Egyptian Foreign Policy Identities

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Abstract

This article aims to study the foundations of change in Egypt's foreign policy. From the Second World War onwards, the Egypt's foreign policy has undergone at least four eras. Each era has its own distinctive context, principles and objectives that can be studied separately. Predominance of distinct identity elements in different eras has led to perceptible differences in the Egypt's foreign policy. Jamal Abdel Nasser's Pan-Arabism, Sadat's patriotism, Mubarak's dual identity and subsequently the Islamic identity of Morsi's administration has given different identities frameworks and worldviews to the Egypt's foreign policy decision makers. This argument is significant in terms of its explanatory value as well as in providing a framework for future examination of Egyptian foreign policy and other Arab countries. The present article, is an attempt to address the following primary question: what are the reasons for significant differences between the four main periods of Egypt's foreign policy in objectives, tools and approaches to the outer world? In response to this question, the article argues that identity developments account for transformation of foreign policy and each identity development at the level of ruling elites give rise to change in Egypt's foreign policy.

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Introduction

The Egyptian identity is neither one-dimensional nor it possess a single dominant dimension. In different eras, different aspects of Egyptian identity have risen and given shape to state's identity. For instance in can be referred to the conflict between Arabic, Islamic and Egyptian identities can be referred to– patriotic in the contemporary era. Each of these identities reveals some aspects of the Egyptian historical character. Rise in each identity is not concurrent with elimination of others. In other words, in different phases of contemporary Egyptian history, each identity element can be traced in social and political scenes. As a result, temporary predominance of each of these identity elements and its rise into the pivot of the state's identity indicates the importance of other elements which have declined in relation to those pivotal ones.

In analyzing the relationship between identity and Egypt's foreign policy, elements of 'centralist state' and 'patriarchal authoritarianism' together with 'social cohesion' should be taken into consideration. These three elements give the state a position to priorities a specific identity element in a certain period of time and make it prevalent in social and political settings. In other words, the centralist state and its patriarchal character leave no distance between national identity and state identity. Therefore examination of the relation between social and national identities beyond the state is difficult. In this regard, the elitist theory that "connects the characteristics of political leaders with social and economic changes particularly in the developing countries" can be utilized (Hafezian,

1389: 27). It is also important to take into account the cohesion of the Egyptian society that enables the Egyptian politicians to frame a national identity and use it as a powerful tool for extraterritorial actions of the government.

The other point is that reliance of the Egyptian foreign policy on the president together with lack of institutionalism has led to changes in foreign policy. Subsequently identity priorities of the ruling elites have changed. Unlike many Arab countries which, due to institutionalized foreign policy, do not allow easy changes, in Egypt, continuation of foreign policy seems impossible. In this country, every new president has changed the direction of foreign policy from the 1952 coup onwards. This is rooted in "lack of institutionalism in Egyptian institutes and mere reliance of foreign policy on presidents' characters" (Fakhri, 2013). This point is indicates the centrality of the top power echelons in shaping and advancing foreign policy on one hand and continuation of the challenge over Egypt's foreign policy on the other hand. Such differences have left the doors open for change in Egypt's foreign policy.

This article is an attempt to find out the basis of subsequent changes in Egyptian foreign policy. The answer and hypothesis is that identity shifts are the basis for change in Egypt's foreign policy and each identity change in the level of ruling elite leads to change in Egypt's foreign policy. In other words, since in Egypt identity constitutes foreign policy, each fundamental change in this country's foreign policy should be spotted in identity changes and also changes in identity priorities and allegiances. In order to examine this hypothesis, four main phases of Egypt's foreign policy on the basis of changes in identity of the state will be studied.

I. Pan - Arab

With Nasser's ascendance to power and abdication of Mohammad Najib, as the interim leader of the coup, the centralist government of Egypt rose once again. The centralist government had to choose its

identity element in accordance with time exigencies. Seeking to establish a new system with a new identity, Nasser tried to bring about cultural, social, political and economic transformation to build a new Egypt. In this process, the majority in the center (the Free Officers) sought to eliminate the differences between them and the minority (other forces in the society) with the aim to put aside any cultural alternative (Alkhalil & Majid, 2012: 138).

