab nationalists (socialist and secular). They all compete to gain command on the normative order and the philosophical content of the national education process in Egypt, an education system that all three groups consider to be lacking a clear philosophy and suffering from an ideological vacuum. However, analysis reveals that the MOE embraces an implicit and limited neo-liberal view that contrasts with its socialist foundations. This contradiction reveals itself very clearly in the national debate on the provision of free education vis-à-vis the privatization of education. This debate reflects the positions of different domestic groups and brings to light the MOE dilemma resulting from the inconsistency between its socialist roots and present neo-liberal direction.

The study of the communication style employed by the MOE to advance education reforms during the 1990s illustrates how the MOE tried to

appease all currents of thought by trying to affirm the religious, nationalist (patriotic) orientation of its policies and its commitment to the masses through the provision of free education. Nonetheless, the MOE failed to build a strategic coalition for the successful implementation and sustainability of reforms. This resulted from the absence of a two-way participatory and persuasive communication with domestic intellectuals. Measuring the nature of the MOE communication style against Jeffery Checkel's Argumentative Persuasion Model, we find that at least three out of its five basic conditions for success were absent. The missing conditions were: 1) reforms were introduced within a heavily contested ideological setting; 2) the centralized and hierarchical MOE institution was not perceived as consistent with the democratization and liberalization values advocated by the reforms; and 3) the persuasion process took place in a heavily politicized domestic and international setting.

Chapter 4

Conditionality, the Conspiracy Theory
and International Cooperation

Introduction:

The implementation, internalization and sustainability of policy reforms are all influenced by the social, cultural and political context. In effect, the conditionality of development assistance is a major contextual variable that influences international cooperation in basic education. It contributes to a discourse of mistrust in development assistance and public policies related to it and prevents the achievement of a satisfactory level of 'domestic resonance'. In this chapter I define conditionality and examine its role in international socialization and relate it to the concept of utility maximization espoused by the 'rationalist' international relations theorists. In the course of the analysis I examine the terms of conditionality related to foreign development assistance to basic education in Egypt during the 1990s, the motives behind it and how it is associated with the conspiracy theory in public discourse. In an attempt to assess the validity of the conspiracy arguments, I also conduct a content analysis of the educational curriculum and the terms of conditionality in donors' programs and their policy outcomes.

A. Defining Conditionality and Its Rationale

"He who does not earn his day's sustenance, does not own his day's decision"

Mostafa Kamel (Egyptian national leader 1874-1908)

Fifty years of development assistance in its various forms have not managed to eradicate poverty from the world. The end of the 20th century, 100 million people around the globe are still homeless; 400 million are under-nourished, suffering from arrested growth, mental retardation or death; 1.9 billion people drink and bathe in water

contaminated with deadly parasites; more than 50 percent of humanity lacks sanitation; and 880 million are illiterate. (Durning; 1989) After all, it may be too unrealistic and somehow ingenuous to expect development assistance to resolve the centuries' accumulating problems of humanity in a half-century, especially when development assistance is provided inconsistently for conflicting purposes, and under contested legitimacy. A World Bank report assessing aid says; " 'The poor always ya have with you,' said Jesus, and 2000 years of history have not proven him wrong". (World Bank; 1998) Whether it is necessary or not to accept poverty as a fact of life, the challenging task of the century has been to understand why a considerable number of development assistance programs have not achieved their objectives.

Official Development assistance in the form of soft loans and grants has not been efficiently or effectively used. Furthermore, soft loans have driven the Third World from poverty into indebtedness. Development theorists and consultants have repeatedly preached the importance of specific economic, political and social conditions to promote, facilitate and sustain development, maintaining that the availability of funds is a crucial element but not the main determinant of effective development programs. The characteristics of such conditions for success have changed over time according to the political and economic inclinations predominant in the various donor institutions over time. Such prerequisites have been recurrently identified by donors' consultants and often started with proposing specific macro economic policy reforms extending to other policy measures that take into account the specificity of the political regime and governance practice in recipient countries. (Panday; 2001) Effective and efficient use of development assistance resources have always been professed to be the ultimate *raison d'être* of conditionality.

Conditionality links the provision and disbursement of financial and/or technical development assistance (in the form of grants or soft loans) to the recipients' adherence to the specific internal or external, formal or informal, policies proposed by donors or funding institutions. This is particularly the case for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) that fail to pay their debts to multilateral financing institutions and the creditors of the rich advanced countries. Achieving predefined social and structural reforms and meeting specific benchmarks for macroeconomic performance are the terms of conditionality the European Commission's development cooperation program identifies in its report on the conditionalities used for the floating of the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) completion points.¹ (European Commission: DG Development; 2000) While multilateral donors may justify conditionality by its importance for successful development programs or debt relieve plans, bilateral donors can afford to spell out their implicit or explicit political and/or economic interests to recipients in exchange of assistance. Bilateral donors (mostly democratic states from the developed world) maintain that after all, development assistance funds are raised from tax payers' money and should reflect tax payers' interests and values.

Conditionality, therefore, can be categorized into political, financial and/or social provisions, frequently interrelated to form

¹ The 'floating completion point' is a World Bank and IMF initiative of the mid-1990s for facilitating debt relief for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. The HIPCs need to establish a track record of good performance under IMF/World Bank-supported programs. This process is not time bound and depends on the satisfactory implementation of key structural policy reforms agreed at the decision point, the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, and the adoption and implementation of a poverty reduction strategy developed through a broad-based participatory process. The "floating completion point" would allow good performers to reach their completion point earlier. Accordingly, bilateral and commercial creditors are expected to reschedule obligations coming due, with a 90 percent reduction in net present value. The World Bank and the IMF are expected to provide "interim relief" between the decision and completion points. (European Commission DG Development; 2000)

general terms of cross-conditionality set and coordinated both by bilateral donors and international development agencies. Political and financial strings attached to development assistance are more common than social conditionality, which entails linking development assistance to the specific social policies or practices of recipient countries relevant to particular social groups based on gender, ethnicity, religion or some other criteria.

The Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund) together with major world donors link most of their development assistance to economic reform policies in recipient countries. Financial conditionality has imposed policy measures that lead to liberalization of markets, local currency rates and price regulatory systems, and include the removal of bureaucratic restrictions on private entrepreneurship, and the dismantling of monopolistic public sector enterprises. Such measures have socio-economic implications, including unemployment, the abolition of subsidies and budget cuts in social services, often sacrificing the most vulnerable social groups in the recipient countries. The Bretton Woods institutions, in coordination with bilateral donors, have hoped compensate for these effects by establishing and financing various social development funds (social safety nets). This brings us to the political terms of conditionality which seek to promote democratic practices in national local politics, active civil society associations and the political empowerment of local communities. In this respect, donors tie official aid disbursement to the recipients' commitment to donor endorsed governance practices, legislative and institutional reforms and higher levels of grass-roots participation at the various levels of decision-making processes. Thus aid is provided to countries according to an index of economic and/or political freedom. Mapping the world into free or non-free countries

categorizes the developing countries into countries deserving or undeserving of development assistance.

Economic and political yardsticks of development assistance programs are often accompanied by social parameters of gender equity, human right standards, and sound environmental measures and practices. Social conditionality has enjoyed greater popularity among donors' constituents, especially because it addresses the most important values of equity and dignity which voters in donor countries hold in esteem. Moreover, social benchmarks serve to compensate for the old debts of colonialism and refute the present accusations of neo-colonialism. Development experts who criticize of the terms of conditionality enforcing structural adjustments, and who attribute to it the inflation of poverty levels in recipient countries, advocate the replacement of financial conditionality with social benchmarks. For example, in the *Oxfam Education Now Report* Kevin Watkins argues that conditionality stipulations should replace 'structural benchmarks' with social ones, so as to ensure the commitment of national governments' to social welfare and services. (Watkins; 1999)

Conditionality is generally an unpopular term among many intellectuals who often consider sovereignty, equity, and dignity to be synonymous. The domestic intelligentsia of the recipient countries, educated during the 1960s (the era of national independence and acquired sovereignty, when socialism and the welfare state were deemed as guarantors of justice) is even more cynical about the concept of conditionality. they associate the term with the 'carrot and stick' paradigm. This, however, does not mean that conditionality does not have its numerous advocates among the neo-liberal supporters of the Bretton Woods institutions' policies and significant voices in donor countries. In defense of conditionality, Gerry Nkombo Muuka maintains that "the Fund and Bank have a right to safeguard the resources

transferred to them by member governments. Although conditionality remains controversial and generates resentment from time to time, it is hard to deny that those who provide assistance and loans can legitimately take an active interest in the design of the recipient country's policies." (Muuka; 1998) While Muuka approvingly quotes the IMF representative in Zambia (1992) to say: "conditionality is legitimate. You can't expect to borrow and use somebody else's money and not pay back," some mid-level executives of the Egyptian Ministry of Education criticize a former representative of a major donor international organization for having made an analogous statement claiming the right of the international organization to dictate its terms on the Ministry. (Personal interviews; March 2001)

Conditionality terms that are not mentioned in donors' press releases and public addresses are those of tied-aid and are more associated with bilateral donors. Tied-aid conditions regulate the allocation of funds, and are meticulously and set out in details in the internal documents and reports signed by donors and recipients. Tied-aid requires that the funds received by a recipient country are spent on the procurement of goods and technical assistance from donor countries. In many cases it is tied-aid that provokes the most vigorous criticism among domestic intelligentsia and opinion leaders who claim it to be among the major causes of financial inefficiency of development assistance, especially at the level of bilateral aid. As a matter of fact, the majority of US grants to Egypt (almost 75 percent) have been oriented towards the purchase of American products, services and weapons as well as to cover the administrative costs of the large USAID bureaucracy. (Ayubi; 1989 and Springborg; 1989)

Developmental specialists, such Kunibert Raffer, criticize tied-aid policies, blaming them for channeling spending in line with the ideological and political interests of donors, or to the benefit of

private enterprises in donor countries. (Raffer; 1999) A World Bank study on aid effectiveness, stated that tied-aid reduces the value of development assistance by 25 percent of its original value. Increasing campaigns during the 1990s against tied-aid and its effects, have led more and more donors to reduce it or limit it to a smaller range of goods and services. "Among OECD countries there has been a clear trend away from tied aid. In 1995 it accounted only about a fifth of all aid." (World Bank; 2000)

The other terms of conditionality that are not particularly popular among recipient countries' constituents and often rejected by recipient countries' governments, are those related to the foreign or security policies with which recipient countries are expected to comply in exchange for debt alleviation or official development assistance. Containing communism by developing non-communist countries and/or allying with front-line countries bordering with the Communist block, was a major feature of development assistance trends from the end of World War II and until the end of the Cold War in 1989. The former USSR and the eastern block an analogous strategy. Even today, many intellectuals ascribe ulterior political motives to development assistance.

Clement Henry claims that a large number of the Middle East region's intelligentsia and politicians compare pressures for structural adjustment with the economic pressures and debt crisis that led to colonialism in the 19th century. The re-launching of world capitalism was perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of the developing states that had long struggled for independence and autonomy. (Henry; 1997) This is supported by Galal Amin who notes that USAID was cut off from Egypt in 1965 because of Egypt's foreign policies, that is, its support to revolutionaries in the Congo, and that suspension of aid in 1967 was tied to the Israeli military attack of the same year. The

Israeli occupation of Sinai in 1967, continues Amin, and the suspension of aid by the West, including the World Bank and the multilateral institutions, forced Egypt to adopt policies that it may have not chosen willingly otherwise. (Amin; 2001)

Since signing the Camp David peace treaty in 1978, Egypt has been second to Israel in receiving USAID, and development assistance from the western world, especially from the United States of America. International assistance to Egypt is provided on different levels: multilateral, bilateral and special agreements. The volume and the sources of foreign donors to Egypt have varied throughout the past three decades, and significantly expanded after the Gulf War in 1991, to reward the Egyptian role in the war. According to a report published by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, development assistance provided to Egypt in 1991 amounted to US \$4.6 billion. This amounted to approximately 10 percent of the total world's development assistance. (DANIDA; 1996) The United States is Egypt's largest donor in addition to thirty-five other bilateral and multilateral organizations working in the country (USAID Congressional Presentation; 1999). The top ten donors to Egypt for the 1990-94 period are listed by the USAID to be:

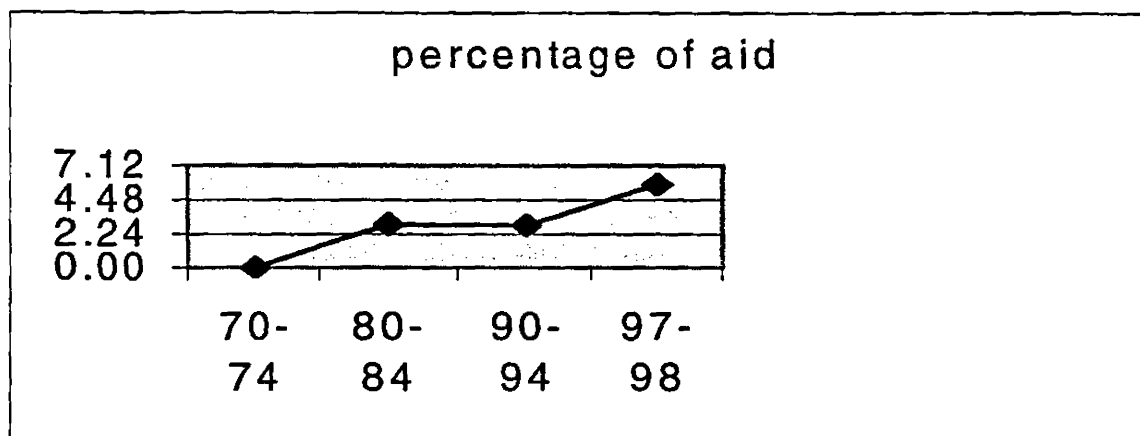
Total Official Development Assistance To Egypt (Net disbursements in US\$ Millions)

Donors	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
1. Arab Countries	2,185.7	510.1	408.6	379.5	94.3
2. United States	1,104.5	822.9	725.9	1,006.7	749.5
3. Germany	347.1	185.3	714.9	110.9	291.6
4. France	139.7	163.6	267.4	260.7	409.6
5. Japan	98.9	619.6	110.6	276.1	189.0
6. Italy	86.6	80.5	138.7	145.4	616.7
7. European Union	47.9	290.0	72.3	57.4	36.7
8. Canada	32.0	35.8	34.9	30.5	26.9
9. Denmark	19.7	20.7	23.0	26.2	25.1
10. Arab Agencies	4.4	35.9	71.7	75.3	66.2

(USAID Report; 1999)

It is also interesting to note the change in the amount of assistance from the European Union to Egypt over the past three decades. An EU report on the nature of the European Community External Cooperation Program states that during the period from 1970 to 1974, Egypt received 0 percent of external cooperation, while from 1980 to 1984 Egypt received 3.3 percent and from 1990 to 1994 it received 3 percent and more recently from 1997 to 1998, it topped the list of recipients with 5.5 percent. (EU commission; 1999) This reveals that the strategic (political and economic) interests of the European Union in Egypt have increased significantly from the 1970s onwards.

The following chart illustrates the percentage of EU aid Received by Egypt during the period from 1970-1998



B. Political Motives for Providing Development Assistance to Egypt

Why is it that Egypt has topped the list of recipients of development assistance in the Mediterranean and Middle East region? Area specialists explain that the preference is due to Egypt's strategic importance and geopolitical position, proximity to Israel, its key role in the peace process, its massive population and its cultural

influence on other neighboring countries. All these factors render Egypt a central agent in determining the stability of the Middle East and southern Mediterranean area. (Parfitt; 1997) Egypt is a key ally of the United States and Western European countries and the Egyptian regime also maintains cordial relations with other key powers in South East Asia and the Eastern European countries. Egypt played a very important role in repressing Hashim El-Ata's Communist coup in the Sudan, restrained the advancement of Communism in Somalia, and confronted it at all levels in the Arab world. (Said; 2002) It has played a major role in driving several neighboring countries in the Middle East area away from Soviet dominion, long before the end of the Cold War in 1989. (Ghassan Salame; Public lecture at EUI: Spring 2000) Therefore, providing development assistance and improving the living conditions of the Egyptians has been of major importance in maintaining a degree of political and economic stability in the volatile region of the Middle East and North Africa. Besides its political influence, Egypt also controls the Suez Canal, the strategic sea route transferring oil from the Arab Gulf and peninsula to the Mediterranean region, in addition to the Suez-Mediterranean 'SUMED' pipelines of oil and natural gas. Oil proved to be a crucial tool of political pressure on industrialized countries during the oil crisis of 1973. Moreover, development assistance increased after the Gulf War due to the key-role played by the Egyptian politicians and army, in support of the UN Security Council's decisions.

Another important strategic motive for providing development assistance to Egypt is the American and West European desire to contain the militant Islamic fundamentalist movements, perceived as a major strategic threat to the interests of the West in the area. Such fears originated in the Iranian revolution of 1979 and were reinforced by the Algerian crisis in 1991, and more recently the events of September 11, 2001. Various studies have argued that among the

internal problems stimulating militant fundamentalism in Egypt are slow democratization and the failure to promote sound economic growth with equity, as well as poor prospects for social mobility, which demoralize and frustrate young people. (Ibrahim, 1996)

The Conspiracy Theory: Its Origins and Propagators

The conspiracy theory in Egypt is a heritage of more than a hundred and fifty years of Western colonialism which began with the French invasion to Egypt back in 1798, took complete control of the country with the British occupation in 1882 and conceived the state of Israel in 1948. Ever since the Pharos, Egypt has been the key to strategic domination of the Middle East, the Mediterranean and to guarantee military and trade routes to the Orient and East Africa. The Hyksos, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, North African (Fatimids), Crusaders, Tartars, Ottomans, French, and the British took this into account when they tried to consolidate their military and economic dominion. Some of the previously mentioned powers managed to control Egypt for centuries while others failed; however, in most cases, losing control over Egypt foresaw the fall of such ascendancy. Egyptians have always lived with some foreign power watching over their internal matters and foreign affairs. Colonialism has often been analogous with underground pacts and struggles of power that reinforced the idea of the behind-the-scenes politics that have dominated political decision making. Even though the conspiracy theory is not particular to Egyptian political culture, it finds fertile grounds to flourish there.

The conspiracy theory, as applied to national politics, is the conviction that foreign or local agents are engineering episodes, events and public or foreign policies to advance their own strategic interests against those of the country. The a theory flourishes during

times of war, cold war or *cold peace* and produces a general skepticism regarding the purposes and schemes of the 'other'. The definition of the 'other' differs over time and is usually determined by an influential domestic elite or opinion leaders. The presumed agents of the 'plot' are not only foreigners but also sometimes nationals who act as cognizant or incognizant clients of the conspiracy. In some cases they can be minority or sub-groups from within the society itself. Such a belief can either be a genuine conviction promoted by a state of war or unarmed-conflict, or mere political propaganda to justify some extreme security measures on either the intellectual or practical levels. The conspiracy theory is not a distinctive feature of Third World countries that see themselves as vulnerable and victims of old and neocolonialism. It has also emerged in the industrialized world, sometimes in association with racism and xenophobia.

The Cold War nourished the conspiracy theory in Egypt, especially during the latter period of the rule of President Nasser and during the rule of his successor, President Sadat. Sadat's first move was to expel the Soviet military experts from Egypt in 1971 and co-opt the Islamist groups (harshly constrained by Nasser) to counterbalance the socialist (pro-Soviet) ideology of the time. According to the conspiracy hypothesis, invisible American hands facilitated Sadat's succession to power as opposed to other pro-Soviet personalities present on the political scene at the time. The climax of the Arab-Israeli war the early 1970s provoked a huge intensification of the conspiracy rationale linked to the threat of military conflict. Ever since the peace treaty signed with Israel in 1978, Egypt has been living in a state of *cold peace* with Israel, which Egyptians identify as an aggressive neighbor intent on enlarging its national borders at the expense of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. The conspiracy rationale prevails most during times of elevated tension in the Arab-Israeli conflict and is reinforced by the belief that the world powers, mainly

the USA, give unconditional support to Israeli actions and veto all United Nations' declarations that condemn Israeli aggression. The situation is exacerbated by Huntington's theory on *The Clash of Civilizations* and what are reported to be the anti-Islamic or anti-Arab statements by some Western politicians. While Margaret Thatcher was quoted to have said that after the fall of the Soviet Union, the West was left to deal with its eternal enemy, *Islam*, Italian Premier Berlusconi was quoted to have praised the presumed superiority of Western civilization over 'brutal' Islamic civilization. (Abdel-Ghani; 2001)

Although the accuracy of such statements has been disputed by western diplomacy, they have reached the Egyptian public and have contributed to the culture of suspicion concerning the genuine intentions of the 'West'. Mistrust and suspicion have often characterized the West-Arab relationship, says Muhammad R. Zughoul, who adds that even some Western scholars associate with Arabs attributes such as conservatism, nationalism, xenophobia and resent towards the West. (Zughoul; 2001) In addition to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the vast debate about the clash of civilizations in the west, the conspiracy theory is propagated by occasional inconsistencies in some donor policies that claim to endorse democratization, yet support a number of allied repressive regimes. "When Americans talk about human rights, they mean American citizens' human rights;" says M. Abdel-Ghani in connection with the issue of double standards applied to international issues. (Abdel-Ghani; 2001)

Advocates of the conspiracy theory use the Arab-Israeli conflict as a resource of evidence and the further deterioration of the half-a-century-long Middle Eastern crisis has further complicated matters. Apprehensive interpretations of events illustrate how public frustration generated by the Arab-Israeli war has prevailed in

Egyptian public discourse. Besides the Arab-Israeli conflict, another concern is neocolonialism represented by economic and cultural hegemony of the West, and mainly the United States. According to John Esposito, an excessive dependence on the West on the political, economic, military and socio-cultural levels, is criticized by national intellectuals as a form of neocolonialism that is exported by the West and imposed by local elites. (Esposito; 2000)

Critics of the conspiracy theory denounce its egocentric assumption that the world revolves around oneself or ones' country. When asked about his comment on the idea that the terrorist attacks of September the 11th against the USA were in fact a conspiracy against Arabs, Naguib Mahfouz (a Nobel Prize Winner Egyptian Novelist) said; "we should stop thinking of ourselves as the center of the universe ... The world is composed of several geopolitical regions and we are just one part of it." (TV interview with Mahfouz on the occasion of his 90th birthday, December 11, 2001)

Many Egyptian intellectuals, including Islamists are highly critical of the validity of the clash of civilizations theory which they believe risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. History proves the clash of civilizations theory to be wrong, maintains Hazem EL-Beblawy, deputy of the UN secretary general and director of the Economic and Social Committee for West Asia. The prominent economist emphasizes that the number of wars fought between western countries and those fought between Arab or Moslem countries exceed in number those fought between Western and Arab countries. He reminds that the World Wars erupted mostly among Western countries and did not involve the Arab or Moslem world. So did the almost decade long Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and the first Gulf war in early 1990s. Fanaticism and injustice are often at the root of conflict between or within civilizations, states El-Beblawi, who says that the major motive of conflict is often the

perception of such fanaticism or injustice regardless of their actual existence. The perception of the 'other' and not what the 'other' really is, has become the main motive of conflict, states El-Bebalwi, who notes that "this does not mean that the enemy is invented by the mass media. Truth is that the tendency for the abuse and control of the weaker, and the attempt to impose ones ideals on the others, are all human inclinations that have dominated human history and, therefore, conflicts and struggles for freedom consist vital components of human heritage that are not particular to any specific civilization or time." (El-Bebalwi; 1999) The principles of Islamic-Arab civilization, according to Egyptian Christian thinker Milad Hanna, will prove the theory of the clash of civilizations wrong. Hanna praises the Iranian proposition presented to the Islamic Conference of 2001 to avoid the clash of civilizations by advocating mutual acknowledgment and acceptance of cultural variance as a healthy feature of human society. (Hanna; 2001)

Islamist thinker Yousef El-Karadwi denounces Huntington's theory and describes it as an attempt to manipulatively select specific historical episodes to build up a suspicious and apprehensive state of mind in the west in order to fabricate a motive for conflict with the Arab world. This state of mind, maintains El-Karadawi, is often produced to raise support for the state of Israel against the Arabs. He attributes this conspiracy rationale to fundamentalist religious movements and Zionist interest groups that are believed to manipulate public discourse in the west, especially in the United States. "We hope from deep in our hearts that the west frees itself from those complexes and approaches the Moslems the same way as it approaches other nations and powers in the world. We believe that the west is not to be stereotyped or generalized upon, since it comprises various fair peoples and individuals, the number of which we hope to increase in time." (El-Karadawi; 2000) Interestingly, those Egyptian thinkers who

endorse the clash of civilization theory, tends to be higher among fundamentalist ideologists who proclaim the theory and its popularity in western political circles as an unofficial declaration of conflict and therefore invite alertness and preparedness to face such Western hostility.

Social psychologists have demonstrated that group cohesiveness increases when faced with outside threats, and in these terms, the populist groups or political parties on both sides feed on the perception of the 'other' as a fanatical aggressor conspiring against group identity and culture. (Keyton and Springston; 1990) As a result, sharp divides are intensified and what are defined as differences are accentuated and individuals become more suspicious of that which is defined as the 'other' and gather more and more around the nucleus represented by their tight reference group. The anticipated clash of civilizations seems to be a contemplation that sells best to conservative populist and fundamentalist groups on each side who use it as a pretext for self-defense against an 'other' who will attack them sooner or later. This is how populist and fanatical approaches acquire strength on both sides and why the conspiracy theory prospers in their favor.

D. The Presumed Triangle of the Conspiracy in Education

Agreeing that the conspiracy theory emphasizes the struggle of ones identity versus the other, we can comprehend that national or group identity is always a presumed target of the plot. Education is not simply the transfer of information to new generations; it is the transfer of knowledge, which make up the foundations of cultures, religions, as well as political, economic and social paradigms. Educational systems provide predetermined definitions of ones

identities (individual and collective) and distinct definitions of the others. Self-knowledge and the crystallization of ones identity are formed during early childhood periods, when children are more receptive and have fewer faculties to reflect on the information and concepts transferred to them. Accordingly, basic education becomes the most critical formation period for new generations. Thus it is also the logical target of a conspiracy that aims at transforming national identity, according to conspiracy theorists. In the next section I analyze the educational debate related to development assistance in Egypt in the 1990s in order to understand the impact of the conspiracy theory on development assistance and its effectiveness in basic education policies.

Firstly what is the conspiracy? This question is addressed by Neamat Ahmed Fouad's book, *What is Wanted for Egypt?! The Issue of Education*. Fouad, a university professor and columnist in the national daily newspaper *Al-Ahram*, is an influential opinion leader who has managed to stimulate public opinion towards some environmental issues and change the state's position on various public decisions. An ardent defender of national values and traditions, she defines herself as being in the tradition of the enlightened intellectuals who matured throughout the second half of the twentieth century and not as an Islamist writer. Fouad agrees with several other Egyptian writers, education specialists and others, that the targets of the plot on education are; the instruction of Arabic language, history and Islamic religion. Language, history and religion are recognized by national intellectuals as the main components of national identity and pride. It is interesting to note again that Margaret Thatcher's conservative government education reform plans in Britain in the 1980s identified exactly these three subjects as targets of reform aiming to increase patriotism among new generations in the UK. Likewise, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 conservative voices in the

United States have called for intensifying and emphasizing American history and English language instruction in order to completely assimilate the children of new immigrants. This illustrates how history, language and religion are universally considered to be the triangle of national identity.

Consequently, an attempt to undermine these three components of national collective identity would be to produce a vulnerable society that is easily dominated by stronger cultures and identities. After all, the long colonial experience illustrates that the first educational policies adopted by colonial powers were to make the colonizer's language the official language of instruction in public and missionary schools. National students were taught the history of the colonial power in order to create a fascination for the colonial power's legacy and remind them of the colonizer's tight grip on the colony. (Mitchell; 1991)

Unsurprisingly, the first step the Egyptians took to declare their independence from British colonialism in 1923 (though Egypt remained under British control as a protectorate until 1952) was to make the Arabic language the formal language of instruction instead of English. The same occurred in Algeria after independence from the French colonialism. "Westerners imposed their forms of education as part of a conscious attempt to impose Western culture and languages. As a result, European technology, concepts of economic growth, and languages spread around the world. That English became the language of the global economy symbolizes the powerful effect of colonial education and trade." (Spring; 1998) An education policy which forges compliance among the colonized subjects by assimilating them into the colonizer's culture, has been an important feature of the colonial legacy. Therefore, we can not simply discard as paranoid the national intelligentsia's concern about the content of the Arabic language and

history curriculum, and the instruction of religion. However, it is important to examine why and how they consider this identity triangle to be the target of a conspiracy.

The Arabic language, spoken by more than 200 million people in the world, professing various religions (mostly Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) originated in the Arab Peninsula in pre-Islamic times and is the present spoken and official language in almost twenty-two countries extending from Iraq to Morocco and include Somalia and Sudan. Inasmuch as it is the language of the Holy Koran, Arabic spread with the expansion of Islam after the sixth century. While classical Arabic (official written and spoken Arabic) has not encountered major changes over time, local and regional accents carry rich flavors of cultural, traditional and historical heritage that are specific to each locality, nation or region. The Egyptian radio station, *The Voice of Arabs*, heated the revolutionary and anti-colonial movements throughout Africa and the Middle East during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The then flourishing Egyptian film industry and radio broadcasting benefited from the widely spoken Arabic language to convey a whole set of beliefs and values that shaped sentiments around the Arab world, in a way that the Egyptian colloquial accent has become the (lingua-franca) of the Arabs. Arabic language therefore, is not simply an element of a single religious or cultural identity; it is the blood that circulates in the minds of twenty-two nations in the region and carries the DNA of a whole civilization. Amidst the jungle of regional conflicts and wars, the Arabic language is the only solid element of integration.

Accordingly, one target of the imperialistic plan is to cripple the Arabic language or at least marginalize it in importance to English. The claimed plots aim to reduce the emphasis on Arabic and increase the quality of instruction and importance of the English language,

using it for instruction science and mathematics, thus paving the way for the hegemony of English in the name of globalization and development. Their evidence is the MOE decree of 1994 that has reduced the final grade of the Arabic language in the second and the third year of the secondary school exams (the tight bottleneck of the Egyptian schooling system), putting Arabic on an equal-footing with the English language in the final grades. "Israel brought Education ministers to revive the dead Hebrew language, so how come we brought an Education minister to kill our language?" said Moustafa Mahmoud in an *Al-Ahram* article criticizing the MOE decision on November 12, 1994. Meanwhile, leading Islamist thinker, Mohamed Al-Ghazali reminds his readers of experience with British colonialism and how the instruction of Arabic language was an element of resistance. Al-Ghazali maintains that the Arabic language is in danger and that if it dies, the Holy-Koran would belong to museums and Arab nations would lose their scientific and literary patrimony. (*Al-Ahram*; October 1, 1994) Other prominent and influential Egyptian writers concerned about the fate of the Arabic language resulting from the MOE decree of 1994, are Ahmad Bahagat (*Al-Ahram*, August 16, 1994), Farouk Gouayda (*Al-Ahram*, October 8, 1995), and Fathi Salama (*Al-Ahram*; October 11, 1994), who criticize the minister for the decision and express alarm against the deteriorating command of the Arabic language among young university graduates and even some government officials. While these writers do not mention the concept of conspiracy and blame the MOE, Neamat Fouad points directly to the minister of Education whom she accuses of being an agent of a conspiracy led by USAID. Command of the English language has become a major prerequisite for any kind of social or economic mobility. And the demand for foreign language schools and universities and the prestige attached to them has led the MOE to establish more semi-private schools that provide English instruction in sciences and mathematics. Cairo university has established fees-charging courses taught in English or French. Even the conservative segment of society

that prefers to send their children to private religious education use private Islamic schools that provide formal instruction in English. The use of the English and French languages in daily life has distinguished the emerging local elite from the middle and lower classes. Therefore, the current increasing demand for education in English reflects a strong desire for mobility by acquiring the necessary communication skills of the economic and political elite. It is now common to see parents boasting the fact that their six year-old children speak better English than Arabic and very often force themselves to speak to their children in English in order to establish a specific socio-economic status. "Political freedom has not meant the disappearance of the colonial frame of mind, which regards everything indigenous as inferior and everything foreign as inherently superior." (Spring; 1998)

The colonial legacy reinforced by the new market economy of globalization portrays English as associated with everything that is modern, scientific, wealthy and powerful. In his book *Education and the Development of National Identity*, Omar El-Shaibani, maintains that this elitist Western-oriented education, inherited from colonialism, produces a self-defeating and dependent national identity that is too keen to replicate western models and life styles, often unsuitable for national needs and too rootless to create authentic models. (El-Shaibani; 1984) Egyptian education Specialist, Said I. Aly argues that language is a path of cultural penetration to society. Aly welcomes mastering a foreign language if this grants access to Western sciences, literature and civilization. Nevertheless, he maintains that what really occurs on the actual ground is that new generations are enchanted by the negative aspects of the Western cultures. "A large segment of our young people are not fascinated by great Western scientists, remarkable western intellectuals or political heroes ... ; they are fascinated by bizarre characters (pop stars and celebrities

of the show business), with strange orientations of immoral nature, and whose news are hot material for yellow tabloids..." (Aly; 1999)

The second alleged target of the conspiracy is the second most important component of national and collective identity: the history of Egypt. Egypt's peculiarity is to have assimilated all its remarkable rulers of non-Egyptian origins, who all ruled in its name and ingrained the spirit of its civilization, said Egyptian historian Gamal Hamdan in his book, *The Personality of Egypt*. (Hamdan; 1994) Egyptians refer to Cleopatra, Salah El-din (Saladin) and Ahmad Ibn-Toulun as Egyptians and not as Ptolemaic, Kurdish or Turkish. Egyptians are immensely proud of their mosaic-like history that reconstructs a broad panorama of several civilizations. In times of developmental, political and economic distress they appeal to history in order to derive some encouragement to go on.

History as a subject of study during the 1990s is taught in primary schools from the fourth grade (changed to the second grade from 2002) and is an optional subject of study in secondary schools. The history curriculum has been revised and condensed to exclude what the MOE deems to be excessive and superfluous information that confuses students. The national debate about the history curriculum is replete with accusations of trying to re-write the history of Egypt and render new generations more vulnerable to the influence of other cultures. History is a complimentary part of the social science curriculum in primary education, where maps of the Arab world (often poorly illustrated in small images in black and white) avoid placing the name of either Palestine or Israel on their locations on the map. This ambiguous position reflects the delicate balance that the Egyptian government is striving to maintain in order to honor the Arab-Israeli peace agreement of 1978, without turning its back on its citizens enraged by the desperate fate of the Palestinian populations in

occupied territories. Fouad maintains that the MOE is deliberately rewriting and revising the history curriculum in order to marginalize the role of Islamic civilization and the modern contemporary history of the 1952 revolution period and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when Israel occupied Egyptian, Palestinian and Syrian land. (Fouad; 2001) The MOE is accused of sacrificing the Arab and Islamic identity of Egypt in favor of its Pharaonic one, thus diminishing national and cultural identity in favor of the neocolonial project.

Religion is a major ingredient of collective identities, especially in the Middle East. Concepts of citizenship and regional identity were blurred after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish endeavor to repudiate its Arab affiliation and re-invent its identity as a secular nation-state constructed according to the European model. Therefore, the only solid point of reference for the former Ottoman protectorates and subjects was religion, the only component of identity that remained unchanged. After five hundred years of Egyptian affiliation to the Ottoman Empire, that brought into existence a foreign monarchy (the Mohamed Aly family) which looked upon Egyptian subjects with superiority and complacency, many Egyptian national movements drew upon Islam and the Islamic civilization as a source of national and cultural identity and resistance to British colonialism. Especially as religious education was more associated with the national traditional culture, while secular education was modeled after the Western education systems and served to help reproduce a local elite collaborating with British institutions which was less likely to contest them.

Al-Azhar Islamic University established in Cairo in 969 is not only a religious symbol but a political one as well. When Napoleon wanted to appeal to Egyptians to guarantee easy governance, he pretended to venerate their religion, wore local costumes and attended religious

celebrations in Al-Azhar in order to attain their consent. However, it was the French dishonoring of Al-Azhar, when they allowed their soldiers to enter the Azhar Mosque fully armed riding their horses that provoked common Egyptian citizens into fighting the French invasion and repel it in 1802. It is known that it is not religiously accepted to enter a mosque with any type of arms and that animals that could tarnish the praying areas are not allowed in. Religious sentiments are sacred for Egyptians of all faiths, and have always been a major part of their national character.

Consequently, religion is arguably the third and most important target of the conspiracy, according to the several writers and opinion leaders. Their conviction is that since Islam had been the major source of resistance to colonialism during the past three centuries in many nations, it would be logical for colonial powers plan to marginalize it in order to weaken the spiritual reference-points of local populations. The common claim of both leftist and Islamist oppositions is that among the conditions of the Camp-David peace treaty of 1978, was a requirement that the Egyptian Ministry of Education should not include in the religious curricular the verses of Holy-Koran that narrate any history of discord with the Jews or the descendants of Israel.

The ultimate concern is that while past colonialism employed its immediate administrations and military powers to control their colonies, neocolonialism aims at diminishing national cultural and religious identities. "Cultural colonialism does not take over lands, but minds and souls in order to influence ideas, concepts, values, standards, tastes, tendencies, ethics and attitudes thus swaying legislation, traditions and the general morale of the whole nation." (El-Karadawi; 2000) Elaborating on the issue of education and national identity, Bradley J. Cook holds that recent education policies have

raised controversies about the issues of national identity and character leading many parents to resort to private Islamic schools and free private lessons provided by Islamic charitable organizations. A general discontent with the public educational system, says Cook, has led to a questioning of the state's ability to promote and nurture the integrity of Egypt's Islamic heritage. Regarding the concern about national identity in face of cultural invasion, Cook quotes Egyptian educator, Sayyid A. Bahwashi as saying; "the last and only hope for the Egyptian national character in facing future challenges is through Islamic upbringing . . . It is the only safeguard from the dangers of the future . . . The Egyptian national character is surrounded by global dangers that are trying to destroy it, and only Islamic instruction can save it." (Cook; 2000)

As it is considered the heart of the Arab world and the role model that shapes the life styles of other Arabs, Egypt is perceived to be an important target of cultural colonialism. Neocolonialist aspirations are seen as being total economic and political dependency on the West and most importantly, Arab passivity in the face of Israeli hunger for Arab land. Accordingly, Egypt would continue to be a dependent developing country with an unstable political system that receives instructions from the west for foreign and internal policies. Moreover, Egyptians' fascination with Western cultural symbols and consumer goods should be such that it amplifies their demand for Western consumer and cultural goods and closes its eyes to Israeli aggression. This would be achieved when the use of Arabic language becomes second to English among the elite, Egyptian history is referred to only in the catalogues of tour-operators, and religious occasions become opportunities for multinationals to launch more consumer products that continue to alienate Egyptians from their roots and assimilate them to a West that scorns them. Having reached such a stage of mediocrity and vulnerability, Israel would claim not only

more Arab and Egyptian territories but also ancient Egyptian history and pride in order to forge an Israeli national identity for its flow of migrants coming from various regions of the world and ethnic and racial origins, based on a hypothetical collective history and not only a single religion. A common conviction among Egyptians about the Israeli national flag is that the two blue horizontal lines represent the Euphrates and the Nile rivers and that the location of the Star of David in the middle indicates Zionist control of the land located between the two rivers. At that point, Egyptians together with Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs would follow the fate of indigenous Americans and Australians and become completely subservient to their Israeli, American or Western masters. An Egyptian population that has no deep sense of national identity would look down on its national language as obsolete and misinterprets the teachings of its religion. Present economic and political frustrations and the entanglements of the Arab-Israeli peace process and the archiving of the 1995-6 Oslo agreements seem to give credit to this pessimistic vision of the future. An episode worth mentioning is that while reviewing a used text-book, I found that the 11 year-old previous owner of the textbook had drawn various sketches of Palestinian children bleeding and lying dead under an Israeli flag and other drawings of the star of David stained with blood. Obviously the drawings were not related to the subjects and materials of instruction but to the general public and media discourse of the time (summer 2001) during which news of the Palestinian Intefada (uprising) took over Egyptian public discourse and media.

