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How Egypt Managed the 2020 Legislative Elections

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How Egypt Managed the 2020 Legislative Elections

Tarek Ibrahim

Introduction

The relationship between the State and society and the extent of their mutual influence in the area of social sciences is a controversial issue. In this context, there are two main approaches: The first approach adopted the priority of the State and the centrality of its role in the contemporary society and its relative independence from it. According to this approach, the State takes care of society, protects its interests, while having the ability to change, modernize and develop it. The second approach focuses on the priority of society, where the State is not neutral or independent from its social environment, but is rather an extension of the interests, cultures and ideas prevailing in society¹.

However, Joel Migdal adopted an approach that is completely different, namely the approach of the "State in Society" to transcend all traditional approaches, and propose a new analytical method that shows patterns of interaction and the relationship between the State and society, taking into account the following:

- The State and society together constitute the main analytical tools, rather than being limited to one without the other;
- The State deals with society within the framework of the process of control and control through several layers of "tools"; The extent of the state's strength or weakness is measured on the basis of its ability to exercise the process of social control and hegemony, through three indicators:
 - The first is the state's ability to use or threaten force in distributing resources and ensuring that citizens are subjected to them,

¹ Ali El-Din Hilal, on the relationship between the state and society, the Arab Liberal Democratic Party, 4/8/2007, accessed 8/11/2020, [link](#)

- The second is the voluntary interaction by citizens and various societal groups with the government to obtain privileges,
- The third is legitimacy, i.e. the feeling of satisfaction on the part of the societal forces towards the government and the governing rules².

According to Migdal's approach the State is synonymous with power, a procedural concept that will be adopted in this paper for studying the Egyptian state's management of the elections for the House of Representatives 2020 (the Parliament's lower chamber), during the period from 24 October 2020 to 8 December 2020.

The paper assumes that the Egyptian state has achieved a great degree of control and hegemony over society, which enabled it to control the inputs of the electoral process during the 2020 legislative elections and accordingly controlled its outputs, up to forming a parliament that is in line with its orientations, in the sense that it enabled the executive power to further control and overpower society. Thus, the paper assumes that the Egyptian case expresses the situation of "a strong state in the face of a weak society".

This means that the independent variable is the legal, political, and security control and hegemony tools in the hands of the State, where the executive power led by Sisi manifests the State in this paper, while the dependent variable is the House of Representatives that is assumed to express society and its social forces, represented here in the paper by political parties and independents.

The problematic of the paper can be summed up in the question: To what extent is the State able to control and dominate the inputs and outputs of the electoral process, to serve its orientations and maximize its power in the face of society?

However, there are two sub-questions that may arise from this main question: What are the State's tools for controlling and dominating the inputs of the electoral process? What are the indicators of the State's ability to achieve control and hegemony through the outcomes of the electoral process?

² The approach of "the state in society", the political encyclopedia, accessed 8/11/2020, [link](#)

First, the State's control tools (the electoral process inputs)

Given the fact that the process of control and hegemony carried out by the State in elections is more focused on political parties, this requires introducing the map of party candidates in the 2020 legislative elections. Out of the 104 political parties in Egypt, only 36 political parties submitted candidates for parliamentary elections, by 34.6% of the number of registered parties in Egypt. Among the 36 parties that submitted candidates, only 14 parties applied for the absolute lists, while all these parties also applied for the individual seats, in addition to those who applied for the individual seats only, away from the lists, numbering 22 parties³.