In this line, the developments in the regional and international environment of Egypt from 1954 to 1956 drove the Nasser government towards Pan-Arabism. Among the most important developments was the extensive support of Egypt by the Arab nations during the Suez Canal nationalization and its subsequent war. Moreover, Nasser regarded the campaign against colonialism and Zionism as a common Arab goal that under Egypt's leadership. As a result, Arabism of Egypt would take the leadership for freedom-fighters of the Arab countries. The non-aligned tendency of Egypt should also be interpreted in this framework. Speaking about the U.S. and Britain's inclination to join Egypt after the revolution, Nasser concluded that, "we do not take part in any coalition except for that of the Arab states" (Lajnat Ekhtarnak, D. T, 1335). In fact, "Nasser's ideology combined Pan-Arabism, socialism and non-alignment in face of two superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union" (Al-Rodhan, Herd and Watanabe, 2011: 19). As a result other elements of Egypt's historical identity were overshadowed by its anti-colonial identity. In this sense, despite the undemocratic nature of Nasser's regime, the distance between the ruler and the ruled, was diminished to unprecedented levels. Mohammad Salim Al Seyyed, the expert of Egypt's foreign policy writes in this regard,

The foreign role of state is determined by a number of factors; the most important among them are the state's ethnical capabilities and its political culture, the national belief patters and the form of political system. In the framework of these defining factors, the personal characteristics, inherent motivations and psychological

environment of political leaders occupy an important position in determining the role that the state assumes (Edris, 2012).

In this way, with promoting Pan-Arab identity, Nasser gained an essential position in Egyptian foreign policy. Accordingly, the identity of the centralist state, despite objections, turned into a widespread identity casting other elements into margin. Meanwhile, Nasser's inclination to Arab identity should not be regarded as formation of a new identity in Egypt but as absorption of the Arab identity by the state within the framework of Pan-Arabism. This is because the Arab identity existed before the Free Officers coup and to some extent was influential on the Egypt's foreign policy.

The change that Nasser regime brought about was thrusting the element of Arab identity at the core of the authoritarian state's central identity. In doing so he attempted to consolidate his domestic legitimacy through its anti-imperial and anti-Zionist features. Nasser's nationalist Arabian ideology "incorporated the rich literal, cultural and political history of the Middle East and North Africa Arabs into a popular nationalism in 1920 German style and the anti-imperial rhetoric of that time in the third world" (Wits, 1390: 68). In this way, he lessened the historical distance between the ruler and the ruled to a minimal level on one hand and consolidated the treason-making discourse on the other hand. Therefore, the Pan-Arab identity increased the regime's legitimacy and at the same time discredited the opponents. The result was strengthening patrimonial authoritarianism, which itself was based upon militarism.

In contrast to some Arab states, the reason for adoption of Pan-Arabism by Nasser was not mending domestic fractions-which did not exist in Egypt. The main aim was taking Arab leadership as well as boosting Eygpt's regional and international stance. Nasser believed that such stance could create a space for maneuver between the great powers and would enable his country to attract further resources. The Pan-Arab identity unified the Arabs with Egypt at the center. This identity "covered the real ethnical, racial and class differences in the

Arab world and prioritized the social unity of the Arab citizens against the foreign enemy (western and colonial) over any internal plans" (Wits, 1390: 68). This statement best represents and summarizes Nasser's objectives.

The Pan-Arab identity was used to increase the regimes' margin of maneuver in foreign policy by providing cohesion and unity in the society. Moreover, as long as state's Pan-Arabism enjoyed the support of the majority of the society, its foreign policy expenses for the regime was acceptable. The cohesive Egyptian society would also increase the regime's freedom of action. The zenith of the popular support to the Pan-Arab state's identity was seen in the 1956 war and then unification with Syria. With such popular support, Nasser's regime relied even further on elements such as the Arab unity and fighting with Israel and colonialism. The Pan-Arab identity would also consolidate Egypt's pivotal Arab role and as a result would boost the country's position in international coalitions.

However, the Egyptian Pan-Arab identity imposed restrictions on the Egyptian foreign policy along with the benefits it entailed. One of these restrictions was imposition of unjustified costs to the Pan-Arab Egypt. For instance, sending troops to Yemen imposed heavy costs on Egypt without any gains. The other challenge was provocation of radical Pan-Arabism. In this sense, in the course of competition with Nasser, the Arab regimes questioned Nasser's regional claims and drove him to take actions for their own advantage. The other instance is escalation of tensions with Israel in support of Syria in 1967. In May 1967 Nasser made four political decisions indicates his inclination to confront Israel under the influence of Pan-Arab factor, "deployment of military forces at Sinai, evacuation of international peace building forces, closure of Aqaba Bay to the Israeli shipping and defense of Gaza." Later on, it became clear that Egypt was not ready for such a military encounter" (Alseyyed, 2002: 192).

With the rise in the costs of Pan-Arab policies, its inconsistency

with the Egypt's capacities and condition became clear. The high costs of Yemen war and the destructive 1967 war were seen as results of Pan-Arab politics which gradually acted to its disadvantage and discredited its principals. If the1950s is considered as the peak of the political Pan-Arabism identity in Egypt, the1960s and particularly the demise of union with Syria in 1967, is regarded as the era of termination for this identity and its related policies. During the unification with the Syrian and Iraqi counterparts, which occurred after the collapse of the Egypt-Syria union, Nasser demonstrated more readiness to recognize the Pan-Arab policies restrictions. He was pessimistic about union between the three countries of Egypt, Syria and Iraq in a way that "mutual distrust was the main feature of these negotiations" (Kerr, 1997: 154).