Political, economic and cultural dependency on the United States, together with the Israeli occupation of Arab land, are the two main arguments of conspiracy theory advocates. It identifies the United States as driven by its strategic and economic interests and pressured by the Zionist lobbies in America and as the architect of a plot that

uses the local political elite to carry out its objectives. In this scenario, Europe is said to play a secondary role to the American lead. Strong sentiments against what is perceived as American bias towards Israel and the desire to enforce its will on the worlds' nations using aid, are reinforced by various news articles that report the American political stance on the Arab-Israeli issue. For example the Al-Ahram issue of March 31, 2001 published an article stating that the US Government blamed Cambodia for voting in favor of sending US peacekeeping forces to Palestine. The US officials, according to the article, commented that Cambodia receives a sizable amount of USAID and cannot afford to vote this way in the Security Council. Needless to say, such news does not help lessen the claims of the conspiracy theory.

Dependency theory, is not a Middle Eastern devised notion, as it matured during the 1970s to describe the state of economic and political dependency of Latin American countries on the Western industrialized world, mainly the USA. "Dependency is concerned with the influence of external forces on a network of internal relationships, structures, political and economic decisions in individual third world countries." (Watson; 1982) Several Egyptian writers claim (conscious or unconscious) state compliance with the presumed conspiracy. However, Neamat Fouad directly accuses the present Egyptian ministers of Education and Culture as conscious agents of the conspiracy. She accuses them of accepting developmental aid, mainly USAID, in order to trivialize Egyptian culture and history. In the case of Education, Fouad and others accuse the Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development, founded by the USAID in 1989 to be the institutional tool of the conspiracy. In addition, Fouad has written an open letter to Egyptian President Mubarak, asking why Egypt ranks number 114 among 160 countries on the Human Development index of 1991, saying: "you either know what is

going on of the damage and devastation that occurs to the Egyptian monuments and education and the damage the country suffers at the hands of those who enjoy lustrous positions, or you do not know of these events, despite the numerous press campaign on the issues supported by facts and documents ... Your unawareness may be due to the falsifications of the beneficiaries in power ... Whatever are the reasons, it is not consistent with your affirmation that you control 'all threads' and that you derive your information directly from the Egyptian citizens." (Fouad; 2001) Fouad's accuse to Mubarak is exceptionally daring, considering the 1990s culture of tame democracy that welcomes open criticism of public officials but keeps the image of the president out of political debate. Even though she directs the accusations of conspiring against national identity and culture of the ministers of Culture and Education, she asks why the president leaves them in their positions. Fouad is not alone in this since she echoes the opinions of numerous Leftist and Islamist writers and columnists in the national and opposition press who denounce the conspiracy and accuse the ruling elite of being its mediators. A case in point is brought up by the education Expert, Said Ismail Aly, who questions the influence of the American University in Cairo (AUC), an elite educational institution that has trained many present and former Egyptian ministers as well as many in the business and media elite. Besides the daughters of late President Nasser, AUC has also graduated many members of the elite of other Arab countries, such as Queen Rania of Jordan. According to Aly, the American University in Cairo exerts an extraordinary power on the education of economic, political and militarily decision-makers in Egypt. Aly brings to his readers' attention the important fact that the spouse of the Egyptian President, Suzanne Mubarak, is the president of the Alumni Association of AUC, since she obtained her Bachelor and Master degrees from AUC, as did her two sons Gamal and Alaa Mubarak. (Aly; 1999) It is important to note that even though both sons play influential roles in

the economic activities in the country, Gamal has occupied an increasingly prominent position in the political and economic life of Egypt during the 1990s.

F. Is there any Genuine Evidence of Conspiracy in the Conditions of EU and USAID Projects?

The absence of direct policy requirements for aid, procurement conditions are the most disputed aspects of conditionality among the supporters of the conspiracy theory who maintain that donors use tied-aid to stimulate their national economies by pouring development funds back into them, thus decreasing the efficiency of these funds. The conspiracy theory's claims on conditionality are unwittingly reinforced by the lack of maturity and sensitivity of some donor representatives, who may boast of their having the upper hand on disbursement procedures. (Panday; 2001) An Egyptian MOE education expert who commented on the issue of procurement conditions confirms this, saying that "the problem is not conditionality. Donors may have every right to try to guarantee the efficient use of the money they transfer to the Ministry; however, the problem is the complicated procedure and the presumptuous attitude with which funds are disbursed. In an official meeting with the minister, a high-rank donor representative answered the Egyptian participants who were complaining about the overly complicated terms of disbursement saying: 'this is our money and we decide how it is to be disbursed!'" (Personal interview; March 2001) On the issue of procurement conditions and how they may create financial inefficiency when procurement is limited to the donor country's (mostly high-priced) goods and services, a donor representative answered: "This is not true, we encourage regional and South to South cooperation, for instance we would support that the MOE purchases goods or services from other Middle Eastern countries like

Israel." (Personal interview; March 2001) The donor representative may have been referring to the Barcelona Agreement of 1995 promoting regional cooperation in the South Mediterranean and the improvement of Arab-Israeli relations through trade. However, considering the state of events at the time, this remark did not indicate much political sensitivity. The interview was conducted a few months after the eruption of the second Palestinian Intefada (uprising) in 2001, a period that witnessed an increase in Egyptian public opinion's exasperation about the crisis. In other words, it is during the times of political crisis that the proponents of the conspiracy theory scrutinize all aspects of donors' activities in search for the anticipated trick believing that there is no free lunch and that there is always a price to pay.

Having reviewed the concerns and hypothetical scenarios of the conspiracy theory, it is important to review the nature of development assistance to basic education in Egypt during the 1990s. Understanding the actual terms and conditions applied by international agencies and if they correspond or not to the expectations of the conspiracy theory is essential for verifying whether the theory is based on tangible facts or is a mere reflection of a general state of political frustration. Are the terms of conditionality of development assistance directed to basic education in Egypt a confirmation of the assumptions of the conspiracy theory? And most importantly, are the funds directed to basic education from development assistance large enough to sway national policies?

The conditionalities of development assistance to basic education are reflected either in terms of direct conditions explicitly mentioned in project documents, or implicit conditionality that is present in general priorities that predetermine which education programs are eligible for funding. Both multilateral and bilateral donors'

activities in basic education have been largely coordinated in the 1990s by the conclusions of the Education for All (EFA) Jomtien. The donors' agreement on structural adjustment programs and assistance to education has aimed to achieve universal access to quality basic education and gender equity. Egypt does not differ from the general trend of development assistance to education. In fact it is a typical example of coordination among major donors in the field. Bilateral donors, such as the USAID and CIDA together with multilateral organizations and donors like the World Bank, EU and UN organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP) all share the EFA criteria of universal access to quality basic education and gender equity.

EU conditionality in the EEP (1997)

In congruence with the Education for All objectives, the European Union and the World Bank fund the Education Enhancement Program (EEP) that addresses universal access to quality basic education, gender equity and efficiency of the education system. The total budget of the EEP for the period (1997-2001) is 676.4 million Euro, of which 15 percent (100 million Euro) was presented as a grant by the EU assistance covered by the MEDA regulations,¹ another 63 percent supplied by the MOE, 8 percent loaned by the World Bank and 13 percent raised from other donors. EU release conditions exclude land purchasing, as well as teacher salaries in formal schools. (EU Commission in Egypt: financing agreement; 1997) Needless to say that funding 15 percent of the Education Enhancement Program, an important but not vital component of basic education system in Egypt, that is not relied on for basic assets or the running costs of education, does

¹ EU Council Regulation (EC) No 1488/96 of 23 July 1996 on financial and technical measures to accompany (MEDA) the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership

not give the EU total control on the functioning of the national education system. EU assistance to basic education amounts to 100 million Euro over 5 years, which is not a large amount if compared to the MOE's annual budget allocation of 16.8 billion Egyptian Pounds in 1998/99 (around US \$ 5.17 billion at the exchange rate of the time). It is worth mentioning that current costs, such as salaries, represent around 94 percent of the MOE budget. This means that the MOE is left with little to invest in educational facilities. So innovation and reforms are feasible only if the MOE relies on foreign funding. (Mahmoud Gamal El Din; World Bank official in Cairo; September 2000) However, it must be recognized that EU financial assistance to education, which accounts for 11 percent of total EU-Egypt bilateral assistance, does have some influence. The general conditions of the specific agreement between the European Community and the Arab Republic of Egypt signed in 1997 to support the Education Enhancement Program dictate the following:

- "GOE will ensure the availability of public funding required in complement to donors' contributions for the implementation of EEP management costs."
- "GOE agrees to maintain its total educational expenditure at no less than the current level of 19 percent of total public current and investment expenditures, will ensure that at least 50 percent of government education expenditures is allocated to compulsory education, and no less than 15 percent of current basic education expenditures is allocated to non-wage educational expenditures."
- "The PPMU will make the EEP annual plans of central and Governorate levels available to the EC by October of each year."
- "Two joint supervision missions per year are foreseen to be conducted by representatives and/or consultants of the EC, WB and the GOE."

The general conditions for the release of the second tranche is subject to the achievement of the following activities:

- "Study on teacher motivation, comparison and support systems initiated.
- Computerized management information system (CMIS) operational.
- GPPMUs, Advisory Bodies and Governorate supreme consultative councils established in first group of Governorates participating in EEP."

Other conditions involve EEP management and coordination structures, community participation, increased enrolment and retention (particularly for girls), and quality improvement through teacher development, in addition to installing monitoring and evaluation system. (EU Commission in Egypt: financing agreement; 1997) A close examination of the EEP's implementation plan with regard to its objectives of access and equity, improving the quality of student performance and system efficiency indicates a detailed and structured action plan and concrete performance indicators. It does not present us with any evidence supporting the assumptions of the conspiracy theory. The EEP action plan touches upon neither curriculum reform nor issues of language, history and religion. The objectives of the Education Enhancement Program are consistent with the EFA objectives espoused by the Egyptian Government and to which most local and international development agencies are committed. Moreover, the EU general conditions of disbursement do not include structural adjustment conditions that can lead to cuts in social expenditure. The agreement ties EU fund-disbursement to an increase in the Egyptian education budget to at least 19 percent of total current and investment expenditures, emphasizing that the allocation for basic education should be 50 percent of the education budget, and that the pursuit of basic education should be the key to all other phases of education. As for the issue of procurement, the World Bank restricts

bidding to suppliers who are nationals of countries participating in the Interim Trust Fund (members or recipients of IDA.) On the other hand, the EU procurement terms stipulate firstly that the EC grant is contracted directly by the Commission following EC procedures, and secondly that is open bidding to EU members and partner countries in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area. (World Bank: Staff Appraisal Report; 1996) The procurement conditions of the EEP do not necessarily re-direct cash to donor country suppliers, even though they favor suppliers who are nationals of member countries of the World Bank fund (almost all countries of the world, except for 6 countries, including Cuba, Andorra and Monaco). The above mentioned agreement documents do not reveal any evident endeavor to manipulate Egyptian minds or create a cycle of economic and cultural dependence. As a matter of fact, the majority of loud voices warning against the "conspiracy" of the *Neocolonialist* West against Egyptian education do not refer to European assistance, but tend to concentrate their criticism on the World Bank and USAID.

It is important to note that in the collective memory of many Egyptians, the World Bank did not enjoy the image of an autonomous international organization, especially after the mid-1950s. In 1956 the World Bank refused to finance the Aswan High-Dam project in accordance with Western political inclinations at the time due to Egypt's central and critical position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The missing World Bank and USSR financing of the High Dam was a major motive behind President Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, an action that was used by Britain and France (joined by Israel) as a pretext to declare war against Egypt in 1956 and bombard the Suez Canal zone. Ever since this episode, Egyptian intellectuals have regarded the World Bank with suspicion. This skepticism towards the role of the World Bank is evident in Neamat Fouad's book, What is Wanted for Egypt. She describes the World Bank's assistance to

education together with USAID assistance as foreign intervention with ulterior motives.

Wariness of MOE policies is often based on assumptions that cannot be verified from actual project activities. This is evident in Fouad's criticism of the absence of primary school records that identify individual students' capacities and developmental needs. I conducted a content analysis of basic education texts (1999-2001) and verified the existence and distribution of a follow-up card for children from kindergarten up to the third grade. The actual collection and utilization of student information is questionable due to the deficient administrative capacity of public school management. Yet the student information cards do exist. Another example of the inaccuracy of Fouad's criticism can be found in her attack on the Egyptian media and MOE for not producing and broadcasting educational television programs targeting poor and illiterate school-drop-out children who cannot afford education. "The television should study what the world's televisions broadcast not out of fascination or unconditional imitation but to learn what can be useful for us. For instance, they can take example from *Sesame Street*, an American educational television production targeting the children of poor families," says Fouad. Interestingly, starting from 2000, the USAID in Cairo has been financing and providing technical assistance to the MOE to produce and broadcast an Egyptian edition of *Sesame Street*, called *Alam Simsim* or 'The World of Sesame', targeting underprivileged out-of-school children, especially young girls in remote areas without access to formal education. This program has been broadcast on Egyptian television twice a day for at least the past two years (1999/00 and 2000/01). The high quality production Egyptian version of *Sesame Street* has a large audience among children from diverse social classes around the country.

My guess is that the unfounded criticisms of some MOE programs, were guided by the selective perception of Fouad who was searching for arguments support her vision of the conspiracy theory. Fouad's book was frequently repetitive in content, and lacking in objectivity, despite the fact that it often referred to several books and articles that it did not include in the references or bibliography. Fouad used the journalistic sensationalist style of those who support the conspiracy theory. Usually their arguments are not based on information from project documents, activities and evaluation reports or meetings with representatives of the development agencies, but on information compiled and manipulated to support their own assumptions.

The Curricula Conditionality of USAID (1989-95)

The core of the conspiracy theory in the context of education is based on the argument of national, religious and cultural identity. The issue of the history, Arabic and religious curriculum has been the main concern of those writers who speak out against an intentional blurring of the teaching of these three subjects. Accordingly, the Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development CCIMD, funded by the USAID and set up within the MOE in 1989 has been a regular target of criticism and skepticism. The main allegations have been that the CCIMD is a tool used by USAID to mislead Egyptian children on the Palestinian issue and influence their religious position on specific questions relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development has been targeted by bureaucratic and public opinion dissent ever since its creation in 1989. The CCIMD, set up by the USAID within the MOE by Ministerial decree N° 192/1989 as part of the *Basic Education I Agreement*, has been superimposed over already existing MOE-units that

have been performing the same functions: the Curriculum Development Unit and the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). The predictable bureaucratic resistance to such a new unit that duplicates the work of two other units, reports directly to the minister of education and enjoys superior facilities, remuneration schemes, professional development plans and administrative flexibility, prevents the smooth organizational insertion and operation of this unit within the hierarchical and archaic structure of the MOE. The functions of the CCIMD drew even more opposition from the intellectual elite, journalists of diverse political inclinations and stimulated intense sessions of the Egyptian (Peoples' Assembly) Parliament in the early 1990s. The CCIMD is referred to by many influential writers as the invisible hand of the USAID that aims at muddying Egyptian national identity in the minds of new generations. The functions of the CCIMD are stated by an official document as:

"To design, develop, improve, modify, test, evaluate, and revise curricula and instructional materials in all subject fields for all levels of pre-university education."

"To train leaders and counselors in newly developed curriculum and instructional materials to enable them in turn to train teachers on nation wide basis."

The objectives of the USAID, according to Sydney Chamber (the Vice President of Education Aid Program in USAID), cited by Egyptian researcher Sahar Ramy are; "to help the Government improve educational methods, upgrade the educational system in Egypt, broaden the perception of students and create an international orientation for the curriculum." (Ramy; 1993) In truth, the international orientation for the curriculum, is the element that is most contested and gives weight to conspiracy theory arguments. A fierce press campaign in the opposition papers representing Leftists and Islamists (*Al-Ahaly*, *Misr-Al-Fatah*, and *Al-Shaab*) accused the CCIMD of collaborating with

American experts to favor the international orientation of curricula at the expense of national identity, reducing the presence of geopolitical and historic maps, and Arab-Islamic history. (Ramy; 1993) The CCIMD and the USAID received laudatory coverage from *Al-Wafd* daily newspaper (the paper of the Right-wing opposition party) together with the major two official papers *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Akhbar*. However, the loudest voices were the disapproving ones. The CCIMD was also attacked by some of the state-aligned columnists in the national semi-official press. Criticism was often directed at the CCIMD director, Koutchok Koutchok, accusing her and the rest of CCIMD staff (including Egyptian education experts) of submitting to the will of USAID officials, enticed by lucrative salaries and stipends.

In response to such allegations, Koutchok answered that "the foreigners" have helped a lot in training and capacity-building on how to develop school curricular and enhance teaching methods, and that their assistance is evident in these fields. "Their interference in any other subject that they are not invited to is entirely refused. If they want to help, they have to listen to our needs and not dictate their own agenda;" added Koutchok. "The sad event in the history of the Unit," she continued, "was the story of the general and comprehensive textbook for basic education classes that was meant to give an integrated curriculum that encompasses knowledge, positive behavior and simplifies the learning process for school children at the primary stages of education. An Egyptian team of educators with the guidance of an American expert carefully developed the comprehensive textbook (a textbook that contains all subjects of study). The team conducted the field-testing through focus groups with school children, guided by Egyptian and American education experts through bilingual sessions with the help of simultaneous interpreters. The textbooks were ingeniously developed and printed and were ready for distribution. Somehow some drafts (of the translations) were

stolen from the center and published in the press. The purpose was to make believe that the textbook was originally an American textbook imposed by the USAID and translated by Egyptian workers as an episode of the presumed cultural conspiracy against the minds of Egyptian children! A ferocious press campaign was launched to attack the textbook, the Center (CCIMD) and the director and accused them of clientelism and lack of national pride and loyalty. Public opinion believed the claims of those writers and no journalist took the time or made the effort to verify the story. It reached the stage that some academics published books on the issue, incriminating the work of the Center. As a result, the new innovative textbooks were never used and were withdrawn from the curriculum!" (Personal interview; March 2001) She described this episode as a sabotage of the hard work, creativity and thought of innovation in the education process. "It is mental terrorism against intellectual innovation and creativity," said Koutchok bitterly. The CCIMD director's affirmations clarifying the issue, which were often communicated through press releases or personal contacts did not persuade the critics of the CCIMD or the proponents of the conspiracy theory.

The CCIMD program is also criticized by some international education experts who blame the MOE for using American education consultants instead of investing in capacity building by national experts and argue that the issue of curriculum reform should not be dealt with by foreign experts but national ones. The claim is that the CCIMD is not an outcome of organizational development in the MOE but a superimposed unit that is carrying out the functions of an already existing one, resulting in internal organizational conflicts. Press campaigns in the early 1990s, claimed that Koutchok was highly compensated with a lucrative monthly salary of 5000 Egyptian Pounds (equivalent to the sum of US \$ 1,500 at the time). She, however, rejects this, stating that her gross monthly salary was around 2500 Egyptian Pounds, a sum

equivalent to US \$ 757 at the exchange rate of the time. Koutchok maintains that her stipend as the director of the CCIMD unit never matched the salary of a secretary in the USAID. (Personal interview; March 2001) Even though USAID has discontinued its direct involvement in the curriculum reform project, many critical pens in the opposition and national press are still tracing USAID influence on the history and Islamic religion curricula, suggesting that English language instruction is given a higher priority over Arabic language instruction.

F. Does the Basic Education Curriculum Confirm the Conspiracy Assumptions?

In an attempt to verify the objectivity of such allegations I conducted a brief content analysis of basic education textbooks distributed to students in 1999-2001. I reviewed all the textbooks with special concentration of the three widely debated subjects (history, Arabic and Islamic religion).

History at primary school is taught under the subject of Social Studies, and the textbooks are printed in very poor quality. History instruction is not taught as such until the Fifth grade, except for some brief paragraphs about certain historical personalities from different eras. In the Fifth grade curriculum, mention of Egyptian history is limited to a brief biography of certain historic personalities such as Mohamed Aly, Ahmed Orabi, Saad Zaghloul, Talaat Harb, and Gamal Abdel-Nasser, while in the Arabic language curricula the most apparent historical reference is to the Algerian anti-colonialist national heroine Djamila Bouhrid. The textbook contains illustrations of how the French colonialist authorities tortured Bouhrid (illustrations include how she was burned and her fingernails

torn out, etc). Even though these are actual historical facts, the illustrations are excessively violent, considering the young age of students (around ten or eleven years old). The text has a clear anti-colonialist position and praises martyrdom in defense of one's home country. The reading assignments included a short book about one of the disciples of Prophet Mohamed, Abdel-Rahman Ibn-Aouf, to whom the textbook refers as 'The Islamic Economist'. The emphasis on personalities, like Talaat Harb (1874-1941) the forefather of the modern Egyptian free (capitalist) economy and founder of the first Egyptian Bank and various industries, and the emphasis on Ibn-Aouf (the Islamic Economist) reflects the MOE's desire to instill entrepreneurial thinking in students. This is clearer in the following text, taken from a reading assignment in the Arabic curriculum of the fifth grade: -

"Islamic history is full of great personalities that can be good ideals and lustrous torches that light the road for our boys and girls on the road of glory and pride and can sustain the development and sophistication of our nation. Among these personalities, is the great disciple Abdel-Rahman Ibn-Aouf, the Islamic Economist ... Presently, our country is in dire need for men like Abdel-Rahman Ibn-Aouf. Virtuous Egyptian entrepreneurs, have set a positive model when they contributed to school building and provided assistance to the victims of Earthquake and floods." (Reading section of the Arabic Language textbook; 5th grade; 2000/01)

It is also worth mentioning that the issue of tourism is central throughout the Social Studies during both the primary and preparatory stages of basic education. On the other hand, the preparatory school history curriculum is richer in content. While the first preparatory stage history curriculum presents a review of Pharaonic, Ptolemaic and

Roman history, the following curricula includes the Egyptian patriotic struggles against the invaders, starting from the Pharaonic (King Ahmos) struggle against the Hyksos (1580 BC), up to the Tartars, Crusades, Turks (Ottomans), French, and British occupations, and ending with the 1956 and 1973 Wars. Moreover, the curriculum contains concise information about the current problems of the Arab world including Palestine, the West Sahara, South Sudan, the three Emirates' Islands, and Kurdistan. The narration of these struggles is inspired by patriotism and nationalism, and not hatred based on differences of religious creed. Besides, the history section within the Social Studies curriculum narrates the history of Islamic civilization and in addition to historical facts, includes descriptions of economic, social, cultural and sports under each dynasty of Islamic civilization written in a very clear style.

However, it is evident that the history curriculum is inadequate in providing information about many historical periods such as Coptic (Ancient Christian) history and lacks continuity. The history curriculum is clearly inadequate in the basic education stage and since history becomes an elective subject of study at secondary school, the general educational curriculum is unlikely to produce students with a satisfactory knowledge of their history and national heritage. It must be recognized, though, that in the curriculum reform, the experts aimed at shortening the overloaded long school curriculum that encouraged rote learning and memorization of facts without stimulating critical and scientific thinking. Extensive media campaigns and conference recommendations had long criticized the excessively long curricula and the very heavy textbooks carried daily by school children to school. In defense of the basic education history curriculum of, Hamed Ammar, a renowned Egyptian education expert and one of the consultants participating in curriculum reform, said that the school textbooks do not necessarily reflect the entire

school curricula. Schoolteachers, adds Ammar, are provided with directions included in the teachers' guidebooks to enable them to enrich the individual textbooks with more information and encourage the use of other instructional facilities according to the regional environments and individual educational needs. (Ammar; 1996) However, it must be recognized that the mediocre preparation of teachers and poor research facilities in public schools do not complement the official curricula with individual and group learning activities or through student research in school or public libraries and/or electronic media. In fact, the insistent press campaigns and intellectual debates on the subject led to an official acknowledgment by the MOE that the history curriculum is inaccurate and incomplete, and a plan to rewrite history textbooks in 1999. (Howeidy; 1999) The assessment of the current curriculum, revision and rewriting process has been estimated to require two years.

The other most discussed subjects of study are Arabic language instruction and the Islamic religion curricula. These two subjects of study are highly interlinked and correlated, since Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran. Yet, the evaluation of student achievement in religion (Islamic and Christian) does not contribute to general student results (final grades). The critics' objections to the Arabic and Islamic religious curricula are that they are condensed, their grades are reduced (reflecting a lower priority) and that their content is lacking in religious values and a position on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

Reviewing primary textbooks for 1999-2001 we find at least four dedicated to the Arabic and religion curriculum. The Arabic language curricula is usually composed of the following textbooks; Arabic grammar, essays and poetry, and booklets for the reading assignments are often composed of stories or plays (historical or fictional

subjects). The basic education Arabic curriculum includes Arabic calligraphy proficiency as well. Even though the textbooks are illustrated and colored, the illustrations are of poor quality and the books are badly printed on mediocre paper, to the extent that the colors of the books smudge on the students' hands. The contents of the essays and reading usually revolve around social, environmental and patriotic values, and praise patriotism and self-sacrifice for national freedom and independence. As for Islamic religious instruction, the concepts of tying high morals to good deeds and high values placed by Islam on religious tolerance and freedom of religious creed are emphasized in all textbooks. Contrary to the claims of the conspiracy theory, that denounce a downplaying of antagonistic attitudes of Zionism towards Arabs and Moslems in the textbooks, the fifth grade religion curriculum contains a clear mention of Zionism as a hostile ideology and glorifies the contemporary martyr Ahmed Hamdy (a distinguished Egyptian Army officer who died in the 1973 War). In addition, the second year geography curriculum (2000/01) of the preparatory stage cites Jerusalem (Eastern Jerusalem where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located) as the capital of Palestine.

Likewise, the preparatory school curriculum dedicates four textbooks to the Arabic curricula and one to the Islamic religion curricula in each of its stages. Topics related to the central importance of Jerusalem, peace based on justice, patriotism, citizenship, environmental awareness, women's participation in national development and the Islamic civilization dominate the readings and essays of the Arabic curricula, while the religion curricula continue the emphasis on the concepts of tolerance to various religious creeds and cultures, respect to the environment as part of Islamic values and how extremism and violence in the form of terrorism are anti-Islamic in essence. As in the other stages, in the preparatory school religion curricula, there is a constant mention of Islamic and religious positions on the

issues of Jerusalem and Zionism. However, it is worth mentioning that at the stage of preparatory education, the MOE has decreased the number of Arabic lessons per week from 16 to 13, a reduction in teaching hours that weakens the students' acquirement of linguistic skills in Arabic language, according to the *Egypt: Human Development Report 1998/99*. The Report maintains that "this will impact negatively on the language and, hence, the efficiency of the education system, and ultimately, on social integration, given that language is a means of communication reflecting the national socio-cultural identity." (Nasser and Osman ed.; 2000)

The allegation is that English instruction is given a priority reflected in increasing its grades in the final student evaluation while lowering those of Arabic language instruction. It is important to note that English instruction is introduced as a subject of study starting from the fourth grade. The English textbooks, entitled Hello!, are very skillfully designed, produced and printed using excellent quality paper and colors. The English textbooks (for the basic education stage) are clearly written and designed for Egyptian children and contain religious symbols related to Islam, Christianity, the local Egyptian environment and local national symbols. The English course materials for each stage consist of two pupils' books, two activity books, two teachers' books and two tapes containing pronunciation practice of all the dialogues, songs and rhymes and phonetic exercises. The reason why the English textbooks enjoy a higher design and production quality is evidently financial, since English language textbook production is financed by development assistance agencies. It would be excessively partial to attribute this difference in quality to the idea of conspiracy. The ideal would be that all textbooks should be designed and produced with the same proficiency and accuracy. However, the financial difficulties of achieving such quality for all textbooks that are distributed almost

free-of-charge to students registered in public schools are understandable. It might be more feasible to try to achieve a higher quality of textbooks' production in general. As for the grading system of Arabic versus English language instruction, it is worth mentioning that throughout the basic education stage, a higher percentage of the grades in the evaluation system are given to achievement in the Arabic language, and the change in the grading system was applied only to the second and third years of secondary education.

The general view that English is a higher-class global language and that parents feel the need to send their children to foreign language schools or schools that teach English to guarantee a better career for their children certainly reflects a reality. But is this a direct result of a conspiracy designed by the West and executed by local elite via foreign aid? Or is it a worldwide trend that involves the former colonies, Western-dependent third world countries, as well as almost all-European countries? English is the language that is most used for communication in the electronic media, Internet, production and publication of scientific research, and in international trade deals and banking transactions. We cannot forget that multinationals account for a high percentage of foreign direct investment, long coveted in Egypt, requiring staff with English language proficiency. Besides, a professional career in engineering, medicine, communication as well as academic research, requires the same linguistic skills. This happens to be the case for many other well-paid professions that facilitate upward social mobility. Egyptians aspiring to join the internationally acclaimed circles of professionalism and jump on the bandwagon of bilingualism may not necessarily be the targeted prey of a Western conspiracy but aspirants for what is perceived to be a higher social and economic status.

G. The Impact of the Conspiracy Theory on International Assistance to Basic Education

Perceiving a hidden foreign plot behind every single decision or opinion proposed by national education experts in or out of the MOE, risks paralyzing education reform efforts. Many adherents of the conspiracy theory derive their conclusions and allegations from odd information and inaccurate data. National education reform policy makers and collaborating development agency representatives operate in a climate of acute cultural sensitivity and heed the opinions of those decrying conspiracy. The common accusation against national experts or staff is being disloyal and unpatriotic agents of foreign powers. The deep-seated belief in the conspiracy influences the daily decisions of government and development agency officials who design programs around those concerns. For instance, within the framework of the Education Enhancement Program EEP (1996) European Union development assistance grants provided for free school-meals distributed to schoolchildren to compensate nutritional deficiency among the children of deprived families. Minister of education Bahaaeddin, maintained that 50 percent of schoolchildren suffer from anemia and malnutrition and that many of the children and even schoolteachers go to school without having breakfast because their family cannot afford it! (Tadros; 1998)

Consequently, most of those children have a substantial deficiency in the levels of vitamins and iron, affecting negatively their scholastic performance and physical activity. However, an Egyptian official in the Program Planning and Monitoring Unit (the executive unit of the EEP) said that foreign aid no longer funds school meals at the request of the Unit that found out that local communities refuse such meals, considering them a form of charity from foreigners. "Food is a sensitive issue for local cultures; therefore, local communities are too proud to accept food from foreigners," said the PPMU official.

When asked how the local communities were informed about the sources of funding of such meals, the official answered; "agency representatives organize field tours to the projects funded by their agencies and interact with the local communities. Very often the European Delegation in Cairo sent media coverage for its development programs and the local communities refuse to have foreign visitors and media come to cover such programs and maintain that they feed their hungry children." (Personal interview; March 2001)

Even though all funded development assistance programs take into account potential confrontation with the conspiracy allegations and cultural sensitivities, bilateral development assistance programs have been in a more delicate position than multilateral efforts. This is due to the political nature of the bilateral assistance and the political and economic interests of individual donors. The bilateral US assistance that has been provided to Egypt for the past three decades has been the most heavily debated in education. On the other hand, the least debated assistance so far has been the multilateral forms of development assistance provided by the European Union and United Nations organizations, such as the UNICEF and UNESCO. Yet many voices often also contest the assistance provided by the World Bank, considering it a US controlled institution. In the face of public skepticism aroused by strong public opinion campaigns, some projects had been cancelled, as in the case of primary school comprehensive textbooks, while other bilateral donors have limited their activities in basic education to avoid being involved in such sensitive areas. Bilateral donors such as the Japanese JICA, the German GTZ, the Danish DANIDA, British aid and others have dedicated most of their assistance to higher or technical education, or subjects of study that are not related to the 'identity-triangle'. For example, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has assisted technical cooperation for the development of creativity lessons in mathematics

for primary education in Egypt in 1997-2000 in cooperation with the MOE- Unit, the National Center for Education Research and Development (NCERD). (JICA; 1998)

Most of the above mentioned agencies have either minimized their direct involvement in basic education programs or directed their assistance through multilateral organizations, like UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank or International Non Governmental Organizations, as in the case of the Canadian aid agency CIDA. Answering the question about World Bank involvement in basic education curriculum reform, Mahmoud Gamal El-Din, senior program officer for education in the World Bank Cairo Office, said that the World Bank does not participate in curriculum reform, especially after the unfavorable USAID experience in the field during the early 1990s. Gamal El-Din added that USAID was largely attacked on the political and cultural levels because of the CCIMD, which he described as a successful unit that managed to produce a lot of reforms, until its activities were hijacked by press campaigns. He continues that, such episodes discourage donors from working on curriculum reform and that even though the World Bank is a bilateral organization, it is too closely associated with the USA, and therefore it carries the same stigma. (Personal interview; August 2000)

Interestingly, USAID reports point out that USAID/Cairo funded a program soliciting "Increased Use of Egyptian Universities in Quality, Demand-Driven Applied Research". It was a program designed in collaboration with Egyptian universities and it achieved its predetermined targets for 1999, contrary to the case of USAID programs targeting basic education. USAID provided funds to support several small linkage grants for applied research to Egyptian universities in association with US universities that also include historically Black Colleges. According to the same USAID report, such grants illustrated

that academic research that is aligned with developmental priorities attracts sustained support from the national private sector and moreover that it increases the research and the instructional awareness and involvement of students and faculty members. (USAID FY 2000 Agency Performance Plan; 1999) While the reasons for success or failure may be only related to intrinsic program designs or administrative problems, the truth is that such joint research program did not have media coverage and have not been received with the same skepticism by the adherents of the conspiracy theory. This same fear of press coverage was shared by Malak Zaalouk, a UNICEF program officer in Cairo, who preferred to maintain a low media profile for her project during its first years in order to avoid stimulating the 'conspiracy' ideology that could have been detrimental to the project.

On the issue of the cultural sensitivity of bilateral versus multilateral assistance, Olfat Girgis, project manager in the Egyptian Swiss Development Fund (ESDF) comments: "From my previous working experience with the USAID and my present one with the ESDF, I cannot conclude that people become more dubious of the political agenda of the bilateral donors versus others such as the WB or UNICEF. The reality is that people do not really care until those agencies start to send visitors to the development project sites and ask beneficiaries if they are aware of the sources of funding and whether they know it is American money or not. When donors insist on highlighting to local communities who gives the money, people start wondering about their intentions . . . Those who provide money for the sake of development do not need to brag." (Personal interview; March 2001)

This part of the study has mostly concentrated on the media campaigns and literary production that has been critical of foreign aid to basic education. Still, this does not mean that development assistance to

education has not had considerable media space and positive press coverage. Several news articles and editorials have been praised such programs. For instance, Ibrahim Nafie (Chairman of Al-Ahram Press, chief-editor of Al-Ahram and head of the Journalists' Union) says; "many in Egypt have failed to appreciate the economic benefits US-Egyptian relations have brought to Egypt over the past two decades ... there can be no denying the many tangible results these inflows of aid have produced." Nafie goes on to praise USAID contribution to basic education in terms of school construction projects, teacher training, and the supply of information technology facilities. "I believe such tangibles provide a useful objective anchor, especially when tempers flare over political differences between the two countries," concludes Nafie. Al-Ahram newspaper, established in 1875, is the official national newspaper with the highest circulation on the national level. (Nafie; 2001) Nafie represents the views of pro-government opinion in semi-official print and broadcast media. The other national elite group which criticizes the conspiracy theory and supports USAID is the new business elite that emerged after Sadat's open door policies of the mid 1970s and flourished in the 1990s.

A case in point is Mohamed Shafiq Gabr, an emerging tycoon who was the first Egyptian president of the American Chamber of Commerce, an influential business organization. Commenting on the conspiracy theory and USAID, Gabr wonders why the Egyptian side did not take more responsibility for the technical aspects of the Aid programs, sponsoring more national research and taking more initiative in program design, limiting US contribution to goods and services, instead of complaining about dependency. He adds; "I do not believe that in assessing Egypt-US relations we should restrict our vision of those ties and perceive them only through the prism of the Middle East conflict, the peace process and relations with Israel, important as these are. I think that it is in the interest of the US that there be

a strong, stable and secure Egypt in the Middle East region. While the US interest lies integrally with that of Israel, experience shows that it is not the only criterion by which it has assessed its relations with Egypt." (Gabr; 2001) Even though such voices are influenced by and influence the circles of power in the country and occupy considerable space in official print and broadcast media, they do not have the same impact at the popular level. Their affinity with the circles of power jeopardizes their credibility among lay-people and their opinions fall in line with what common Egyptian citizens refer to as, "newspaper talk".

This however, does not mean that all opinions endorsing the benefits of aid are discarded as lacking objectivity and credibility. Some academics examine the issue of aid out of the context and influence of the conspiracy theory. For instance, Egyptian political scientist, Abdel-Monem Said, forwards another argument against the conspiracy theory in relation to the USAID to Egypt. Said argues that it is inappropriate to criticize USAID on the basis that a large percentage of the money is spent on 'expensive' American products and services, especially given that this form of tied-aid is used by several other donors, and it is the same approach that Egypt followed when it offered financial assistance to some other African and Arab countries. Said adds that "since aid money is in form of grants, then such products and services are even more inexpensive than others, simply because Egypt does not pay anything to acquire them." (Said; 2002)

Conclusion:

The skeptical intellectual elite supports the dependency theory view foreign powers control local policies in coordination and cooperation with the local elite. However, before discarding the views of national

intellectuals, who belong to diverse schools of thought ranging from Leftist to Islamist as unverifiable we need to examine their motives. The reservations of domestic intelligentsia towards education reforms could be for one of two reasons. First, a historically constructed domestic identity that erects a barrier to change, especially when mediated by foreign donors. It is worth mentioning that "persuasion is more likely to be effective when the persuader-persuadee interaction occurs in less politicized and more insulated private settings." (Checkel; 2001) The second factor is a deficient communication and argumentative persuasion process that does not involve all significant domestic actors and that alienates them further and heightens their distrust and resistance to change. Exclusion from the decision-making process and lack of formal and informal communication is one reason for the resistance to the change introduced by foreign development agencies through state institutions.

To a large extent the Egyptian intellectual elite is distant from the decision-making process and their ceremonial participation in official conferences and workshops launching reform programs often turns out to be a rubber stamp. For example, commenting on the case of the CCIMD unit, the Head of the Education Committee in the Shura (high legislative) Council, Mahmoud Mahfouz said; "The CCIMD did not sufficiently consult the numerous national intellectuals, artists and scientists, and this is why it failed and received heavy criticism. The lack of support to several programs is due to the poor participation of free Egyptian intellectuals as well as many other institutions." (Personal interview; 2001) Indeed, complaints of exclusion from participation in the general process of decision making is not only limited to national experts with Islamist or Leftist inclinations, but extends to others who are distant from the centers of power. A director of a civil society association that operates in the field of basic education, and who has an evident liberal economic

and political ideological tendency, complained of this lack of participation. The director of the association criticized the CCIMD for being "a rigid and undemocratic MOE unit that does not consult experts and civil society associations directly involved in the field, thus reflecting the general disease of the absence of democracy in the rest of the MOE and the rigid and centralized structure of decision making even in the most trivial of decisions." (Personal interview; August 2001)

Participation in the decision-making process maybe one of the keys to the issue of the conspiracy theory. In the absence of overall organizational and political democracy and given the poor opportunities for participation (usually reserved to those who agree with the state), various political and economic frustrations tend to be projected onto the public educational debate, an issue that enjoys relative freedom and openness. Two cases in point are the open critique that was directed by Neamat Fouad to President Mubarak for not reprimanding the ministers of Education and Culture whom she deems to be agents of foreign power and, the indirect connection Said Ismail Aly makes between the American elite educational institutions in Egypt and the President's family. Both arguments would have found less resonance in the context of other issues related to economic activities or foreign policies. The fervent debate surrounding education, which is unparalleled for other policy issues, reveals that the public discourse on education is often used as the safety valve to release dissatisfaction created by other public issues.