With regard to candidacy for individual seats: the Future of Homeland Party ranked first with respect to the number of candidates, with 280 candidates; followed by the Defenders of Homeland Party, with 121 candidates; then the Wafd Party, with 67 candidates; the Republican People's Party, with 58 candidates; the Freedom Party, with 49 candidates; the Conference Party, With 46 candidates; the National Movement Party, with 20 candidates; the Free Egyptians Party, with 14 candidates; the Nour Party, with 15 candidates; the Democratic Generation Party, with 12 candidates; the National Progressive Gathering Party, with 11 candidates; the Sons of Egypt Party and the Egyptian Liberation Party, with 10 candidates each; the Future Egypt Party and the Reform and Ennahda Party, with 8 candidates for each; the Reform and Development Party, with 7 candidates; the Arab Justice and Equality Party, with 6 candidates; the Justice, Al-Ghad, Modern Egypt and Nidaa Misr parties, with 5 candidates each; the Victory Party, with 4 candidates; the Union, Leadership and Voice of the People parties, with three candidates; the Socialist People's Alliance Party and the Free Egyptian Edifice, with two candidates for each; the Generation Will, the Free Socialists, the Constitutional Liberals, Human Rights and Citizenship, and Egypt My Country parties, with one candidate each⁴.

As for running for the absolute list seats, two lists in the northern, central and southern sectors of Upper Egypt competed for 100 seats, namely the National List for Egypt and the Nidaa Masr List. In the West Delta Sector Constituency, two lists, the National List for Egypt and the Nidaa Masr List,

³ Amr Hashem Rabie, Political Parties and Egyptian Parliament Elections: The expected outcome and its impact on the work of the new parliament, Emirates Center for Studies, 27/10/2020, accessed 24/12/2020, [link](#)

⁴ Mary Maher, A review of the volume of partisan and independent political participation in the House elections of 2020, The Egyptian Center for Thought and Strategic Studies, 27/10/2020, accessed 24/12/2020, [link](#)

competed for 42 seats⁵. In the Cairo Sector Constituency, South and Central Delta, the National List for Egypt and the Alliance of Independents list competed for 100 seats, while in the East Delta Sector constituency, the election competition was between the National List for Egypt and the Sons of Egypt list on 42 seats. Therefore, the National List for Egypt is the only one that competed in all the four constituencies all over the republic. The National List for Egypt is composed of 12 political parties alongside the Coordination of Youth Parties coalition, led by the Future of Homeland Party, in addition to the parties: Al-Wafd, Protectors of Homeland, Modern Egypt, Democratic Egyptian, People's Republican, Reform and Development, the Grouping, the Generation Will, the Egyptian Freedom, the Justice and the Conference parties⁶.

In order to impose control and hegemony in the face of political parties and independents, the State relied on a number of tools, or as called by Migdal in his approach as "layers" represented in: trenches, which are represented here by the police, and local offices represented here by police stations, the agency's central offices, represented here by the National Security Sector and the Supreme Elections Committee, and the 2015 Parliament; and finally, the leadership, represented here by the head of state.

The role of these tools or "layers" according to Migdal can be addressed by dividing them into legal tools and political and security tools:

1) The legal tool: the election law

The 2021 Parliament elections took place in accordance with Law No. 140 of 2020, which amended some provisions of Law No. 46 of 2014. This law was prepared by the former House of Representatives (2015 Parliament) and ratified by the President of the Republic in July 2020⁷. Here, their role played by the parliament and the president, appears as one of the layers or tools of the

⁵ Abdel Rahman Abu Talib, Egyptian House elections: the most prominent features of the race that may lack serious participation, BBC, 7/10/2020, accessed 24/12/2020, [link](#)

⁶ Hisham Abdel Galil, The National List for Egypt.. 12 parties raise the slogan of public interest above all considerations, Youm7, 24/9/2020, accessed 24/12/2020, [link](#)

⁷ The President ratifies amendments of the laws of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the political rights, Youm7, 2/7/2020, accessed 24/12/2020, [link](#)

State in the process of control and hegemony. The most important articles of Law No. 140 of 2020 stipulate the following⁸:

The law sets the term of the House of Representatives at 5 years, and the number of its members at 568, where the President of the Republic appoints 5% of them. While the former 2014 law allocated 420 seats to the individual electoral system and 120 seats to the absolute closed list system, the 2020 amendments in Law No. 140 of 2020 divided membership in two equal halves between the two electoral systems, allocating 284 members for the individual system, and 284 for the absolute list system, giving parties and independents the right to run for elections in both systems. The law also stipulated specific quotas in the lists for workers, farmers, Christians, youth, the disabled, expats, and women.