Therefore and with the increasing political costs of the Pan-Arab identity, the patriotic discourse began to emerge not only within society and among intellectuals but also in the Pan-Arab state's policies. Acceptance of the Rogers plan should be understood in this context. The Pan-Arab state of Nasser recognized the limitations of the Pan-Arab foreign policy further, particularly in the aftermath of the 1967 war. Although until 1973 war and as a result of Egypt's need to Arab's support against Israel, Pan-Arabism remained the dominant and constituting feature of Egypt's foreign policy identity. In this period the initial changes from the Pan-Arab identity started and, "the roots of a territorial state in political identity, even under shadow of a regime committed to the Pan-Arab political identity began to develop." (Karwan, 160: 2002).

II. Patriotic Identity

If Egypt's leadership aimed to maintain its supremacy in foreign policy, Arab unity and common action of the Arab countries were regarded as basis for the Pan-Arab foreign policy under Nasser. Giving priority to the Egypt's interests and transition from Arab unity should be seen as basics of Egypt's patriotic foreign policy under

Sadat. "Sadat's foreign policy was in principal focused on Egypt's direct interests and was influenced by his personal understanding of regional and international relations as serving such interests" (Shebli, 2002). In Sadat's era, Egypt put aside the Pan-Arab identity and began to change its foreign policy based on a new identity framework. The Egypt's identity transformation meant that patriotism is the new priority for the Egyptian government.

The 1967 war made it clear that costs of foreign policy based on Pan-Arab identity far exceeds its benefits. In contrast to the Pan-Arab foreign policy interests in 1950, the costs imposed on Egypt in 1960 raised serious questions about rationality of the continuing foreign policy based on Pan Arabism. However, in the post–war circumstances extensive cooperation between Egypt and the Arab countries for a future war preparation began to develop, and thus the insistence on the Pan-Arab identity by Egypt could still survive. The Arab League's summit in Khartoum (1967) insisted on Pan-Arabism. In practice, however, "the Nasser's post war project was limited to management of the war's consequences" and Israel was no longer viewed as "a colonial state that should be wiped out" (Ahmad, 2007: 63-64).

The rise of Sadat to power should be seen as beginning for a real change in the Egypt's identity priorities; the priorities which transformed Egypt's foreign policy in future. As many observers contend, the role of the head of government in Egyptian foreign policy decision-making is unique. As Jamal Zahran, an expert on Egypt's foreign policy puts it, "analysis on Egypt's foreign policy under Sadat should be focused on the personal level of analysis and the psychological environment of the president" (Zahran, 2002). As a result, Sadat toed the line of his predecessor in monopolizing foreign policy (Abd Al Monem, 1997: 165) and consolidated the centralist government. Taking into consideration the centralist state's pivotal place in identity shifts, change in identity priorities of the ruling elite, made transformation of identity and consequently change in foreign

policy viable.

The centralist state and Sadat's personality does not explain the transformation per seby themselves. Although Sadat's maintained that, "99/9% of the game cards are in the possession of the United States" (Ahmad, 2007: 66) and this was consequential for the new Egypt's orientation, the environmental factors should not be ignored. Mohammad Hassanein Heikal contends that, "although the political decisions are taken by one person, such decisions are not taken haphazardly or in vacuum." (Heikal, 1978: 715). The complex economic conditions and the resulting social and political difficulties together with continuation of the no-peace – no-war relations with Israel as well as decline in the government's revenues that were partly made up by the Arab aid, created an environment that shaped Sadat's perceptions. A more lucid image of the Egypt's environmental conditions is depicted if the country's embittered relation with the Soviet Union is taken into account.

Contrary to the pre-1973 era, Sadat tended to see the need for cooperation with the Arabs insignificant and maintained that its costs would exceed associated benefits. The oil-rich Arab countries' aid to Egypt was 250 million dollars per month which mainly was spent on military expenditures. At the same time, Egypt was monthly paying 350 million dollars cost as a result of the Suez Canal closure as well as sharp decline in tourist revenues and losing the oil resources of Sinai Peninsula. If the costs of the three wars of 1967, the war of attrition and the 1973, are added to the weakened economy of Egypt, the difficulty of managing the economic crisis clears further. The crisis exasperated day by day and the "economic battle" incapacitated the government for any economic recovery. Nasser had declared the policy of economic battle in 23 November 1967 in the Egyptian parliament. He believed that his country had no way but to pursue an economic battle (the Statement of the President Nasser in 23 November 1967, Youtube). But after the October war the government had to find new ways to counter economic challenges,

"Identity builds interests and interests are dependent to identities" (Wendt, 1994: 385). Sadat saw the Egypt's interests in pursuing an economic open-up policy.