The above analysis emphasizes that most arguments in support of the presumed foreign conspiracy are based not on valid argument and facts but are expressed by actors that are not directly involved in the decision-making process. Most of them distrust the domestic elite and project onto the basic education reform programs their dissatisfaction

with other policy areas where criticism is less tolerated. This atmosphere of dissent from the domestic intelligentsia and the over-defensiveness of the state and the donors certainly does not contribute to a successful process of participatory communication. If a process of argumentative persuasion demands that reforms are debated and contingency plans considered to reach a level of consensus and domestic resonance that facilitates implementation, internalization and sustainability, then they evidently does not occur in Egyptian education reform.

Part Three

Exploring the Policy Process:
The Impact of Development Assistance
on Domestic Policy-Making

CHAPTER 5

The Impact of Development Assistance on Basic Education Policy Initiation and Formulation

Introduction:

Having identified education as a central policy issue that links the various threads of domestic and foreign affairs and that establishes the legitimacy of the state, it is crucial to analyze the education policy process in order to identify the influential actors. In the following I conduct a policy analysis that examines the stages of policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation in order to understand the impact of foreign development assistance on these processes.

In this chapter I examine how issues of reforms were individualized, problems diagnosed and how basic education policy initiation and formulation were socialized during the 1990s. I analyze the process of institutionalization and internalization of the policy formulation units sponsored by development assistance in order to understand how the reform policies were socialized in their initiation and formulation phases and whether this socialization process led to a level of domestic resonance that endorses the internalization of such policies. I also assess the relative leverage enjoyed by different actors (external and domestic) on the process of policy initiation and formulation. In examining the interaction of local and external actors and the style of communication adopted by the decision-makers and donors when dealing with the domestic actors, I employ both constructivist and rationalist modes of analysis. This analysis will also answer the question of whether education policy reforms were donor-driven or demand-driven and how this affected the policy formulation process and its outcome.

A. The State of Basic Education in the 1990s

Dewey (1927) defines public policy as "concerned with how issues and problems come to be defined and constructed and how they are placed on the political and policy agenda." Parsons and Elgar define a policy as an attempt to define and structure a rational basis for action or lack of action. (Parsons and Elgar; 1995) Policy initiation and agenda setting are the founding steps of policy formulation that sculpt and shape a policy, determining its implementation strategies, tactics, instruments, institutions, and evaluation criteria. It involves identifying a specific issue as a problem worthy of attention and placing it on the political and public agenda. Agenda setting is a process whereby different actors seek to influence policy choices. Policy formulation, on the other hand, "involves setting goals for policy, creating specific plans and proposals for those goals, and selecting the means where by such plans can be implemented." (Gomaa; 1997) Consequently, in the context of basic education policy, we need to examine how basic education issues are identified as problematic and consequential, thus deserving political attention and the allocation of public resources and how policy makers approach them.

Investment analysts advise multinationals and investors interested in Egypt to count on the economic advantage of low-cost skilled labor, in one case stating however that "labor remains cheaper in south-east Asia and that the quality of workmanship there is superior," according to the *Egypt Country Profile* published by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 1995. (Economist Intelligence Unit; 1995) As frustrating as it is to read such a phrase for Egyptian policy makers striving to encourage foreign direct investment in Egypt, they could not underestimate its implications. Having insufficient and unsustainable land, water, capital and other material resources, Egypt is bound to aim for economic growth, with extensive long-term investment in human

development and human capital. Human development in Egypt has represented a big challenge given that at present only 25 percent of the population is in the labor force supporting a large size nation of sixty-four million. Over 23 percent of Egyptians live below the poverty line, and per capita income is well below that of neighboring countries. It is worth noting that Egypt ranked 112 out of 174 countries on the Human Development Index in 1998 (UNDP; 1999) and its ranking from 112 to 119 during that decade.

Egypt has been suffering from an education crisis for the past three decades. It ranks number 81 on the Schooling index and 128 on the international educational scale. The country had an illiteracy rate of 49.6 percent in 1986, with a large gender gap in the levels of literacy. Only 60 percent of males and 38 percent of females are literate. Unemployment rates exceeded 14 percent of the labor force in 1992, and interestingly, the UNDP Egypt's Assessment Report, states that 85 percent of the unemployed were aged between 19 and 29, most of them recent graduates of intermediate education. (Rouchdy; 1998) Basic education, particularly in rural areas, suffers from poor quality. As a result, 250,000 registered students drop out of school annually according to USAID research, which also states that approximately 800,000 young females from (6-15 years old) are out of school. (O'Gara et. al.; 1999)

Education policies in Egypt have proven to be economically and socially ineffective. They produced a poor general quality of cognitive and practical skills among students, high dropout rates, high unemployment rates among unskilled and inadequately educated university graduates as well as scarcity of skilled labor. Furthermore, the consequences of the education crisis are not only economic but also affect the social and political stability. Numerous studies indicate that the members of extremist militant groups that

have presented a significant security threat to the country were young people (50 percent university students and 48 percent professionals). (Ibrahim; 1996) They often belonged to the middle and lower middle classes, highly motivated for social mobility but blocked by the inequitable distribution of wealth and frustrated by their poor prospects. This dilemma was accentuated by poorly designed education policies that neither correspond to the labor market and economic and political development requirements, nor contain any intellectual consistency. This intellectual and societal identity crisis stems from the absence of a consistent educational philosophy. Existing instructional and educational doctrines have remained torn between the socialist ideology of the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, and the capitalist, market oriented direction that began with the open door policy of the mid-1970s.

In her report *The Children of the Nile*, Malak Zaalouk, education program officer at UNICEF in Egypt, presented the qualitative problems of education in Egypt during the 1990s as follows:

- r Only 30 percent of pupils in primary school attend full day schools.
- r 48 percent of primary schools have two shifts.
- r Classes have an average of 45 pupils with some urban schools reaching 100 pupil per class. The teacher/pupil ratio is 1/45.
- r Dropouts and repetition rates are 25-35 percent.
- r Existing school buildings are insufficient with an estimated shortage of 5,911 classrooms, all in bad condition.
- r Teachers are not qualified, poorly trained, and short of the required number for primary education by at least 5,000 teachers.
- r Acquisition of basic literacy and numerical skills is low, particularly in arithmetic, and competency in basic literacy skills has been declining since the late 1980s.

, Teachers rely on rote and teacher-centered methods. (Zaalouk; 1995)

The Egyptian government tried to solve the above mentioned problems back in the 1970s by establishing small multi-grade schools in squatter settlements in rural areas, where 25 percent of the population suffer the absence of educational services. These multi-grade schools have spread, and around 2,000 were established. However, fast population growth and deteriorating economic conditions prevented them from achieving their goals. They could not absorb the great inflow of pupils and the teaching needs of the job market, and they gradually disappeared.

In short, the deficiencies of basic education in Egypt have been defined as educational system ineffectiveness and inefficiency: ineffectiveness in terms of the failure to achieve universal access to quality basic education that achieves enrollment and equity across the different socio-economic classes, rural/urban areas and genders; and inefficiency in terms of high dropout and repetition rates as well as the poor quality of academic and intellectual achievement.

Reviewing the research projects commissioned to diagnose the state of basic education in Egypt during the 1990s, more than eighty percent of the research was commissioned by international development organizations, such as the UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF and other bilateral development agencies. International development organizations and donors also sponsored local research centers generating information about the educational system in Egypt, such as the Institute of National Planning and the National Education Research Center (NERC). The large-scale involvement and sponsorship of international development organizations in studies of education reflects increasing interest in the sector. On the other hand,

inferior involvement of MOE internal research units may reveal either their distance from the decision making circles or the insufficiency of the MOE's research facilities. This may also reveal that such initiatives for diagnosing the basic education system malaise have originated outside the Egyptian MOE structures, that is, coordinated with the decision makers (The minister of education) outside the formal MOE structure and its technocrats, often described as rigid and stagnant. Most important, it indicates that the diagnosis of the state of education has been guided by the conceptual frameworks and methods designed by international development agencies and organizations, which follow the style and conventions of the literature produced by international organizations.

This was the case for the *Egypt: Human Development Report* series, produced annually by the INP and UNDP since 1994, the UNESCO report on *Education Status in Egypt* of July 2000, the *Education in Egypt* report prepared for Danida in 1994 and the *Egypt National Report: Education for All 2000 Assessment*, sponsored by the World Bank and submitted to the International Consultative Forum. All these reports and assessments identified the problems of the education sector and have influenced the agenda of the policy reform plans and strategies. Given that actors steering policy initiation are those who identify issues and place them on the policy-agenda for decision-making, we can infer that the active participation of international organizations and donor agencies in diagnosing education problems, has given them critical role in education policy initiation and formulation.

B. Education as the National Project of the 1990s in Egypt

The Bretton Woods' institutions', as well as other bilateral and multilateral provisions of grants and soft loans to developing

countries have been linked to the implementation of structural economic reforms. The purpose has been to reduce the role of the state in the economy and retain a leading role for the state in national security, regulation, and basic services. Public health, basic education, the preservation of natural environmental resources and cultural heritage were agreed upon as the pillars of sustainable development that can not be abandoned by governments. Recognizing basic education to be a major investment in human capital and a universally recognized human right, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP convened key decision-makers, ministers of education, multilateral and bilateral donors and NGOs in Jomtien, Thailand for the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) in 1990. The most important outcome of the conference was the unanimous pledge to provide primary education to all children and reduce illiteracy before the year 2000. (UNESCO Press; 2000) Consequently the 1990s were proclaimed 'the education decade'.

At the end of the 1980s, Egypt was facing a serious economic crisis, large budget and international trade, and colossal foreign debts. These external and internal imbalances threatened the economic, social and political stability of the country. Structural reforms were suggested by major donors, the international monetary funds and the World Bank as a condition for providing more development assistance and the relief of foreign debts. These reforms were designed to restore internal and external economic balances and increase economic efficiency. Macroeconomic reforms were deemed crucial for promoting economic growth.

Aware of the vital role of education in the process of development and its far-reaching external benefits, the Egyptian state initiated a formulation process of education policy reform by the end of the eighties. Fathy Sorour, minister of Education from 1986 to 1990,

commissioned a series of consultative committees and conferences to develop a reform plan for pre-university education. (Ramy; 1993) Sorour launched the first wave of reforms in 1987-88 and 1991-92, with the main objectives of improving quality, increasing relevance and improving efficiency and increasing the mobilization of resources. Sorour's reform plans aimed to direct larger numbers of pupils towards technical education after basic education rather than higher education. However, inadequate resources and the insufficient involvement of participants in implementation, undermined the reform initiative. (Rugh; 2000)

The second reform initiative of the 1990s (1991-1996) took a more favorable course, since it enjoyed more political and economic support from the state and from international development assistance. The state proclaimed education to be the national project of the 1990s. A Ministry of Education report stated that; "Since the onset of the 1990s, education and culture are a priority, and Egypt exerts its efforts to develop education at all levels as the cornerstone of progress to forcefully face strongly the challenges of the age." (Ministry of Education; 1999) In the executive summary of the MOE policy paper on education in the 1990s, basic education reform is recognized as an investment and not a service, and is given high allocation priority. The first lines of the document state that the Egyptian government supports basic education as an active response to The Children's Human Rights agreement of 1989 and the decade's objectives for the world's children. Therefore, according to the document, Egyptian policy priorities encompass internationally recognized aims for universal basic education, referring to the Education for All conference objectives. (Ministry of Education; 1997)

The two interesting lines worthy of analysis in the above mentioned document are first, the definition of basic education as an investment

and not a service; and second, the recognition that the Egyptian government is positively responding to the recommendations of international agreements and conferences in setting its education policy. Defining basic education as an investment means that it is not a sector for which funds should be cut as part of the budget commitments. Thus, increasing allocations for education would be compatible with structural adjustment and not conflicting with it. Second, affirming that the state is placing universal basic education on its agenda as a positive response to the recommendations of international organizations is a confirmation that internal development policies are not set and formulated in isolation from the concerns of those organizations. This is further confirmed by the speech of May Chauchang, education expert at the World Bank and Head of the North Africa/Middle East task force, delivered on 1997 at the Conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affaires. Chauchang stated that between 1995 to 1997, "a strategic framework for basic education development has been set through co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, within which we have worked closely with Dr. Hussein Kamel and the work team he formed for that end, to wholly review basic education policies and practices. This revision will result in a collection of educational input that will - when applied - equip students with what Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak described as 'the ability to think for themselves and effectively participate in the work place.' The Basic Education Development Program will be the umbrella under which all donor entities would operate in order to crystallize, even surpass the educational targets set by government policies." (From: The World Bank Report on the Development of Basic Education in *Mubarak and Education*; 2001)

At this point of the investigation we can answer the question of whether basic education policy reforms were donor-driven (imposed by donors) or demand-driven (supplied by donors in response to the

request of domestic actors). The sequence of events demonstrates that policy reforms were demand-driven. This interpretation is in line with the claim in international relations theory that domestic elites often resort to external actors (international organizations and donors) for assistance after a policy crisis that reveals a domestic deficiency in technical and financial resources. (Ikenberry; 1990)

That reforms were demand-driven is confirmed by the fact that the Egyptian minister of education has planned consultative committees and conferences aiming at education reform plans already in 1987. Reforms were therefore planned three years before the Jomtien EFA Conference of 1990. The reform initiatives had therefore already been conceived internally within the Egyptian government schemes. The Egyptian government had already developed an interest in the education reform policies before the launching of the Jomtien EFA campaign, and the MOE synchronization with the Education For All goals was most likely jumping on a moving wagon that was going in the desired direction. In other words, even though the process of agenda setting and policy initiation was highly influenced by the donors' agenda, education reform was not imposed by donors on the Egyptian state. International organizations and donors supported existing MOE plans for education reform, which were hampered by scanty resources and insufficient institutional capacities.

The MOE approach to reforms can also be analyzed with a rationalist approach to explain how the MOE adapted external donors' reform ideas in order to obtain their support and legitimate its policies. MOE rationalist and utilitarian approaches was evident in its adjusting its policy reforms and budget allocations to external models that had proven effective in similar situations in other countries. This pragmatic approach served two MOE objectives; 1) to guarantee necessary technical and financial assistance for basic education

reforms; 2) to compensate for its fragile domestic decision making structures. This granted a degree of legitimacy to the policy reforms on the basis of their previous success in other parts of the world. (Jacoby; 2000)

A close review of the state's basic education reform priorities indicates that the MOE has matched its priorities to those of the international organizations in order to benefit from their financial and technical support. Reading through the executive summary of the Egyptian Government education strategies for the 1990s we recognize that improving access to basic education, improving the quality of education (curriculum reform, teaching quality and facilities) and achieving gender equity in education are the objectives of reform. Such MOE objectives mirror the policy strategies of the World Bank as stated by Lockheed in 1990 to be: "enhancing learning environment (this includes curriculum reform, instruction materials and improving learning capacities of students); improving the preparation and innovation to teachers; strengthen educational management; improving equitable access; and strengthening financial support for primary education." (Lockheed; 1990)

Education issues and problems dominated public discourse in the early 1990s and occupied almost fifty percent of the public agenda, according to the *Arab Strategic Report* (1996). The same report presented a discourse analysis that illustrated that the educational issues dominating the media and public discourses were related to quality education, the abolition of the sixth grade, private tutoring, curricula reforms and equitable access to higher education. Significantly, the education policy reforms of the 1990s have encompassed issues that were present neither in previous MOE official discourses nor public agenda, but were a high priority in the policy agendas' of the international organizations and donor agencies at the

time. The policy issues placed on the education policy agenda and inspired by donors were, first, the allocation of more state resources to basic education rather than to higher education; and second, the issue of extending the interpretation of equity from the social and economic class to spatial (rural against urban) and gender equity (girls' education). These two issues had not particularly dominated the national public discourse on education. Even though earlier MOE statements addressed them, they were not specifically highlighted as priorities on the education policy reform agenda.

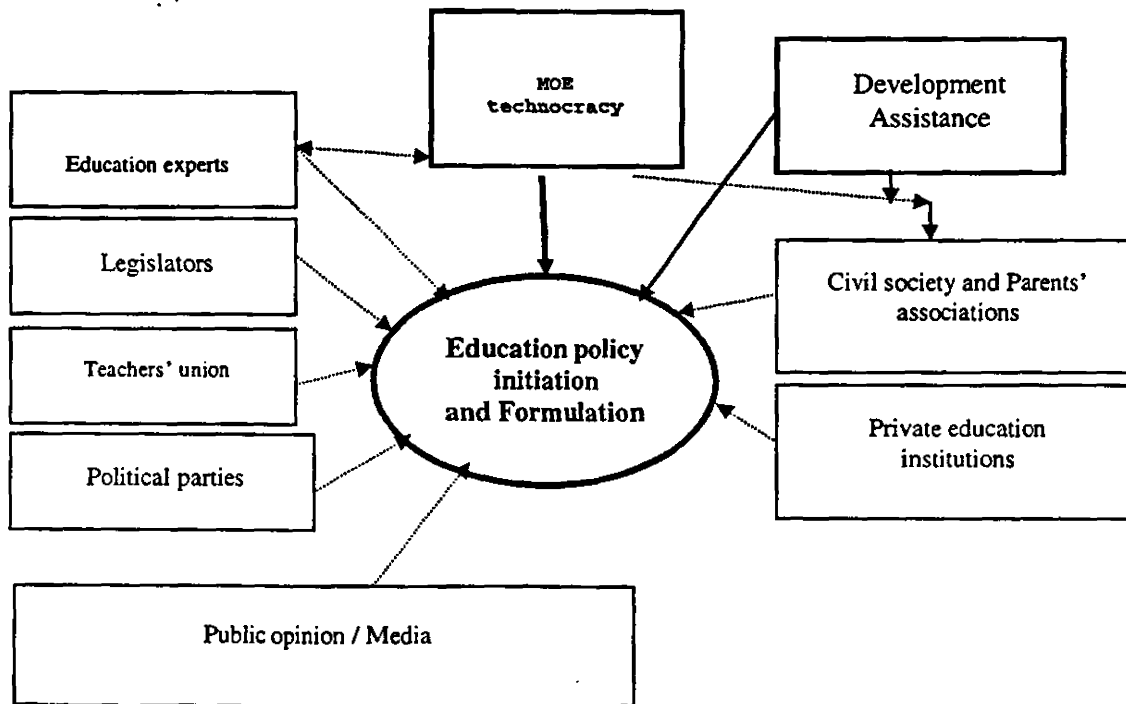
C. Achieving a Strategic Coalition for Policy Reform

Policy reforms can be described as political answers to situations that decision-makers classify as problematic and worthy of political attention. In order to build coalitions among domestic actors in favor of the reforms, they need to be perceived as coherent with the values of those actors and in support of national interests. (Epstein; 2002) Therefore, it is essential to identify domestic actors and recognize their values and interests, so as to assess the success or failure of the formation of a domestic strategic coalition in favor of basic education policy reforms. In this section I will look at the domestic actors outside the Ministry of Education. I review their structures, relative political weight, capacity, and actual participation in the policy formulation process. These actors are political parties, legislators, civil society associations, parents' councils, teachers' union, education experts and academia, private education institutions, and the media.

Policy formulation is defined as a process during which various actors interact and compete to place their priorities on the policy agenda and promote policy alternatives. From this perspective it is crucial

to identify potential (domestic and foreign) actors who could have played an active role in education policy initiation and formulation besides the senior political elite in the MOE and the international development organizations and donors agencies. The potential actors and interest groups in the field of education in Egypt have been the legislators, the MOE technocracy, private school owners, teachers' union, the parents association, the national education experts, political parties, and public opinion.

Actors potentially involved in policy initiation and formulation



Throughout the 1990s there have been fourteen political parties in Egypt: the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) (led by President Mubarak and established in 1978) and thirteen opposition parties ranging from Left to Right and Islamist. In the 1995 parliamentary elections the NDP gained 417 seats, the right wing New-Wafd Party six

seats, and the leftist National Progressive Unionist Grouping Party five seats. The Islamist Socialist Labor Party, the Nasserist (named after President Nasser), and the Socialist Liberal Party held one seat each. The remaining 13 seats were taken by independent representatives. (State Information Services; 1999) Opposition parties in Egypt can compete for power but are far from attaining it or even sharing it with the ruling party. Political observers maintain that only five opposition parties have any political weight to speak of: the New-Wafd, The Nasserist, The Socialist Labor party (in association with the Moslem Brotherhood), the Progressive Unionist party and the Liberal party (Ibrahim, S.; 1996). They are, however, "weak, poorly organized and internally authoritarian, and have limited appeal," (Goodson; 1997) Opposition parties barely participate in public policy initiation or formulation in general. Other than criticism or praise of present or former education policies in their newspapers, opposition parties neither propose their own vision of education reform nor suggest alternative comprehensive reform strategies. As a matter of fact, many of these papers' editorials either praise the 'good old days' when they were in power (the Wafd before the 1950s or the Leftists and socialists before the 1970s) or criticize present state policies or individual projects. The limited access and participation of these parties in the decision making process, due to their limited representation in the Legislative mechanism, and their limited public-base may be the main reason behind the apathy of the opposition parties towards many public policy issues.

This is confirmed by statistics published in an article in *Al-Ahram* maintaining that during the late 1990s, education ranked as the third issue of priority discussed in the Egyptian Parliament and that while 61 representative of the NDP intervened in education-related debates, only two of the Progressive Unionist party and single representatives of the New-Wafd and the Labor parties, intervened in such debates.

(Al-Ahram; December 21, 2000) Apart from, being invited to participate ceremonially in national conferences on developing basic education in 1993 and 1994, individual members of opposition political parties did not actively participate in the education policy formulation process.

This brings us to the roles of the Legislators, Peoples' Assembly (Parliament) and Shura 'Consultative' Council, in the decision making process in the education policy reforms in the 1990s. Around ninety two percent of the members of the Assembly, in the 1990s, belonged to the National Democratic Party (NDP), another 2 percent belonged to the four opposition parties, and the rest of the seats were divided between independent members and appointed ones. The executive and bureaucracy have exerted significant control over the parliament, since over one third of the members of the People's Assembly are employees in the civil service or public sector, where as public servants have to resign their post if elected to parliament before 1952. (Springborg; 1989) The ascendancy of the executive over the legislature reveals the limited criticism, participation, or opposition parliament can mobilize in relation to a state-proposed policy reforms, explaining how the parliaments' approval process in education reform plans has been to a large extent a rubber-stamp. (Aly; 1999) Education policies are discussed with slightly more vigor when issues are brought up by the national media and attract wide public concern, as in the case of private lessons, the third year secondary certificate, or curriculum content related to national identity. This however does not mean that Parliament is totally absent from education policy, since the head of the education and scientific research committee of the Peoples' Assembly, professor Housam Badrawy (an NDP representative), is often present in the Egyptian media discussing issues of education quality, teacher training and administrative reform, and invites improvements in all of these areas.

(Al-Ahram; August 29, 2001) However, the discussions hardly contest formal state policies or actual MOE programs.

As for the Shura 'Consultative' Council; its functions are to "study the proposal of what it deems necessary to consolidate national unity and social peace to protect the alliance of the working forces of the people as well as the basic components of society". (State Information Services; 1999) The people elect two-thirds of its members, with 50 percent of seats reserved to laborers and farmers, while the President appoints the other third. It has a six-year term of membership and an election and appointment of 50 percent of members takes place every three years. The Shura Council is only consultative, however, and its proposals are neither binding nor have any authority over the Executive. According to Fathi Radwan (a leading Egyptian politician and intellectual and a senior member of the ruling majority party in Egypt), the council "was intended as a means to group together some of the politicians whom the state was unable to employ in top jobs, or was intended to compensate some of those who lost their seats in the ministries. In the final instance it is a council without purpose or influence and does not participate nor direct the affairs of the state." (Springborg; 1989)

This brief review of the concrete influence of the Shura Council is important to understand the extent to which it influences the process of education policy initiation, formulation or decisions. The Education Committee in the Shura Council in the late 1990s was chaired by Professor Mahmoud Mahfouz and was composed of seven former ministers of education and the present minister of education. The Committee produced several reports and recommendations on the issues of education and human development and held various sessions to discuss education policies and their role in Egyptian human development. The sessions enjoyed the high participation of present

pre-university and higher education ministers who speak to the council and present to it their ministries' achievements and views. The Ministers frequently praise the Council's reports and suggestions for policy reform, argue that they have taken them into consideration and that many of the suggestions are already integrated within MOE policy strategies. Sessions often end with mutual approval and accord between the majority of the Councils' members and the Executive that promise alignment with the Councils' suggestions and recommendations. However, the Shura Council's Sessions' proceedings reveal that the Councils participation in education policy conception and formulation have been limited to the formalistic and ceremonial level and that it had minimal direct participation, review or evaluation of development assistance sponsored programs.

Civil society associations and non-governmental organizations enjoyed a revival during the 1990s sponsored by international development assistance activities that identified an active civil society as a key to democratization and market liberalization. With their revival, linked to a massive inflow of financial and technical resources, civil society associations active in education in Egypt received explicit MOE institutional recognition and consideration. NGOs like Caritas, CEOSS, The Upper Egypt Association and others have a long tradition in community schools in rural areas and deprived urban areas. In addition, many of them conduct some of the most successful literacy programs in Egypt. (Assaad and Rouchdy; 1999) For many years these civil society associations had struggled as they depended on their meager technical and financial resources alone, and enjoyed only minimal cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Official recognition was articulated by MOE decree number 334/1998, conferring certain powers on the Parents' Associations and establishing a special unit within the MOE. Called the Administration of Civil Society, this unit was established in 1998 to coordinate and follow up policy with

civil society associations. The Unit director said that it was set up once the minister of education realized the importance of coordination and communication between the 1250 NGOs and Community Development Associations (CDAs) working on education. (Personal interview; April 2002)

However, a community education advisor working with several civil society associations and INGOs active in the field of basic education argues that on the practical level, civil society associations do not participate in agenda setting and that the limit was actually established to neutralize their influence. He argues that the very name 'administration' implies a top-down attitude of the Ministry towards these groups. Extending participation in the decision making process to civil society associations and organizations is one of the terms of the World Bank's, the EU's and other donors' assistance conditions. Among civil society associations and NGOs benefiting from the decree, the MOE press releases also include international non-governmental organizations and international organizations operating through local civil society associations such as local associations working under the UNICEF community school projects and civil society associations sponsored by donor agencies and joint development funds such as the Egyptian-Swiss Development Fund. Local civil society associations are under the dominion of the Ministry of Social Affairs, that has to approve all their activities and budgets, and they have to coordinate with Ministry of Education and other local state agencies a jungle of bureaucratic hierarchy and red tape that constrains their potential participation as active pressure groups influencing the agenda-setting process. Most of the interviewed members of civil society associations working on education claim that they have not actively participated in the policy initiation or planning stage and that NGOs do not have any effective role in agenda setting and policy formulation. Civil society associations are, according to Fayed Mina,

professor of Education in Ain-Shams University, are hindered by the laws governing civil Society in Egypt, which subject them to all sorts of controls and confinements imposed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, security authorities and others. (Mina; 2001)

Donor agencies and international organizations have mediated the limited participation of these local civil society associations with the MOE in the basic education policy initiation during. Many years of totalitarian rule had left Egyptian civil society groups, associations and organizations impaired by poor administrative capacities, lack of self-sustainable funding and low membership and participation as well as lack of financial transparency. Consequently, their only opportunity for revival was to adopt donor agendas to qualify for donors' sponsorships and capacity building programs.

The other form of grass-roots participation within civil society are parents' councils, usually pointed to by MOE press releases as a source of democratization of the education decision making process. Absent from the educational arena during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Parents' Councils have witnessed a rebirth during the 1990s. Therefore, their absence from the initiation and formulation stages of education policy reform plans during the late 1980s and early 1990s was unavoidable. Their participation has been solicited by the new opening of education institutions dictated by the top-down policies of the MOE and the education programs of the donor agencies and international organizations, grounding their programs in grass-roots participation. MOE press releases during the decade usually confirmed that the Minister gave his instructions to the National Center for Educational Research to invite parents' associations and distinguished students to participate in national conferences for education reform. They were invited to participate in education funding, decision-making and reform efforts. Thus, parents' associations were rebuilt and re-

launched during the 1990s in order to democratize education policy processes. This trend was confirmed by Ministerial decree number 5 of 1993 that established Parents' and Teachers' Councils and later, in 1998, strengthened by several decrees the operation of both parents' and teachers councils. (Ministry of Education: *Mubarak and Education*; 2001)

Parents' Councils, however, have argued that this process of opening has not been sustained throughout the decade and went into demise by the end of the 1990s. Parents complain of the lack of fair elections and democratization within such associations due to the absence of a regulatory association monitoring the fairness of the internal elections of parents' associations. For instance, in many cases the school administrators are themselves allowed to be the presidents' of the parents' associations in their own school. (*Al-Ahram*; September 22ⁿ, 2001) This gives an idea about the degree of autonomy of the parents' councils and their capacity to influence the education process independently of the formal state education institutions. When asked about the Parents' Councils as a means of increasing participation, an EEP expert said that they did not actually participate in the decision-making process. This, according to the expert, was partially because of the low level of interest from the side of MOE bureaucrats and school administrations and partially because some parents abuse their power. That is, unused to democratic rules and culture, some parents often use their posts on the council to sway decisions in favor of their own children or to advance their own personal interests. (Personal interview; May 2002)

The other actors that could have potentially influenced the education decision-making process are schoolteachers. The teachers' union was founded in 1951 but remained inoperative until 1955. The union was activated in 1955 by Kamal El-Din Hussein an important member of the

'Free Officers' movement, the 'Revolutionary Council' and Minister of Education from September 1954 until August 1961. (Seyam; 2003) Throughout the 1960s the position of the head of the union was held by the Minister of Education, El-Sayed Youssef, who enlisted all teacher members of the union, as members of the 'Socialist Union' (the one party system at the time). In 1964, Youssef fired all teachers who campaigned through their union for more professional and financial rights. (Noweir; 2001) This close association between the union's leadership and executive authority turned the union into yet another subordinate unit of the Ministry of Education and limited its potential role as an interest or pressure group. This state of affairs persisted until the 1990s, during which period the union was presided by Moustafa Kamal Helmy (for two terms in 1989 and 1993). Helmy had been the head of the Shura Council from June 1989, and was Minister of Education (from April 1974 until March 1976), Minister of Education and Higher Education (from March 1976 until October 1977), and Minister of Education and Scientific Research (from October 1977 until October 1978). He has been a key figure in the Egyptian state for the past three decades and served as Egypt's permanent delegate at UNESCO in Paris (1971-1974). (Shura Council; October 1994 and Seyam; 2003)

The union had around 950,000 members during the 1990s and its branches extend across all 26 Egyptian governorates and 249 educational directorates. (Kandil; 1995) The size (it is the largest union in Egypt) and the territorial and institutional expansion of the teachers' union creates considerable potential for an active and effective role in the policy process.

Together with other civil society associations and interest groups concerned with the education process, the union representatives were invited to attend the MOE conferences preparing for primary and

preparatory education reforms in 1993 and 1994, headed by Egyptian First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak. (The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports) Like other professional associations in Egypt, the teachers' union is controlled by the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, unlike other professional unions, the teachers' union has limited financial means due to the drastic financial conditions of teachers, who are dependent on an average state salary of 200 Egyptian pounds per month (around US \$ 60 1990s exchange rates). Such a salary, often rounded up by an additional 50 Egyptian pounds or so by bonuses and overtime, was supposed to sustain them and their families during a decade that witnessed cuts in state subsidies and limits on non-investment expenditures. Teachers, members of the union, are all MOE employees. Therefore, their dependence on the state can hardly encourage their unconstrained input in the education policy initiation process. The teachers' union could only constitute a subsidiary division within the hierarchical and centralized structure of the MOE. Besides providing modest services and pension plans for its members, the teachers' union has mainly supported government policies and acted as an additional MOE department in the process of policy making. (Ibrahim; 1996) This is also supported by Fayez Mina who says that it is evident that the teachers' union is badly organized and has no role in improving teachers' conditions, professional development or participating in education policy formulation. (Mina; 2001)

Both national conferences for the development of primary and preparatory education held in 1993 and 1994 were chaired by Suzanne Mubarak in her capacity as a chairperson of the Egyptian Organization for Development. Suzanne Mubarak has a central role in issues related to social development and her direct involvement in any specific program reflects the priority the political leadership gives to that program. Her association with the conferences on education reform has given greater visibility and importance to the conferences, attracted

more resources and has helped deter potential institutional resistance to change. She holds a Master's degree in the sociology of education from the American University in Cairo (1982) and a Bachelors degree (1977) in political science, also from the American University. (State Information Services; 2004)

Participation in the conferences (1993 and 1994) was extended to include important public figures, members of the People's Assembly and the Shura (Consultative) Council in addition to representatives of consultative bodies, international and foreign organizations and embassies. Deans of education faculties, professors of education, representatives of Al-Azhar and the teachers' union, parents associations, and members of research centers also attended the conferences. (The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports) Interestingly, the degree of active participation of education experts and academics in basic education policy formulation is judged differently between those commissioned by the MOE to prepare for the conference workshops, as opposed to those invited only to participate in the conference proceedings and general sessions. For instance, education expert professor Hamed Ammar, who headed one of the technical committees preparing for the 1994 conference, ardently defends the consultative nature of the policy formulation process. Ammar assures that the committees meetings lasted three months, and that the conference workshops depended mainly on field and comparative research designed and conducted by around 250 experts from 19 different sectors that included parents' associations, teachers' union, legislators and political party members and public figures. (Ammar; 1996) But education expert Said I. Aly maintains that active participation in such conferences was limited to an inaccessible group of the MOE and some education faculties, and that further participation was limited to a passive presence as spectators of the conference proceedings. (Aly; 1998) This was confirmed by Galal Amin who suggests that advice

from intellectuals and legislators was used as a rubber stamp for the Minister's pre-conceived decisions on education reform plans, and that participants were not given any concrete channels for feedback. (Amin; 2000) The weak influence of the national education researchers and experts on the education decision making process within the MOE, is discussed by Fernando Reimers and Noel McGinn, two education research experts commissioned by the USAID to conduct policy research programs in Egypt during the late eighties and early 1990s. In their book, *Informed Dialogue: Using Research to Shape Education Policy around the World*, Reimers and McGinn depict a marginalization of research activities and MOE research centers from the power circles in the Ministry and maintain that the National Education Research Center operates in isolation from policy initiation and formulation processes. Accordingly, assessment reports are often commissioned and conducted, especially when funded by donors, but are not fully put to use for comprehensive education reform plans. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997) This conclusion is confirmed by the World Bank Staff Appraisal Report of 1993 on the Basic Education Improvement Project. The report maintains that "high-level policies and decisions are often arrived at without making use of information and research available, and even without consultation with the officials who will implement the decisions." (World Bank; 1993)

In the light of the authoritarian, centralized and personalized style of the policy making process, there is very limited space for actual and significant participation on the part of independent experts and academics in policy planning. Their presence on the participant lists of national conferences and other various committees' serves as another ceremonial means of demonstrating participation in policy making. In such a formalized participatory environment, policies are formulated by technocrats and then presented to academics and experts without a genuine interest in their active participation. This is a

type of formalism in Egyptian bureaucracy, which encourages bureaucrats and technocrats to submit and comply with their superiors and senior officials as long as those superiors are in power. Such formalism encourages agreement with all reforms suggested by their superiors, and a false enthusiasm in their application. Later, they either omit or forget the reforms, or even criticize them openly when their superior is out of power. (Mina; 2001)

While private educational institutions account for only 10 percent of formal basic education, and are totally dependent on the MOE for licensing and operation permits, the main actors influencing education decision making remain the media and public opinion. Even though the media is largely regulated by the state and reflects to a great extent official state views, the state cannot ignore the heated public debate on education that touches on the lives of most Egyptian citizens. On the contrary, the media emphasizes such debates and promotes them in order to satisfy their readers' interests and expectations. Obviously, public discourse does not encompass the highly technical and specialized issues of comprehensive policy reforms, but concentrates on topics that touch upon parents and students, such as private lessons, secondary school certificate exams, free education, school curricula and identity issues, as well as the quality and safety of school buildings. Since the print and broadcast media substitute for the other pluralistic mechanisms as a stage of public discourse and debate, it has had a stronger influence on the education decision-making process. Consequently the MOE frequently passes on press releases to demonstrate its purported achievements or to refute potential criticism.

Reviewing the profiles and effectiveness of the actors that could have participated in the initiation and formulation of education policy during the early 1990s, we have found that education decisions have

been centralized and personalized to a great extent. The personalized nature of public policy decision-making processes is not peculiar to education policies, but a general feature of the political and administrative apparatus. Mustafa El-Feki, Egyptian Ambassador and senior advisor to the Egyptian Presidency, maintains that the personalization of decision making dominates and that in many cases members of the political elite dominate institutions and in some case use them to obtain personalized influence and prestige. (El-Feki; 2002) In such cases, all political and administrative changes and reforms are tied to the person at the top of the organization and continuity is tied to the presence of that particular person in power and not to its institutionalization in the organizational mission and procedures.

As a matter of fact, every single news coverage or press release that refers to education policy reforms names the direct sponsorship of the Egyptian First Lady as a guarantee of political commitment to the policy reforms as well as Mubarak's labeling of the 1990s as the decade of education as the major national project. In a newspaper interview refuting the insinuation that education policy is personalized and a Minister's policy and not a Ministry's policy, minister Bahaaeddin said: "It is a state policy. If President Mubarak says that education reform is Egypt's biggest national project, is it possible that such a project becomes the task of only one minister? Is this logical?" Bahaaeddin continued by saying that he represents an executive instrument of the state and that he carries out what the state decides to do through national conferences presided by the Egyptian First Lady and in which all university presidents, concerned ministers, intellectuals and legislators have participated. (Al-Ahram; August 28th, 2000) Even though the minister refutes the argument that education policies are tied to his person, he consistently refers to the interest of the President and support of the First Lady as a

guarantee of political commitment to the policy, a guarantee that ranks higher than the commitment of the state institutions. In the context of what Reimers and McGinn have described, as an 'authoritarian bureaucracy', communication is unilateral and vertical, i.e. a top-down communication that originates from central political authorities and senior officials. Such an organizational environment has not facilitated participation in the policy initiation or formulation process from the subordinate groups that derive their competence from state machinery. In that setting, the actors that could potentially have been involved in the agenda setting of the education reform process were most likely to be those that are instituted outside the state machine, but still had the political, technical and financial capacity needed by the state to carry out its national project, in other words, donors and international agencies. This is confirmed by the joint UNDP/UNESCO report, *Review and Assessment of Reform of Basic Education in Egypt*, which maintains that the reform of basic education in Egypt has been motivated mainly by the strong political determination of the Egyptian state and that donor activities have increased its capacity to guide policy strategies and frameworks. (UNDP and UNESCO; 1996)

The previous analysis illustrates that there was no genuine effort from the MOE to cultivate a strategic coalition in favor of reforms among the specialized sector of domestic actors lying outside MOE circles of power. Hence, the MOE failed to stimulate domestic support and resonance for reforms among the specialized sector in the formulation process, thus failing to create a sense of ownership towards the reforms.