The law also provided 4 constituencies for the electoral list system, two constituencies were allocated 42 seats each, and the other two constituencies were allocated 100 seats each, while the number of individual system constituencies decreased from 205 to 143. The law stipulated continuation of the capacity on which the member was elected, otherwise membership shall be cancelled through a decision by the House of Representatives voted by two-thirds majority of the members of the House. The law also stated that the member appointed by the president has the same rights and duties as the elected member.

Within the framework of this law, a number of facts that ensure the State's control and hegemony over the inputs of the electoral process and accordingly its outcome, can be referred to as:

- The decline in the number of individual system constituencies means that the size of the electoral constituencies for these seats has become large compared to the previous elections, which makes it difficult for candidates to manage their electoral campaigns, either in terms of increasing the cost, or in terms of the required logistics, and advertising coverage of larger areas. In the end, the individual candidate may find himself in front of residential areas that he does not know anything about; unlike the party candidate, especially if the party that he/she belongs to enjoys a strong presence in those

⁸ Law No. 140 of 2020, the official website of the National Elections Authority, [link](#)

areas. accordingly, the State can reduce the opposition candidates' winning rate, especially that most of them had been able to access 2015 Parliament by running for individual seats as independent candidates, in light of weak opposition parties, whether for structural reasons stemming from inside or for external reasons due to political and security strikes by the State.

- Raising the percentage of those elected according to absolute lists, enables the State to further control the outcome of elections, as the State focusses all support to one list in 4 constituencies that all over the Republic, and accordingly ensure winning half of the parliament's members in favor of the regime, especially after granting the list system 50% of members of Parliament in the amended election law of 2020 - where the absolute list system is always favored by strong parties, because it enables them to obtain all the seats of the list if they reach the specified quorum, while weak parties prefer proportional lists, where the votes they obtain are translated to seats in Parliament, each according to ratio. In the Egyptian case, the pro-regime parties are much stronger than the weak opposition parties.

Therefore, the Civil Democratic Movement, composed of a group of liberal and left-wing opposition parties, including the Dignity Movement, the Socialist People's Alliance, the Constitution, and the Bread and Freedom (under establishment), were against the election law amendments, including the absolute list system, considering it an undemocratic system, where the law was issued without any societal dialogue, or inviting party representatives to listen to their views⁹. This divided the opposition parties into two groups, one that refused to participate in the list system, such as the Civil Movement, which was content with supporting only 20 candidates for individual seats¹⁰. Some other opposition parties even joined the National List led by the Future of Homeland Party, such as the Egyptian Social Democratic Party¹¹. However, both groups were convinced that the absolute list was not commensurate with the state of weakness that characterizes their parties.

⁹ Al-Sisi ratifies amendments of parliament election laws, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 2/7/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

¹⁰ Egypt's civil opposition movement announces the support of 20 candidates in parliamentary elections, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, 19/10/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

¹¹ Egyptian Social Democratic Party: We agreed on 3 candidates on the list of the Future of Homeland alliance, Akhbar Al-Youm, 7/12/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

The adoption of an absolute majority system and two rounds of voting as a means to determine the winner enables the State to control the election results. The previous election law (of 2014) only required obtaining more votes against competitors to win, which enabled opposition candidates to easily win from the first round, decreasing the state's ability to control election result. However, the system approved by the 2020 law requires obtaining a majority (50% + 1), and thus making it difficult for candidates to achieve this percentage from the first round, giving the State an opportunity to act, in the event that an opposition candidate moves to the second round, deal with him/her through several of tools.

2) The political and security tools

Here, the role of the rest of the layers or tools of the State in the process of control and hegemony appears, as represented by the police, police stations and security services, as well as the role of the president, as follows:

The Future of Homeland Party has emerged as the closest party to the State, where it is indirectly supported by it. Therefore, it is noted that the Future of Homeland Party is the most party that has introduced candidates for individual seats, by 280 candidates. The party also controlled the National List for Egypt, where its share of the list's seats exceeded 50%, where the list was the only one that competed for all the four constituencies of the Republic, which indicates the extent of logistical and political support provided to the party by the State.