In such critical circumstances, the change was inevitable; and it was the ruling elite that determined the shape and direction for change, "Interests demand existence of identity because actors do not know what they want until they know who they are … Interests are motivational forces for identities… without identities, interests have no orientation" (Went, 1384: 336-337). The patriotic identity directed Egypt's interests towards Sadat's foreign policy approaches; the result of this foreign policy approach was consolidation of the patriotic identity. The incident that affected the course of change in Egypt under Sadat was that despite considerable costs of preparation for the 1973 war the achievements were insignificant and Egypt only gained control over a very small part of the Suez Canal. Eventually, the centralist state, supported by the patrimonial militarism of the president, together with the social cohesion and unity paved the way for change. But perhaps it was the social cohesion that enabled major changes in identity and foreign policy. In socially fragmented countries, any major change would face resistance from a segment of society and cannot be materialized easily. Thus government cannot undertake real foreign policy shifts as often change in identity priorities is a hard and formidable.

In changing the identity priorities and as the result foreign policy, influenced by the Pan-Arab outputs of Nasser's era, Sadat made use of monopolized state media tools. It is clear that each leader that poses a new policy should justify it through a collection of goals that their materialization is promised by the leader through that policy" (Anderson, Hermann and Hermann, 1992: 760). Based on this the state media were pointing to issues like the immense costs of war with Israel for Egypt, the insignificant gains of coalition with the Arabs, adoption of Pan-Arab policies and most particularly the alternative perception which emphasized on putting Egypt's interests

first".

Giving the first priority to Egypt in foreign policy was pursued since 1973. The truce between Egypt and Israel was followed although it was not within the framework of Egypt–Syria agreement. The second Sinai agreement was followed in a similar way. Over all, Sadat's visit to Israel and then the Camp David accord were never discussed with the Arab states. In his speech before the Israeli Knesset, Sadat declared that, "each separate peace between Egypt and Israel cannot bring about sustainable peace" (Ghali, 1982: 772). Meanwhile his presence in the Knesset meant separation of Egypt's way from other Arab countries.

Resistance against the patriotic priorities of the government was obviously more extensive than the resistance against the Nasser's Pan-Arabism. The movements that proclaimed Egypt's Islamic identity resumed their active presence in Egypt's social and political scene. Pan-Arabism was still resisting against the patriotic approaches and foreign policy based on patriotic identity was criticized by many social and political currents. As a result, this era witnessed the revitalization of the differences between the ruler and the ruled in a new form. The height of such differences was manifested in the extensive detentions of the early 1980s and finally Sadat's assassination.

III. Dual Identity

Nasser and Sadat each gave special attention to one aspect of Egypt's identity turning it into a state identity. Accordingly Egypt's domestic and foreign policy was conducted based on such identity. Hosni Mubarak looked at the Egyptian identify differently. In the Mubarak's era the principle that Egypt needs foreign resources continued. As Osama Al-Ghazali Harb put it this aspect was intensified under Mubarak, "connecting the national economic interest and diplomacy and foreign policy was pursued unprecedentedly" (Harb, 1999: 6). Mubarak who neither had Nasser's charisma nor Sadat's courage

strived to frame the state's identity by incorporating the identity dimensions of the two previous presidents.

Hence, the hard choice for Mubarak was the challenge to create an identity and political balance. Sadat and Nasser had defined Egypt's identity in two different ways and the political and foreign policy discourses correspondent to each of these two state identities rendered different strategic outputs. Elimination of this contradiction was difficult. Mubarak insisted on multidimensionality of Egypt's identity more than his predecessors. In his view, none of Egyptian identities were dominant. As a result, his foreign and domestic policies did not have the clarity and cohesion of Sadat and Nasser. This, however, should not be attributed to identity duality as, "Identities are fluid and multiple for even a single actor because of varieties of discourses and articulation and re-articulation of their parts" (Moshirzadeh, 2013: 22). Therefore, this issue is rooted in the discursive diversity at least in one of its dimensions. Thus it did not imply identity and foreign policy cohesion under Mubarak. , Accordingly, the multiple and vague identity of Mubarak was extended to his foreign policy and not only it lacked clear prioritization but also it faced difficulties in government's interaction with internal forces. This should also be noted that continuation of the centralism in Mubarak's era enabled him to counter such challenges. In this sense, despite a seemingly established democratic structure "the axis of domination remained unchanged as a result of the ruling party's monopoly" (Kazem, 2011: 87).

The first problem for Mubarak, like his predecessors, was domestic issues and the gap between the government and citizens. One way to mend this issue gap was releasing some political prisoners and restoring the normal conditions to Egypt. Furthermore, the conservativism–reformism duality was spreading from the society to the state. Identity and political hesitation along with the two previously mentioned elements entered the political system's decision making process. .