D. Instituting Policy Formulation and Monitoring Units in the Ministry of Education

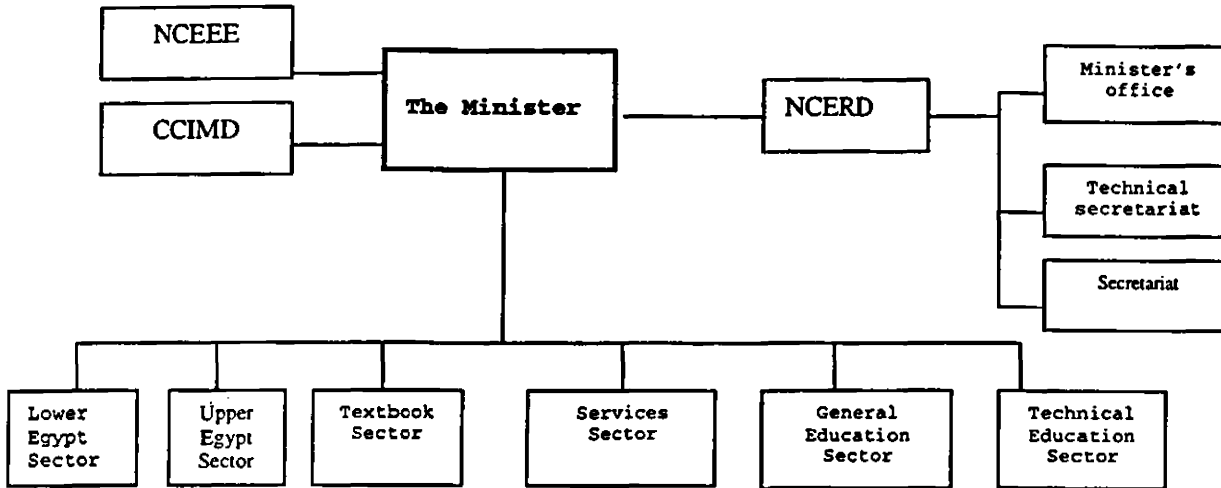
The state institutions that formulate and implement reforms are the main engine of the reform process. Therefore we need to evaluate the level of involvement of such institutions in producing the policy blue prints so as to assess their commitment to such reforms.

However, when Mubarak embarked on the education reform enterprise in 1986, the official structure of the MOE was deemed by policy makers to be an archaic, rigid and overly centralized institution, incapable of self-improvement and institutional development. The MOE directorate for educational planning and information was judged as being unable to plan or carry out reforms. The education system was diagnosed as limited in its managerial and technical capacity, lacking information about the sector that impairs national policy analysis and formulation and suffering from an over-centralization of analysis and planning functions and a fragmentation and duplication of its planning. (World Bank; 1993) Fathi Sorour, who was minister of education at the time, proposed a national conference on education and shortly before, he appointed a deputy minister for planning and organizing the education reform process, who headed the Education Planning Unit. The deputy minister had an American academic training and three-years' work experience with the World Bank in Washington. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997) Evidently, the academic and professional background of the deputy minister, who comes from outside the official MOE institution, was intended to facilitate collaboration with the donor agencies and international organizations sponsoring the new units responsible for formulating and implementing the reform. At the end of the 1980s, USAID launched its Basic Research and Implementation in Developing Education Systems Project (BRIDGES). This program was coordinated with the MOE and directed by the Harvard Institute for International

Development in order to assess and then optimize the organization of the education system. In that context, the objectives of both the MOE and BRIDGES' project were to develop and improve education policy planning and management of information systems, and policy research analysis. (World Bank; 1993) Besides, the general objectives of the World Bank were to institutionalize reforms in order to guarantee the sustainability of reform policies as well as future state capacity to envisage and implement prospective reforms.

In accordance with those aims the five-year (1987-92) MOE education reform plan stipulated the establishment of five new semi-autonomous institutions in the MOE to operate in close cooperation with and support international donors such as the World Bank and USAID. The five new institutions were: The Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development (CCIMD); The General Agency for Educational Buildings (GAEB); The National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), The Fund for Supporting and Financing Educational Projects, and the National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation (NCEEE). In due course, the education reform enterprise has been mainly conceived outside the education institution and then reinstalled within it for the purpose of policy implementation. The aforementioned units report directly to the minister, do not enjoy formal organizational communication with other MOE units, and had a staff organization and remuneration system similar to the university faculty that is higher than the internal one of the MOE.

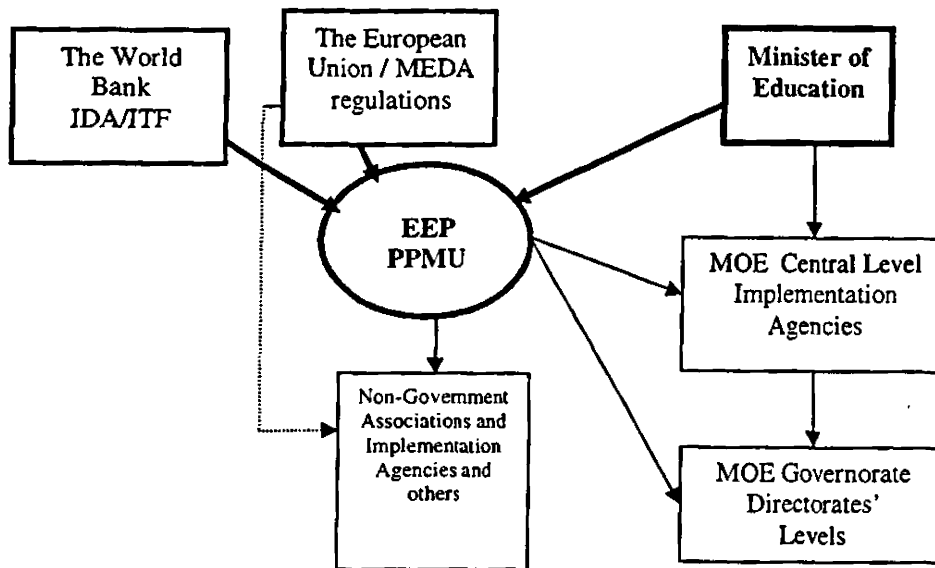
**Organizational Structure of the MOE
(Central)**



The largest scale education reform program conducted by the MOE and supported by donors and international organizations in the 1990s was the Education Enhancement Program EEP. The EEP assists the Egyptian Government in implementing a sectoral reform program with the financial and technical assistance of the World Bank (International Development Assistance's Interim Trust Fund) and European Union grants and has a strategic framework that was intended to guide planning and activities over a 15 to 20 year period through a multiple-phase program. The EEP's total budget for the first phase (from 1997 to 2001) is 676.4 million Euro, out of which 15 percent was presented as a grant by the EU, another 63 percent was supplied by the MOE, 8 percent was loaned by the World Bank and 13 percent was raised from other donors. The main institutional unit in charge of planning and programming for the EEP is the Planning, Programming and Monitoring Unit (PPMU). The PPMU has been established as a specific and fully independent unit responsible for programming, planning, coordinating and monitoring implementation as well overall management of the

program activities, with a Central office in Cairo and remote office in each involved Governorate. Like the other donor-funded units, the PPMU reports directly to the minister of education, and its role consists of programming, coordinating and monitoring implementation. In this context it works directly with MOE implementing agencies including the NCEEE, CCIMD, GAEB, as well as NGOs, universities, and operates at the central as well as governorate levels (Governorate-level PPMU).

PPMU network of organizational chain of command and communication



Reviewing the professional and academic preparation of PPMU staff, we note that they all come from outside the MOE ministerial structure, and they all had a western academic training. Furthermore, their senior executives have previous work experience with similar World

Bank or USAID education projects. In return for their special preparation, their stipends were around six times higher than their MOE counterparts.

It is noteworthy that almost all policy formulation and monitoring units in charge of education reform planning and implementation are satellite units reporting directly to the minister of education, and are composed of experts from outside the education institutions, with minimal contacts with the MOE institution, except for the PPMU. Those units are established and largely sustained by donors, and their auxiliary position in the MOE organizational chart does not provide them with a wide network of organizational communication.

E. Education Reform Policies

At this point of the analysis, it is necessary to look at the actual policy reforms formulated by the MOE and endorsed by international development agencies. The main goals of the education reform program in the 1990s are to increase access to basic education, improve equity across gender, social groups and areas in the country, and raise the quality, relevance and efficiency of basic education. The new educational policy specifies a number of approaches, which are intended to upgrade education in quantity in terms of reach and access and quality of teaching and curriculum design. Among these important approaches are a reform of teachers training and professional conditions, improved flexibility among different types of education, and initiatives in curriculum development. The state defined the challenges facing the education reform process as:

- provision of sufficient financing for the overall education reform;
- generalization and dissemination of mandatory education in rural areas and among disadvantaged groups;

- build enough schools to absorb full enrollment, decrease the number of students in classes and cancel multiple shifts;
- improve teachers' recruitment, training, remuneration and working conditions;
- provide nationwide adult education programs in order to eradicate illiteracy;
- achievement of institutional development by upgrading, modernizing and increasing the efficiency of the education sector.

(Ministry of Education; 1997)

Thus the main issues are the quality of teacher preparation, the availability of school buildings, and the upgrading of obsolete curricular. The MOE also implemented some development programs in relation to these goals. The national education project planned to establish 1500 new schools annually in order to enroll all the students of compulsory education and gradually terminate the rotation system and replace it with a full-school day. The state has also allocated around a million and a half US Dollars to improve teachers' remuneration. Furthermore, around 1152 teachers have been sent for training in the USA, UK and France, while, 12,000 teachers have been trained in the MOE to operate the Internet and retrain their students. Computer Science has been added to the curriculum and the MOE has devised a number of computer labs. The scheme was to achieve 4,000 fully-equipped schools by the end of 1997. The state set the following quantitative targets for primary education development:

- abolishing rotation systems in primary schools starting in 1997/98;
- application of the mobile class system starting in 1997/98 to help increase assimilation at a rate of 25-30 percent;
- holding a national campaign to establish 28,000 kindergartens.

(Ministry of Education; 1997)

Egypt has also been promoting a comprehensive package of reforms aimed at generating healthy and health-promoting schools. The package includes:

- regular medical checks for schoolchildren;
- school nutrition programs, with special help for rural areas;
- free health insurance for schoolchildren;
- the integration of health and nutrition messages into the curriculum;
- child-to-child programs to promote health in the community.

These policies have been launched and supported by the Education Enhancement Program, in order to effect transformation in education planning and management, so that the principles of equity, quality, and efficiency can be based on accurate data, objective criteria and scientific analysis, and that implementation is properly coordinated on the national level. (Saunders: World Bank Human Development Group; 2002)

F. The Economics of Education and Budget Allocations

Budget allocation and distribution is an indicator of long-term political resolution and commitment to the formulated policies. While the allocation function of government is defined as "the process by which the total resources are divided between private and social goods, and by which the mix of social good is chosen," education is considered to be a mixed good because of its social as well as private nature. (Musgrave; 1989) That is, education has private benefits for the individual receiving education in addition to the external benefits for the rest of the society. As a result, education budgeting and allocation has always been a subject of debate in terms of

determining the amount of public resources to be allocated and how much they should be distributed within the sector. Distribution is debated on diverse levels horizontally and vertically: spatially in terms of regions, socially and economically in terms of gender and economic classes, and also, within the sector in terms of educational stages (basic versus higher). Optimizing allocation in order to obtain the highest rate of return without sacrificing social benefits for private ones is the objective of deliberation. The ideological tendencies prevailing in international development climates and within international organizations throughout the 1990s have considered the amount, percentages and distribution of governmental allocation for education as an investment in human capital. And, like any other investment, it is to be evaluated by its social and private return rates. Since it is a public investment, priority should be given to investments with the highest social return rates.

Cost-benefit analyses of education have often been used in order to evaluate education as an investment for the individual and for society as a whole. Economists tend to look at the benefits to be evaluated in terms of market value, and in his article "The Range of Educational Benefits," L.C. Solomon says that there are dimensions for educational benefits that affect both the individual and society as a whole. (Solomon; 1987) The economic benefits of education are measured in terms of the additional lifetime income of educated workers compared with the earnings of those with lower levels of education, according to M. Woodhall (1987) in his article "Cost Analysis in Education." The average earnings of workers with diverse education attainments, says Woodhall, can be compared by means of age-earning profiles; which show the average lifetime earnings of workers, calculated on the basis of sample surveys of workers of different age groups and levels of education. It is possible to measure the rate of education using discounting cash flow techniques, which measure the present value of

both costs and future benefits. Returns on education have been calculated for many countries and have been summarized to be: -

- returns on primary education are higher than the returns on other levels of education;
- private returns exceed social returns, especially at the university level;
- Returns on education proved to be higher in lower income level countries. (Hicks; 1987)

1. Financing Education

International development trends of the 1960s had particularly emphasized the importance of education for human development leading to economic development. Prominent economists like Shultz and Dension had proved that education contributes directly to Gross National Product, by increasing the efficiency and productivity of manpower. Moreover, the increasing demand for education, free-education policies, and the general growth of population and increasing need for human capital formation to meet the needs of the labor market, have increased demand for public education in the newly independent and developing nation states. Egypt has followed the same pattern throughout the 1960s, even though its budget commitment faded during the 1970s and 1980s. This was confirmed by the findings of a comparative study researching expenditure on education as a proportion of GNP in some Arab countries, that illustrates that while Egypt's ranged around 5.2 percent, Jordan allocated around 7.1 percent of GNP and Saudi Arabia up to 8.9 percent of GNP. Algeria had the highest percentage at 10.8 percent. (Ministry of Education; 1995)

Percentage of Government Expenditures on Education as compared to GNP in Arab countries in 1985	
Algeria	10.8%
Saudi Arabia	8.9%
Morocco	7.9%
Jordan	7.1%
Tunisia	5.9%
Egypt	5.2%

Recurrent Public Expenditures on Individual Students in Different Levels of Education for (1988/89) in US Dollars (MOE; 1995)

Country Name	Individual's share of GDP	Recurrent expenditures on individuals in various levels of education	
		Basic Education	Higher Education
Egypt	630.0	88.2	485.1
Morocco	930.0	111.6	1,441.5
Algeria	2,170.0	---	3,298.0
USA	21,100.0	3,798.0	11,183.0
United Kingdom	14,570.0	2,185.5	7,139.3

However, as it stated that education was the national project of the 1990s, state spending on education consistently increased throughout the decade. Starting from 4.6 billion Egyptian pounds in fiscal year 1990/91, spending on education increased to 16.8 billion Egyptian pounds in 1998/99. (Nasser; 2000) Allocation for education reached 20.6 billion Egyptian pounds in 2001/2002, accounting for 20 percent of the state budget. (Al-Ahram; January 16th, 2001), percentage that ranks highly against international standards since the average budget in OECD countries is around 7 percent and is lower still in developing

countries. In his report "Education in Egypt" presented to DANIDA, Mahmoud Mohieddin stated that state investment in education has compared favorably with other countries at Egypt's stage of development, as expenditures ranged around 3.9 percent of the GDP and around 9.8 percent of the Egyptian state budget during the early 1990s. This, however, is not very significant in absolute figures because Egypt's GDP is low; therefore the absolute amount of expenditure on education has not met actual need. (Mohieddin; 1994) Nevertheless, persistent state commitments to education reform policy is also reflected in, PM Atef Ebeid's speech to the preparatory meeting of the conference on secondary education reform in December 2000. Ebeid announced that the state planned an increase in the annual education budget to a minimum of 25 billion Egyptian Pounds per year for the next ten years. (Al-Ahram; December 21, 2000)

Ultimately, state budgets throughout the 1990s reflected a high degree of government commitment to education as its national project. And while the goodwill towards education had amounted to little more than slogans in previous decades, during the 1990s they were translated into a sizable portion of the state budget as spending on education doubled that reflected policy reform objectives.

2. Allocation

This leads us to the debate over allocation conducted by Egyptian economists during the late 1980s and early 1990s. For the most part, economists had repeatedly complained that state spending on education revealed a strong bias towards secondary and higher education compared with basic education, as shown by the ratios of students' distributed across those stages and the economic and social externalities of the

different stages of education. The allocation of resources to basic education, according to Ismail, increased by 50 percent from 1986 to 1989. However, the increase in the allocated budget for primary education was insufficient because of the increasing number of students inside the classrooms and the increasing phenomenon of three-shift government schools. (Ismail; 1994) The total number of students enrolled in the various levels of education in Egypt (primary, secondary, and high) increased from 5.3 million in 1970/71 to 7.7 million in 1980/81 and to 11.6 million in 1989/90. It grew to 13.5 million in 1993/94. (CAPMAS; 1995)

Distribution of Students over the Different

Levels of Education in 1993/94

Level of Education	No. of students	% to Total Number
Primary	7,049,549	52%
Preparatory	3,353,358	25%
Secondary	2,466,609	18%
High	612,844	5%

In her report on poverty in Egypt, Aida Seif-El-Dawla maintains that state allocations to primary education, which accounted for 77 percent of students in all levels of education, amounted to less than one third of total education expenditure (capital investments and wages). (Seif-El-Dawla; 1998) The preparatory level accounted for 12 percent, while secondary and university education levels accounted for over 50 percent of total spending. Reforming education would require committing of at least 12.5 percent of government public spending, argues Mohieddin; who adds that the budget allocated to education is grossly insufficient, and that out of the total recurrent expenditure allocated to basic education in 1989/90, approximately 94 percent was spent on wages. (Mohieddin; 1994) Moreover, the bias in allocation was

not only towards higher levels of education against basic education, but also towards urban rather than rural basic education. This was proved by a survey conducted by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), together with the Social Fund for Development SFD in 1993. The Survey established that even though the distribution of public primary schools between urban and rural areas has been more or less similar, the availability of higher levels of education was not so equitable. This inequality in the delivery of the educational services between urban and rural areas, maintains Mona El-Baradei, was evident in enrollment rates and educational achievement of the people in the two regions. (El-Baradei; 2000) The poor performance of education policies caused an educational crisis that resulted in Egypt being ranked 81st on the Schooling Index and 128 on the international educational scale, in addition to an illiteracy rate of 49 percent. Basic education, particularly in rural areas, suffered from poor quality, high repetition and drop out rates and wide gender gaps. state awareness about this inequitable distribution of allocations and intentions to alter it were disclosed in the MOE executive summary of education strategies for the 1990s, announcing shifts of state allocation in favor of basic education, with special attention to girls' education in order to reduce the gender gap in enrollment.

On the other hand, many Egyptian intellectuals warn against directing resources away from higher education and scientific research, fearing that this would result in a scarcity of research and development in the areas of sophisticated technologies, leading to a constant dependency on foreign technology and know-how and creating a subservient society and culture, a society with no intellectual, scientific or administrative classes able to engage in development. In an economic version of the conspiracy theory, an Egyptian professor of education maintains that the industrial world encourages and imposes

such trends in order to establish a status quo of economic and cultural dependency in which the developing world remains a world of consumers and cheap labor. (Personal interview; May 2002) Likewise, Fayez Mina criticizes the way in which researchers interpret higher allocations to university education in terms of a disparity. He maintains that it is natural that expenditures on university students are higher than those allocated to lower levels of education and that the level of expenditure differs among the various types of higher education. He concludes that the discrepancy in allocation among the various levels of education is not a valid argument for shifting resources away from higher education. (Mina; 2001) The argument of these intellectuals is not to favor higher education at the expense of basic education but to increase resources to both.

Conversely, the World Bank argues against the disparity in education allocations towards higher education using the rationale of social equity and socio-economic mobility. The World Bank argument is that in countries where less and less economically underprivileged people have access to basic education, let alone higher education, public funds for higher education tend to finance the rich who manage to get their children into higher education. Therefore, allocations need to be shifted in order to enlarge the scope of beneficiaries and create greater horizontal equity among classes, spatial areas and genders.

3. Shifts in Budgeting and Allocation Inspired by International Assistance

Interestingly, the education policy reviews of the MOE were compatible with international organizations' guidelines, modeled on the Education For All Conference and structural adjustments, which were in turn, dictated by the IMF and World Bank. These institutions directed most

of their meager financial aid to the education sector (only 2 percent of total development assistance to Egypt) to technical, secondary and higher education, giving lower priority to basic education, in line with Egyptian government priorities. It was not until the beginning of the 1990s that policy makers considered the need to alter the allocation bias against basic education, rural areas and the poor. The World Bank's approach to basic education as one of the tools of poverty eradication around the world has been reflected in its policies and has shaped other donor approaches. Correspondingly, the OECD, the European Union and other bilateral donors, such as USAID, CIDA and DANIDA have shaped their financing and allocation policies in line with this model. The Specific Financing Agreement between the European Community and Egypt in 1997 stated; "The European Community maintains that reforming basic education is the key to achieving social and economic equity in Egypt and reducing unemployment. The education enhancement program is totally compatible with the EU Ministers' decree of 'Horizon 2000 for education and training (1994)' which had recommended that assistance should be provided for health and education (...) and that European Union's support for education enhancement in Egypt is conditioned by Egypt's adherence to the structural reforms of the sector (specified in annex number 3). The third annex specifies that the Egyptian Government's commitment to structural reforms in the education sector implies that total educational expenditures would account for 19 percent of total public current and investment expenditures and that a minimum of 50 percent of education expenditures would be allocated to compulsory (basic) education. (EU Commission in Egypt; 1997) This was confirmed by an official letter sent by the minister of education to the vice president of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa, on 23 June 1996. The letter states that: "the Government will maintain its total educational expenditures at no less than the current level of nineteen percent of total public current and investment

expenditure, and will ensure that at least fifty percent of Government education expenditure is allocated to compulsory education. In addition, the Government is committed to allocating no less than fifteen percent of current expenditures in basic education to non-wage educational expenditures." (World Bank Staff Appraisal Report; 1996) Actually, in the year 2000-01 the Ministry of Education allocated 66 percent of its total expenditures to basic and secondary education in order to improve universal access to education and reach the poor and remote areas of the country (Saunders; 2002), while allocations for higher education have decreased from 47 percent in 1990-91 to 35 percent in 1996-97. (Mina; 2001)

This review of the reconstruction of education policy priorities and state budgeting and allocation trends reveals that the Egyptian government's policy priorities and allocation strategies have followed those of donors and international development agencies. The Egyptian Government benefited from the international organizations' Education For All campaign to strengthen its initial commitment to education reforms, and benefited from increasing assistance to the sector in order to carry through its 'national project of the 1990s', for education. In order to attract the highest resources from international development assistance agencies, decision-makers tailored their policy objectives to make them compatible with donors' agendas and welcomed donor propositions in terms of instituting research and executive units as well as shaping budget allocation and distribution. MOE formulation and budget planning for reforms is a clear example of the international relations rationalist model that interprets domestic actors' adherence to donors' agendas in the light of utilitarian and pragmatic motives.

Conclusion:

The intensified commitment of international development assistance to the production of studies assessing the state of basic education in Egypt reflects increasing interest in the sector, while the minor involvement of MOE internal research units reveals their distance from decision-making circles, as well as the insufficiency of research facilities in the Ministry of Education. The key initiatives for diagnosing the basic education system have mostly originated outside the formal MOE structure and its technocrats, but were coordinated with the Egyptian minister of education. On the assumption that actors steering policy initiation are those who identify policy issues and place them on the policy agenda, we can infer that the active participation of international organizations and donor agencies in the diagnosis of education problems, has given them a key role in education policy initiation and formulation in Egypt.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that policies were entirely determined by foreign development assistance agencies. The fact that the Egyptian minister of education had planned for consultative committees and conferences aiming at education reform plans three years before the Jomtien EFA Conference of 1990 indicates that the reform initiatives had already been conceived internally within the Egyptian Government. The government had already developed an interest in education reform policies before the launching of the Jomtien EFA campaign, and MOE's flexibility in adopting the Education For All goals was a way of accepting to international organizations' funding. International organizations and donors have revitalized the Egyptian state's plans for education reform that were previously constrained by meager resources and insufficient institutional capacities. This state of affairs is a clear illustration of the international relations rationalist model at work, which suggests that domestic actors adopt

the policy recommendations of donors to benefit from technical and financial assistance and gain legitimacy for their policy choices on the international and domestic levels. (Jacoby; 2000)

In accordance with the Education for All goals, the main objectives of the education reform program in the 1990s were a) to increase access to basic education b) to improve equity across gender, social groups and areas in the country and c) to raise the quality, relevance and efficiency of basic education. The educational establishment in Egypt was limited in its managerial and technical capacity and lacking information about the sector, and therefore unable to carry out national policy analysis and formulation. Consequently, the education reform project was mostly conceived outside Egyptian educational institutions and later reinstalled within it for purposes of policy implementation. In cooperation with the USAID and the World Bank, five new semi-autonomous institutions were established within the MOE in order to perform policy planning and monitoring tasks. These units report directly to the minister and do not have formal organizational communication with other MOE units. In many cases they have a parallel structure and function to other existing units and are thought to duplicate their functions.

Meanwhile the state's budgeting decisions have reflected its political commitment to the education project and state allocations to education have doubled in the 1990s. The Egyptian government maintained its total educational expenditures at no less than the current level of nineteen percent of total public current and investment expenditure, and has ensured that at least fifty percent of Government education expenditure is allocated to compulsory education. This review of the reconstruction of education policy priorities and state budgeting and allocation trends reveals that the Egyptian government's policy priorities and allocation

strategies have followed those of donors and international development agencies.

Taking a look at the formation and effectiveness of actors that could potentially have participated in education policy initiation and formulation in the early 1990s, we see that decision-making in education was to a great extent centralized and personalized. On the one hand the poor capacities and distance from power or formalistic involvement of the various actors such as political parties, teachers' union, civil society associations, and independent intellectuals, made them ineffective and incapable of participation in the decision making process. And on the other hand, the authoritarian bureaucracy has not facilitated the participation in the policy initiation or formulation process of subordinate groups that derive their competence from the state. This institutional context has not facilitated the embeddedness of the policy reforms in the domestic setting and has deterred the achievement of 'domestic resonance' for such policies.

In this environment, the actors that were most effectively involved in agenda setting were those outside the state machine, and which had the political, technical and financial capacity needed by the state to carry out its national project. In other words, donors and international agencies.

Chapter 6

The Impact of Development Assistance On Basic Education Policy Implementation

Introduction:

The socialization of policy reforms that leads to their institutionalization and internalization occurs mostly during the process of policy implementation. Because implementation is both affected by and reflects the structures, functions, as well as formal and informal cultures of implementing institutions, in order to examine the degree of institutionalization and internalization of reforms. It is essential to conduct a structural and behavioral organizational analysis of the Ministry of Education and other actors involved in the implementation process

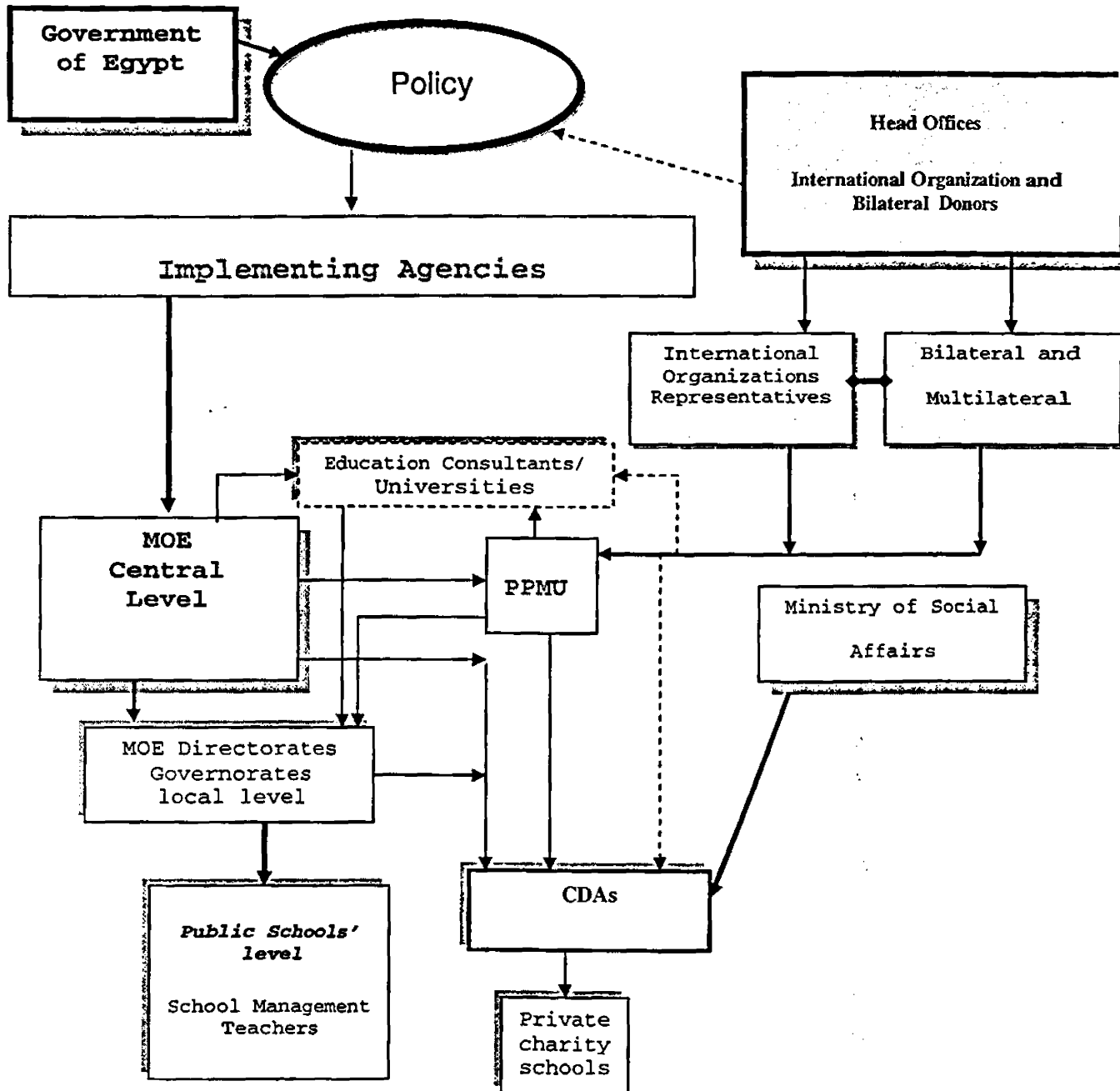
The successful socialization of a particular policy, according to international relations theorists, should internalize the norms and values promoted by the policy and habitualize them in the daily practices of the institution. (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998 and Meyer; 1977) To effectively socialize policies it is important to persuade implementing institutions to embed these norms in their formal and informal cultures and integrate them in their daily operational procedures.

In their formulation, policies often appear extensive and promising, but their actual effectiveness and applicability is revealed throughout the implementation phase, given that policy implementation is a complex and long-term multilevel process that involves various different implementing agencies as well as the different public groups targeted by the policy. In the case of education policy, implementing agencies extend from the central government agencies of the Ministry of Education and local directorates, to the smallest schools in the most dispersed hamlets. Moreover, implementing agencies encompass international organizations, donor agencies sponsoring and monitoring programs determined by joint agreements, as well as research centers,

consultants, civil society organizations and other associations involved in the implementation process (see the Policy Implementation Diagram). All the above mentioned institutions in charge of delivering basic education target a wide range of school-age-children coming from various geographic regions, socio-economic classes, and local traditions. In order to understand the impact of development assistance on the process of policy implementation we need to identify the implementing agencies, their organizational structures, cultures, formal and informal systems of communication, as well as budget disbursement as a tool of policy implementation.

The chapter aims to assess the degree of embeddedness of reforms among the various actors in order to discover if reforms were actually internalized in the formal structures and actual work activities. It shows that foreign development assistance agencies have taken a leading role in the implementation process on many levels. A second finding is that donor sponsored implementation units have been neither institutionalized nor internalized within the existing educational system. On the contrary, their dissonance with domestic organizational structures and cultures has often resulted in recurrent conflicts that have impeded implementation. The poor participation of domestic actors and the failure to establish a sense of 'ownership of reforms' among significant domestic actors have all symptoms of the unsuccessful socialization of policy reforms in the process of implementation.

Policy Implementation Diagram



- Orange boxes represent International Organizations and Donors
- Yellow boxes represent MOE institutions
- White boxes represent private institutions, civil society and academics that are independent from the MOE
- Dotted lines represent indirect influence as opposed to solid lines that represent direct influence

A. Development Assistance and the Educational Administrative Apparatus

1. The Selection of the Minister of Education:

According to the constructivist approach, the international socialization of policy reforms is facilitated by the presence of technocrats and senior officials who promote the diffusion of the norms and values advocated by reforms. These experts and officials are themselves "exposed to norms and ideas about 'appropriate' public policies in their professional training." (Chwieroth; 2003) This is true in the Egyptian case, where international organizations encourage the recruitment of technocrats and senior officials who are likely to facilitate the socialization of their reforms. At the same time, the Egyptian state adopts a utilitarian rationale in its selection of senior officials in order to benefit from development assistance and acquire the approval and support of international community, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The position of minister of education has always been considered an important political post and the Minister is often a notable professional from outside the administrative apparatus of the Ministry of Education. In many cases, the Minister (who has always been a male professional) has also been an active and devoted member of the National Democratic Party (the state majority party presided over by President Mubarak). The present minister of education, who was appointed in 1991 and who has overseen the education reform process throughout the 1990s is Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin. The Minister, a physician has a political background as an active member of the NDP and the old Socialist Union of the 1960s, has a Ph.D. in Pediatrics (1959) and enjoys good connections with the circles of political power. Bahaaeddin was also awarded the World Health Organization

Pediatrics prize in 1989 and is a member of numerous international pediatric societies and associations.

The 1990s were characterized by appointing ministers who embrace the current spirit of neo-liberalism. Key posts in the Cabinet have been assigned to figures that have a good rapport with international organizations, donor agencies and the international community, and who received their degree (MA's and PhDs) from Western Europe or the USA. They have often been figures who had already worked for international organizations and who would be candidates for senior and consultant posts in the same type of institutions once they are out of the cabinet, in case they do not get honorary appointments in the Shura (consultative) council. This was very much the case of Minister Fathi Sorour (appointed in 1986) and the case of Minister Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin. Sorour was appointed, at the conceptualization stage of the education reform program. His appointment was described by Fernando Reimers and Noel McGinn in their book, *Informed Dialogue: Using Research to Shape Education Policy around the World* (1997), as a turning point for education policy making in Egypt. They relate this optimism to the fact that Minister Sorour was Egypt's representative in UNESCO. Therefore, he had a good base of communication with such organizations and agencies and shared a common working language with them. Reimers maintains that he was appointed during a period when Mubarak was planning his economic and education reforms and counting on cooperation with international institutions and aid agencies for the implementation of such programs. After appointing Fathi Sorour to preside over the Egyptian People's Assembly (Parliament), the appointment of Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin was met with the same enthusiasm from development assistance agencies and international organizations.

The tendency to appoint cabinet members with donor-oriented experiences and endorsed by donor agencies has been a general trend in the Cabinet of Ministers and not unique to the Ministry of Education. One of the clearest examples of favoring candidates predisposed towards donor approaches and the drive toward market-oriented economy is the selection of Prime Minister Atef Ebeid in 2000. During his previous task as Minister of Public Enterprise, Administrative Development and Environmental Affairs, Ebeid had often taken part of important state delegations to the World Bank and the IMF as well as other donor agencies. (Valsan; 1997) In his previous ministerial post Ebeid was also responsible for privatizing large public sector enterprise. In a recent TV interview (broadcasted on Egyptian national television on August 2003), P.M. Ebeid stated that Egypt is definitely a market-oriented state when asked whether Egypt was a capitalist or a socialist country.

Another example, is the selection of the Minister of Planning, Osman Mohamed Osman, in Ebeid's Cabinet, who was the director of the Institute of National Planning, established and financed by the UNDP. The Ministers are expected to raise funds in the forms of grants and soft loans, negotiating with donors and international funding institutions besides coordinating the implementations of donor-funded programs. Therefore, ministers are expected to be abreast of international development trends, donors' agendas, and able to devise proposals that are most likely to attract donors' interest and thus funding and/or technical assistance. These capacities are necessary for politicians and senior executive of countries striving for development assistance, especially when powerful donors such as the European Union and funding institutions like the Bretton Woods institutions allocate assistance in terms of common funds to be distributed according to the merit of the projects submitted. Consequently, the opportunities of a country to attract assistance are

linked to its capacity to produce more professional proposals that may have a greater chance of gaining larger shares of the aid.

2. The Ministry of Education as the Prime Implementing Agency

The decentralization and democratization of educational institutions are at the heart of policy reforms in the 1990s. Therefore, it is important to analyze the structure and culture of the MOE in order to assess the internalization of democratic norms within educational institutions.