- With regard to the Wafd Party, it seems that there is a tendency from the state against parties that have a political and historical balance such as the Wafd Party, in favor of the parties that were established under its supervision after the events of July 3, 2013 (which overthrew the government of President Morsi, the first democratically elected civilian president in Egypt's history) as the Future of Homeland Party. One of the indicators of this was a footage posted by an official at the Wafd Party and a candidate in these elections, criticizing the security services' control over Egyptian parties and

elections, and affirming the party members' readiness not to run for elections in light of the authorities' attempts to weaken the party¹².

- As for the Nour Party, despite the fact that the party has major popular grassroots in villages and hamlets, especially in the governorates of Beheira, Alexandria, Matrouh and Kafr El-Sheikh, which enabled it to win 96 seats in the House of Representatives of 2012, however, the situation changed dramatically after the events of July 3, 2013, as the party's share of the 2015 Parliament seats decreased to only 12, and it did not win any seats in the 2020 Senate elections¹³. In the 2020 legislative elections, the party refrained from participating in the list system, limiting its candidates to only 15 for individual seats.

The size of the large discrepancy in the number of candidates and then in the number of representatives of the Nour Party between the 2012 elections and the 2015 elections cannot only be interpreted by the party's declining popularity, in light of security and political pressures against the party; whether for its religious background, or for its popularity and ability to mobilize, and accordingly its ability to win many seats, in a way that may confuse the State's calculations and its plan with respect to imposing its control and hegemony.

- Some reports indicated that upon the orders of Al-Sisi himself, the National Security Sector was assigned the task of finding political cadres acceptable to public opinion for membership in the two Parliament chambers (Representatives and Senate), after the failure of the intelligence experiment that brought in the 2015 Parliament, and therefore the National Security Sector was actually the one that has managed the internal political scene including all its details during the past two years after the presidential elections in 2018. This is referred to what the security service possesses of communication networks and map of families and alliances¹⁴.

- Other reports referred to a meeting that brought together Ahmed Gamal El-Din, Sisi's advisor for security affairs, with a number of security leaders, a number of party leaders and businessmen, upon

¹² Security services control the parliamentary elections.. A resounding message from a member of the Wafd Party to Sisi, Al Jazeera Net, 16/9/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

¹³ Egypt's Parliament elections.. "a fatty meal" for the regime that lacks the "salt" of the opposition, Al Jazeera Net, October 29, 2020, accessed 12/26/2020, [link](#)

¹⁴ A presidential directive to freeze Parliament, Mada Masr, 01/10/2019, accessed 8/11/2020), [link](#)

Sisi's direct orders. During this meeting, the form and composition of the Senate was agreed upon, where one of its most important outcomes was that the Future of Homeland Party would take the lead in the Senate¹⁵, which actually happened, as the party won almost half the Senate's seats, with 147 seats out of 300, followed by the People's Republican Party, which won 17 seats¹⁶. The same tools were used in the management of the House of Representatives elections, giving similar results.

Second: Indicators of the state's ability to control election results

In this context, the paper discusses the state's ability to assume control and hegemony over the electoral process and its outcomes, through the three indicators developed by Migdal, namely: compliance, participation and legitimation.

A- Compliance

Compliance here refers to the ability of the state to use force or threaten to use it to distribute resources and ensure citizens' (positive) response to this. Here, the distribution of resources refers to the authority's management of the electoral process, or in other words, distribution of parliament seats to different forces, especially that the role of the state here was not only limited to supervising elections, but extended to controlling them and ensuring their results. Based on this indicator, the state has greatly succeeded in producing a parliament that conforms to its orientations, and that will never be an obstacle to its policies and objectives, or even attempt to balance its power, but rather a tool in its hand. This indicator can be addressed in more detail as follows:

1) Election results and their implications

Some 13 parties of all the parties that participated in elections, along with the independents won 567 seats in parliament (except for the Deir Mawas seat). Some 8 parties collected seats on individual system and lists, 4 parties collected seats on lists only, and a single party that collected seats via the individual system only.