The reason for incorporating the positive aspects of Nasser and Sadat foreign policies was the fact that the outputs of both periods had both strengths and weaknesses. Contrary to what Sadat expected, alignment with the West and adoption of the Open–Up policy did not resolve Egypt's problems. This policy was implemented when "Sadat invested on his increasing positive reputation as a result of the effective practice during the 1973 war and created a small revolution in Egypt's economy" (Pappe, 2010: 52). In fact when Mubarak took office, Egypt was gradually facing difficulties of paying the debts back. This was reflected in the 1977 "bread uprising" during which Sadat could only stay in power by use of force and Army's involvement. Although the immediate challenge was handled but the resulting economic difficulties but social discontent continued. Under such circumstances, pursuing a new approach to get over the complex situation was inventible.

Referring to slogans from the Pan-Arab era, Mubarak showed his inclination for reviving Egypt's regional influence. In fact the first challenge of Mubarak's foreign policy was normalization of relations with the Arab countries which had come to a halt after Egypt's peace with Israel. Mubarak tried to restore Egypt's reputation with granting support to Arab countries particularly the Palestinians, "In line with the policy of returning to the Arab world Mubarak showed frequent signs of limiting cooperation with the United States and the West" (Ajami, 2011: 16). In first days after coming to power, he stopped radio propaganda against the Arab countries which was carried out from Sadat's times" (Mahmood, 2007: 230). In All, Mubarak was pursuing three objectives during first years in power: ending the isolation of Egypt in the Arab world, keeping special relations with the United States, and continuing peaceful relations with Israel (Abootaleb, 1989: 57). Therefore the Mubarak's Egypt, in parallel with underlining Arab identity, pursued this statement, "any Arab – Egyptian rapprochement would not be at the cost of choosing peace by Egypt" (Rabi', 119). The apparent contradiction of the Pan-Arab

approach in Mubarak's foreign policy along with keeping peace with Israel made his foreign policy management difficult.

Mubarak was not seeking revival of Egypt's leadership in Nasser's style. As Raymond Hinnebusch put it, "in contrast to the Nasser's Egypt that was claiming Arab leadership by playing the role of a hero in the Arab revolution and independent from the West, the Mubarak Egypt was introducing itself as a balancer and stabilizer of the Arab world" (Hinnebusch, 1390: 205). He "insisted on the compatibility of the Arab interests and not their conformity". (Rabi', 121). In this way the rapprochement with the Arab countries was pursued gradually. Supporting Iraq in the eight years war, trying to introduce Egypt as the protector of the Persian Gulf southern littoral countries, supporting Syria during its tensions with Turkey and entering the Arab Cooperation Council were all efforts to mend Egypt's Arab relations and aimed to regain its regional status. But none of these initiatives were more effective and useful for Egypt than the crisis of Kuwait occupation.

The political tension rooted in the identity of the Mubarak government was quite obvious in this crisis. Mubarak's insistence on uniting Arab countries was incompatible with his support for the Western countries attack to Iraq. This crisis demonstrated that the patriotic identity is the primary determining element in Egypt's foreign policy under Mubarak. Moreover, the Pan-Arab facade lost its significance in relation to the patriotic realities in critical moments. Mubarak truly understood that Egypt's interests are better served by approving international coalition's attack to Iraq and its expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In this way, he could pay his tribute to the West and at the same time considerable resources from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait could be absorbed to Egypt; the resources which were exhausted as a result of tension in relations over the past decades.

In the 1990s, Hosni Mubarak was able to revive its regional role through mending Egypt's foreign relations Egypt while sustaining the patriotic authoritarianism of his regime. In the 1990s, the

Headquarters of the Arab League returned to Cairo; Egypt's relations with the Arab countries were promoted and together with Saudi Arabia and Syria, Egypt was leading the Arab triangle. The other face of the Mubarak's government was reflected in its relations with Israel. Mubarak was trying to sustain Egypt's pioneering role and at the same time mediate in the Arab–Israeli peace process. Active participation in the peace conferences during 1990s and 2000s were a part of this policy. In other words, "the Egypt under Mubarak entitled itself committed to an active role to complete the peace process with all other Arab countries" (Harb, 1999: 7).

It is clear that only in Arab's fragmented environment Egypt could revive and maintain its credit and regional stance. In the last decade of Mubarak's rule, particularly after dismissal of Amr Mousa from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, his foreign policy of integration faced serious challenges and the credibility of his Pan-Arab slogans as well as his ability to remove the contradictions between the two foreign policies of Nasser and Sadat were called into question. Israel's wars against Lebanon and Gaza and Egypt's cooperation in blockade of the strip completely ruined Mubarak's image. The anti-government demonstrations against Egypt's foreign policy were indicative of the deepening rift between the ruler and the ruled.

The difference between government's identity and Islamic and Arab identities entered a critical phase from the1990s. The symbolic manifestation of this crisis was demonstrated in confrontation between the government and the Islamist movements who regarded Egypt's identity as Islamic in principal. Along with the identity crisis, the fact that Mubarak could never promote Egypt's regional stance to a level comparable to that of Nasser in terms of policy initiatives, further damaged his reputation In fact, Mubarak ignored the regional capabilities of Egypt which led to underperformance of his country in regional equations. With demise of Mubarak two identity anti-theses came to surface: Islamists on one hand and the Nasserists and nationalists, on the other. Thus, Egypt remained uncertain in

determining its first identity.