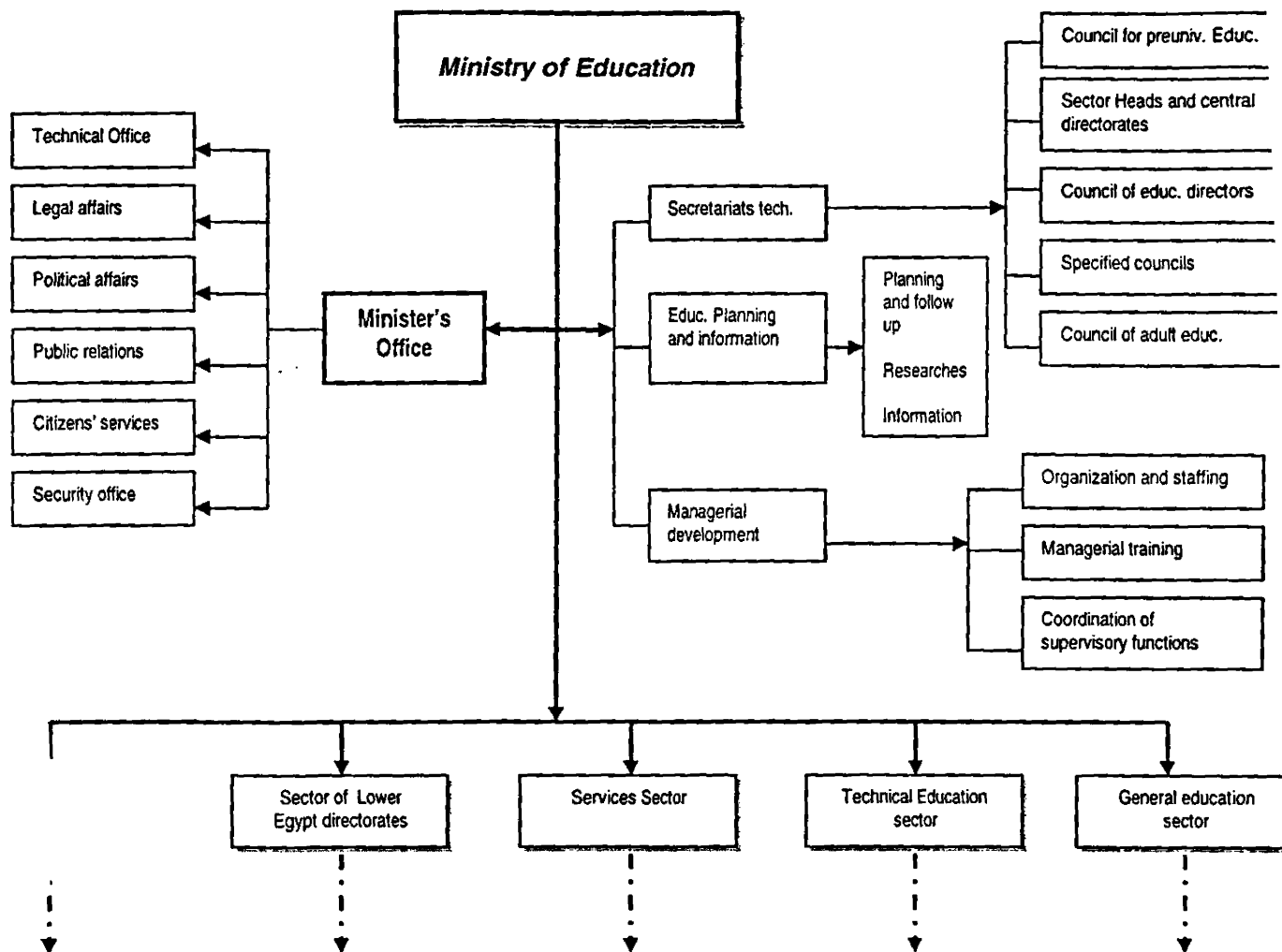
The Egyptian Ministry of Education is responsible for pre-university education policies' planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation. It determines curricula, textbooks, teaching aids and teachers recruitment, training and remuneration. The MOE is also in charge of statistical and economic assessments of the educational process, and compiling and issuing annual assessment reports. The MOE is expected to communicate and coordinate with the Ministry of Higher Education which supervises higher education programs. (UNESCO; 2000)

The MOE is as centralized as all other administrative apparatuses of the executive branch of the Egyptian state, yet some degree of administrative de-concentration is achieved through Educational Directorates. Egypt is spatially and administratively divided into 26 governorates (geographic and administrative regions) with 76 education directorates. These belong to the various governorates and are accountable to the MOE, and are classified into three levels according to the strategic importance of their locations and the number of schools they supervise. The first level directorates are in Cairo and Alexandria, while second level directorates are in the provinces of governorates; and third level directorates are located in provinces

with fewer schools. They are in charge of all systematic matters connected with to the local schools in each governorate. Besides being delegated to execute the central education policies of the MOE, the Directorates supervise local human resource management, appraise local educational requirements and propose programs and projects in relation to those needs. Consequently, they determine the dates of vacations and timetables of schools, and administer the examination of the basic education (primary and preparatory) certificates within the governorate. They also participate in illiteracy eradication campaigns and other forms of non-formal education programs on the local level. The MOE is responsible for pre-school (kindergarten), basic (primary and preparatory), and secondary (general, technical and vocational) education. These educational stages cover students from the ages of 4 to 17. They are distributed as follows: kindergarten (2 years); primary (5 years, but six years from 2001/2); preparatory (3 years); and secondary (from 3 to 5 years) depending on whether it is general, technical or vocational. The MOE also supervises private and foreign educational institutions. Educational research is conducted by the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). Research is usually conducted by MA and Ph.D. researchers, and statistical data are published in annual yearbooks that carry data collected at the district and state levels. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997)

Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education

(Egypt Human Development Report 1998/99)



The above organizational chart illustrates the mechanistic organizational structure¹ of the MOE, which indicates a centralized decision authority, a high horizontal differentiation among levels of authority, rigid hierarchical relationships and a high degree of

¹ Mechanistic organizational structures (as opposed to organic structures) are rigid and rely on authority and a well defined hierarchy to facilitate their coordination. On the other hand, organic structures are flexible, adaptive and achieve coordination through participatory communication. (Robbins; 1994)

formalization of communication channels typical of public institutions and enterprises. (Chandler; 1962) The organizational structure revolves around the Minister, and the various sub-units and directorates are not organizationally linked among themselves, reflecting a poor level of horizontal communication and coordination. All organizational communication is originated centrally from the minister's office and flows vertically downwards.

3. The Authoritarian Organizational Culture of the MOE

The centralized and hierarchical nature of the Ministry of Education is faithful to the organizational structure of the civil service in Egypt. A civil service that is regularly attributed to the legacy of the highly centralized 'hydraulic society', that has characterized Egypt ever since the Pharos.¹ (Valsan; 1997) Like other public institutions, the MOE has a large bureaucracy with a promotion system based on seniority rather than performance or merit. With a basic monthly salary of around US \$ 30, rising to US \$ 70 with bonuses and supplementary payments controlled by senior management, employees are encouraged to be in the good books of their superiors. In addition to being structurally rooted, submission to one's superiors is necessary to secure the supplementary payments and tolerance for employees' eventual absenteeism when they take other part-time jobs that help them make ends meet. The top-down hierarchical and authoritarian culture of the MOE bureaucracy was confirmed by an interesting observation made during the fieldwork for this study. During a visit to the MOE offices to interview one of the directors of an educational

¹The 'hydraulic society' describes the agricultural society that has historically relied on river irrigation and depended on a central authority that manages to control the river resources by constructing water ducts, dams and irrigation channels, and is able to distribute water resources among the farmers. Such central authorities usually have the power to allocate resources, extract taxes and use a sophisticated bureaucracy in the management of such resources.

sector, the employees under the director working in modest offices and wearing very simple but neat dresses were waiting for the arrival of their superior, approaching his secretary to ask her to allow them in as he arrives to present him their requests. Alerted about his arrival by one of the janitors they stood up and the secretary hurried to turn on the air-conditioner in his office (obviously their offices had old fans) so that he finds the relatively more luxurious office cool enough as he enters it. As he arrived at the office, he had a haughty attitude and someone following him carried his jacket and bag. The interesting thing is that this director had been one of their ordinary colleagues until he reached this post by seniority and his salary may not have exceeded US \$ 500 /month (including bonuses and supplementary payments). The authority and prestige in his office is derived solely from his bureaucratic rank that gives him the authority to punish or reward his less senior colleagues. In the absence of significant financial compensation for reaching a senior position after long years of service and an unfulfilling professional career, the authority over fellow colleagues probably serves as a self-actualizing psychological reward to the civil servant by the end of a long and often unsatisfactory bureaucratic career. This aspect of the MOE informal culture may help explain the high degree of resistance to any decentralization or delegation of authority.

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Another feature of the centralized hierarchic culture of the civil service and consequently of the MOE, is the huge amount of statutes and civil service laws (nearly 54,000) stipulating hierarchical control of one level of bureaucracy over the other, devised over time to systemize procedures and prevent corruption and favoritism. (Valsan; 1997) Fearing accusations of corruption, laxity or mismanagement, ministry officials tend to wait for 'decisions from above' and avoid making decisions themselves in order to avoid any potential negative consequences from such decisions. Besides, they may

turn a blind eye to possible executive misdeeds or waste, as long as formal bureaucratic procedures are followed. (Mina; 2001) Obviously, besides restraining corruption, this massive heritage of decrees, statutes and regulations (sometimes contradicting each other) has led to a tangle of red tape and institutionalized inefficiency. This situation ensures that little gets done, and makes it difficult to resort to contingency strategies in policy implementation and accomplishment. The contingency theory in implementing education reform policies in developing countries, explains Denis Rondinelli, proposes that the management process and structures required by organizations operating in stable environments and performing conventional tasks, is different from the management style and structures necessary for organizations performing innovative tasks in inconsistent environments. (Rondinelli et. al.; 1990) This means that the success of the implementation process depends both on the projects' design and the flexibility of implementing agencies and their capacity to adopt their implementation measures to the various challenges. In other words there is no single model that can be successfully applied to all systems at all levels.

One among several examples for this counter-productive red tape is the case of scarce use of personal computers already available for instruction in public schools. The education reform program planned the distribution of personal computers to schools, as part of the MOE policy towards introducing information technology to the instruction facilities, and ordering teachers to operate these machines. Yet, it discouraged the teachers from using the computers themselves, making them liable of any damage or malfunction of the computers, and deducting the repair costs from their meager salaries (ranging from US \$ 35 to 150 per month). This regulation resulted in leaving several hundred personal computers unused in the locked offices of several schools. (Personal interview with World Bank officer, March 2001) This

situation was encountered by issuing more MOE decrees announcing the penalization of any schoolteacher who avoids using the computers for instruction. (*Al-Ahram*: Mamdouh Shaaban; October 2, 2000; and *Al-Ahram*; January 29, 2001) This 'damned if I do and damned if I don't' situation has imposed education reforms that were introduced without actual participation and implemented them through a series of threats of financial and/or administrative reprimands.

In the absence of valid professional or financial reward systems, penalization has become the only tool of administrative control or motivation. Actually, news about the punishment of various 'negligent' MOE directorates' officials, school administrators and teachers after a sudden field visit from the minister of education are frequently published in daily newspapers. Such news articles are often published to demonstrate the MOE's resolve and the seriousness and commitment of mid-level officials, administrators and teachers to the education reform policies. The Minister's "planned and unplanned" visits to schools are referred to in the MOE's, *Education for All 2000 Assessment report*, as a strategy of improving educational management. These visits, according to the report, are meant to communicate concern for the actual implementation of the educational reform strategy, and enhance the sense of commitment, assuring teachers and administrators of their concerns and priorities as well as generating societal confidence in the reform process. (Ministry of Education; 2000) However, the news about the 'planned and unplanned' inspection visits come through as a tool of state control aiming at supervising the educational process and castigating lax or corrupt employees. Throughout the year 2001, the visits of the Minister were reported monthly in daily newspapers announcing the penalization of a number of negligent officials. The news headlines quoting the Minister included phrases such as: "No leniency for any remissness and punishment for senior employees even before the junior ones"; "No concession for any

corruption, we will remain the guardians of the educational mission;" and "Dismissing all negligent and lax officials from senior positions in the educational institution." Some news articles also report discharging some directors for not implementing reform policies or not following up on the execution of ministerial decrees. (*Al-Gomhoureya*; December 3, 2001) The news coverage and the Minister's declarations do not reflect dialogue, nor argumentative persuasion and certainly not participation, but top-down control and subordination.

Another example of formalism is the videoconference Network installed by the MOE to connect educational Directorates throughout the country, in cooperation with donors. The Videoconference is considered the pride of the reform process, mentioned in international conferences as the achievement of the successful automation and modernization of the Egyptian educational system. Besides, it is frequently mentioned by MOE press releases to daily newspapers as evidence of a democratization of the education process. "To realize the principle of democracy, wide scale periodical conferences are held via video conferencing in which several thinkers, politicians, educationalists and returnees from foreign training programs, and others ... take part in such conferences;" states the MOE in its publications. (Ministry of Education: *Mubarak and Education*; 2001) Frequent meetings are held between the Minister and the MOE senior and junior officials through the networks and sometimes with students. 'And in some cases, students even stood up and expressed their perplexities about certain aspects of education to the Minister,' stated an MOE press release, in order to highlight the degree of democracy such a network allows. (*Al-Ahram*: Sayed Ali; July 8, 2001) However, an NGO representative commented that the Videoconference is a 'big joke' in the communication and participation and training at the MOE. "It is often a one-way top-down channel of communication," the NGO representative said, "where local staff in the various directorates participate as passive listeners. In

some cases, if the Minister noticed a scarce attendance from the other side of the screen (at the side of the local directorates) he ordered an administrative inquiry and punished absentees." (Personal interview; April 2002) The videoconference is a tool of communication technology, and its availability is not a sign of democratic and organic communication if the ruling pattern is top-down communication where compliance and obedience to the superior is the most important value.

This portrays a pattern of significant power distance, where society accepts that the unequal distribution of political and economic power is also reflected in an unequal distribution of power and authority in state institutions and organizations. (Hofstede; 1980) This acceptance of power distance is an expression of a societal predisposition to accept authoritarianism, long ingrained by an authoritarian and totalitarian political culture. However, even though this general acceptance tolerates paternalistic authoritarianism, the widespread attitude becomes one of the defiance to such authority. In other words, it accepts it nominally but in practice works around it. For instance, employees will fear their seniors and fake compliance with decrees, but reduce their input and try to maximize their benefits, either by increasing absenteeism and procrastination, or by engaging in corruption and favoritism. This paternalistic pattern exempts them from individual initiative and responsibility because it blurs accountability.

B. The MOE's Implementation of Reforms:

Reformers repeatedly claim that in order to achieve universal access to basic education, the MOE must eliminate multiple shifts in schools and improve the quality of instruction and learning. These are the

objectives of reform policies, as major transformations have to be carried out on various institutional levels. The suggested strategies of reform have encompassed, national bureaucracy, local education authorities and local communities involved in the reform process. That is, reforms should work on decentralizing the MOE's structure on the central and directorate levels, improving school management and improving teachers' preparation and remuneration, which would in turn improve the quality of learning. (UNDP and UNESCO; 1996) Besides administrative reform and improving teachers' performance, education policy reform has also planned to eliminate multiple school shifts and the enhancement of the learning environment. This would be achieved by implementing a plan of school construction and providing modern instructional facilities such as personal computers, and installing the video-conference network linking the MOE with educational Directorates and schools all over the country.

The MOE's institutional capacity was evaluated by the World Bank Staff Appraisal Report of 1993 as weak and insufficient to carry out reforms and allocate resources equitably to maximize effectiveness, and therefore unable to achieve the objectives of educational reform. The same report defined the problems to be the limited institutional and managerial capacities of the MOE that have been reflected in poor administrative skills and absence of coordination among the different units, in addition to the poor quality of education due to the low morale of teachers, the lack of instructional materials and inadequate access to education. (World Bank; 1993)

The rigid hierarchical organization of the educational sector on both the central and local levels does not allow participation and therefore ownership of reform efforts. In addition to poor professional and financial compensations, it has provided little motivation to MOE administrators and schoolteachers to implement

reforms. On the contrary, in many cases it has been the middle bureaucracy and schoolteachers who have resisted and hindered the implementation of policy reforms. The minister of education has held administrators and parents responsible for the problems of policy implementation. He also attributed this resistance to reforms to the internal structural inertia pushing for stability and fearing change, because of potential threats to established power relationships. (Al-Ahram: Labib Al Sebaai: Interview with minister of education; December 10, 2000) In this context, officials and middle bureaucracies adhere to formalized procedures and adopt a defensive position, viewing all changes, reorganization of work or organizational charts as a threat to the status quo. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that overcoming resistance to change within the MOE has often been dealt with by imposing more central controls and decrees, instead of improving horizontal organizational communication, participation and negotiation.

This issue was also raised by the Joint Supervision Mission of the World Bank, the EU and the PPMU in its report on the Education Enhancement Program in February 2002. The report stated that the Supervision Mission was concerned about the obvious lack of knowledge about the program among some key stakeholders, and that there is an urgent need that for effective coordination between all stakeholders and implementing actors at all level of the system. (EU Commission in Egypt: JSM:EEP; Feb. 2002) Ownership, which is a key concept in development administration, where stakeholders need to actively participate in planning for reforms and internalize policy objectives, guarantees a fuller support and commitment of stakeholders in the implementation phase. Participation in the decision making process may guarantee commitment to reforms, since it is unlikely that individuals will resist a change in which they have participated. (Robbins; 1994) The authoritarian bureaucratic culture of the MOE has not assimilated

the importance of communicating the purposes of reforms to middle and junior bureaucrats and schoolteachers, and has not involved them in the decision making process.

Another instance of the negative impact of the lack of MOE staff participation in the decision making process is the position of one of the officials working in one of the donor-sponsored units in charge of implementing policy on girls' education. When asked about MOE priorities for education reform, the expert listed school construction, MOE capacity building and the provision of educational facilities. When I asked why he did not mention girl's education as a priority, he replied:

"Girls' education is a 'private objective' for donors that is not based on an actual need. There is no real gap in enrollment between girls and boys in basic education. The difference in enrollment is a difference in the real numbers of boys and girls. For instance there are more boys than girls in that age group and it is logical that there are more boys in schools. When we consider that girls' education is a problem in Upper Egypt, we see that on the national level there is no gap, because there are more girls than boys in the north, and more boys than girls in the south. However, the problem of girls' education would be automatically resolved if the state provided quality schools near villages.

Girls' education is part of the entire problem (which is a lack of schools) and is not a major problem. We should ask ourselves if we can provide each girl with an appropriate school.

That is, can we provide supply before creating the demand? Programs such as the community schools and the one-class school addressing girls' education prove to be economically unfeasible because they have a small number of girl students. Donors have their own priorities that may represent problems that can be resolved if the original general problem is resolved."

Other personal interviews with other Egyptian education experts and content analysis of several MOE reports, illustrate that the above

mentioned opinion about the issue of girls' education does not reflect the MOE official position or the informal position of senior state officials. Moreover, when I shared the argument with the international education expert Nader Fergany, he commented that empirical research and facts do not support the opinion that girls' education is not a priority and that all reports indicate that special efforts are to be exerted towards the achievement of more gender equity in basic education in Egypt. Fergany attributed the lack of the belief of the previously mentioned official in the issue of girls' education to misinformation. This leads to the important question: why wasn't this MOE official, who is directly involved in the implementation process, fully informed and sensitized about the education policy objectives and their rationales? This question that brings us back to the issue of centralized decision-making and vertically downward lines of command, which require politicians and senior officials to set policies and lower levels to obediently implement them without either participating in the formulation of policies or even comprehending their purpose.

**C. MOE Interaction with Development Assistance Agencies:
Organizational Structures and Cultures**

An important aspect of the implementation of policy reforms is the interaction of the implementing agencies with bilateral donors and international development and funding organizations involved in basic education reform. Development assistance agencies and donors come in to the implementation process with their own diverse organizational structures and cultures, bureaucratic systems and regulations. They collaborate with the MOE units, the education civil society associations and coordinate with each other, bound by the regulations set on the central levels in their head offices abroad. Besides those

international organizations providing technical assistance such as the UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP, the three major donors and funding bilateral and multilateral agencies active in the field of basic education during the 1990s have been USAID, the World Bank and the European Union.

These three large institutions have large bureaucracies, institutional regulations and strict procedures, as well as an organizational culture of their own. Various donors often have different priorities and agendas as well as different levels of leverage over the development programs they co-sponsor. While USAID has had a long standing history of influence over the development agenda in Egypt since the mid-1970s due to its large grants to the Egyptian state, other donors are also able to exert considerable pressure. Sven Holdar confirms this observation in his study of the political geography of foreign aid. He maintains that the emerging framework for cooperation on aid programs in the European Community allows greater coordination of its member states' aid programs and a greater negotiation power that has reduced the United States' past bilateral domination over aid. (Holdar; 1999)

A World Bank official claims that since the World Bank can only offer soft loans in the field of education, and since the Egyptian government refuses to implement a development program funded mainly by loans and requires aid in form of grants, donors like the EU, USAID and others exercise considerable power over the Bank's local policies. He added that the EU started out in the early 1990s as a large but not very influential donor because it lacked both a coherent strategy and administrative and technical capacity. However, this has changed over the years because the European Commission has begun investing in its own potential and policy-making capacity. (Personal interview; 2000) Internal power games and politics play a significant role among

international organizations that in many cases compete over final program objectives.

The diverse patterns of administrative structures and organizational cultures among the various development agencies and the MOE administrative apparatuses have resulted in friction at many levels of implementation. All three donors have their own regulations, procedures and organizational cultures that frequently conflict with those of the MOE causing deadlocks and stalemates for the implementation process. The different aspects of organization culture that may cause conflict are not only related to the different missions, functions and structures of those institutions, which vary from international organizations to bilateral donor-state agencies and executive state institutions (such as the MOE), but they also stem from national cultural differences. National cultures often embrace specific concepts of human nature, power distance and concepts of individualism versus collectivism, as well as time orientation. While general societal concepts of human nature determine the levels of institutional control over individual employees, power distance determines the level of accepted authoritarianism in a state bureaucracy. Time orientation indicates the importance of organizational planning and adherence to deadlines. These concepts are usually carried into the organizational cultures of the various institutions and influence informal as well as formal cultures.

Other than cultural differences, there is a mismatch between the MOE apparatus and the development agencies in terms of staff preparation, level of professional motivation and remuneration systems. Average MOE employees have mostly been a product of a poor educational system and assigned haphazardly to their posts because of the 1960s laws obliging the state to hire all university graduates in the public sector. They have been promoted by seniority and receive salaries that place them

among the poorer categories of Egyptian society. Employees of international development agencies and donors, on the other hand, often belong to the prestigious class of international experts or have enjoyed illustrious careers in the foreign services of their countries, thus enjoying high levels of professional preparation, motivation and lucrative remuneration. While foreign representatives and experts work in elegant air-conditioned offices equipped with modern facilities, MOE employees are squeezed into dim and run-down offices and only the senior officials have access to information technology. This mismatch of administrative capacities and levels of personal and professional motivation is not likely to produce a harmonious working relationship between the implementing agencies and donors.

In order to bypass the MOE bureaucracies, donors working on education have tended to establish executive units outside the MOE's formal structure, with recruitment policies and remuneration systems that match those of donor agencies rather than MOE levels. In many cases, administrative assistants and secretaries working in such donor-funded units earned three times more than an MOE deputy Minister. This incompatibility of organizational structures and cultures had proven unfruitful in past collaborations when mid-level state bureaucrats resisted the development programs. This was especially true of decisions that they had not endorsed either because they felt they were imposed on them or because they resented the fact that a foreign expert, alien to their realities would assume the authority and power to direct their work. "Sometimes they (referring to donors' representatives) refuse to deal with the present system and require drastic changes and do not recognize that they need to deal with the present system" said an MOE administrator in a personal interview in April 2001. The establishment of institutions outside the MOE, fully financed by donors, according to the World Bank report of 1993, have

been resisted by MOE staff and have proven to be unsustainable and counterproductive, especially because in most cases such units, established and funded by donors, have parallel structures to already existing units and have duplicated their functions, marginalizing still further the original MOE staff. (Adli; 1996) By 1992, after having benefited from USAID experience in the field, the international development assistance agencies led by the World Bank encouraged the Minister to establish a technical secretariat in his office to coordinate donor activities and provide technical and policy analysis to the MOE's senior management. This unit was funded by UNDP and implemented by the MOE.

D. Development Assistance and Institutional Development

The socialization (institutionalization and internalization) of reforms necessitates that they are embedded in both the structures and functions of the education institutions. Therefore, donors supporting education policy reforms sponsored institutional change within the MOE in order to facilitate the implementation and sustainability of policies.

Coordination and cooperation between the MOE (as the major implementing agency of education reform) and development assistance agencies (as important contributors and sponsors of institutional reform), was expected to be an intricate task. Therefore, the Education Enhancement Program implemented by the MOE in cooperation with development assistance agencies (mainly the EU and WB) created the Planning and Programming Management Unit (PPMU) in 1997. Financed by the World Bank and the EU and reporting directly to the Minister, the PPMU is responsible for programming, coordinating and monitoring implementation together with the MOE, Governorates and donors as well

as civil society associations. "Units like the PPMU are created to help implement projects and it is important to have professional staff and local experts ready to absorb and deal with reforms and innovations," said Galal Farag the head of Administration, logistics and HR department. Farag adds that the unit acts as the link and very often the buffer between the MOE system, which he describes as extremely decadent and centralized, and the donors' system, which he described as "advanced and calling for innovations." (Personal interview; April 2001)

The PPMU has a leading role in education reform policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The World Bank Staff Appraisal of 1996 attributes to it the following role:

- *"To assist governorates and implementing agencies in plan preparation.*
- *To facilitate cooperation between implementing agencies and governorates (organizing meetings, visits and seminars).*
- *To approve work plans and budget and reports from implementing agencies and governorates and release funds accordingly.*
- *To monitor and evaluate performance and provide feedback.*
- *To exercise financial control and ensure accountability for expenditure.*
- *To act as a clearinghouse for capacity building proposals from the MOE department, governorates and implementing agencies."*

These roles indicate the wide access, significant role and high degree of power the PPMU exercises over the implementation of education reform programs. The unit functions as the heart of the reform

process, it is linked to all circles of power in the decision-making process and provides resources (technical and financial) to all state implementing agencies as well as civil society associations. The PPMU is assigned policy planning, formulation, monitoring and implementation tasks on the central as well as directorate levels and is expected to assist in the capacity building of MOE units that should take over these functions upon the withdrawal of foreign funding.

The PPMU reports directly to the Minister and is composed of local experts and administrators. Nonetheless, it is directly linked to the World Bank and the European Union. The business cards of the senior and junior administrators and officials introduce their organizational affiliation as follows: "World Bank/European Union; Education Enhancement Program; Program Planning and Monitoring Unit." The unit is supported by donors' money for salaries and administrative facilities and the majority of the staff comes from outside the MOE apparatus, and has had previous work experience in the field, having worked for other donors operating in education such as USAID, CIDA and others. (Personal interview; April 2001) Donors' leverage over the PPMU is formalized through the supervision terms of the Education Enhancement Program which determines that in addition to an EU staff member placed in Cairo throughout the life of the project to facilitate implementation and supervision, two joint IDA-EU supervision missions are organized annually. The supervision missions are responsible for reviewing the development of the action working plan, and the "Government's public investment program for education, including a breakdown of investment by level of education." The project implementation and supervision stipulations entail that the joint supervision team has the task of focusing on the following:

"(a) The consistency of activities in each component and sub-project with agreements reached at appraisal; (b) performance of the implementing groups and institutions; (c) assessment of emerging needs for adjustments to project parameters; (d) progress of project implementation; and (e) progress of institutional reforms." (World Bank; 1996)

The supervising role of the European Union and the World Bank is perceived by MOE staff and some PPMU administrators and experts as an external control. "As a matter of fact the most difficult time to work with the EU is when they have an audit committee that comes to check on the program twice a year," said a PPMU administrator. (Personal interview; 2001) Some MOE and PPMU officers reprove what they deem to be donors' control over the MOE operation and the implementation of the reform process. Their criticisms were largely free of any political insinuations or doubts about the intentions of donors. They were mainly concerned with what they have described to be excessively rigid and bureaucratic donor procedures. The common line was that donors have the right to ensure efficient disbursement of their money but not to complicate procedures. The general complaint was that all three big donors, USAID, the European Union and the World Bank, have a huge legacy of complex bureaucracies and rigid procedures that added to the MOE's complexities, creating important obstacles to implementing reform. This complaint was confirmed by a World Bank official who stated that all the European Commission, USAID, the World Bank and the UN-organizations have their own huge amount of red-tape caused by extra-transparency and checks, that led administrators to be over prudent. "They tend to cover themselves with documents and are often hesitant to make decisions;" added the World Bank official.

In fact, the centralization of decision making, according to local administrators and experts working in several donor-funded units is

also a negative feature of the administrative structure of many donors. For instance in the case of the EU, officials of the delegation have the task of administrating daily work and operating rapid co-financing instruments to carry out mini-actions. The decision power of Delegation officials is limited, according to two consultants and one senior Social Fund official, who maintained that very often the Cairo Delegation asks them to send their proposals directly to the Commission in Brussels, because this is where the decisions are made. The consultants suggested that the procedures of the Delegation suffer from bureaucratic delays and red tape, and inflexibility in decision-making. A third PPMU administrator maintained that an example of "the incoherence of implementation and lack of understanding from EU side is evident when there is an extra program that needs to be implemented out of the job description of certain local experts; yet EU representatives refuse to compensate them for doing the extra work, thus discouraging those (MOE) experts who refuse to cooperate." The common complaint was that donors insist on bringing external experts who lack the necessary background and knowledge of the situation and pay them more money than the local experts. This inflexibility, according to the interviewees, impedes the cycle of work and slows the pace of the implementation process.

However, they also maintained that the problem was not as evident in the case of the World Bank because it has less rigid conditions, as it provides loans and not grants. Their interpretation of the difference between procedures of the World Bank and the EU was that in the case of grants, the EU imposes specific conditions to ensure accurate allocation, while the World Bank does not, because it provides loans. It is worth mentioning that the local experts and administrators' complaints expressed regarding EU terms of remuneration for extra work assigned to local experts in the interviews conducted in 2001 replicated the complaints of the staff of the National Education

Research Center and the Education Planning Unit (sponsored by the USAID) during the early 1990s, and reported by USAID commissioned researchers, Reimers and McGinn, on this issue. The large difference between the staff remuneration schemes of program officers working for development agencies and the Ministry of Education staff in the case of USAID researchers conducting a joint study in cooperation with experts from the National Education Research Center NERC, has been a source of dissatisfaction. Egyptian researchers were unwilling to cooperate with USAID research partners because they were not involved in the decision making process and were not compensated financially by USAID for their participation. Meanwhile, they were comparing their modest state stipends with the generous USAID ones, and felt it was unfair that they worked with equal counterparts on unequal terms. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997 and El-Matbouli; 1995) This means that this dissatisfaction has accompanied MOE local experts throughout the 1990s, which may well have decreased their professional motivation and negatively influenced their performance.

This assumption concords with the equity theory, which suggests that employees compare their job inputs and outcomes relative to others and their perceptions of eventual inequities influences the amount of effort they exert. (Vecchio; 1984) It is important to mention that this negative sentiment concerning the heavy reliance on foreign experts in donor sponsored programs targeting education is not a phenomenon peculiar to Egypt. In 1977, Havelock and Huberman conducted a study that revealed that in the case of United Nations-sponsored development programs, local education professionals often resented foreign experts, whom they perceived as wastefully duplicating their own functions and distorting national priorities. (Rondinelli et. al.; 1990)

Thomas Webster gives another example from Papua New Guinea, confirming concern with the unnecessary duplication of policy decision making that may cause further implementation failure. "Due to the paucity of research information available in many developing countries, donor and international development assistance agencies have been heavy handed in analyzing country situations from a global perspective. Such analyses and policy prescriptions made by donor agencies and their personnel (often flying in northern consultants) with little input from local specialists, often do not take into account the contextual factors specific to that country." (Webster; 2000)

E. Disbursement

Another area where MOE officials denounce what they deem to be rigid donors' procedures and administrative inflexibility, is the disbursement of funds. In fact fund releases from the Education Enhancement Program are not automatic but tied to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and supervision missions. (EU Commission in Egypt; 1997) An example given by an MOE official of the rigidity of EU disbursement procedures was the booklet of the terms of reference established according to European Community criteria was composed of almost 100 pages of provisions and stipulations. The booklets aimed at suppliers (local private sector companies supplying professional training or educational facilities) are so complicated and rigid, said the official, that they discourage the qualified suppliers (who are in demand) and invite suppliers who are not as prepared. This negative selection of suppliers, according to the MOE official, is because qualified suppliers are usually in demand in the private sector, do not waste their time catering for the not so profitable bids of the MOE, and are therefore unlikely to invest sufficient time and effort to go through and comply with all MOE and donor conditions to get a

job that may not be financially rewarding. Moreover, donor terms are also complicated with regard to the allocation of funds, according to the same official. He goes on to say that, "sometimes the MOE wants to train teachers, but the donors are willing to give money only for administrators or technicians, therefore at some points the MOE compromises on its priorities and needs in order not to lose the funds altogether." Sometimes the terms are so complicated, explained the MOE official, due to mistrust concerning the Egyptian side in terms of moral integrity and technical ability. The administrator attributes, this 'mistrust' to a more general suspicion people and systems of the 'Third World'. He supports this argument by saying that donor terms and conditions are more flexible where assistance to Eastern Europe is concerned.

Apart from the rigid procedures required by donors, some MOE officials also criticize the poor coordination and cooperation between donors co-financing specific programs and regard it as an obstacle to the expeditious disbursement of funds. This is because each donor has its own terms of reference and auditing rules. Thus, each program has to be tailored to meet the terms of different auditing standards and regulations that many contradict each other at different levels. The MOE, according to some of its officials, is torn between donors and their lack of flexibility, and the end result is that money does not get to the destination targeted by development plans.

Complaints about donors rigidity in the disbursement of funds have not only been raised by middle bureaucrats and MOE administrators cooperating with donors' representatives on daily levels, but have also been raised by senior decision-makers and top politicians. In the context of the 34 donors' convention held in Sharm El-Sheikh on February 2002 to raise assistance funds to prevent Egypt from falling into economic crisis after September 11, Egyptian Premier Atef Ebeid

raised the issue of the swiftness of disbursement. Ebeid complained that not all funds that were allocated have actually been disbursed. Likewise, the Minister of Finance, Medhat Hassanein, suggested that donors should set non-obstructive conditions in order to facilitate disbursement. (Dawoud; 2002) The statements of top politicians endorse the complaints of the MOE administrators negotiating over terms of disbursement with donor representatives, who are constrained by their own regulations and procedures formulated in their head offices.

F. Donors and Civil Society Associations as Implementing Agencies

A significant feature of education policy reforms sponsored by foreign donors is the demand to increase the involvement of the private sector and civil society associations in the education process, especially in the field of girls' education. Examples of donor-sponsored programs that target girl's education and rely on local communities and civil society associations as the principal implementing agencies in coordination with the MOE are the one-class schools and community schools. Both projects are co-financed by international organizations and bilateral donors such as USAID, CIDA, UNICEF, World Bank and others. The design of several donors' assistance programs targeting education demands the participation of civil society associations as implementing agencies in charge of delivery. In education, civil society associations are active in teacher training, school construction and maintenance, linking schools to local communities through local committees, and organizing support classes for low-achieving students as supplementary educational assistance.

The civil society associations which cooperate with donors are not the only ones operating in education, since there are also several Islamist community associations, funded by Islamist private sources,

delivering educational services, some of which work under the sponsorship of Al-Azhar. While some associations (both secular and religious) have operated in the field ever since the 1950s and early 1960s, and depend on the sponsorship of local entrepreneurs, most of them were re-launched in the 1990s and many were even established with donor money. The largest number of associations providing formal schooling services that reflect state policies are funded by donors and risk collapse if donors withdraw financial assistance. Some donors, such as the Egyptian Swiss Development Fund, cooperate solely with NGOs (either international or local).¹ These NGOs have the task of coordinating among donors, the respective Ministries (the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Education) and other public agencies and grass roots associations.

Entangled in the difficult task of coordination among various state and donor procedures as well as grass root associations, local NGOs complain of administrative and procedural obstacles. However, their major complaint is the rigid and top-down administrative structure of the MOE, with which is very difficult to communicate with.

The growing role of civil society associations in basic education and adult literacy programs, and the pressure of donors, led the MOE to establish the Administration of Civil Society in 1998. The Unit director, Sami El-Tabbakh said the Unit of Administration of Civil Society was instituted when the minister of education realized the need to coordinate and communicate with the 1250 NGOs and Community Development Associations (CDAs) working on education in Egypt. Out of these, 40 work on girls' education and illiteracy and the others work on environmental and cultural education. The Minister made this

¹ The Egyptian-Swiss Development Fund and the Egyptian-Italian Development Fund are both funds that redirect debts to Egyptian national development programs supporting the new market economy and other human development objectives.

decision, says El-Tabbakh, after meeting with a committee established to improve the coordination of civil society associations. (Personal interview; April 2002)

Nevertheless, many members of civil society associations believe that the unit was formalistically instituted, with non-qualified staff, inadequate facilities and an unspecified role in active coordination. Sometimes it connects certain civil society associations with the ministry and obtains ministry approval for its programs. But like the rest of the MOE, it has a very paternalistic attitude towards the NGOs. Sometimes it is considered a unit where unwanted and unqualified employees are sent, as the unit does not have a clear and defined role. This was in part confirmed by El-Tabbakh himself, who complained that the employees are all young graduates with very limited experience, inadequate training and very poorly motivated, since they perceive the unit as a form of exile inside the MOE, as it provides no particular career or financial advantages. Yet he remarked that considering the very small capacity of the unit in terms of personnel and facilities, it manages to carry out a lot of activities and functions. (Personal interview; April 2002)

Encouraging social participation in school management, expanding dialogue among local MOE implementing agencies, and creating ownership among stakeholders and local communities, is how the EEP, as well as many donors, plan to create sustainability for reforms. "Community participation is the real hope of development and reform of education in Egypt," says Magdi Mehanni, PPMU Capacity Building Expert. However, he argues that the problem is that local CDAs have poor managerial and fundraising capacities, and depend mainly on donor' funds and, to a lesser degree, local entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, he mentions a few success stories in certain small hamlets and villages, where Community Development Associations have formed an Education Support Fund,

financed by small contributions from local residents. They contribute to the support of basic education activities and are managed by local communities. Mehanni describes this as a very small success given the challenges of mistrust from local communities and suggests that their empowerment and direct involvement would fortify and help multiply such initiatives. (personal interview; April 2002)

Magdi Nasif, director of the Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development, maintains that donors are vital for local civil society associations, not so much for their expertise in the field of education and technical assistance, but for their financial support. Nasif argues that a country like Egypt does not lack know-how or ideas for development programs, but suffers mainly from the absence of financial resources. He supports his argument by stating that a project like the Community Schools has been conceived and implemented by certain Egyptian civil society associations, including the Upper Egypt Association, since the late 1980s and that it was not imported from abroad through the UNICEF. (Personal interview; September 2001)

The fact remains that regardless of the form and mix of contribution (technical or financial) donors offer to civil society associations operating in basic education, development assistance has had an important role in reviving the participation of local CDAs in basic education during the 1990s, and are their major financial supporter. Local NGO capacity to survive through local fundraising after the eventual withdrawal of foreign development assistance funds is the only guarantee of their program's sustainability, says Olfat Girgis, a project manager at the Egyptian Swiss Development Fund. (Personal interview; 2001)

The various personal interviews and literature examined have confirmed that local CDAs are largely dependent on donor financial assistance.

Local NGOs depend on donors not just for implementing their education programs, but for their very existence. They provide for their employees' salaries, program expenses including transportation, and also the acquisition of facilities from development assistance funds. This can only increase the influence of donors and international organizations on local civil society groups as policy implementing agents.

Conclusion:

This chapter examined the socialization of reforms within the domestic setting and assessed the extent to which the implementation process leads to the internalization of those reforms. Tracing the details of the implementation of education policy throughout the 1990s, one can detect the significant influence of development assistance agencies on the selection of top executives and policy makers in the MOE. This can be seen in the implementation and monitoring units, the supervision and fund disbursement of major reform programs and the activities of civil society associations. The effects of donor influence can be either direct or indirect. For instance, in the case of the selection and appointment of senior officials, the influence is often indirect and stems from the initiative of local political elites. In program implementation, evaluation and disbursement, the influence is direct and set out in formal agreements.

The most important aspect of education policy implementation that it is beyond donor control is the actual structure and culture of the MOE apparatus. Structures and cultures have repeatedly collided with those of development assistance agencies, causing deadlocks in implementation procedures. Donors, however, have tried to surpass such obstacles by establishing and sponsoring external research, planning

and implementation units and superimposing them on the formal structure of the MOE as a means of facilitating cooperation. The analysis has shown that reforms were not internalized and integrated into the daily operational procedures of the MOE. On the contrary, the implementation of reforms was conducted by donor-sponsored units that were structurally and culturally incompatible with Egyptian educational institutions. The organizational and administrative structures of these units have been created alongside existing MOE units and have no organic links with the rest of the MOE directorates.

These units resembled foreign donors in their organizational and remuneration systems and their sustainability is highly dependent of donor funds and facilities. This has also proven to be the case of the majority of civil society associations. Therefore, a comprehensive and thorough revision of the organizational structure of the MOE at all its levels that devolves some competence and responsibilities to stakeholders, is thought to be the initial step towards continuity and sustainability of reforms by donors (especially the EU and the World Bank). (EU Commission in Egypt: JSM:EEP; 2002) These recommendations have been formally acknowledged by the Ministry of Education in 2001 and recognized as an additional objective of the Education Enhancement Program, with which the MOE has promised to cooperate. The recommendations that donors made and the state formally agrees, await a real political commitment.