Thus, the final composition of the House of Representatives was as follows:

¹⁵ Senate elections: How we moved backward, Mada Masr, 7/8/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

¹⁶ The Future of Homeland Party wins 147 seats in the Senate out of 300, Al Bawaba News, 19/9/2020, accessed 26/12/2020, [link](#)

The Future of Homeland Party came in first place, as it acquired 315 seats, by 55% of seats, which represents an absolute majority in Parliament; followed by the People's Republican Party, with 49 seats; the Wafd Party, with 25 seats; and the Defenders of Homeland Party, with 23 seats. The Modern Egypt Party won 11 seats, the Conference Party, 8 seats; the Freedom Party, 7 seats; the National Democratic Grouping, 6 seats, which acquired its seats via the list and the individual systems. As for the parties that won their seats via the list system only, they were the Reform and Development, with 9 seats; the Social Democratic Egypt, with 7 seats; the Justice Party, with two seats; and the Generation Will Party, with one seat, while the Nour Party remains the only one that won its seats via the individual system only, with 7 seats, and finally the independents, who won 97 seats¹⁷, in addition to 28 MPs that were appointed by the President of the Republic¹⁸.

In light of these results, the following data indicate the extent of the state's ability to control election results:

- In the 2015 parliament, there were a number of MPs who were critical of the state and opposed its political orientations, notably former MPs Ahmed Tantawi and Haitham Hariri. Both MPs succeeded in the 2015 parliamentary elections as independents; and their failure in the 2021 parliamentary elections can be referred to the process of control and hegemony carried out by the state, as allowing the survival of certain MPs within the opposition elite effective in political life for a long period, could eventually lead to escalating their political and popular weight, making them potential candidates for presidential elections.

- The state's intervention here can be seen through two tracks: The first is indirect, through the election law, which expanded individual constituencies, making it difficult for candidates that do not have a strong party backer, such as Tantawi and Hariri, to succeed in elections. The second is direct, related to the state's intervention to remove Hariri and Tantawi, as the latter announced that he had

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mahmoud Gawish, learn about the most prominent new appointees in the House of Representatives, Al-Masry Al-Youm, 6/12/2020, accessed 27/12/2020, [link](#)

obtained the highest votes, according to the results of the official counting records issued by the sub-election committees in the constituency, contrary to what was announced by the central committee¹⁹.

Although the Nour Party won only 7 seats, however, this number of seats does not reflect the party's real popularity for two reasons: First, that the party won all its seats through the individual system, which reveals the extent of the party's strength and popularity; second, that the Nour Party won 7 seats out of the 15 candidates of the party in elections, by 46.7%²⁰. Thus, the party had the ability to present more candidates, and accordingly win more seats, but refrained due to likely pressure from the state, within the process of orchestrating the electoral process.

- The basic composition of the 2015 Parliament was as follows: The independents won 318 seats, while the rest of parliament seats were distributed among 19 parties, most notably: the Free Egyptians Party in the first place, with 65 seats; the Future of Homeland Party, with 50 seats; Al-Wafd Party, with 45 seats; the Protectors of Homeland Party, with 17 seats; the People's Republican Party, with 13 seats; the Conference and Al-Nour parties, with 12 seats each²¹. While the state in 2015 secured a majority in parliament that support its orientations, the pro-regime MPs were scattered over a number of parties, in a way that had hindered, albeit a little, its control and hegemony over the parliament.

However, in 2020 parliament, only one party (supported by the state), The Future of Homeland Party, managed to obtain a majority of the parliament seats, with 315 seats. By adding the seats of the Protectors of Homeland Party and the People's Republican Party, the three parties control more than two-thirds of the parliament's seats, with 387 seats, which facilitates the process of state control of the parliament, by virtue of the orientations of these parties.