IV. Brotherhood Identity

Although one year of Morsi's rule is not enough for evaluation of his foreign policy performance, the orientations of this policy and its identity bases are distinct even in this short period of time. In comparison with the identity attitude of the Mubarak government which was based on integration of Pan-Arab slogans into Sadat logic, the Morsi government replaced Pan-Arabism with Islamism and incorporated it into the patriotic state's logic. In other words, Morsi's government was an Islamist one in one hand and was acting in accordance with the modern state's logic on the other. Similar to the durable challenges of dual identity for Mubarak, Morsi's government found it problematic for his the short-lived government as well. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood government faced the reality that rebuilding regional and international coalitions of Egypt should not harm government's interests and its national security (Abdolhadi, 2013: 323). This made short run comprehensive changes impossible for Morsi's the Muslim Brotherhood government.

As noted earlier, due to continuation of the centralist form of government in Egypt, the relation between identity and foreign policy should be perceived in government's identity. In the Mubarak era identities different from that of the state was starting to emerge as a result of the gradual opening of the political environment. The overthrow of Mubarak by the nation and Morsi's emergence through free election is illustrative of the political role of the people and therefore the necessity of paying attention to national identity in line with the state's identity. This means that although the majority may choose the president in accordance with their identity priorities, taking office by such president does not necessarily mean that identity would be prioritized over the structure of the government.

The Muslim Brotherhood learned the logic of governance in its transition from opposition to government. In other words, contrary

to the period before gaining power, the Muslim Brotherhood left many of its maximalist slogans behind after formation of a government and accepted Egypt's adherence to the international obligations and commitments including peace with Israel. Accordingly, Morsi's government which rose from an Islamist movement faced some contradictions between its previous stances and the new realities. Muslim Brotherhood's repudiation of Israel was a historical reality, but Morsi did not make any changes to Egyptian–Israeli relations when he took office as president. The reason was Egypt's need for tension–free foreign relations in order to stabilize its economic condition. In this way Morsi sustained the "status of peace" between Egypt and Israel while combining peace and normalization (Shebli, 2013: 43).

The apparent continuation of some aspects of Mubarak's foreign policy by Morsi, despite change in the identity at the government level, should be analyzed against the backdrop of Egypt's need to resources and maintain relations with some regional countries, "The reality is that economic pressures and increase in the significance of some other powers pushed Egypt back in some foreign policy areas" (Salem, 2013: 50). Not only Morsi inherited the political and security challenges of Egypt in transition, but he also had to find solutions for liberalizing economy of Egypt. The need to foreign investments tied Morsi's hands in taking any revolutionary foreign policy. This explains continuation of Egypt's special relations with Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Cooperation Council countries despite changes in identity.

Similar to Mobarak's era, in Morsi's time, identity multiplicity and the resulting political variety proved challenging and problematic in critical situation. One instance is the Israeli's assault on Gaza. The eight days operation created a major challenge for Muhammad Morsi's new administration. While he was reluctant to resort to military means, silence toward Israeli's invasion was difficult as it was by no means in line with the Muslim Brotherhood's principles and

Islamic identity of the government. Morsi's initiative to exit the crisis was adopting an active role in stopping the operation and simultaneously intensifying the media and political campaign against Israel.

Another example of identity-oriented transformation of Egypt's foreign policy can be seen in Morsi's regional policies. Mohammad Anis Salem, an expert on Egypt's foreign policy, argues that all articles written in Egyptian journals and newspapers about Egypt's new foreign policy agreed on "condemning the setback in Egypt's regional stance and asking for revival of this country's foreign policy role in Arab and African settings" (Salem, 2013: 48). In such circumstances, Morsi tried to boost relations with the Arab countries and "advance Egypt's role as a regional leader" in line with Muslim Brotherhood principals (Grimm and Roll, 2012: 1). In this era, Egypt also moved to restore relations with Iran and at the same time keep its distance from Tehran to placate Saudi Arabia. Other foreign policy related developments under the Muslim Brotherhood identity includes cutting relations with Syria and expressing readiness for sending troops to overthrow Assad (Aladvi, 2013).