Democratization and participation, which are among the central values advanced by reforms, have not been compatible with the organizational structure and culture of the MOE and were not integrated into the daily operational procedures of the institution. Finally, the objective attracting greatest consensus is that effective and efficient policy implementation and sustainability depends on the willingness of the MOE to undertake internal and external

democratization. Only when all stakeholders gain a complete sense of ownership of the reforms, will they commit to carrying them out.

Chapter 7

The Impact of Foreign Development

Assistance on Basic Education

Policy Evaluation

Introduction:

This chapter examines the evaluation process, its parameters, the actors influencing and conducting the evaluation, the reporting style and the issue of accountability. The analysis emphasizes the concordance of the evaluation process with the norms promoted by the donor community and international development agencies.

I use the rationalist approach to explain how the evaluation of reform serves to legitimize policies and project proposals in the eyes of donors so as to secure more foreign funds which also bolstering domestic legitimacy for these policies. I use a the constructivist approach to argue that policy evaluation has been largely formalistic and ceremonial and does not actively involve the various domestic actors, thus alienating them still further from the policy process. They state of affairs has weakened the sense of ownership of policy reforms and prevented the achievement of domestic resonance.

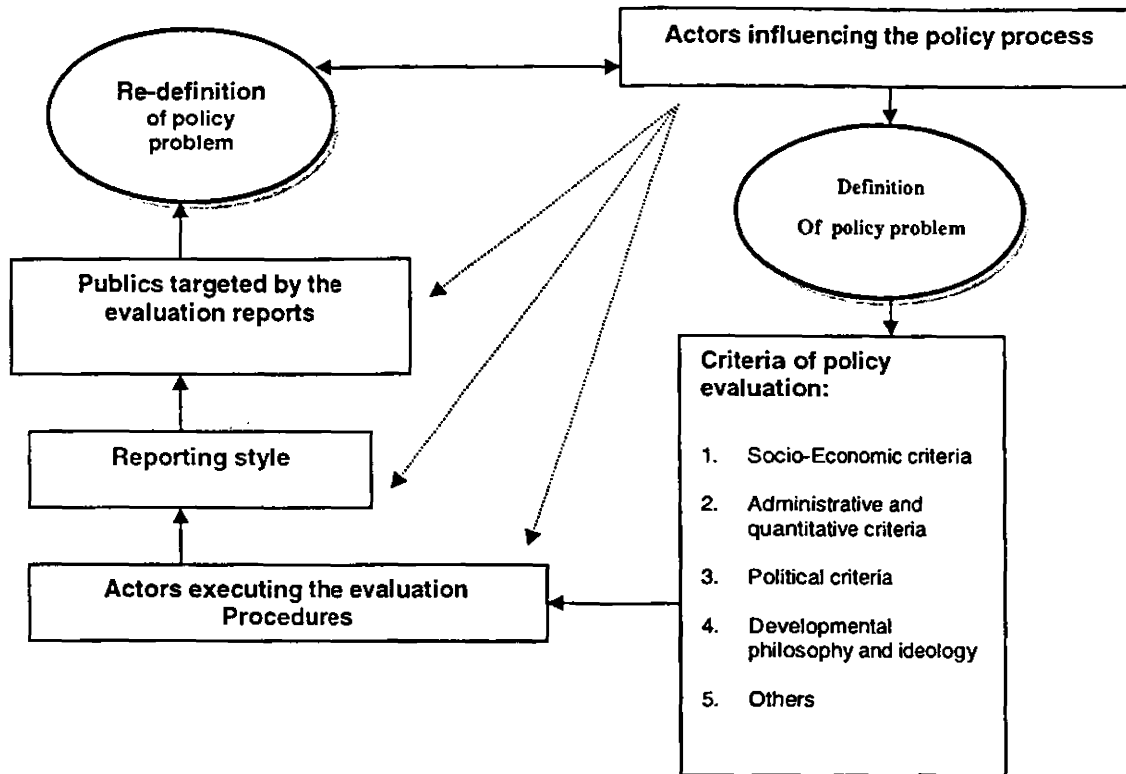
This study does not seek to evaluate the quantitative and qualitative impact of assistance which lies far beyond the scope of this study. It is concerned instead with the extent to which international organizations and foreign donors influence the evaluation process in terms of the selection of evaluation criteria, the choice of experts conducting the evaluation, and the assumption made and type of methodology used. The analysis sheds light on the power relations that have dominated the education policy process during the 1990s and explain why and how specific policy options have been selected over others and who has shaped the values that have dominated the education policies during that period.

A. The Importance of Evaluation in the Policy Process

Policy evaluation is a continuous process that is not limited to assessing the outcome of the final stage of policy implementation. Throughout the policy life cycle, evaluation is conducted to weigh the various alternatives (inputs and outputs) prior to the selection of policy options. Later on evaluation is conducted to assess final outcomes. (Parsons; 1995) The interpretation of such outcomes contributes to a further redefinition of the policy issue or problem and prescribes the objectives of other policy options injected into the policy formulation process. Various criteria are mixed, prioritized and weighted differently by each actor influencing policy formulation and implementation, and the dominant policy evaluation criteria become those set by the actor or actors that have greatest influence.

In addition to the significance of *who* conducts the evaluation, it is important to examine how results are reported and presented and how they are communicated to the larger executive and legislative apparatus of the state as well as to public opinion. Reporting policy assessment is a crucial part of the policy process and is worthy of analysis in itself since it determines how outcomes are presented and to which publics they are tailored. Reporting styles determine how evaluation outcomes are presented to the decision-makers directly responsible for specific policies including, state officials, legislators, donors, as well as local public opinion and the international community. Reporting styles dictate whether outcomes are presented as scientific, objective facts and if conclusions are supported by qualitative or quantitative information and most importantly they reflect the values and ideologies (social and political) of the actors involved.

The Policy Evaluation Process



Policy evaluation is the most politicized stage of the policy process, as it establishes the aptitude and competence of the state and its governance capacity. It examines whether the state has lived up to its commitments, and divulges the outcomes of its policies. Evaluation reports are not simply used to enhance further policy making and implementation procedures but also, and most importantly, to ratify the legitimacy of the state itself.

Consequently, the determination of evaluation criteria, the selection and recruitment of consultants conducting the evaluation, and the choice of the reporting styles are not simply technocratic decisions

shaped after the rational model of decision making, but political ones. The rational model assumes that policy decisions are based on a meticulous analysis of alternatives, and supposes that decision-makers engage in a maximizing behavior that aims to optimize the concrete benefits delivered to the population affected, irrespective of various (internal and external) political pressures. (Gomaa; 1997)

B. Evaluation: What are the Assessment Parameters and Who Sets Them?

International socialization takes place through the diffusion of "shared expectations about the appropriate behavior held by a community of actors." (Finnemore and Sikkink; 1998) Therefore, the values determining the evaluation criteria provide a reliable indicator of the normative order governing the policy process. It is important to identify these values and the evaluation criteria in order to assess the socialization of donor sponsored reforms within the Egyptian Ministry of Education.

Prior to the launch of the education policy reforms early in the 1990s, policy assessments were simply a collection of statistical data about school construction, enrollment rates and the distribution of students over the various grades and types of schools. When launching the reforms, USAID provided the MOE with technical assistance in the field of research and evaluation, for the development of staff capacity, sector assessment and policy evaluation. Assessment reports have been jointly produced by MOE researchers, external foreign consultants and Egyptian consultants, following the guidelines of the (IEES) International Education Evaluation Standards' sector manual. However, the main issue of dissent between the MOE and USAID officials has been the objectives of assessment. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997)

This issue was settled, to a certain extent, by the objectives and parameters prescribed by the Jomtien Education for All Conference of 1990. Policy effectiveness, efficiency and equity have been the three parameters of investigation most endorsed by the recent policy analysis literature, followed by the concepts of cost-benefit analysis, procedural fairness and social and environmental impacts. (Gomaa; 2000) While policy effectiveness entails relevance and impact, policy efficiency endorses the maximization and optimization of policy benefits and the minimization of procedural costs or waste in capital and/or human resources. The concept of equity embraces issues of socio-economic class, rural-urban equilibrium, gender empowerment, ethnic and religious minorities and subgroups, as well as segments of society with special needs.

The three parameters (effectiveness, efficiency and equity) have dominated the evaluation criteria of the assistance programs of the international organizations in different parts of the world, as illustrated by numerous reviews in the evaluation documents of these organizations. For instance, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) report on aid evaluation criteria published in 1998 lists relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as the main evaluation criteria for development assistance. (OECD; 1998) Likewise, these parameters have been followed by the international organizations and nation states conferring in Dakar-Senegal in April 2000 which reviewed the achievements of the Education for All decade proclaimed in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990. The *Final Report* of the World Education Forum evaluates these achievements in terms of improving the quality and equity of education for all, and making an effective use of resources for education as well as co-operating with civil society associations to achieve social goals through education. (UNESCO: *Final Report*; April 2000)

Those parameters were the same criteria of evaluation used by the authors of the *Review and Assessment of Reform of Basic Education in Egypt*, conducted by UNESCO and financed by the UNDP, at the request of the Egyptian minister of education Hussein K. Bahaaeddin in the mid-1990s. The UNESCO/UNDP report uses access and equity of the education process, quality, relevance and efficiency, as well as the management of reform, as the main criteria for assessing reform. (UNDP/UNESCO; 1996) The same applies to the Education Enhancement Program sponsored by the World Bank and European Union, which sets as its performance indicators 1) access and equity; 2) improvement of the quality of student performance; and 3) system efficiency. Such parameters are also present in the EU financing agreement for Basic Education in Egypt in 1997. (World Bank; 1996 and EU Financing Agreement; 1997)

This agreement on evaluation criteria between the various international organizations, donors and the parameters of policy assessment (applied by different reviews and assistance program assessments in Egypt in the 1990s) reveals that the evaluation criteria devised by international agencies predominates. Assessment parameters are dominated by socio-economic, administrative as well as developmental criteria, since they concentrate on three main goals: a) increasing access and retention in schools of disadvantaged groups (girls, poor segments of the rural south of Egypt, children with special needs); b) reducing wastage in education in terms of dropouts and repetitions; and c) increasing the educational system efficiency in terms of optimizing the use of physical, and financial resources. Developmental and governance criteria (including sound economic and political governance as well as administrative reform) also dominated the agenda of the UN Monterrey-Mexico Conference on *Financing for Development* held in March 2002. This conference was attended by US President George W. Bush, senior EU officials and leaders of various donor and recipient countries and recommended the use of developmental

and governance criteria and criticized the use of donors' strategic-interests as a parameter for the evaluation of development assistance to the developing countries. (*The Economist*; March 25, 2002)

C. Political Criteria of Evaluation

Even though the political criteria of evaluation are not directly highlighted in the evaluation of basic education policies in Egypt, they emerge if one reads between the lines, and are more traceable in MOE official publications and those bilateral aid agencies. For instance, the importance of universal access to basic education as a factor of social integration and assimilation is often mentioned in MOE reports as an important element of national security that reduces the susceptibility of young people to militant fundamentalism and/or substance abuse. (MOE: *Mubarak and Education*; 1991)

Political criteria of evaluation are also interpreted in the light of education policies and democratization in several MOE and donor agency reports linking policy education reform achievements to increasing political pluralism, the democratization of the educational process itself, as well as the active role of basic education in the indoctrination of civic education and citizenship rights and duties. Another political criterion considered by donors and not often mentioned in formal assessment reports, is the achievement of a level of social and economic stability in Egypt, that contributes in truth to the stability of the entire region. As Michael Crosswell points out in the *Development Record and the Effectiveness of Foreign Aid* report, the evaluation of aid to Egypt is conducted in the light of the achievement of peace and stability across the whole Middle East. (Crosswell; 1998)

D. Sustainability as a Criteria of Evaluation

Sustainability as an indicator of successful development, dominated the discourse of development throughout the 1990s and especially after the UN conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Sustainable development is widely defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The concept of sustainability has important implications for public policy and governance and entails the institutionalization of reforms and building capacities for policy initiation and implementation to sustain the reform process, once the external actors (in this case, foreign development assistance) withdraw. The institutionalization of reform includes not only empowering government institutions to carry out reforms, but also embedding the reforms in the social, cultural and economic texture of the state itself. In other words, institutionalization requires the embeddedness of a particular belief and behavioral predisposition within a domestic setting, achieving domestic resonance. (Epstein; 2002) Thus a policy is evaluated against its integration and internalization within state institutions.

In the case of foreign development assistance and education policy reforms, sustainability means the ability of the state to sustain and revitalize the reforms initially supported by development assistance in the long term, even after the termination of such assistance. The true challenge is not only to bring about improvement in the system, but to help the system both to sustain the reforms in the long term, and to reinvent and reinvigorate them when necessary. Consequently, the sustainability of reforms is an important criterion of evaluation.

The main preoccupation of policy makers as well as donors has been the problem of launching reforms in an archaic and rigid educational system that suffers from inadequate resources. Sustainability has not been mentioned categorically as a major criterion of evaluation in any of the assessment reports produced in the 1990s. This is especially true of MOE official reports that do not acknowledge foreign development assistance as a fundamental initiator of reforms. But even if assessment reports sponsored by international organizations and donors do not refer to sustainability as a major, they do consider it to be a byproduct of the process of the internalization of policy reforms. In other words, sustainability is achieved when the state (in its wider definition) accomplishes a sense of ownership of the policy reforms. Successful capacity building of the MOE administrative apparatus and local directorates as well as civil society is deemed to be the means of achieving sustainability. (UNDP/UNESCO; 1996) However, the assessment reports did not present specific parameters for assessing such approach of internalization and institutionalization. Thus, there are no concrete benchmarks against which policy makers can measure how far successful internalization and institutionalization has been accomplished.

In fact the notion of achieving sustainability through capacity building and ownership of the development process was clearly set out by the Education Enhancement Program as a crucial part of its program objectives in 1996. The EEP set three major strategic objectives to be achieved with clearly defined interventions following a precise timeline that are measured against 'outcome performance indicators'. The sustainability of reforms is mentioned in the third EEP objective of *Improving System Efficiency*, an objective that is to be achieved by "intensive processes of capacity building, particularly in participatory planning and management, monitoring, and evaluation, and in areas related to improvement of pedagogy." (World Bank; 1996) The

achievements are assessed twice a year (in May and December) by the Mid-Term Reviews, carried out by the European Commission that evaluate the EEP and the policy reform process. (Personal interview; April 2001)

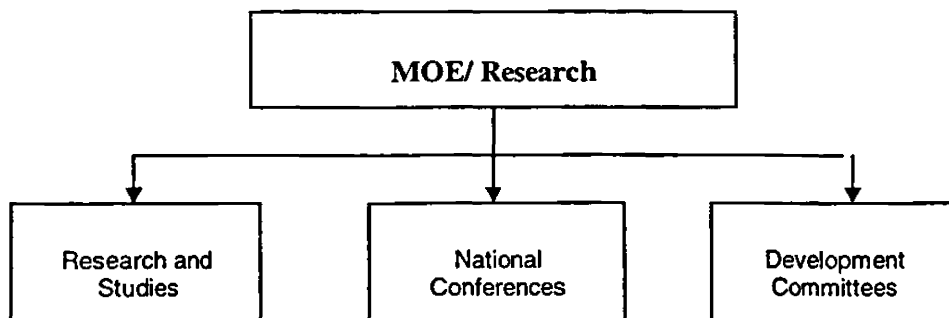
E. The Actors Implementing Evaluation Procedures

Identifying the actors conducting the evaluation procedures, their academic training, ideological background, and organizational allegiance, gives us a clear indication of how they conduct the evaluation and who influences the policy process. Policy evaluation is conducted by the research centers of the MOE, international organizations' cooperating with the MOE, and donors evaluating the education reform programs financed by them.

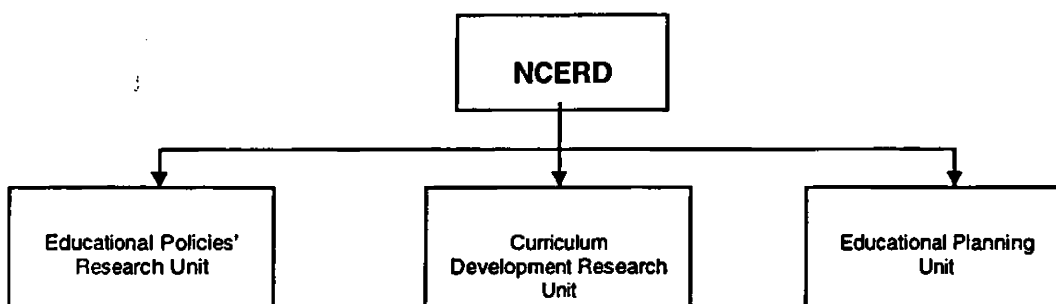
The specialized research units in the Ministry of education the conduct formal policy evaluations have a special status as research centers and enjoy the same institutional organization as academic research institutes. Their staff consists of academic researchers with Masters and Doctoral degrees in education from Egyptian Universities' faculties of education and enjoy the promotion criteria and pay scales of academic faculty, which are more prestigious than those available to administrative MOE staff. The majority of the researchers are active in academic production, publish their independent research in Egyptian and Arab academic journals and press. Some also write occasionally for national newspapers on topics of education and cultural development. However, many of these researchers have been academically trained with an emphasis on qualitative analysis rather than quantitative analysis, and have insufficient experience with the most recent computer technologies and quantitative software. International experts collaborating with the national research centers

have noted this. Insufficient quantitative research skills can be explained by their academic training in the Egyptian faculties of education, a form of training that focuses on psychological and anthropological methods of research and does not provide adequate faculty specialized in neither quantitative methodology nor research facilities. (Reimers and McGinn; 1997) The lack of MOE investment in facilities and continual academic training for these researchers aggravates this situation. For instance, unlike other faculty members in the Egyptian universities, MOE researchers are not given the opportunity to obtain academic scholarships or fellowships to pursue postgraduate and postdoctoral research abroad.

Nevertheless, MOE publications and statements confirm that the state's interest in research in the field of education has increased since the late 1980s with an increasing focus on education reform. In its periodic official publications, The Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of scientific research for education reform and innovation and its crucial importance for diagnosing problems in the educational system. *"The Ministry of Education has verified the strategy of scientific research in developing education reform through strenuous and constant efforts that focused on three main factors, research and studies, conferences and development committees."* (Ministry of Education; 2001)



The National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), the National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation (NCEEE) (established in 1990) and the General Directorate for Educational Research, are all research units that have been supported by the MOE and by donors in the 1990s, and produced around 200 studies in the period from 1992 to 2001. (Ministry of Education; 2001) The NCEEE produces bi-annual reports on school quality, including teaching, school maintenance and students' performance on the governorate-levels, but these reports are not distributed the national level. (EU Commission in Egypt: JSM: EEP; 2002) The NCERD was established in 1972 as the National Center for Educational Research, and later changed to the National Center for Educational Research and Development in 1989 by Presidential/Republican Decree (number 35/1989). It was reformed with the assistance of UNESCO, which supplied it with technical and financial assistance and the purpose of the modification was to reinvigorate and reform the NCERD to elevate it to the higher levels of academic research. The Organizational Structure of the NCERD after 1989 is represented in the following chart.



(Adli; 1996)

However, institutional duplication took place again in 1991, when the minister of education issued Ministerial decree (number 88/1991) establishing the USAID-sponsored CCIMD, the Center of Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development. Faten Adli, a researcher in the

NCERD criticizes this as a wasteful duplication of the functions of the NCERD unit specialized in Curriculum Development Research. Adli criticizes the creation of the CCIMD and the allocation of both MOE financial and human resources to it, and the subtraction of resources from the NCEPD. She wonders why the NCERD-unit was not developed and technically and academically strengthened to perform this role instead of assigning the role to another unit outside the MOE's formal structure. To make matters worse, a unit that is dependent on external experts that will not contribute to capacity building in the long term. She argues that the USAID aims at dominating education assessment, development and evaluation in order to take the lead away from UNESCO, which she considers to be an independent international organization that does not have a hidden political agenda. (Adli; 1996) Again here, we note the influence of the conspiracy theory on the assessment of USAID's role in funding MOE units conducting educational policy research and evaluation.

On the other hand, in a press release to *Al-Ahram* in April 2002, Minister Bahaaeddin described the NCERD to be the conscience and inner voice of the Ministry. (*Al-Ahram*; April 2, 2002) He announced the establishment of an executive unit in the NCERD that ties its plans of research to policies and their implementation, and utilizes all research produced by the NCERD, as well as the information technology and computerized database system sponsored by the World Bank and the European Union.

Reviewing the documents available on the assessment of basic education reforms in the 1990s produced by the Ministry of Education, we note that many of these documents are produced by donor-sponsored units of the MOE such as the National Center for Educational Research and Development and the Policy Planning and Monitoring Unit, which is

supported technically and financially by the World Bank and EU. The latter also support the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) unit in the MOE. Another report assessing human development in general and education in particular and not produced directly by the MOE is the Egypt Human Development Report produced annually since 1997 by the Institute of National Planning, established and financed by the UNDP and operating in collaboration with CAPMAS (the Central Authority of Public Mobilization and Statistics). The Egypt Human Development report is "guided by the conceptual framework and methods developed by the UNDP in 1990." (INP; 1998-99) It is produced annually by a team of Egyptian academics and experts, including Osman Mohamed Osman, the present Minister of Planning, appointed late in 2001. This confirms that senior technocrats and national experts cooperating with donors and international organizations have close connections with the circles of power.

Other reports produced by the Ministry of Education include the official books highlighting MOE policy trends, objectives and most important of all, MOE achievements. They are produced by the supervision committee of document preparation, headed by the undersecretaries of the minister of education. This series has been produced since 1991 and the books have been called *Mubarak and Education* and *Mubarak's National Project*, and are produced in both Arabic and English. The books often begin with the speeches of President Mubarak presented to parliament and the Shura Council and are followed by other statements from the minister of education that applaud the President's interest in Education and attribute the success of education to the direct and personal involvement and concern of the President and the Egyptian first lady.

The other type of reports are the assistance program evaluation and policy assessment reports conducted and standardized by bilateral

donors, mainly USAID, and international agencies in collaboration with the MOE. An example of such reports is the *Mid-Term Review*, conducted by the European Commission to evaluate the Education Enhancement Program and evaluate the policy reform process. The MOE supports these periodical assessment studies by facilitating field visits, personal interviews and access to official statistics and operational reports. these assessment reports are assigned to international experts commissioned by the aid agencies, and assisted by MOE researchers in the NCERD and produced abroad (in the donors' head offices) and later shared (but often only in part) with their Egyptian counterparts. Considered highly confidential internal documents, public access to such reports is very limited. Most evaluation reports are never published or even shared with middle bureaucracy of the MOE let alone with independent academic researchers. Yet some national education experts describe them as the only extensive policy assessment effort carried out in basic education policies. "The *Mid-Term Review* is the only comprehensive policy evaluation conducted in the field of basic education," an education expert collaborating with the PPMU plainly admitted. Likewise, a senior NCERD researcher affirmed that the role of the unit in comprehensive policy monitoring and evaluation is limited to micro studies that lack comprehensive scope and statistical data (with figures often manipulated to highlight achievements). Moreover, the researcher confirmed that there is no real MOE plan for policy evaluation or assessment, but random studies that concentrate on statistical data. Donors such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, EU and others have carried out most evaluation research and sectoral research commissioning independent experts and professional researchers (Egyptian and international) to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector.

The most important of these reports is the UNDP/UNESCO *Review and Assessment of Reform of Basic Education in Egypt* in 1996, prepared by

four international consultants, one of whom was Egyptian. The World Bank and UNESCO selected the experts (Seth Spaulding, Klaus Bahr, Vinayagumn Chinapah and Nader Fergany), as well as the type of knowledge and references to be used. The international experts met for three days in Paris, and then spent 18 days in Egypt, during which time they visited two selected governorates, four university campuses and conducted 50 personal interviews with top MOE and aid officials. The references consisted mainly of MOE reports and UN publications, besides the earlier research work of Nader Fergany in this area. (UNDP/UNESCO; 1996) It is worth mentioning that the Review is considered to be the most important and most cited assessment report produced during the 1990s and is often quoted in MOE publications. In May 2002, Minister Bahaaeddin announced that the MOE had requested UNESCO and UNDP to conduct another review and assessment of reform of basic education in Egypt for the period from 1996 till the end of the 1990s. (Al-Akhbar; May 31, 2002) The evaluation work was scheduled to start in September 2002 and is conducted concurrently in 63 other countries in the world.

Going back to the 1996 *Review and Assessment of Reform*, the question is how thorough and comprehensive is a short-term and cross-sectional examination if conducted by a team of four researchers, three of them foreign to the system with an incomplete experience of Egyptian realities and the Arabic language. This is not to challenge their competence but rather the sufficiency of the 18-day time frame and the inadequate resources with which they had to accomplish such a difficult task. The assumption is that they had mostly to rely on existing data and studies with predetermined methodologies, research objectives and assumptions. Thus disproportionate responsibility was given to the Egyptian researcher of the team, who was more familiar with the type of available data and knowledge, as well as the disposition of local interviewees.

Fergany, the Egyptian consultant cooperating in the research was, "selected to collaborate in the work because he is an internationally renowned expert and not because he is Egyptian;" said Ghada Gholam the UNESCO education program specialist in Egypt. (Personal interview; 2001) In fact, Fergany is also the chief author of the *first Arab Human Development Report 2002* published by the UNDP. He is a senior sociologist and demographer, and the director of the Al-Mishkat research center, an external consultant for the MOE and collaborates with several UN organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNDP) and others in the field of research and assessment. However, he is not closely linked to the circles of power and political elite. His autonomous position as a researcher who does not answer directly to public officials and is not on the pay roll of any specific donor or organization allows him a higher degree of independence in his research. Egyptian consultants with an affirmed academic and research experience in human development, who are familiar with Egyptian socio-economic and political realities and have a grasp on local cultures and convictions often give a deeper dimension to the assessment reports. This is especially true if they are not bound by their public posts or direct influence of the various agendas of the diverse sponsors of assessment and evaluation efforts. We can conclude that the actors sponsoring the assessment studies and selecting the experts who conduct them and type of knowledge to be used do indeed shape the evaluation process.

F. The Reporting Style and Publics Targeted by Evaluation Reports

The Mubarak and Education book series produced by the Book Sector of the Ministry of Education highlights MOE policy achievements and objectives, and are not actually policy evaluation reports. The books enumerate President Mubarak's interest in educational reform, and the

personal commitment of Susan Mubarak to the reform process and development. They address topics of education for all, quality education, democracy, educational technology and globalization in a rhetorical style. The book series addresses all the issues that are of current interest on both the international and national levels, but target mainly national public opinion. The books are circulated among top officials, members of the parliament and Shura Council, opinion leaders, editors and journalists, academics and Arab and foreign delegations. They are written and produced in the Arabic language and are translated by the MOE into English.

Interestingly, even though the two books are written by Hussein K. Bahaaeddin (the minister of education) *Education and the Future* (1997) and *Patriotism in a World Without Identity: The Challenges of Globalization* (2000), are published by independent publishing houses. Both books are distributed by MOE officials together with the Mubarak and Education book series in both their Arabic and English versions as promotional material. This suggests that they represent the official MOE stance and not just the personal convictions of Bahaaeddin himself. His books address the same issues of development and educational reform concentrating on quality, efficiency and effectiveness and achievements as those emphasized by international organizations. Parallel to the MOE book series are the Education for All Assessment reports prepared by a team of researchers from the National Center for Educational Research and Development and other Consultants under Nadia Gamal El Din (EEP and NCERD). The reports are written in English and Arabic and were presented to the International consultative Forums on Education For All held at the end of the 1990s. Both quote the UNESCO/UNDP 1996 report assessing education. They use the style and vocabulary that prevail in the development field and address all the *politically correct issues*; however, they do not present concrete figures measuring achievements against objectives.

On the other hand, the reports and studies sponsored by the international organizations such as UNESCO and UNDP and others, and supported by the MOE are written directly in English and then translated to Arabic. The reports are commissioned from international consultants in collaboration with Egyptian experts with international status such as Nader Fergany (the leading author of the UNDP Arab Human Development Report 2002). The language of these reports corresponds closely to the style, terminology and organization of the International Development Agency's reports and match organization and writing style the UNDP and UNESCO reports on human development and educational reform. In fact, the report largely follows the parameters and style set by the DAC Evaluation criteria for development assistance. (DAC-OECD; 1998) The reports pay close attention to the project proposals and fashionable development terminology of the international scenes and are guided by the conceptual framework and methods developed by the UNDP. Terms like sustainable development, social capital, girls' education, women's empowerment, good governance and democratization etc... dominate the language of the reports. Most of these reports cite each other, are methodologically analogous and use the same type of knowledge and theoretical assumptions.

While the official MOE publications echo the state's philosophy and objectives and list figures and indicators to highlight achievements, the international organizations' and donor-sponsored evaluation reports tend to be more concrete and scientific. They applaud the state's political and economic commitment to education reform, yet they diplomatically acknowledge the problems and shortcomings of policy implementation. The readership of these reports is mainly composed of the international community, especially delegations participating in international conferences on Education for All in the 1990s, donors' representatives, international organizations, public officials, and the senior journalists of the Egyptian National Press.

An interesting report, is the *Follow up on the Objectives of the International Summit for the Decade of the 1990s* report produced by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Childhood and Motherhood presided by Susan Mubarak. It evaluates the attainments of the goals of the Jomtien Conference of 1990 and Mubarak's National Child decade. Unlike most of the other official reports, it relies on quantitative data and indicators interpreted by qualitative analysis. It emphasizes figures that indicate inadequate achievements and was prepared in cooperation with UNICEF Cairo by seven Egyptian education experts. It relied on data and information obtained from CAPMAS, the MOE and the Ministry of Health. In other words, it has the strength of not relying solely on the information and data produced and reproduced from within the MOE.

While all the above mentioned reports address public officials, international organizations, donors and political elites the wider public, that is the Egyptian masses, are addressed by MOE press releases through the national media. The majority of MOE releases that are published in interviews and articles have highlighted state achievements in the fields of school construction, teacher training, the installation and spread of the video-conference computer network and educational satellite television channels and the 'Reading for All' campaign sponsored by Susan Mubarak. On the other hand, columnists and journalists identify education as a topic of major interest to the Egyptian public, and write on the issues of private lessons, child labor, dropout rates, illiteracy rates and labor markets and unemployment.

G. Accountability in Policy Evaluation

Accountability, is a concept closely associated with democratic governance and the rule of law, where the bureaucratic elite

dominating the executive answers to its constituents through established political and administrative systems of checks and balances. A World Bank report defines accountability as "the ability to call public officials, private employers or service providers to account, requiring that they be answerable for their policies, actions and use of funds." (World Bank Report; 2002) In other words, accountability checks and balances serve to ensure that public officials are held responsible for their practices within the rule of law. Officials are held accountable to those who confer on them the power to act within a particular political, economic and/or social system. However, accountability can also be internal or external, since control and power can be exercised by outside institutions and actors can be held accountable to various agencies. (Ayeni; 1998)

Policy evaluation is a critical phase of the policy process, especially as it assesses the levels of achievement of the original policy objectives and estimates the aptitude of policy makers and the competence of the entire administrative and social system. It is the phase of verifying whether the objectives were realistic, the implementation efficient and effective and above all if the policy makers have been competent and the system sufficiently transparent and accountable. Evaluation is the phase during which the whole policy process is re-examined, policy issues are redefined and power relations are readjusted. In theory, policy evaluation examines all the elements and factors involved in the policy process in order to optimize policy outcomes. It is supposed to be the ultimate example of rational decision making. This is why it is important to examine the dynamics and power relations influencing the evaluation process, and consequently the whole policy process.

We will examine the mechanisms of accountability within the administrations that conduct education policy evaluation. Identifying

who commissions the evaluation reports and who is the target of these assessments helps to assess the accountability of the evaluation process. In light of the centralized, hierarchical, top-down structure of the MOE we can infer that the MOE researchers conducting the various studies evaluating the educational process are conditioned by the authoritarianism in the system. In an autocratic and personalized organizational structure, officials are held accountable not to the groups affected by the organization but rather to the central figure holding power over the system. The power of highlighting and engaging the researcher in further research activities, international conferences, and donor sponsored programs could procure him/her more economic advantages and social prestige, or marginalize the researcher and reduce him/her to an additional number on the personnel register of the MOE. Several interviewees (among researchers and education experts) suggested that the MOE's official assessment reports are conditioned by the lack of objective and independent research resulting from the absence of accountability. A senior Egyptian education expert maintains that central bureaucracy dominates all evaluation and research work conducted within the MOE and that Egyptian intellectuals are marginalized from the policy process. "If you work closely with the Minister, you either endorse his positions and become the 'minister's man' or you are out of the circles of power." (Personal interview; April 2002)

On the other hand, we also need to examine issues of accountability in the assessment reports sponsored by donors and international organizations. As previously mentioned, national and international experts carrying out assessment and evaluation studies sponsored by foreign development assistance agencies are commissioned by such agencies based on their international fame and expertise. They are often the same people that write many of the reports sponsored by the UN organizations, INGOs and the World Bank and bilateral donor

agencies. Most of the consultants are academics with international reputations regarded as authorities in education and human development. They built these reputations as consultants by publishing in international journals of development, participating in international conferences on development and mastering the language and styles and jargon in the field. Even though they are independent consultants who do not have to answer to individual governments and are commissioned as impartial international consultants, they are still held accountable to the international organizations that commissioned them and to the international development environment that accredits them. Therefore, either directly or indirectly they are encouraged to comply with the values and codes prevailing on the international scene.

Another factor influencing the efforts of scientific and impartial assessment of national education policies sponsored by international organizations and donors, is the delicate political and diplomatic balance involved. Political and diplomatic relations and the fragile relationship between donors and recipient countries, exercise significant influence over the content and language of evaluation reports, especially if they are to be published and made accessible to the national and international community. Evaluation reports that reveal information questioning the competence and transparency of governance in recipient states, and are openly and harshly critical of the national policies and/or the practices of public officials could damage diplomatic relations between donors and recipients. In many cases the recipients may construe some statements as violations of national sovereignty. Sometimes, such reports may jeopardize and interrupt the development programs themselves, and therefore become counterproductive. Consequently, independent consultants are invited to act as spin-doctors and gloss over many of the criticisms in their reports. In many cases, these reports are confidential and are shared

neither with the internal nor the external publics of the organization but only with the senior officials of development assistance agencies and top officials of the MOE. This was evident from our review of the assessment reports sponsored by the UNDP, UNESCO and others, as well as from the personal interviews with national researchers and representatives of foreign development assistance agencies.

We can therefore argue that the issue of accountability in education policy evaluation is present but not necessarily practiced with an eye on MOE constituents. Evaluation targets the various circles of power dominating the policy process such as policy makers, senior public officials, and development assistance agencies, but not the groups targeted by the policies (teachers, schoolchildren, parents, MOE junior administrators and other actors involved in education). The MOE's primary aim in evaluation was to legitimize its policies before donors thus gain their approval and support.

Conclusion:

Our observations suggest that the evaluation parameters used to assess achievements in the education reform process are those widely agreed upon on the international level and set by the Education for All Conferences organized by the UN organizations and embraced by the World Bank and individual donors throughout the 1990s. Policy effectiveness, efficiency and equity are recognized and adopted by the Egyptian Ministry of Education as well as the various development assistance agencies as the main criteria against which the policies should be assessed. The internationally agreed criteria of accountability involve developmental, socio-economic and administrative parameters that are broadly applicable to developing

countries. However, national politicians and public officials espouse them and mould them to fit their own visions of national development.

In spite of the strong emphasis on policy evaluation and comprehensive assessment and the capacity building of the MOE in data collection, information processing and research facilities, there has been no comprehensive policy assessment program. Evaluation and assessment are conducted by development assistance agencies, often in cooperation with the MOE, and both MOE and donors select the independent experts and consultants who carry out the assessments. By contrast, donors and development assistance agencies have their own periodical assessment studies that focus mainly on their own specific development programs and not all education policies. In many cases such reports are classified as confidential and not shared with the general public, and often not even with the middle MOE-bureaucracy. Nonetheless, they are considered to be the most substantial and accurate policy assessment reports produced in the 1990s.

Most of the evaluation and assessment reports produced by the MOE address the political elite with a particular eye to pleasing donors and the international community. Therefore they tend to highlight the achievements of the MOE reform policies. Figures are used to emphasize increases in enrollment rates, newly constructed schools, newly purchased computers, and the wide reach of MOE videoconference network. The acquaintance of report writers and editors with the latest development terminology and ideological trends helps them produce reports that emphasize purported achievements according to widely-agreed criteria with a considerable degree of formalism. Formalistic evaluation risks producing an inauthentic monitoring and assessment of policy implementation in the light of original policy objectives, but is yet another standard bureaucratic procedure carried out for its own sake. (Rouchdy; 1998) It values contexts more than

contents and holds policy analysts accountable more to individuals holding power than to the system that includes the individuals affected by the policy. It is the same formalism that encourages some policy makers keep evaluation reports that manifest concerns about potential problematic areas in their drawers. Again, it is the very same formalism that does not integrate the evaluation parameters that assess performance in the design of the daily operational procedures of education institutions and consequently does not seek to integrate the norms promoted by the policy reforms on all institutional levels.

Chapter 8

Development Assistance and the Concept of Participation in Basic Education

Introduction:

Democratization of development and ownership of reforms are two major values universally promoted by international development agencies. Community participation models have been endorsed in various fields of development including basic education. In due course most international organizations have directly and indirectly promoted and sponsored civil society in developing countries hoping that eventually NGOs will be "strong enough to articulate interests of their own." (Jacoby; 2000)

This chapter identifies the various external pressures (direct and indirect) on the MOE for acceptance of models of democratization, decentralization and governance in education. I examine how the community participation model in primary education has been advocated by external donors, and examine the socialization mechanisms used to achieve a degree of ceremonial conformity, persuasion and moral consciousness. A close exploration of the legislative framework and organizational structures and a review of the financial sustainability of civil society associations operating in basic education are all essential for assessing the level of participation.

The brief case study of UNICEF Community Schools shows how external actors have promoted and implemented external models that entail structural and normative changes domestic institutional contexts and how domestic bureaucratic structures have influenced the degree of institutionalization and internalization of an externally promoted project.

I. The Democratization of Development

A. Democratization, Decentralization, and Governance in Education

In the absence of tangible results from development assistance funds directed to the developing world over several decades, and their being misused or wasted by either inefficient administration or corrupt practices at several levels, development agencies have revised their development philosophies and procedures. This desire to find an alternative and more efficient course for development assistance has given way to concepts of participation, ownership and the empowerment of local communities and civil society associations, as a means to render development programs more democratic, effective and efficient. These new ideas materialized into development assistance and soft loans policies by the beginning of the 1990s. In this context, decentralization became a major condition for achieving development success. In fact, ever since their independence (starting from the 1950s), developing states have identified democratization and decentralization as a means and goal of national development. Nevertheless, the majority of developing countries that embarked on the democratization process five decades ago failed to accomplish democratization, although some managed to carry out a degree of decentralization with very limited community participation.

Decentralization has several characteristics, phases and definitions, starting from de-concentration, through delegation and finally devolution. De-concentration implies the decentralization of central government authorities to regional administrations that are delegated to carry out services at the regional levels and may or may not be authorized to make decisions. To a large extent this represents the case of the MOE's 76 education directorates distributed around Egypt's 26 governorates. Delegation, on the other hand, implies the transfer

of both responsibilities and institutional authorities, and is seen as a higher form of decentralization. The ultimate form of decentralization is devolution, which does not entail the transfer of power from the central government to regional directorates, but the autonomy of regional authorities. Under the umbrella of devolution, regional authorities define their responsibilities and functions and control the administrative and fiscal means that enable them to carry out their programs on the regional level.