It is noteworthy that the share of Al-Wafd Party as a historical party decreased from 45 seats in the 2015 parliament to 25 in the 2021 parliament; and the seats of the Al-Nour Party, which has a prominent Islamic ideology (albeit supportive of the regime), decreased from 12 seats to 7 seats,

¹⁹ Al-Sisi gets rid of the last annoying MP.. Tantawi's loss amid accusations of rigging, Al Jazeera Net, 9/12/2020, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

²⁰ Amr Hashem Rabie, Formation of the New Parliament, Al Shorouk, 16/12/2015, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

²¹ Zaki El-Kadi, 100 Information about the 2015 Parliament, Youm7, 16/12/2015, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

while the share of the Future of Homeland Party increased from 50 to 315, where the large gap between the two figures, cannot be attributed only to the likely political development of the party, but rather to the state's intervention in favor of the party. In general, the election law played a prominent role in reducing the number of independents on the one hand, and the winning parties on the other, both of which further enable the state to control the parliament.

2) Parliament's powers and effectiveness

The House of Representatives has great powers in accordance with the provisions of the Egyptian Constitution²², where:

Article 122 states that the House of Representatives must approve bills submitted by the president or the government. Article 123 states that the president has the right to object to laws passed by the parliament; but after that the parliament has the ability to pass them with no need for the president's approval, by a two-third majority. Article 124 refers to the parliament's approval of the state's general budget and the parliament's authority to amend it. Article 127 states that borrowing from abroad is not permitted without the approval of the House of Representatives.

Articles 129 to 134 refer to the right of the House of Representatives members to direct questions or interrogations to the Prime Minister or one of his ministers. They also refer to the House of Representatives' right to withdraw confidence from the Prime Minister or one of his ministers. Article 147 states that if the President of the Republic wishes to exempt the government from performing its work, he must obtain the approval of the majority of members of the House of Representatives. .

Article 151 states that the President of the Republic concludes treaties and ratifies them after the approval of the House of Representatives. Meanwhile, Article 152 stipulates that the President of the Republic cannot declare war, nor send the armed forces on a combat mission outside the borders of the state, except after the approval of the House of Representatives, by a two-thirds majority of the members. Article 154 stipulates that a majority of members of the House of Representatives must agree to declaring a state of emergency, and that it shall not be extended without the approval of two-thirds of the members of the House. Article 159 states that charges of violating the provisions of

²² The Constitution, the official website of the House of Representatives, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

the Constitution, high treason or any other felony against the President of the Republic is to be based on a motion signed by at least a majority of the members of the House of Representatives, while impeachment is to be issued only by a two-thirds majority of the members of the House of Representatives and after an investigation to be carried out by the Prosecutor General.

Finally, Article 161 allows the House of Representatives to propose a withdrawal of confidence from the President of the Republic, and to hold early presidential elections, based on a motion signed by at least the majority of the members of the House, and the approval of two-thirds of members. Once the motion is approved, the withdrawal of confidence from the president and holding early presidential elections shall be put to a public referendum.

In light of the previous powers of the House of Representatives, and in view of its final composition, it is likely that the state, represented in its executive authority, led by the President of the Republic, completely control the parliament and its powers through two tracks:

The first track, by using the Future of Homeland Party bloc only in Parliament, where it represents the absolute majority, without the need for the rest of the parties;

The second track, with the help of a coalition composed of the parties of the Future of Homeland Party, the People's Republican Party, and the Protectors of Homeland Party, to ensure a quorum of two-thirds of parliament members, to prevent passage of laws rejected by the president, to approve extension of the state of emergency at his request, to approve declaration of war or sending military forces abroad, in case the president so desires; to prevent passing any decision related to directing charges including high treason against him, and to prevent withdrawal of confidence from him or holding early presidential elections.

Thus, it can be concluded that the new legislative authority will increase the dominance of the executive authority, compared to the 2015 parliament version, thus undermining the principle of balance between powers on the one hand, and deepening the state's domination of society on the other hand.