At the international level, during Morsi's rule, Egypt was pursuing a different foreign policy compared to that of Mubarak. Morsi, "opened Cairo's foreign policy for the new potential allies" (Grimm and Roll, 2012: 1) and adopted "Look East Policy". His visit to China aimed at diversification of technological resources as well as attracting more foreign investment. His new policies showed signals which could lead to tension with the West and Israel in future. However Morsi was overthrown before he could act on different aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood and its designed identity in foreign policy. His collapse was to some extent the result of change in the identity of the Muslim Brotherhood government. This change led to accusing Morsi of trying to "Ikhwanize" the government. But even if the accusation that Morsi "tried to create a domination over the state by the majority as an instrument to defend the collective

identity" (Alkhalil and Majid, 2012, 138) is as taken as credible, the aim of this policy was to promote Egypt's political stance. Contrary to the Mubarak era when the state-oriented patriotism was the promoter of the foreign policy and the Pan-Arab slogans were forming the outer layer of this policy, in Morsi's Egypt the Islamic identity of the state was the principal and the logic

The most important aspect of the Muslim Brotherhood foreign policy should be seen in its movement along with other Muslim Brotherhood inspired governments in the region. These governments and the sub-national Brotherhood movements in other Arab countries were gradually shaping the structure of a new regional axis. Based on the Muslim Brotherhood centrality, Egypt was playing a pivotal role in such new alignments. Moreover, this axis would be against the previous alignments based on competition between the two resistance and moderation fronts (Ahmadian, 1391). In this sense the emerging axis was creating a new form of regional order.

The Morsi's Egypt was also considering the necessities of the modern state and tried to avoid tensions that could increase the Egyptian internal difficulties for the Muslim Brotherhood ruling. Morsi's first foreign visit to Saudi Arabia can be analyzed in this context. However, this approach was criticized by many observers. For example, Nabil Fahmi, the former Egyptian foreign minister wrote, "Morsi is more concerned about policies, priorities and the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood than acting as the president of Egypt" (Fahmi, 2013).

Morsi was trying to attract financial resources of the Arab countries and at the same time continuing Mubarak's economic programs to be able to receive loans from International Monetary Fund. In Essam Abdel Shafy's viewpoint, Morsi's visit to China and his efforts to receive loan from the International Monetary Fund "were initiatives taken with precisin and were following specific goals and carried messages for all parties involved in Egypt's foreign Policy" (Abdel Shafy, 2014). Thus the economic needs and priorities

to restore Egypt's stability replaced identity priorities of foreign policy and as a result extensive developments in foreign policy did not occur.

Eventually, paradoxical approaches of Morsi's government increased led to more troubles for his administration. With the weakening of the centralist state,the major Egyptian political currents including Salafis and Seculars, who represented two aspects of Egyptian identity, gained more freedom and gradually found themselves against Morsi's government. In other words, Morsi's the Muslim Brotherhood government moved towards becoming an identity-oriented regional actor while demonstrating weak performance in "directing allegiances and people's dependence towards central political system" (Randall and Theobald, 1998: 29).

V. Iranain Factor

Egypt's approach toward Iran has gone through many changes in line with shifts in its identity-based foreign policy. In each of the explained eras, Egypt's policy towards Iran demonstrated specific changes. During Nasser, the Arab Pan-Arabism put Iran vis-a-vis Egypt and the two countries stood against one another in all issues related to the Middle East as well as the regional countries' relation with the two superpowers. Iran and Egypt had different and even contradictory approaches with regard to the Baghdad Pact, Eisenhower doctrine, Jordan crises (1958), Lebanon (1958) and relations with the superpowers. The Pan-Arab Egypt supported Mosaddegh's cause to humiliate the Shah and chose to confront Iran with supporting the United Arab Emirates during its dispute with Iran. Egypt supported changing the Name of the Persian Gulf and Khuzestan province as well.

Moreover, the Egyptian government cut its relations with Iran in 1960 when Iran declared its de facto recognition of Israel (Valdani, 1387: 28). After that Egypt expressed its supports to the dissidents of the Iranian monarchical regime and signed a contract with the

Freedom Movement (Nehzat-e- Azadi) to grant them backing. However it is not clear to what extent such supports were materialized and when the ties were ended (Jafari Valdani, 1387: 30). Moreover, as Mohammad Hasanein Alheikal's claims, in the course of the 1363 developments and in response to Ayatollah Khomeini's request, Nasser sent an intelligence officer to Iran with 150000 dollars who was arrested at the airport (Haykal, 1988: 155). The authenticity of this claim cannot be verified but it shows the seriousness of tensions between Shah and Nasser. With defeat of Egypt by Israel in 1967, its tension with Iran was also seized. After this defeat, the wounded Pan-Arabism of Egypt was no longer able to determine the priorities of Egypt's foreign policy.

If 1960s is regarded as the climax of Iran–Egypt tensions, the 1970s took a different direction. With change in the identity principals of foreign policy during Sadat, this country took different approaches toward the Middle East and Iran. The patriotic identity that came after Nasser by the elites gradually dragged Egypt toward the West. The expel of the Soviet military personnel and the economic opening up policy of Sadat was a beginning for this policy. Tilt to the West was accompanied by inclination of Sadat toward the Western allies in the region including Iran. Iran–Egypt relations took a personal turn in the last years of Iran's monarchical regime to the extent that after the revolution Egypt became the last resort for the Shah and his family. Moreover, in the 1970s, the relations were expanded and improved in a way that the two countries coordinated their foreign actins with respect to regional issues; this was based on mutual understanding of the two countries (Al Sabagh, 2007: 102).