Decentralization does not automatically translate into democratization and the empowerment of local communities. Central authorities may transfer functions but not authority and may not allocate sufficient means to local communities. These may be impaired either by their poor administrative and political capacities, scarce social capital, or by the unwillingness of the central state to transfer authority to them. An empowering approach to participation in reform programs, according to a World Bank release, retains local communities to be co-producers, endowed with authority and control over decisions and resources devolved to the lowest appropriate level. (World Bank Release: 2002)

Democratic decentralization is defined as a "people's entitlement to initiate their own projects and the competence to implement and operate them." (Valsan; 1999) That is, democratic decentralization is not limited to allowing community participation in development projects. It allows local community groups not only to run projects independently, but also gives them the authority to set them up themselves. Community participation in development requires the voluntary involvement of the community in a) identifying problems; b) specifying changes needed; c) determining the degree, type and direction of change required; d) plan implementation; and e) participating in the implementation and monitoring of their projects. (Badran; 1999) These conceptions of democratic decentralization,

however, do not exonerate the state from its important and central role in development planning and the efficient and effective implementation of development projects. In fact, the concept of governance dominates the agendas of development agencies and, is recommended to all recipient states as a criterion of project appraisal.

Governance, a relatively new concept, a fashionable term which been emphasized in all development papers, proposals and agencies' recommendations remains all-inclusive and too vague for many politicians, development operators and technocrats. On the one hand, the World Bank and United Nations' definitions of governance is broad. It sets out how societies should govern themselves within an efficient and transparent political, administrative and economic system that foresees an active role for civil society. On the other hand, many technocrats perceive governance as the efficient functioning of current political and administrative systems and relate it to civil service reform (downsizing bureaucracy, increasing transparency and accountability). (Rosenbaum; 1999) The empowerment of local communities, providing them with the means and the opportunities to pursue their locally projected goals, has been identified as a route to development, that is directly connected to a form of the democratization defined as the "expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives." (World Bank Release; 2002) Hence the dominant trend in developmentalist thought has been pushing for the democratization of development. This democratization is based on an equal and equitable access of all societal groups and communities to participatory mechanisms that allow them to plan, implement and evaluate their projects and equitably distribute the fruits of those projects. This conception of the democratization of development proposes civil society as the main

driving force in the development process, without discharging the state from its principal responsibilities towards society, especially given that in this context the state is not limited to legislative and executive authorities, but includes social and cultural institutions as well.

B. The Community Participation Model in the Provision of Basic Education

Various studies have proven that state allocation for education has often discriminated against the most disadvantaged groups of society. (El-Baradei; 2000) Public education insufficiency in Egypt has failed mostly poor rural areas and urban slums, and given lower opportunities to young females. Moreover, it has favored higher over basic education. Consequently, educational investments have been redirected to urban upper and middle classes that could afford the opportunity costs of higher education. The inequitable distribution and restricted reach of educational services has been blamed on the limited resources of the state that have been insufficient to cover all educational needs. A country like Egypt invests around 20 percent of its annual budget in education, yet its actual investment figures are rated as low compared to other neighboring countries. Therefore new policy reforms have urged to supplement state efforts with private sector and community participation in the provision of education.

Within this model, all social forces, individuals, civil society, political parties, interest groups and others join forces to achieve a collective goal. Accordingly, the private sector is expected to provide private education for the well-off and contribute to state educational projects through donations and partnerships, alleviating some pressure on state budgets in order to re-direct funds to the less

advantaged. For instance, private sector industries can be partners with the state in establishing technical educational institutions directly connected to their industrial activities, which in turn becomes a secure source of skilled labor. Also, civil society associations on the local level are expected to motivate local communities to create more demand for basic education, especially among young females in disadvantaged and remote areas. As a matter of fact, it is precisely in remote rural areas that civil society associations are expected to perform the leading role in correcting problems of socio-economic inequity, especially as these areas have the most serious problems of illiteracy, school dropouts, child labor, families supported only by mothers, and children with special needs. In the context of this model, civil society associations should work more closely with the marginalized groups of society that do not have access to public services and cannot afford private services. (Ministry of Education; 2000)

Community development associations are counted on to mobilize local resources, to help local communities raise funds, and build capacities to initiate and run informal educational projects that are meant to reach dropouts, and eradicate adult illiteracy. This model however, does not transfer to civil society associations and organizations all responsibilities for basic education in these areas, but involves a complementary role together with the MOE, according to Emad Siam, representative of the Association for the Advancement of Education. (Ministry of Education; 2000) The common factor in all these activities, is the strong presence of the state (the Ministry of Education) as a main source of funding and expertise.

"Community participation is the real hope for development and reform of education in Egypt," said Magdi Mehanni, capacity building expert in the Education Enhancement Programme. Mehanni gave the example of

some small hamlets and villages where some Community Development Associations have formed an Education Support Fund, financed by small local contributions to basic education activities that are managed by local communities. He describes it as a very limited experience given the wariness of local communities which are not accustomed to such initiatives and traditionally mistrust non-governmental initiatives. Mehanni suggests that the empowerment and direct involvement of local communities would fortify and help multiply such initiatives, pointing to the activities of the Menya group with the Shorouk (integrated rural development) program, where poor local communities contributed to school building. (Personal interview; April 2002)

The essential element for the functioning of the community participation model is the institutionalization of liberties and pluralism in diverse political, economic and social associations. (Mina; 2001) Dummy political parties, formalistic civil society groups and constrained associations that are incapacitated by legislative, political and cultural obstacles are unable to produce the community participation model. Open-mindedness towards diverse political, ideological and religious positions, and the guaranteeing of civil liberties and freedom of association, are fundamental for an active civil society.

Many of these conditions for the operation of active civil society groups, associations and organizations are missing from the Egyptian political scene of the 1990s. Even though civil society associations in Egypt have a history that goes back to the late nineteenth century, many years of totalitarian rule and institutional (legislative and administrative) impediments have eroded a civic culture that began to flourish within the Egyptian society during the first half of the twentieth century. Ever since the 1952 revolution and the republican decrees abolishing political parties and civil society associations

through the 1950s and 1960s, Egyptians have been passive actors in the nation's political life and their lives, (education, selection of career, economic activities and social mobility) have been controlled by a paternalistic and authoritarian state whose head of state has often described himself as the father of the nation. In due course, for the community participation model to function in the field of education, a new civic culture has to be instituted within the legislative and executive systems and new organizational capacities and codes for collective and community work have to be mobilized. In short a new political culture has to emerge in order to provide the space for a pro-active civil society.

C. The State, Development Assistance Agencies and Civil Society

We can employ the Risse-Sikkink model of socialization to investigate of the implementation of the community participation model in basic education in Egypt during the 1990s. The model suggests that there are three sequential phases that should be successfully completed to internalize and sustain reforms promoted by external actors within a domestic setting. These phases are: 1) instrumental adaptation and strategic bargaining, 2) moral consciousness and persuasion, and 3) institutionalization and habitualization. (Risse and Sikkink; 1999)

Almost all donor documents and development assistance agencies' proposals suggest that the participation of civil society associations is the main determinant of development and the guarantee of an equitable distribution of the returns on development programs and the future sustainability of these projects. "Reform of the decision-making process will be a crucial element for strengthening system effectiveness and efficiency. This process is currently highly centralized and susceptible to arbitrary intervention at each

successive level of authority." (World Bank; 1996) Ensuring the participation of non-governmental organizations, community development associations, private enterprise, teachers' union and parents' councils has been the pledge of almost all development assistance agencies and donors working on basic education throughout the 1990s in Egypt. It is important to note that the 1990s have witnessed parallel trends to activate civil society in all the fields that lie within the scope of foreign development assistance agencies. Civil society associations have been particularly activate in the fields of human rights, gender equity, and integrated rural development. (Kandil; 2000) And while the Egyptian state has formally welcomed the cooperation of development assistance in the activation of NGOs in gender and rural development, it has been more reserved with regard to those operating in human and legal rights.

A decentralization that would eventually lead to a fully-fledged and mature process of democratization has been the premise behind numerous development assistance projects in Egypt. For instance, while almost all bilateral donors tended to provide aid to the education sector through NGOs operating in the fields of girls' education and adult illiteracy, the World Bank's and the European Unions' Education Enhancement Program, in cooperation with the MOE, emphasized the importance of decentralization and participation in its planning and implementation phases. Even though there were no direct preset conditions tying a particular project to political and administrative criteria for decentralization and the participation of civil society associations, these concepts were embedded in the project documents. Besides, several bilateral donors directed their hard and soft development assistance only through NGOs. For example, the Egyptian Swiss Development Fund, stated Olfat Girgis, project manager of the fund, works solely with (international and local) NGOs in education and prefers medium and large-sized associations because it does not

provide less than 800,000 Egyptian Pounds per project. This sum can be managed only by well-established NGOs that in turn re-channel those sums through sub-NGOs on the local levels. (Personal interview; March 2001)

All the way through the decade the Egyptian state has witnessed considerable internal and external pressures for the liberalization of civil society associations, allowing them more space in the field of development. Those pressures urged institutional and administrative changes to allow greater pluralism and pro-active participation. Institutionally, the state was urged to change the 1964 law that used to govern civil society and that gave the state full control and even the right to dissolve a particular civil society association whenever it felt it appropriate to do so. (Kandil; 2000) Therefore, many international NGOs, local NGOs and donors joined forces to steer the state towards greater democratic participation and decentralization, a pressure to which the state did not remain unresponsive.

At this point we can observe the extent to which the Egyptian state reacted to these pressures through an instrumental adaptation of reforms and strategic bargaining with external and domestic actors. Recent MOE releases and interviews with Minister Bahaaeddin all highlight community participation as a major factor in the process of education reform. In the chapter about democratization of education, in the book series *Mubarak and Education*, the Ministry's official position is the following: "Education has become a national responsibility among the society categories and sectors. In the light of this feeling of national responsibility, the Ministry has made great efforts to mobilize potential nationwide. This constitutes a sort of community partnership which seeks to convert education from an executive responsibility into a national and community responsibility. Community participation is represented as follows: Non-governmental

organizations; Self initiated efforts and private sector partnership; Community participation in illiteracy eradication." (Ministry of Education: Mubarak and Education; 2001) Thus, by the end of the 1990s, the state responded to pressures calling for more community participation in education by allowing more space for NGOs and the private sector. After the meeting between the Minister of Education and the representatives of 17 civil society associations working on education in December 1998, the Minister decided to establish the Unit of Civil Society working on education, and later in March 2000 the Unit held the first conference for civil society associations working on education. The Unit director, Sami El Tabbakh, is a senior MOE administrator with a typical MOE career progression from teacher to headmaster and then to a senior administrator, who has also been a member of some local community development associations and elected head and representative in a local council. The Minister selected him because of his personal experience with the activities of CDAs and local communities. El Tabbakh says that considering the very small capacity of the unit in terms of personnel and facilities, it manages to carry out a lot of activities such as:

"(1) Compiling a database for all the civil society associations operating in education; (2) Coordinating between the various NGOs working in the field; (3) Facilitating the operation of civil society associations through the implementation of their projects; (4) Preparing proposals for decrees in education; (5) Suggesting projects for civil society associations to participate in; (6) Following up on development projects with local and international donors; (7) Liaising with the Supreme Parents' and Teachers' Council." (Ministry of Education Leaflet; 1999)

Moreover, El Tabbakh argues that the unit has developed a recent project intended to extend development thinking within the various organizations and works on substance abuse in cooperation with CARITAS. (Personal interview; April 2002) However, the frequent complaint from several representatives of civil society associations

dealing with the unit (around 1250 CDAs and NGOs) is the poor organizational (financial, and administrative) capacities of the unit itself. The common feeling is that the Unit was casually and formalistically instituted in order to demonstrate the states' willingness to open up its doors for participation, without actual planning, recruitment, selection, capacity building, delegation of administrative authority, or provision of technical facilities to the unit. It is worth mentioning that the Unit has not received any direct technical assistance from the development assistance agencies.

Besides organizational reinforcement through capacity building, the institutionalization of civil society's participation requires the provision of a clear and strong legal framework that allows these organizations to develop into strong and embedded social, economic and political institutions. Another major obstacle, which has long been contested by civil society associations, opposition political parties and international development assistance agencies is the NGO law, changed in 1999 and revised in 2002 after being locally and internationally contested as unconstitutional and restrictive. According to the most recent version of the law, civil society associations and organizations are not allowed to engage in any political activism or unionism, that advances the interests of a political party or participate in election campaigns using NGO officers or funds. While the 1999 version (deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court in June 2000) prohibited fund raising unless approved and supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and restrained local NGOs from receiving any funds from abroad, the 2002 version gives NGOs the freedom to raise funds and receive donations locally and urged the administrative units of the Ministry to provide their official approval to fund raising requests within a maximum of 15 days. Moreover, instead of forbidding NGOs from receiving funds directly from foreign development assistance agencies, and insisting

that all funds must be directed to the Ministry of Social Affairs (which in turn redistributes them to civil society associations), the latest law allows them to receive such funds after obtaining the approval of the Ministry. However, Article 55 of the 2002 law forbids NGOs from joining a network without the approval of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Those approval procedures require NGOs to wait for 60 days before receiving the Ministry's permission to join any particular network. NGO leaders criticize the fact that the executive regulations do not specify the criteria for accepting or rejecting an NGO's application to join a network. (Tadros; 2002)

Given that a major criterion for democratization is the effective and proactive engagement of civil society groups in political advocacy that guarantees their influence over the policy agenda and national political debate, we can conclude that the most recent law forbidding civil society groups from political activities, impairs their 'full democratic operation'. However, Minister of Social Affairs, Amina El Guindy, states that NGO Law 84 of 2002 grants a greater degree of freedom to civil society organizations and associations, especially given that they can raise funds, operate freely and can no longer be dissolved by a judicial decision, but through a more complicated administrative process that involves the members themselves. (Al-Ahram; October 24, 2002) The purported reason behind the state's skepticism regarding the foreign funding of local NGOs is that numerous NGOs have been established nominally to benefit from foreign funding without having a clear activity, thus raising doubts about the transparency of the operation of many NGOs. Interestingly, the other reason is related to the degree of influence foreign development assistance has on the agendas of local NGOs and how such agencies may abuse some of those NGOs for ulterior political motives. That is, the state adopts the conspiracy theory; i.e. identifies foreign funds as an external political actor that could direct the agenda of local NGOs

against national interests. Needless to say, the state itself has been struggling to refute such allegations from its leftist and/or Islamist opponents.

The state approached the issue of participation by establishing administrative units to coordinate NGOs and reconsidering the controversial NGO law. Yet it also delayed the empowerment of these administrative units and imposed constraints on NGOs with the very same law. This presents us with a clear example of instrumental adaptation whereby the state carries out cosmetic changes in institutional structures but retains an authoritarian organizational cultures. Moreover, the analysis demonstrate that while the MOE officially encourages civil society associations, it still expresses reservations towards it, fearing that they it will be used by external powers to operate against national interests. This climate of mistrust towards civil society associations servers to justify more state control and supervision. This situation indicates a serious failure in raising moral consciousness towards the importance of participation.

Another important factor limiting efficient operation and restricting participation in local Community Development Associations (CDAs) and NGOs is the poor organizational and administrative capacity of the majority of those organizations. Most local CDAs and small NGOs lack organizational, networking, administrative and communication skills and have poor access to information and resources. In many cases they also suffer from the resistance of local communities which are accustomed to depending on the state for the provision of services, as well as the skepticism of local authorities, which often accuse local CDAs of lacking in transparency. Again, capacity building of local CDAs and NGOs has mostly been carried out by foreign development assistance agencies, and has attracted support from several bilateral donors and international organizations. The investments of the USAID,

DANIDA, CIDA, UNICEF and other bilateral and multilateral funds in capacity building for NGOs working in adult literacy and girls' education are examples. However, most of these efforts remained within informal adult education and did not extend to formal basic education.

At this point we will investigate progress in the third phase of the socialization of the community participation model which is institutionalization and habitualization required to attain sustainability. This institutionalization occurs through the empowerment and capacity building of local NGOs so that they can operate independently of external support.

The major actors in capacity building for local NGOs in formal basic education have been the World Bank and the European Union working in cooperation with the MOE in the framework set by the EEP. "The concept of community participation in the coming phase of the EEP should be extended to expand beyond community mobilization. It should rather be perceived as a long lasting investment in human resources and not simply a service rendered or a tool to achieve the programs goals." (EU Commission in Egypt and world Bank Joint Supervision Report; Feb. 2002) Accordingly, the EEP's Program Planning and Monitoring Unit delegates the Program Coordination Unit and the Donors' Coordination and NGOs unit to plan and implement capacity building programs and awareness campaigns that have targeted 13 Egyptian governorates in 2001-2002. (*Internal document of Community Participation Department with PCU Technical Assistance; February 2002*) These awareness and training campaigns were conducted by the previously mentioned PPMU units in order to mobilize and train local communities, opinion leaders, local authorities and NGOs, and involve them in basic education programs implemented in their local communities. These campaigns targeted all NGOs, even those that are not working in education, in order to persuade them to integrate education or

literacy programs within their scope of activities, stated Souad Abdel Rassoul, head of the Donors' Coordination and NGOs unit. (Personal interview; April 2002)

This review of the general situation of civil society associations operating in basic education and their political and administrative interaction with the state and foreign development assistance agencies, indicates the following. First, in spite of strong internal and external pressures to decentralize political decision making in education and pave the way for a more proactive involvement of civil society associations in education, the Egyptian state still exercises a great deal of centralized authority over the education process. Both legislative and executive authority provides the state with considerable influence over civil society associations, regulating the type of activities they can engage in and their fund-raising capacities. The role of civil society associations in local educational projects is still constrained by the unwillingness of the state to delegate authority and responsibility to local communities.

Secondly; the state has not remained indifferent to the internal and external pressures calling for more pluralism in development activities. It established the civil Society Unit in the MOE, agreed to revise the strongly contested NGO law of 1999, and formally included the several NGO representatives in many national conferences. Besides, the Ministry of Local Development has programmed the 'Shorouk' (sunrise) national integrated rural development project, targeting neglected rural areas, and in which the state based a considerable part of the project on community participation and integrated basic education. (Moharram; 2001) Moreover, recent MOE statements to the national press proudly announced the cooperation of 2000 civil society associations and organizations in building 10,087 schools throughout the country the next five years. (Al-Akhbar and Al-

Ahram; September 27, 2002) In short, the state has encouraged the formation and activation of civil society associations but has not worked to institutionalize and guarantee their proactive participation in the political, economic and social life of the country. It liberalized their establishment but strengthened its grip on them so as not to lose control to any external political actors 'abusing' pluralism for their own purposes (e.g. Islamists).

The third point brings us back to foreign development assistance agencies and donors, who have been the major catalysts behind the revival of civil society organizations and associations in the various fields of development in Egypt during the 1990s. This is demonstrated by the positive correlation between the increase in number of NGOs in Egypt and the increasing funds directed to them from foreign donors, especially given that more than 25 percent of local NGOs depend entirely on foreign development assistance. (Kandil; 2000) This raises a question though as to their capacity to sustain their activities if foreign funds are withdrawn. However, if capacity building programs are to bring about any positive results, civil society associations that have a social base and a future vision could adopt fundraising mechanisms and networking skills that support their sustainability.

II. The UNICEF-Community Schools as a Case of Development Assistance and Community Participation

• Community Participation and Girls' Education:

Gender equity has been a dominant issue on the agendas of most development assistance agencies throughout the 1990s and numerous studies have shown a positive correlation between the level of human

development and quality of life in relation to the degree of gender equity. According to a USAID report; "educated women tend to have fewer and healthier children, are more likely to send their children to school, have higher earnings and are more likely to participate in civic society and help protect their environment." (USAID: *Girls' Education*; 1999)

Gender disparity in school enrolment and attendance rates in Egypt has been significant and this is particularly true for the more remote rural areas in upper Egypt, where girls had the lowest access to the formal educational system in the mid 1990s. School attendance rates for Upper Egyptian governorates like Sohag and Assiout rated around 67 percent and fell to 55 percent in the surrounding rural areas. (Watkins; 1999) School attendance was 14 percent higher for boys. National statistics for 1992 indicated that enrolment rate for boys in most governorates were 98 percent for boys against 85 percent for girls. (UNICEF Directory, 1995) In rural areas of Lower Egypt (North Egypt) the school attendance ratio for girls was 78 percent, and in Upper Egypt (South Egypt) 65 percent in remote hamlets. "In many hamlets even less than 15 percent of girls attend schools during the early 1990s." (Zaalouk; 1995)

Long distances between schools and home, poor teacher performance, traditional teaching methods, outdated curricula and overcrowded classes are some of the major causes of the basic education problems in general and gender disparities in particular. According to minister of education Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin, girls drop out of schools for three main reasons:

- "Parents do not send their daughters to faraway schools.
- Due to customs and traditions, some families do not send their daughters to mixed schools.

- Children are sent out to work because their families need the money." (Nessim; 1994)

Many studies have established that when girls attend mixed classroom schools (especially in rural areas), they receive less pedagogical attention, are subject to various forms of aggression and bullying from their male peers and have less access to educational facilities than boys. (O'Gara et. al.; 1999 and EEP Internal Document; 2002) Besides, the schools are usually located far away from small hamlets and in order to reach them, small girls have to walk through rough and unsafe roads that may subject them to dangers, especially if they have to return from the evening shift, in the multi-shift schools.

Moreover, formal basic education in rural areas has provided such a poor quality of education that in many cases children of the fourth and fifth grade were still illiterate, even after having been admitted to more advanced grades. Therefore, many of them drop out and join the child-labor market without having benefited from their schooling. (Fergany, 1994) In addition, in the cultural context of rural areas, girls have the traditional assignment of helping with housework and taking care of their younger siblings, in order to replace their mothers who often work in the fields to help make ends meet. Thus it becomes more important for the family to have them work at home instead of sending them to schools that do not provide them with a safe environment, give them poor instruction without any future economic or social opportunities, and withdraw them from a task that is important for the subsistence of their families.

The frequently used argument that many local communities are restrained from progress by their intrinsic cultural and traditions is seriously challenged by the reasons deterring local communities from demanding more girls' education. Local communities do not always act

irrationally against their own interests, withdrawing their children (girls) from the formal educational system. Considering local communities as irrational actors, prisoners of their limited visions of life, inhibited by their traditional backward cultures and incapable of making intelligent choices, limits the possibility of finding solutions and condemns any development program to failure. A program that is not based on the reasoning and needs of local communities addresses only the virtual problems of development planners while neglecting the real ones. In fact, these communities do have real problems that needed to be faced and resolved. Attaining gender equity in girls' education requires the involvement of local communities.

The state had attempted to resolve these obstacles to girls' education in the 1970s and 1980s and planned to provide basic education for females in rural areas. Yet, the state's objectives were never reached, either because there were not enough financial resources, or because they were not policy priorities. Girls' education was re-launched as a policy priority in Egypt after the Summit of the Nine Most-Populous Countries (Egypt, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Mexico, and Nigeria) in Delhi in 1993. (Rugh; 2000) The MOE re-launched girls' education mainly through two programs, the One-Classroom schools and the UNICEF Community Schools. The One-Classroom project, funded mainly by USAID, and ordered by Ministerial Decree number 255, aimed to establish 3,000 schools for female dropouts ranging from 8-15 years old, giving preference to older girls. Each school is made up of only one classroom where the MOE provides primary education and vocational training, so that girls develop certain life and economic skills and participate in income generating projects. (Nessim; 1994) In order to establish a girl-friendly school environment, the One-Classroom schools are often built within walking distance of small villages, give priority to older

girls, recruit female teachers, and have flexible working hours to facilitate girls' participation in household activities and reduce their parents resistance to their education.

Community education, according to Samir A. Mounir, the general director of the One-Classroom Administration at the MOE, has the objective of meeting the constitutional human right of providing basic education for all, regardless of the individuals limited economic, cultural or social capacities, as well as mobilizing the community at large to participate in the educational process. (MOE; March 2000) Community participation can take various forms, starting from land donation for school building, encouraging families to send their children to schools, and increasing civic activities that contribute to integrated rural development. There are several analogous projects to the one-classroom schools', such as the UNICEF Community Schools and the several Small-Schools' projects implemented by local CDAs and supported by international NGOs like PLAN International and CARE International. The Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development, Amicale Saint Marc (Alexandria), CARITAS, and the Jesuits et Frères (Menya) are some of the most active Egyptian NGOs implementing the Small-Schools programs. They are all based on local community participation in school construction, management and mainly target girls in poor and under-served areas, states Essam Assaad, community education advisor for the New School Program in CARE Egypt. (Personal interview; May 2002) According to Magdi Nasif, director of the Comprehensive Project for Education and Development in the Upper Egypt Association, "the schools are financed through various development funds, such as the Swiss fund and German aid and some funds are raised locally." (Personal interview; September 2001) For the most part, donors provide most of the funding for the programs because of the scarce resources of local communities, small numbers and/or resistance from local entrepreneurs which limits local

fundraising. Moreover, it is difficult to organize the fundraising activities in the light of the restrictive supervision and administration of the Ministry of Social Affairs which tightly controls the operations of NGOs. In other words, there is no real sustainability of such programs if donors withdraw.

• **UNICEF Community Schools: A Case Study**

During the 1990s, UNICEF pioneered a number of innovative activities in Egypt in the context of education reforms, curriculum planning and teacher training. The UNICEF directory of projects in Egypt lists four major education programs planned for the 1995/2000 period: Primary Education-Innovation and Reform; Early Childhood Development ECD; Information and Advocacy; and Female Literacy and Basic Life Skills. The Community Schools project, launched in 1992, lies within the innovation and reform in primary education. (UNICEF Directory; 1995) The project aims to provide of basic education to disadvantaged children (mostly young girls) deprived of educational services in under-serviced hamlets and small villages in Egypt.

A. The Community Schools Project

Community schools are small schools established in remote rural areas with the full involvement of the local community (who form education committees) to set up and manage the schools as well as the selection of teachers (facilitators) from among the young women of the village, in order to advance girls' access to basic education. These schools are established in small hamlets, which are satellite villages that have remained untouched by modernization. Their inhabitants suffer low incomes, harsh living conditions and lack of basic services. The

UNICEF Project initiator and director, Malak Zaalouk, is a holder of a Ph.D. in Sociology from University of Hull/UK and a graduate of the American University in Cairo. Zaalouk is acknowledged as a strong, meticulous and reputable development expert with a deep understanding of Egyptian realities and international development theory and practice, and is enlisted among the distinguished Egyptian women in development and public work.

The Community Schools project, according to Zaalouk, operates on the strategy of establishing girl-friendly, non-formal community schools in the governorates of Upper Egypt with the lowest rates of enrolment. The Schools provide their pupils with the same core skills and certification as recipients of certificates from formal (regular) primary schools. UNICEF's original plan was to establish 3000 community schools targeting one-million students, aiming for the long term objective of extending the model to the national level and advocating the incorporation of its innovative approaches and methodologies into the formal system to enhance the quality of education. The Community Schools Project has two major goals:

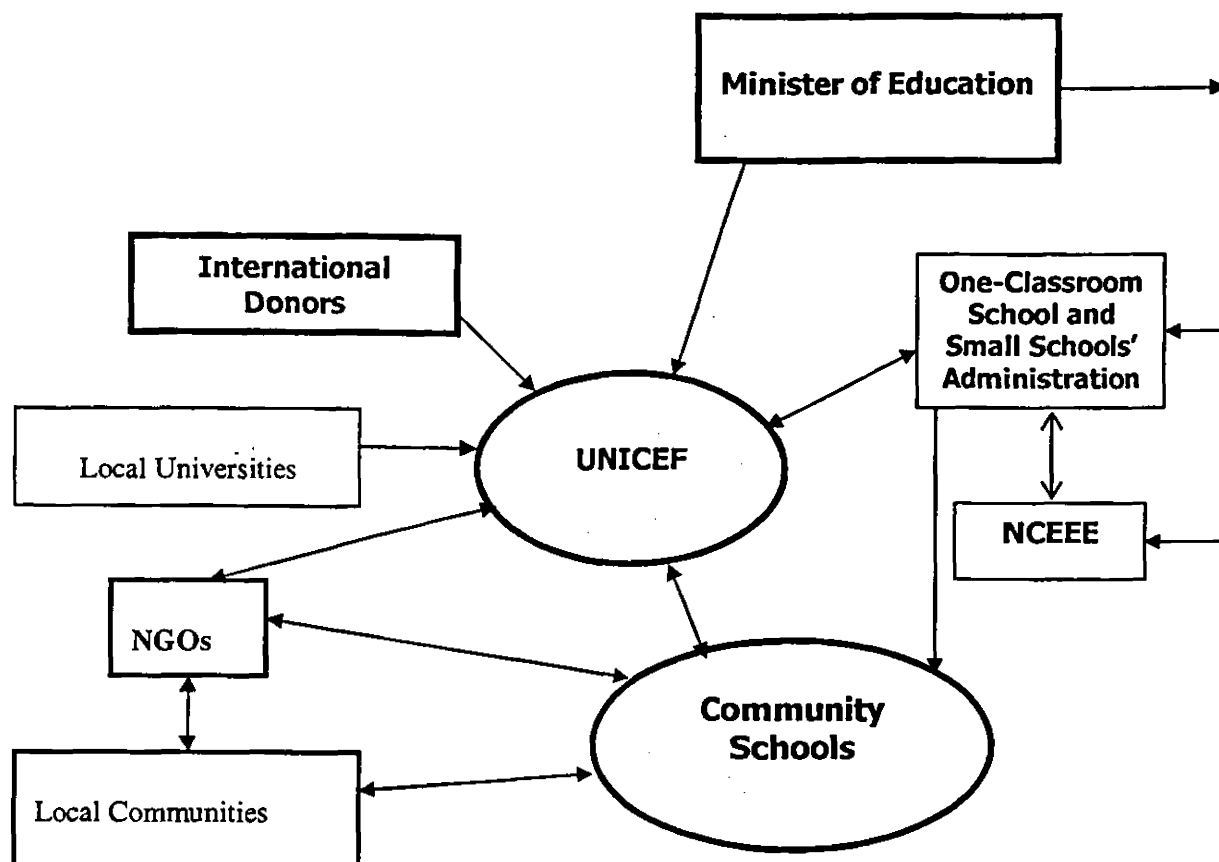
1. Raising girls' enrolment to over 95 percent in 25 percent of Egypt's school aged population in remote rural satellite villages.
2. Reduce the gender gap in enrolment from 14 percent in 1993 to 5 percent by 2000.

According to the Education for All MOE national report, The Community Schools project was programmed to support the national 'Education For All' campaign launched by the Egyptian government through advocacy and training activities. (Ministry of Education; 1999) "However, this was a distraction from the major goal of the project that was imposed by

the government," said an expert working on the project, who added that the program officers managed to break away from this commitment so as to concentrate on the two previously mentioned goals. The major emphases of community schools, as stated by Zaalouk, are to:

- ensure that each child, especially girls, has access to school;
- encourage self-help and non-governmental sources for providing and maintaining educational buildings and furniture;
- select facilitators/teachers from the local community to support self-learning, pupil centered active learning and ensure pupil commitment and attendance;
- provide models for strong, supportive management for school facilitators and strengthen their knowledge, skills, and class management capacity;
- develop pupils' critical thinking and problem-solving skills as opposed to rote memorization;
- design a curriculum to suit children's learning needs, preferences and inclinations.

1. Community Schools' Partners



"The strongest aspect of this project and its catalyst of success is the successful partnership and good coordination among the various partners of the project," states Dalia Hassan, assistant education project officer at UNICEF Cairo. (Personal Interview; 1999)

The major partners of UNICEF in this project are: the Ministry of Education, the National Center for Examination and Education Evaluation, The Canadian International Development Agency CIDA, the Social Fund for Development, UNDP, UN Fund for Population UNFPA,

Egyptian NGOs, local universities, and the local communities themselves.

Division of Responsibilities among project partners:

The Role of the Egyptian Ministry of Education:

- r Responsible for payment of facilitators' salaries and provision of books, and participating in training facilitators.
- r One year after signing the agreement, the project would be eligible for school feeding program (fortified vitamin biscuits) of government regular schools with medical check-ups for children.
- r The National Center for Examination and Education Evaluation / NCEEE provides and evaluates the yearly exams and evaluation criteria to ensure the community schools curricula provides its pupils with the same knowledge provided by regular primary schools.

The Role of UNICEF:

- r UNICEF funds all training of the project's team members and facilitators. It is also responsible for training technical supervisors, field workers, facilitators (teachers) as well as community committees who receive training in management of community schools.
- r Implement project through local NGOs at governorate levels.
- r Provide school furniture, equipment, and instruction materials.

The Role of International Donors:

International agencies like the; UNDP, UNFPA, USAID, and CIDA are all providers of supplementary funds for the project. Besides, the Social Fund for Development SFD is interested in replicating the model of community schools.

Non-Governmental Organizations:

Community Schools are currently implemented in three governorates in Upper Egypt, Sohag, Qena and Assiout. NGOs in these three governorates have a major role in hosting the projects, providing penetration in the sites as well as selecting field workers and recruiting facilitators (teachers). The three NGO partners in community schools are: The Health Improvement Association in Qena, The Integrated Care Society in Assiout, and the Training and Women Affairs in Sohag. Field workers are usually influential characters in their communities with wide political contacts on the local level. They select local community committees and are keen to have women representatives. They often have long experience with other development projects, of which some were run by UNICEF, such as the water and sanitation programs. They were nominated to the community school project by the Ministry of Education Directorate in Manfalout said Zaalouk. Field workers have been actively involved in site selection and persuading community members to donate land space. A common characteristic among the community workers is their good networks of relations with local bureaucratic and political authorities that provide them with a considerable level of political influence and support.

Local Communities in Hamlets:

They have the major and most important role of providing adequate space for the schools, managing them and ensuring pupils' attendance. Local communities are also in charge of the selection of education committees from local communities that are created to represent the community and act as a school board. Another role of communities is to make management decisions concerning a curriculum that they deem to be relevant to local environment, as well as nominating facilitators to be trained.

Local Universities:

Local Universities like the University of Assiout and Menya share in the pre-service training for the project, which is funded by UNICEF.

2. Project Phases

The community schools project had three major phases, the pilot phase (1992-93), the development phase (1993-95), and the expansion phase (1995-2000). During the pilot phase the project has successfully achieved its target of setting up four community schools developing the system and devising a training strategy, states Zaalouk. The consequent development phase had a major task to test the schools for sustainability and the potential of quality performance, and achievement of the goals of 'Education for All.' Dalia Hassan confirmed that during this phase, twenty-four community schools were successfully set up to meet the previously set goals. (Personal Interview; 1999)

The previous two phases, according to Hassan, succeeded due to the high quality of training provided to facilitators, which was possible because of the successful coordination among partners as well as the limited and manageable number of trainees (facilitators). The previously mentioned pilot and development phases have faced several constraints and problems during their operation such as site selection, regular provision of salaries of facilitators, recruiting facilitators and dealing with some negative attitudes held by mid-level bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education. Those according to Hassan, are sometimes resistant due to "lack of interest, disbelief in project objectives, lack of awareness, poor working conditions, or professional inefficiency, etc."

The expansion phase started in October 1995 and achieved its target of setting up 120 schools by 1996 and 280 schools by 1998, in preparation for extending it on the national scale said Zaalouk. "By now," she continues, "a sustainable system has developed to allow the initiative to grow gradually and to internalize the project in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. The Expansion phase has faced three major challenges; listed by UNICEF project officers as follows:

- ┌ To what extent should we compromise quality of training in order to expand and reach larger beneficiaries and communities? And what is the minimum level of quality required for program's success? Meanwhile it would be futile to limit the project to a small number of sites in order to maintain high quality.
- ┌ Working with the middle level bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education. There is a pressing need to 'internalize' the project inside the Ministry of Education, given that mid-level bureaucrats are either resistant or not enthusiastic due to lack of facilities and commitment (partially due to their poor working conditions), motivation and inspiration.
- ┌ Internal conflict between the regular curriculum of the MOE and the Community schools, since the pupils from both programs take the same exams but the community schools' pupils score higher.

3. Project Operation

a. Site Penetration and Selection

The project has been applied in three governorates in Upper Egypt Qena, Sohag, and Assiout; based on their pressing needs, which were detected from previous research carried out by Nader Fergany and other researchers for UNICEF. The project had planned to have two other

urban development sites in Cairo and Alexandria by 1997 said Hassan. UNICEF has entered the villages through performing Health, Education, and/or water sanitation projects according to the needs of the areas, and conditioned by the acceptance of the local communities. And then UNICEF has approached the schools project working through the local leaders who are mainly involved with the National Democratic Party NDP and therefore have contacts and influence. It is worth noting that the project failed to enter some villages due to the resistance of the peasants to the nature of the project, either due to family rivalries (a common case in Upper Egyptian villages) or because they refuse girls' education altogether.

The project began in the governorate of Assiout with four schools having two facilitators each, and one supplant or rotating facilitator. Each project site was provided with one technical supervisor, a field supervisor and a project manager. An Education for All (EFA) conference was later held in Assiout at the same time as the opening of 15 new schools. The project had by then a total of 25 community schools in Assiout and Sohag. Zaalouk explained that the convergence of other services in the community school sites had been achieved at this stage, and health centers, water and sanitation services, literacy, early childhood development activities as well as opportunities for income generation could become part of a general development plan.

b. Innovation Strategies in School Operation

- ┌ Classes are situated in available space easily accessible to the communities.
- ┌ Facilitators, all young women in the area who have an intermediate certificate, are recruited locally, and are para-

professionals with minimal or no experience in teaching, but they were intensively trained.

- r Access to school is totally cost free with no hidden costs. Classes are held at convenient times allowing children, and girls in particular, to meet the requirements of family house and fieldwork, in an attempt to decrease opportunity costs.
- r Children are able to join regular government primary or preparatory schools because they attain the learning objectives of the curriculum.
- r In each community school, the facilitators and children developed a social contract, which is composed of a set of rules for observation by both the facilitators and pupils.

c. Techniques Employed:

- r Facilitators apply relevant instructional methods in classrooms. i.e. children learn through art, songs and games in an interactive way. They also develop self-learning and peer teaching.
- r Creativity, planning, problem solving and active learning have become part of the classroom.
- r Classes are friendly, lively and animated. Furniture is designed in ways to allow for mobility, flexibility and creativity.
- r Imaginative materials and equipment are used as learning aids, and children are not burdened by homework, but work individually or in groups during class hours.
- r Subjects and activities are relevant to community's interests such as health, environment, agriculture and local history; therefore they enhance the official curriculum.
- r The maximum number of children in class is 32 with 2 facilitators.

4. Evaluations of the Community Schools' Project

UNICEF Community Schools are presented by the MOE assessment reports and press releases, bilateral donors, international organizations and several assessment reports as the success story in girls' education and community participation. Many attribute this success to the project's participatory approach that relies on grass root community associations for implementation. "The most promising approach," according to Fregany, "seems to lie in the setting up girl-friendly, community-owned, schools built around child-centered participatory learning." (Fergany; 2000) Besides, the UNESCO *Education Status in Egypt Report* states that the UNICEF community schools project, together with the One-Classroom schools project, have managed to increase the number of girl-friendly rural schools by 568 percent during the 1990s. (UNESCO; 2000) The expansion phase had been so satisfactory in its achievements that by 1996 Canadian aid had allocated to the project a grant of US\$ 6.5 Million to be disbursed by the year 2000. (CIDA; 2001)

The results as stated by Zaalouk in her report, published in 1995, are as follows:

- Total number of schools established by 1994/95 is 38.
- Total number of schools by end 1995 was 125.
- Female enrolment rate reached 70 percent.
- Girls enrolled in government schools near the communities targeted 12 percent, while girls enrolled in community schools reached 35 percent.
- Facilitators' unauthorized absence was 0 percent.
- Children's' absence rate was 5 percent by 1995.
- Only 4 children dropped out of the program since it started.