B- Participation

Voluntary participation reflects the state's ability to mobilize via persuasion, an indicator that can be monitored through the election turnout and participation, which amounted to approximately 29% of the electorate²³, close to the participation rate in the 2015 parliament²⁴. However, comparing these rates with the turnout of the 2011 parliament, where the participation rate was 54%²⁵, shows how this indicator seems weak .

C- Legitimation

Legitimation is the feeling of satisfaction on the part of societal forces with the government and the governing rules. Given that the position of pro-regime political forces is expected, we can monitor the position of the opposition (albeit a formal one), represented in the Civil Democratic Movement, including several parties, which criticized the election law. The legitimation can also be monitored through the extent of diversity in party representation in Parliament, including pro-regime forces and other opposition forces, as the former dominates the parliament, in the absence of a real opposition.

Conclusion

- The state imposed its control and hegemony on the electoral process and its inputs through several tools, or layers, as Migdal calls it, including: first, the trenches, represented by the police; second, the local offices, represented by the police stations, where in addition to their role in securing the electoral process, they played another role that appeared in the arrest of members of the Wafd Party after showing opposition to the state's strategy in orchestrating elections and forming parliament.
- The role of the agency's central offices was represented by the National Elections Authority that manages the electoral process, the 2015 parliament that approved amendments to the electoral law, as well as the election law itself as a tool for control and hegemony of the state, and the security services that officially secure the electoral process, and informally manage the political scene. general

²³ Ahmed El-Bahnasawy, National Elections: The turnout in the second stage of parliament elections is 29.5%, Al-Watan, 15/11/2020, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

²⁴ Abdel Nasser Kandil, A review of the results of the 2015 parliamentary elections, Al-Masry Al-Youm, 11/12/2015, accessed 29/12/2020, [link](#)

²⁵ Participation in elections and referendums after the January revolution, Al-Masry Al-Youm, 27/10/ 2015, accessed 29/12/ 2020, [link](#)

and electoral in particular. Then comes the supreme leadership of the state, represented by the President of the Republic, where his role appears in ratifying the election law, as well as in withdrawing the role of managing the political and electoral scene from the general intelligence service in favor of the national security sector.

- Measuring the state's ability to control and dominate the electoral process and its outcomes was done through three indicators as set by Migdal:

-The first indicator is compliance, as the state has greatly succeeded in producing a parliament that conforms to its orientations, and that would never be an obstacle to its policies and objectives, or attempt to counterweight its authority, but rather be a tool in its hand.

-The second indicator is voluntary participation, as the state appears weak according to this indicator, as the election turnout was only 29% of the total electorate.

-The third indicator is the legitimation, where the state proved weak, which can be monitored in the objection of a number of opposition parties to the election law, and in the extent of diversity of party representation in parliament between the pro-regime and opposition forces, as the former dominates the parliament, in the absence of real opposition.

In light of the indicators of control and hegemony, the state appears strong according to the first indicator, compliance, while it appears weak according to the second and third indicators, namely participation and legitimation.

- The strength of the compliance indicator and the weakness of the participation and legitimation indicators expresses a politically unhealthy state, where the state's strength according to the first indicator and its use of violence and coercive tools in the face of social forces "parties" in distribution of resources seems strong enough to compensate the weakness in the other two indicators.

- The apparent strength of the state does not indicate that it is really strong in itself, but also due to the severe weakness of society and its various forces, which explains the weakness of the indicators of participation and legitimation, as these two indicators do not only indicate the extent of the strength or weakness of the state but those of the society as well. This ultimately leads to the conclusion that

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the Egyptian case expresses one of Joel Migdal's models of: "a strong state and a weak society", which is an unhealthy state in political life.

There must be a state of balance between the two parties, i.e. "a strong society and a strong state", which can produce a strong legislative authority that can really perform its supervisory and legislative role, and also play as a brake to the state's executive authority, which ultimately leads to consolidation of the principle of balance of powers.