The Islamic revolution in Iran and Egypt's peace with Israel dramatically changed the direction and pattern of relations between the two countries. The Islamic Republic turned into a source of inspiration and encouragement for the Islamic movements in Arab countries including Egypt. Iran's new policy of rejecting Israel and ending normal relations with the Israeli regime along with

condemning U.S. hegemonic efforts in the Middle East eventually ended the two countries' relations three months after the victory of the revolution. Granting asylum to the Shah by the Egypt's parliament upon Sadat's request (Alsabagh, 2007: 198) escalated propaganda of the two countries against one another to unprecedented degrees. The assassination of Sadat and Iran's expression of happiness added fuel to the fire of conflict.

In such circumstances, the Mubarak era started. Mubarak tried to tie the two discourses of Nasser's Pan-Arabism and Sadat's pragmatism and therefor removed restrictions of the two previous eras. During Mubarak rule, the only sensible change toward Iran was reopening of the embassies and resumption of the relations. However, the relations were not promoted any further and remained at consular levels. In fact the close tie of Egypt's foreign policy with its economic needs became clear during this era more than any other time when Egypt tried to use its relations with Iran as leverage to get concession from Saudi Arabia and the other members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. This approach was followed by Mubarak even in the last years of Mohammad Khatami's presidency.

Mubarak's collapse and the ascendance of the instrumental elites with different identity priorities brought about changes in Egypt's foreign and domestic policies. During the Morsi tenure two factors continued to affect Iran-Egypt relations negatively despite shifts in the Egypt's approach towards the regional issues. The first was the two countries' different viewpoints with regard to the Syrian crisis. The second was the economic needs of Egypt which contributed to persistence of Egypt's former approach towards Iran and with respect to its relations with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council countries. As a result, despite frequent meetings between Iran and Egypt's presidents the relations remained at the Chargé d'affaires level. The Muslim Brotherhood identity of Egypt did not improve Egypt's relations with Iran and ironically brought about more confrontations between the two countries over the Syrian crisis and to lesser degrees

in Iraq and Yemen. In sum, Egypt's approach in the four periods that were discussed in the article was immensely affected by the identity priorities of the ruling elites of Egypt; identities have determined the approach and politics of Egypt in the region and accordingly its relations with Iran.

Conclusion

Egypt's foreign policy, like other countries, is conducted and implemented based on its interests. States, like human beings, act based on their identities and therefore identity determines state's interests and direction. Consequently, the Egyptian foreign policy is conducted in accordance with interests that are themselves dependent on identities. As Egypt has a long history of centralist state, it is not viable to separate the national identity from state identity; accordingly state priorities constitute national identity. Thus, ascendance of different state identities to political scene, has determined state interests. Each identity transformation in state's level has led to change in foreign policy.

With ascendance of Nasser and pivotal role of the Pan-Arab identity in his administration, interests were also defined in accordance with this identity and foreign policy was shaped and directed based on these interests. Some objectives of Nasser's foreign policy were taking the leadership in the Arab world, fighting against colonialism and foreign influence, and Arab unity. With Sadat's ascendance to power Pan-Arabism was replaced with patriotism as state's the central identity. This identity redefined Egypt's interests and re-shaped foreign policy in line with those interests. Based on this identity, the interests of Egypt were best served by separating Egypt's interests from that of Arab countries. Policies such as peace with Israel, aligning with the United States as superpower, refraining from involvement in costly issues of the Arab countries and trying to attract foreign investment and resources, were taken by Sadat's administration to serve Egypt's interests.

Ascendance of Mubarak made state's identity more ill-defined. He was familiar with Egypt's multidimensional identity; thus he integrated some aspects of patriotic identity with the Pan-Arab one and defined Egypt's interests and foreign policy accordingly. Due to the contradictions between different elements of Egyptian foreign policy and despite the pan-Arab rhetoric, Mubarak valued Egyptian national interests over coordination with the Arab countries. An example of this policy was supporting the 1991 war on Iraq and Egypt's involvement in the Gaza blockade. Mohammad Morsi defined Egypt's identity in a different way and consequently followed different policies from those of Mubarak including noncompliance with the old regional order. He tried to promote the regional stance of Egypt within the framework of regional interests. Furthermore, on the international level, diversification of partners and opening doors of Egypt to actors as potentially allies were among developments of Morsi's foreign policy based on Islamic identity of his admiration.

In sum it is clear that identity developments through redefinition of national interests was determining Egypt's direction of foreign policy; as a result any identity transformation at the level of ruling elites changed the foreign policy of Egypt. In other words, since identities are constitutive of interests and interests, in their turn, shape foreign policy, any fundamental change in Egypt's foreign policy should be traced in its identity change and shifts in the identity priorities and allegiances of the state.

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