- Out of 290 children in school, 736 are girls and 184 boys, there are 66 facilitators and 14 supervisors.
- Literacy activities in villages mobilized 1580 adult learners and 67 literacy coordinators.
- Projections for 1996 were encouraging with 1650 children enrolled (1320 girls and 330 boys), 207 facilitators and 40 supervisors. (Ministry of Education; 2000)

According to Zaalouk, the following targets had been achieved by 1996:

- The total number of students reached 3,500.
- The total number of schools was 125 (and reached up to 280 by 1998 according to the MOE 2000 Report).
- The total number of employed facilitators was 300.
- By 1996/97 a group of children had taken the exam of the last years (fifth grade).
- Community school students in Sohag achieved the third grade exams with passing rate of 100 percent as compare to government regular schools of 86.6 percent, while the first grade had a 97 percent as compared to government schools which achieved 89 percent.

Notwithstanding the wide confirmation of the success of the Community Schools' project, some USAID sponsored reports describe the program together with the One-Classroom schools' project as having produced a relatively lower quality education and explained this by the fact that they transfer lower number of children to the subsequent phase of preparatory schools. (Rugh; 2000 and O'Gara et. al.; 1999) Still, O'Gara recognizes the need to conduct more comparative research in order to evaluate the actual educational achievement. And both reports regard the programs as success stories in terms of community participation, and consider them as an eventual starting point for an

overall education policy innovation based on addressing the grass roots and opening the policy process to direct participation.

5. The Program's Economic Efficiency

The total program budget as stated in the UNICEF directory of projects to be US \$ 6,821,000 from 1995 till 2000. Of these funds, 25 percent come from the direct resources of UNICEF and 75 percent are supplementary funds raised from donors (like CIDA, USAID, and others). According to Zaalouk, the project achieved more than its original target on the programmed-budget, and on 1995 it received supplementary funding of 1.5 million US\$, which covered the target and a bit higher.

a. Economic and Social Incentives of Community Schools:

- Children do not have to pay fees nor would their families have to be burdened with expenses such as uniforms, whether direct or hidden costs.
- Graduates from this particular schooling system would acquire a basic school certificate at the end of the cycle just as regular government schools.
- Because of school's multi-grade nature, advanced and older children can combine the syllabus of two years in one.

b. The Economic and Social Costs of Community Schools:

Most deprived families face a substantial difficulty in providing for their children. Therefore they send them to the labor market to either cover their own expenses, or support the family. Several families have to renounce time spent in the field to allow children to study. Hence community school hours were designed to be flexible enough to allow children to continue both their agricultural and house chores.

c. Project Expenses:

"Development expenses should diminish gradually as the project grows," says Zaalouk. The initial sums had to be large enough to set up a reliable structure to ensure viability and efficiency. In terms of long-term sustainability, the unit cost per community school needs to be shown in the light of the cost of government schools. For the community schools, the average pupil cost in 1994 was 300 LE annually (excluding development and transportation costs); while the average cost for regular ministry program is 200 LE annually. The average annual cost for 1 community school is around 11,872 LE. There are attempts to reduce costs by reducing transportation and furniture costs. However the previous costs do not take into account the internal school efficiency, since the multi-grade system of the community schools means that the opportunity of combining 2 years in one decreases costs. Repetition rates are almost non-existent, which means that they are very cost-effective. When asked about the high unit-cost of community schools, Zaalouk said that the initial costs were inflated due to the experimental nature of development projects which start with higher costs, and that such high costs are justified by high quality and minimal repetition rates, unlike ordinary methods of education.

The high cost of community schools, according to a UNICEF program officer, imposes a challenge on the sustainability and expansion of community schools due to its high unit cost. (Personal interview; 1999) Even though the pilot and development phases were successful, the actual financial efficiency should be measured if applied on the national level; then quality may be sacrificed for the sake of reach.

Regarding how to achieve quality and expansion in the expansion phase, Zaalouk said that the answer would be to provide excellent management systems for both communities and governments bureaucrats provided by

UNICEF. Facilitators should be supplemented with good and self teaching (self explanatory) training packages and materials prepared and financed by UNICEF experts, and financed also by CIDA and USAID.

6. The Participatory Development Nature of the Community Schools' Project

a. Development Activities Related to the Project

The project was designed by UNICEF as the entry point of other development activities. By the mid-1990s the following activities were achieved: -

- Adult literacy classes were established, two for each community school.
- At least 10 community schools prepared place for health posts.
- In one site an environmental bio gas plan was set up through community participation.
- In one site, members of the school committee built a grocery store and devoted 15 percent of profits to their community school.

When asked about more recent achievements of such projects, Zaalouk stated that these projects are linked with the Credit Scheme of UNICEF, which is financing people to start their own small enterprises. These projects were started 1994, and were said to have bloomed and brought about immediate benefits. However they were not expanded since then due to lack of funding. By 1997, these projects linked with the credit scheme were to be re-launched and Qena communities were to receive credit funding for an animal husbandry project.

b. The Program's Impact on Community

"Developmental perspective is the change in attitudes at all levels and the community schools are acting as catalyst for development and change," said Zaalouk. The values of participation, democracy, the empowerment of women and girls, self reliance, organization and social equity, are all promoted through the project. A good example is the district of 'Dar El Salam' in Sohag governorate known for female seclusion, "they are allowed out of the house on two occasions; upon marriage and upon death!" However, the schools in this district have attracted girls and allowed women to participate in education committees and become facilitators. Which is a process of female empowerment. Families are now able to correspond with their relatives working in the Gulf, because of illiteracy eradication efforts. On the official level, local district heads are responsible for the provision of any infrastructure services or other social services conditional upon the inauguration of a new school in their site.

c. Factors Mobilizing Community Participation in Program Planning and Implementation

The community schools project was a well designed project, based on extensive research, assessment of needs and local input and has used a tactful approach using a pilot phase and a development phase before expanding the project on the national scale. The project has several elements of success such as:

- Coordination between partners.
- High community and non-governmental organizations' involvement in development, implementation and evaluation phase.

- Clear and strong chain of inspiration, which takes its momentum from the project initiator and leader, Malak Zaalouk.
- Intelligent use of local community leaders, and their commitment to the project.
- Clear benefits for the local communities, as school hours are flexible to meet social obligations of members of social communities. It is also related to other developmental activities and income-generating projects.
- Local communities managed the project through education committees in coordination with branch offices of the ministry of education. This indicates a reasonably successful degree of decentralization that can contribute to project's success.
- High emphasis on the importance of training for: local communities on management; facilitators on innovative and creative teaching techniques and child psychology; NGOs and Ministry of Education staff on management skills.

7. Challenges Faced by the Community Schools Project

Nevertheless the main factor of success is the high participatory nature of the program, since it is highly dependent on community participation for its implementation. This very same element of success could be an element of complexity because it weights heavily on the selection of local field workers in communities that had not had any grass roots participation in civic and volunteer work for decades. Field workers are responsible for selecting education committees and are to encourage the participation of local women in the program's activities. That is, field workers are responsible for the most sensitive and important phase of the community schools project in a particular community. Therefore, their selection and

preparation is crucial. "It is relatively easy to find field workers," according to a program officer, "because they are interested in the project, which they find lucrative (financially and politically) but it is difficult to find genuine and scrupulous ones that espouse the real cause of the community schools.

Another problem faced by the project is the economic sustainability of community schools; especially as UNICEF and other foreign donors are the major providers of educational materials, books, and furniture; while the local community members provide the space. And even though Malak Zaalouk foresees 'sustainable development beyond international support,' aspiring for the support of local entrepreneurs and fundraising, those mechanisms do not have clear mechanisms and capacities and the potential resources have not been consolidated. Especially that the economic sustainability of the project has to resolve the following issues on a nation-wide scale:

- The preparation of school space is time consuming and final products often come in poor quality. Since they are built in local materials made of mud bricks, that are not very safe, considering recent experiences with floods, and earthquakes.
- The project needs to be financially feasible for the Ministry of Education, requesting greater capacity building and development of local supervision system without rise in costs.
- Costs need to be cut, especially furniture and materials.
- Community schools invest a great deal in training, development and supervision costs, while the 'one room' government schools invest more on actual buildings (40,000 LE per school).
- Selection criteria must remain strict to ensure quality. This means recruitment is slow and lengthy and often cannot meet the demand in school enrolment.

- Enrolment ratio in community schools is 77 percent for girls and 23 percent for boys but because of the low enrolment of girls in government schools (27 percent gross enrolment rate) there are still up to 36 percent of girls out of school in these communities.

We also need to bear in mind that the opportunity costs of sending children to school is still too high for the 25 percent of the Egyptian population who live under the poverty line. This means that a real free education would mean that the government provides some allowance for pupils, free books, meals and school uniforms. An economic obstacle that USAID has researched in the mid-1990s and approached with the MOE by providing scholarships for 11,000 girls, in order to encourage their families to send them to schools and give up the potential income they could have accrued if they were sent to the labor market. (USAID; 2001) This reconfirms the high dependence of the education programs targeting girls on international development assistance financial resources.

B. Community Schools' Case Analysis

1. The Impact of Foreign Development Assistance on the MOE Agenda and Policy Priorities

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, widening access to enroll and retain more females in the formal basic education system, had been a concern for the state long before the 1990s. However, the achievement of this goal was restrained by lack of financial resources and local administrative capacities. Therefore, the re-launching of girls' education as a policy priority and the inclusion of community participation as a component of development have been resurrected and

taken shape in association with development assistance agencies' support.

The Community Schools Project in Egypt is not a new program designed and programmed exceptionally to be implemented in Egypt. In fact, it is a UNICEF project that has parallel modules being implemented in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Senegal, Thailand and Zambia. All six projects in all six countries have the same target participants and similar components. They all address the *Education for All* objectives and target young females in rural and poor areas and they all have a civil society participation and environmental component. In many cases, the same donors and international organizations such as the World Bank back them. This confirms the previously discussed views of Hinnebusch and Farzamand that international organizations, followed by donors, adopt general policies and philosophies of development in many Third World countries. They also enjoy a high degree of policy leverage on domestic policy choices in host countries. (Hinnebusch; 1993 and Farzamand; 1999)

In the case of Egypt, the project was designed to match the policy priorities set by the World Bank, USAID and other principal donors such as the EU. Also, it was well-received and encouraged by the Ministry of Education and endorsed by Egypt's First Lady. The project has addressed all the policy issues heading the agendas of development and donor agencies during the 1990s, which are gender equity, empowerment of local communities, poverty and democratization. The project targets females in the poorest regions of the country (Qena, Sohag and Assiout) identified by the Social Fund for Development to be the pockets of poverty in the country. (Social Fund For Development, 1995-97) Moreover, the community schools project involves democratization since it integrates CDAs and local communities in the implementation phase and implements small-scale economic and social

activities. That is, the project meets the 'democratization' criteria requested by several bilateral donors in order to satisfy their voters in their home countries.

Finally, even though the project is designed to match the priorities of major donors and development assistance agencies and addresses all their criteria, we can not conclude that its objectives have been totally imposed on the MOE's general policy priorities. In fact, the community schools project addressed an already existing and predefined target of the state to expand school access to females, and was based on the existence of a wide gender gap in enrollment and literacy rates in rural remote villages. Therefore we can conclude that the MOE has embraced a project that advanced its own interests and that if it was not for the technical and financial assistance of foreign development assistance then it may have not been able to deliver. This provides a clear example of the rationalist and utilitarian tactic of the MOE to adopt universally promoted norms of international organizations to achieve its own objectives. The concern however, is about the potential collapse of the program after the withdrawal of donors' funds and technical support because of the absence of financial support and/or political commitment from the side of the state.

2. Communication Aiming at Raising Moral Consciousness and Persuasion

According to the Risse-Sikkink model, moral consciousness raising and persuasion are to be effectively completed to successfully socialize an innovation such as the community participation model. This persuasion efforts requires communicating with sensitive cultural issues and devising a tactful communication strategy.

In the face of the cultural sensitivity of girls education, UNICEF was an intelligent choice as the development assistance agency to be used for project delivery to the remote conservative hamlets of Upper Egypt. UNICEF is likely to be received with less political and cultural skepticism, given that the UN organization has had a history of success in Egypt, because it has delivered successful basic services in the fields of child and women's health and sanitation. It has succeeded in eradicating long-term epidemics and diseases such as polio, and it has sponsored the delivery of potable water to many villages. Unlike USAID and other bilateral aid agencies, UNICEF did not carry a negative political stigma and did not represent a potential political conspiracy. Another element of success, was the UNICEF program officer, who interfaced with the communities and bureaucracies on the local level and addressed women in these communities. She was a senior Egyptian woman and not a Western consultant accompanied by junior Egyptian assistants, as in the case in many development programs delivered by foreign development agencies. Western program officers are often perceived as aliens, especially when we talk about Upper Egyptian villages with remarkably traditional local cultures. As mentioned previously, the local cultures are so conservative that in some instances the project failed to penetrate some of the hamlets because of the rejection of their communities to the idea of female education and emancipation in general. Selecting an Egyptian woman to conduct the project was less provocative to the local communities and authorities than a Western program officer.

Another important tactic adopted by UNICEF, was a communication strategy that aimed to have a minimum level of visibility and limited publicity at the initial and launching phases. The media, according to UNICEF officers, had not been used in previous stages of the project because the community schools project was still in the experimental

phase, and realistically one should not promote and publicize any project in these early stages. Besides if the media had been used at earlier stages of the project there would have been a lot of resistance to the project. This policy may have been motivated to a great extent by the previous experience of the USAID-sponsored, curriculum reform program conducted by the CCIMD, where the media contributed to the termination of one of its main programs; the comprehensive basic education textbooks.

In order to avoid antagonism and criticism based on culture and religion, UNICEF had minimal contacts with the press in relation to the project and hardly mentioned its foreign partners and donors in the few press releases related to it. In official reports and press releases, UNICEF always emphasizes its cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Social Fund for Development, while bilateral donors like the USAID, CIDA and others are mentioned on the margins and only in internal or English language reports.

This communication strategy changed when the community schools' program was linked together with Suzanne Mubarak's One-Classroom schools project and semi-internalized in the MOE. At that point, Zaalouk started giving press interviews, and appeared together with the minister of education on national and international conferences to celebrate the success of the program. This communication strategy aimed at raising the profile of the program in order to consolidate it and attract potential local donors from among the Egyptian enterprises.

3. Bureaucratic Politics and Project Internalization within the Ministry of Education

Internalization and sustainability are the criteria against which success or failure of a donor-sponsored model within domestic settings is evaluated.

The UNICEF had planned to withdraw from the project and transfer it to the MOE after the end of the expansion phase planned for 2000, and the MOE was to be prepared to handle and manage the project on its own by then. The process of internalization of the project within the MOE was programmed by linking community schools with the One-Classroom schools. The Education Innovation Committees (EIC) planned to make a link between the two types of small schools. By the end of the decade, the MOE had instituted the One-Classroom School and Small Schools' Administration. However, the biggest challenge to internalization is how to change the attitudes and behavior of middle bureaucrats and motivate them to adopt the innovative approaches and techniques of the community schools program. "Community schools have succeeded so far thanks to the Minister of Education Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin who has been very dynamic, and willing to explore the new education system," according to Zaalouk. The solution to this according to Zaalouk, is not to preach new ideas and behavior but to set an exemplary model for the bureaucrats to follow. For further internalization of the project in the greater Egyptian society and not only in the MOE, the project planned to use a multifaceted strategy and experimentation. This included mass media, workshops and seminars, and communication with parents to convince them of the importance of the new methods in order to help the expansion of the project.

Generally, the project officers of development agencies and bilateral donors are reluctant to release any comment or research information

that may give some negative the project, jeopardize their collaboration with the state, limit funds, and endanger its continuity. Consequently they are skeptical of academic researchers and are not disposed to give information related to internal bureaucratic conflicts and policies. Therefore, it is not always easy for an external observer to gain access to inside information about the bureaucratic politics of the development programs. One often has to read between the lines of personal interviews and press releases in order to re-construct the dynamics of the internal bureaucratic politics of project operation among the various partners of the program.

a. Internal Conflicts with International organizations and donors

Some international donors, according to Dalia Hassan, want to be involved in the technical aspects of the project and impose their own priorities and objectives on the program. Consequently, UNICEF project officers usually want to minimize interference with the project's objectives so that they do not deviate from the original goals. Through my interviews I found that internal power games and politics play a significant role in and among international organizations. Such conflicts often occur over the reporting of achievements, decision making processes and setting final project objectives. For instance, while UNICEF officers have been more concerned about the quality aspect, other major donors together with the MOE were eager to link the program to the One-Classroom schools' project in order to widen its base, and report the success of the achievement of Education for All objectives.

b. Internal Conflicts within the Ministry of Education

The present minister of education, Hussein K. Bahaaeddin, is described by Project officers to be the catalyst of success of this project, and

the highest resistance is attributed to mid-level bureaucracies, who seem to feel threatened by the project. This is a significant problem because no matter how long the minister stays in his post, middle-level bureaucracies always outlive any minister and unless the project is successfully and completely internalized by the MOE, it will not have any future on the national level. This is especially true as the most important element of success for any development project is the political commitment of the government and the support of the civil service.

c. Organizational Difficulties with Local Community Development Associations

Community schools projects often face problems selecting Community Development Associations' members who are usually people with influence in their communities and a lot of political contacts. They have often worked with several development agencies and projects, and most of them have their own self-serving motives. They have often benefited financially and politically from such projects, and many of them are allied with the local bureaucratic and political elite. They are not community or local leaders, but are often powerful and domineering, which has both advantages and problems. Through their strong contacts and knowledge of local communities they help in selecting and penetrating sites and in recruiting community workers and committees. However, they are often manipulative of the community and restrain the work of committees and facilitators; they act as power centers, and at times they have engaged in corrupt practices. They are described by some program officers as the 'Mafia' of the local development projects.

d. Project Internalization in the MOE

Administrative and institutional internalization is set as the ultimate goal of the project. However, its budget shows that UNICEF

provides almost 25 percent of its funds, and other donors provide 75 percent. Besides there is heavy competition by donors and other project partners to add more duties to it, creating considerable administrative conflict with other international organizations, bilateral donors, local organizations, and bureaucracies.

Another interesting point, that adds some doubt to the possibility of successful and sustainable internalization, is the program officers' assurance that the project continues and obtains positive results due to excellent direct contacts with the Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin. The Minister is described as a source of great support to the project and protects it from the procrastination of unmotivated middle bureaucrats. This shows that the program was not successfully embedded within the administrative structure of the Ministry and also reflects the personal power base of the Egyptian public administrative structure. This confirms Cochran's observation that "Under the existing system, institutions and policies change with the rapid rise and fall of single individuals, often ministers." (Cochran; 1986)

4. Local Political Support for the Project

The Community Schools project penetrated the remote Egyptian hamlets through local community and non-governmental organizations and associations leaders who enjoy good contacts with local leaders of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP has a relatively greater influence on rural areas than urban areas. The internal structural weakness of the party does not allow it to play a major role in the control of elections, and this task is usually carried out by branches of the state apparatus, including the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Local Government which, in turn, controls education directorates. The state apparatus controls voters in the countryside

through the distribution of patronage. The agricultural bureaucracy in the cooperatives, extension services and credit institutions controls the distribution of subsidized agricultural inputs. (Springborg; 1989) Therefore, a successful penetration could not be achieved without the political approval and support of local NDP agents as they feel the need to have power over any form of distribution of resources, especially in basic services. In most cases, the local community agents secure their influence and power from their membership in the NDP and as rent seekers are not entirely altruistic in their motives. UNICEF program officers had to co-opt those local agents in order to be able to implement the program at grassroots levels.

In conclusion we can see that potential political, cultural and administrative conflicts are all present in the case of the UNICEF Community Schools project in Egypt. They have not impeded its short-term achievements and success, but present an internal public policy cycle and a pattern of interaction with foreign donors and international organizations.

Conclusion:

This chapter illustrates the high degree of centralization of education policy institutions regardless of the ceremonial effort of the MOE to appease external and domestic pressures to pluralize the decision making process. The fact remains that legislative and executive authority gives the state the upper hand on civil society associations and the power to restrict their competence and fundraising potential, or even ban their activities. Nonetheless, the MOE did not remain indifferent to pressures for greater participation in basic education. Consequently the Ministry created a civil Society Unit in the MOE to coordinate community participation. MOE official

statements also repeatedly announce a cooperation with 2,000 civil society associations in school building and management. However, the state has maintained a tight control over all matters making sure not to leave any space for domestic political opposition groups (such as the Islamists) to penetrate the system.

This chapter also illustrated how donors and foreign development assistance agencies have pressured the MOE to allow greater space for the participation of civil society associations in basic education during the 1990s and how these civil society associations are dependent on external assistance for their funding and capacity building. This is a state of affairs that justifies concern about their sustainability beyond the lifetime of external funding and their independence in setting their own work agendas.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the process of international socialization of basic education policy reforms, through which development assistance agencies have promoted a set of key beliefs and objectives. International socialization aimed at internalizing and habitualizing these norms within the Egyptian educational institution and making them part of daily operational procedures. As previously defined, socialization is the process by which actors internalize norms and habitualize them in daily institutional practices. These norms represent the collective understanding and expectations about the appropriate behavior of actors that share a specific identity (Finnemore & Sikkink; 1988)

International organizations have aspired to socialize several sets of norms on the international level, such as adopting and respecting a universal set of Human Rights' (social, economic and political), trade liberalization, and the democratization of decision making at various levels. Universal basic education has topped the agendas and attracted the resources of most international organizations and donor agencies following, from international organizations-sponsored research that showed that education has a direct positive effect on poverty reduction, gender equity and the social and political empowerment of individuals and communities. These are all objectives targeted by development agencies.

Basic education is a policy issue of significant importance for domestic politics in Egypt, as it has always been used as a source of political legitimacy and reflects the political and ideological disposition of the regime. Education is often proclaimed by the state to be an issue of national security, both on the external level (Arab-Israeli conflict) and domestic level (militant religious fundamentalism). A careful examination of political statements related to education and analysis of MOE policies present us with a clear

delineation of the position of the state and what it considers to be important and urgent security matters. Correspondingly, the level and type of cooperation of foreign development assistance in the field of education has always reflected Egypt's foreign policies and its stance on various strategic issues. The Government of Egypt and foreign development assistance agencies identify education as a crucial agent of internal and regional political stability. Therefore, both the state and international organizations together with bilateral donors have mobilized significant resources and activities to contain the phenomenon of militant fundamentalism as a present and urgent threat to internal political and economic stability.

A. The Model of Analysis and the Main Argument of the Thesis

In my analysis of the process of socialization of basic education policy reforms sponsored by foreign development assistance agencies in Egypt, I employed Risse's and Sikkink's understanding of socialization mechanisms based on three different modes of social interaction: 1) processes of strategic bargaining and instrumental adaptation (instrumental rationality); 2) processes of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion (communicative/argumentative rationality); 3) processes of institutionalization and habitualization. (Risse and Sikkink; 1999) This model of analysis incorporates both the rationalist and constructivist approaches, and the successful completion of each of these stages and processes is necessary to achieve the internalization of reforms in domestic practices.

The policy analysis conducted in this research confirms my original hypothesis that reforms were carried out at the level of strategic

bargaining and instrumental adaptation. However, the main deficiency occurred in the process of moral consciousness-raising and argumentation, and a sufficient level of domestic consensus (domestic resonance) among domestic actors necessary to complete the process of institutionalization and habitualization was not achieved. Domestic resonance, which entails the embeddedness of a specific set of beliefs and values in the normative order of domestic settings, is attainable through argumentative and discursive rationality, an approach to communication through which decision makers seek to draw up a common definition of the situation, and argue the aptness of their decisions policy actions on the basis of a shared perception of identities, interests and preferences. (Checkel: 2001; Risse and Sikink: 1999; Epstein: 2002)

B. Communicating with Identities, Interests and Preferences

The common reproach directed to education polices form the various domestic actors belonging to the miscellaneous political and ideological currents of thought (neo-liberal /pro-western and seculars, leftists, and neo-conservative/Islamist) is the lack of a clear educational philosophy based on a clear perception of national identity, the ideological nature of the state and a concrete definition of national interests. Advocates of diverse currents of thought seek to promote their socio-economic and political philosophies in basic education policies. In an attempt to maintain a balance between external donors and domestic power groups, the MOE seeks to accommodate them all by maintaining a median position among them. Yet it largely fails to appease any of them, especially neo-conservative and leftist groups.

The ideological controversies around the philosophy of development dominating the reform process reveal that the new set of educational

norms advocated by policy reforms are promoted within highly contested normative order. The most challenging task of both the MOE and development assistance agencies is to cultivate a strategic coalition through argumentative persuasion, and convince the various domestic actors that reforms are consistent with their own identities, preferences and interests. The most important phase of the persuasion process is that which seeks a domestic consensus. Therefore, it was important to assess the communication style adopted by domestic elites to promote education policy reforms and understand how far it was persuasive or manipulative.

Argumentative persuasion, according to international relations theorists, can be more effective in the presence of the following conditions; (1) the persuadee faces a serious policy failure; (2) the persuader is an authoritative member of a group to which the persuadee wants to belong; (3) the persuadee has few prior key beliefs that are inconsistent with the advocated change; (4) the persuader acts in consistency with his advocated principles; (5) communication does not occur in a heavily politicized settings. (Checkel; 2001) This study revealed that at least three of the above mentioned conditions were absent and that consequently argumentative persuasion was not achieved. The missing conditions can be briefly summarized as follows; (1) the recommended reforms are introduced within a heavily contested ideological setting and conflict with the socialist normative order on which the Egyptian state was established after the 1952 revolution. (2) The persuader (in this case the MOE) is not perceived to be serious about the liberal, decentralizing and democratic principles endorsed by the reforms. On the contrary the MOE is perceived by its internal and external publics to be an authoritarian, centralized and hierarchical state institution that advocates democracy only on a ceremonial level. (3) The persuasion process takes place in a highly politicized setting on the domestic and international level. Indeed,

the communication style practiced by domestic elites was far more ceremonial and manipulative, and was not positively engaged in active participation. The most significant domestic actors described their participation to be formalistic and argued that decision-makers solicited their presence only as a rubber stamp and were not interested in achieving genuine consensus based on argumentative persuasion or participatory communication.

C. The Conspiracy Theory and Identity Issues as Contextual Variables

Education policy reforms are largely subject to their domestic and international social, cultural and political contexts. In fact, the conditionality aspect of development assistance is perceived by domestic groups to be a significant contextual variable influencing international cooperation in basic education. In this way it contributes to the conspiracy theory, and hinders the achievement of a domestic consensus on reform. The political, economic and cultural hegemony of the USA, in addition to the Israeli occupation of Arab land, are the two main issues that nurture the conspiracy theory. It identifies the USA, driven by its strategic and economic interests and pressured by the Zionist lobbies, to be the draftsman of the conspiracy, using local political elite to carry out its objectives. Conditionality is ever seen as the main tool of the conspiracy because it is used to exercise powers over weaker nations in order to influence. The focus of the conspiracy theory in the context of education is on national, religious and cultural identity. The shape of the history, Arabic and Religious curricula have been the main preoccupations of numerous domestic actors.

In this study I have attempted to examine the traces of conspiracy in the conditions of European Union cooperation in the Education

Enhancement Program and the USAID curriculum reform programs. This was done to verify whether the theory is based on real facts or whether is a mere reflection of a general state of political frustration. The findings reveal that many adherents of the conspiracy theory in the field of education reform reach their conclusions and produce their allegations on the basis of imprecise information and inaccurate data. Suspicion of a foreign plot behind every decision and opinion proposed by national education experts, inside or outside the MOE, has jeopardized education reform efforts. As a result of public skepticism fuelled by vigorous opinion campaigns, some projects have been terminated and several bilateral donors (Japanese aid JICA, German aid GTZ, Danish aid DANIDA, British aid) have decided to either reduce their direct involvement in basic education to avoid provoking political and cultural sensitivities, or direct their assistance to higher or technical education and subjects of study that are not related to the identity-triangle.

Ultimately, this inquiry has stressed that most of the arguments in support of the foreign conspiracy on the young Egyptian minds are not based on substantial arguments and real facts related to specific development assistance programs. They are mostly expressed by actors who are not directly involved in the decision-making process and are either marginalized or only formalistically involved. Certainly, many of them generally mistrust domestic elites and express their dissention in the field in education where criticism may be tolerated more than in other policy areas such as foreign policy, corruption or economic and political liberalization. A low level of participation in the decision-making process is a key explanation of the diffusion of the conspiracy theory, which finds its origins in the deficiency of general organizational and political democracy. In this way, political and economic frustrations are projected to educational public discourse. This is where the argumentative persuasion process becomes

most important for the contested reforms, and contingency plans to reach a level of domestic resonance that facilitates the implementation, internalization and sustainability of reforms.

D. Applying the Risse-Sikkink Model in Policy Process Analysis and Identifying the Domestic Resonance

A careful look at the basic education policy process (initiation and formulation, implementation and evaluation) during the 1990s reveals that the Risse-Sikkink model of socialization mechanisms (suggesting three courses of socialization) can be used to detect the potential internalization and sustainability of reforms. First, the Egyptian state, driven by the necessity of reform and desire to belong to an influential and resourceful international community, utilized strategic bargaining and instrumental adaptation (instrumental rationality) in buying into-internationally promoted education reform objectives and means. In the early 1990s the Egyptian state faced a difficult education and economic crisis and sought to take advantage of the inflow of the capital and investments promised by globalization. The government aimed to improve the quality of its human capital to increase its comparative advantage and attract more foreign direct investment. However, limited resources and insufficient institutional capacities restrained education reform plans. In fact, the reform initiatives had already been conceived internally within Egyptian government schemes, and the government had already developed an interest in the education reform policies before the launch of the Jomtien EFA campaign in 1990. The MOE assimilation of the Education For All goals allowed it to jump on a moving wagon. To reach its desired objectives, MOE education policy priorities and state budgeting and allocation trends revealed that the state's policy

priorities and allocation strategies have emulated those of donors and international development agencies.

A careful analysis of the policy initiation and formulation process reveals the limited involvement of MOE internal research units and their distance from decision-making circles as well as the insufficiency of its research facilities. Thus, initiatives for assessing the basic education system malaise, coordinated with the Egyptian minister of education, have mostly originated outside formal MOE structures and technocrats. Knowing that actors conducting policy initiation are those who identify policy issues and place them on the policy-agenda, we can deduce that the active participation of international organizations and donor agencies in the process of diagnosing education problems gives them a predominant role in education policy initiation and formulation.

This study has also attempted to investigate the formation and effectiveness of the domestic actors who could have participated in the education policy initiation and formulation. We arrived at the conclusion that education decision-making was to a great extent centralized and personalized. For instance, political parties, teachers' union, civil society, and independent intellectuals are rendered ineffective and unable to participate in decision making by their poor capacities and distant positions from power and formalistic involvement. At the same time, an authoritarian bureaucracy has hindered the active participation of subordinate groups that derive their competence from the state machine. The education institutions are limited in their managerial and technical capacity and lack information about the sector, and unable to carry out national policy analysis and formulation. As a result, the education reform project was conceived outside the education institution and later reinstalled within it for the purpose of policy implementation. In this context,

those who could have been involved in agenda setting the reform process were outside the state apparatus. We can conclude that the process of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion with the middle and lower MOE ranks expected to implement reforms was not appropriately conducted. This explains the high level of general (social and administrative) resistance or at best indifference to reforms which has impeded successful implementation and internalization.

The institutionalization and habitualization of reforms, according to the same model, occurs during the phase policy implementation, through the incorporation of reforms in the standard-operating procedures of domestic institutions. The analysis of education policy implementation in the 1990s reveals the important influence of development assistance agencies over the selection of top executives and policy makers in the MOE, over implementing and monitoring units, over supervision and fund disbursement of the major reform programs and over civil society associations. This is particularly true of program implementation, evaluation and disbursement, where donor influence is direct and stipulated in formal agreements. However, the major aspect of education policy implementation beyond donor control is the structure and culture of the MOE apparatus. These structures and cultures repeatedly clash with those of development assistance agencies, resulting in implementation deadlocks. The donors, however, have tried to overcome these obstacles by establishing and sponsoring external research, planning and implementation units and superimposing them on the formal structure of the MOE to simplify cooperation. Such organizational and administrative structures have overlapped with the MOE's original structures and have no organic communication flow with other MOE directorates. Then, donors (mainly the EU and World Bank) advocate a thorough reexamination of the organizational structure of the MOE at all its levels and the delegation of some competences and

responsibilities to stakeholders. Effective policy implementation and reform sustainability are closely linked to the willingness of the MOE for democratization. Only when all stakeholders gain a complete sense of ownership of the reforms, will they commit to carrying them out. Donor recommendations for a comprehensive democratization of the entire educational system were formally acknowledged by the MOE in 2001, and also recognized as an additional objective of the Education Enhancement Program, with which the MOE promised to cooperate.

The influence of donors on the policy process is also manifest in the phase of policy evaluation, where assessment parameters are devised by international organizations and set by the Education for All Conferences organized by the UN organizations and embraced by the World Bank and individual donors. These criteria include developmental, socio-economic and administrative parameters, which are broadly applicable to recipient countries, and national politicians and public officials apply them to conform with their own conception of national priorities. The policy assessment reports produced in the 1990s were drawn up by development assistance agencies in cooperation with the MOE. Generally they are not shared with the middle MOE-bureaucracy. In addition, the majority of the MOE evaluation and assessment reports target foreign development assistance agencies as well as the political elite. The MOE often aspires to reinforce its record of achievements quoting the praise of the Egyptian government by international organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and others. They try to convince public opinion of the validity of its education reform policies by adopting external assessment criteria and endorsement of international organizations. (Meyer; 1977) Evaluation reports often emphasize the achievements of the reform policies where the use of statistics is important to articulate the increase in enrollment rates, the number of schools, computers, and the large coverage of the MOE videoconference network. Thought the 1990s, MOE

reports were couched in the most recent development terminology that emphasizes the achievements corresponding to the widely agreed upon criteria and benchmarks but formalistic evaluation is typical of daily operation bureaucratic procedure and are applied to conform with predetermined policy objectives rather than verify actual accomplishments. Ceremonial evaluations rated contexts higher than contents and confine accountability to individuals holding power without extending it to the system at large, that is, the wider groups affected by the policy.

E. Participation and Domestic Reform Consensus

The educational system in Egypt is highly centralized. However, there have been persistent external and domestic pressures to decentralize political-decision making and open the doors to the participation of civil society associations. Both legislative and executive authority allows the state a great degree of control over civil society associations. The activities of civil society associations' are restricted by the state's unwillingness to delegate a wide range of authority and responsibility to local communities. Nevertheless, the Egyptian state has responded to international organizations' pressures for greater participation in basic education. The MOE instituted the civil Society Unit in order to encourage community participation in basic education and the government gave the green light to the highly contested 1999 NGO law. MOE statements also repeatedly announce cooperation with 2,000 civil society associations in school building and management. That is, even though the state has welcomed the cooperation of civil society associations in its basic education programs, it has not institutionalized their proactive participation in the political, economic and social life of the country. It facilitated their establishment but maintains a strong hold over them

so as not to allow other domestic political opposition groups (for example the Moslem Brothers) to take advantage of this pluralism to undermine the political regime.

The international organizations' solicitation of civil society associations in basic education in Egypt confirms Risse's and Sikkink's 'boomerang pattern of influence', according to which domestic groups bypass their state and directly approach international organizations in an attempt to exercise pressure on their states from outside. (Risse and Sikkink; 1999) In this respect, international organizations and donors have connected domestic civil society associations to the international networks that provide funding, information (technical assistance), access, and leverage over the domestic educational process. In other words, we see that foreign development assistance agencies and donors have been the major engine of the revival of civil society's involvement in basic education. This is confirmed by the positive correlation between the increase in the number of NGOs and the increasing funds directed to them from foreign donors. More than 25 percent of domestic NGOs are financially supported by foreign development. (Kandil; 2000) This raised a question regarding their sustainability beyond the lifetime of external support, as well as the issue of their autonomy in setting their own priorities.

Finally, we see that driven by its need for reform, the state has bought into the programs suggested by the international community and cooperated with donors to establish policy implementation and monitoring units. Nonetheless, due to its centralized and authoritarian culture, the state did not put enough effort into communicating with the constituents and the stakeholders of the policy reforms, thus failing to harmonize the structural and cultural changes required by reform with collective identities, interests and

preferences. In other words, the second stage of policy socialization, which is dialogue and persuasion (communicative/ argumentative rationality), was not sufficiently planned and carried out. This failure of argumentative persuasion has further aggravated the climate of skepticism and apprehension regarding foreign aid in education. The inadequacy of comprehensive proactive participation increases the administrative and social resistance to reforms. The minister of education Bahaaeddin often condemns this resistance in press interviews and attributes it to a prevailing culture of dogmatism and intolerance both within the lower ranks of the Ministry of Education as well as in some intellectual circles and in the general public. Development agencies and state institutions usually try to deal with the communication and participation puzzle by holding national and international conferences and convening intellectuals, experts and representatives of civil society associations to meetings in order to inform them about reform programs and its objectives. Most of these function as top-down, one-sided forms of communication, in which the role of domestic actors is largely passive. The top-down approach to development is a term used by Arturo Escobar to describe a system that advocates a set of universally applicable technical interventions. (Escobar; 1995)

In due course, the basic nature of top-down bureaucracy require that decisions regarding policy objectives and implementation strategies are made in the absence of the constituents of such policies and those that apply the programs on the ground. As a result, they do not develop a sense of ownership of the programs and cannot sustain them once donors withdraw. The only guarantee that reforms are internalized and sustained is the proactive participation of domestic actors and policy beneficiaries. Proactive participation does not limit grass roots engagement to participation in the implementation of programs and policies formulated from above. It should be grounded in the

participation of stakeholders in identifying issues, participating in making decisions and implementing and evaluating the programs from which they benefit.

Can a state that has a highly centralized administrative and political structure and culture partially modify its character and adopt proactive participatory communication, in order to implement policy reforms successfully? Is participation a means to successfully implement and sustain policies or an end in its own right? Trevor Parfitt's answer is that 'participation used purely as a means is simply a variant on traditional top-down development where people are mobilized to implement externally planned programs. (Parfitt; 2002) My answer is that most frequently, the state encourages participation only on the ceremonial level, that it is a form of 'confined-participation' that invites stakeholders to confer over the issues without granting them an effective voice, and solicits their social and material participation and contribution, providing that their contribution supports the status quo. A confined and ceremonial form of participation that fails to confer real power over a centralized and personalized decision-making process fails to placate either the various actors inside the educational institution or the general public. Nor does it accommodate their identities or individual and collective interests with those proposed by the policy reforms. The long heritage of centralization and lack of administrative and technical capacity of the implementing agencies of the MOE together with the fear of losing control to Islamist opposition groups that penetrate the service sector at local levels all impede effective policy implementation.

One can conclude that policy reforms required institutional changes that were inconsistent with the functions, structures and culture of Egyptian educational institutions and have operated in a climate of

suspicion surrounding foreign aid to education. The Middle Eastern conflict and absence of a pluralistic dialogue at the national level has nurtured such skepticism, impeding the internalization and sustainability of reforms. However, the main problem has been insufficient persuasive dialogue with policy stakeholders at several levels, alienating domestic actors from the policy process and preventing a consensus over the main issues of reform. Thus the MOE has failed to accomplish even a minimum level of 'domestic resonance' required for embedding the values and administrative cultures advanced by reforms in institutions or publics.

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