K4D | Knowledge, evidence and learning for development

Effectiveness and Legitimacy of State Institutions in Egypt

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Question

What evidence exists on the effectiveness and legitimacy of state institutions in Egypt, with a particular focus on corruption, security and justice institutions and local governance structures and their role in service delivery, local/community development, and state-citizen engagement?

Contents

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1. Summary

This rapid literature review focuses on the legitimacy of the state in Egypt after the 2013 military coup, with a focus on three issues: corruption, security and justice institutions, and local governance and civil society relations. The main finding is that since the 2013 coup the new military government has embarked on widescale repression to quell dissent and consolidate its power. The legitimacy of the authoritarian government rests on its ability to provide jobs, public services and security. So far there is little evidence that the government is achieving these objectives (Brechenmacher, 2017; Hamzawy, 2017). However, the crackdown on protests, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and religious structures leaves little space for citizens to express their dissatisfaction.

There is very little literature on topics such as governance, state legitimacy, corruption, justice institutions and local governance in Egypt which is published after 2012. There was a flurry of literature around the 2011 revolution, but not much has been published since 2012. Experts contend that it is very dangerous and difficult to conduct research in Egypt and therefore little research is published in the academic and policy literature. The limited literature which is available after 2013 (in the academic and grey literature) focuses primarily on the growing authoritarianism and human rights abuses of the Egyptian state. This rapid literature review was able to find two articles which discuss the strategies that the authoritarian government uses to maintain its legitimacy. The limited literature does not provide enough evidence to postulate about the future stability of the Egyptian state.

After the 2013 coup, the military government took advantage of the climate of fear and its unchecked power during the interim period to introduce several repressive measures (Pinfari, 2013). The Sisi government used the following means of attaining legitimacy:

- The military government justified its actions by utilising narratives relating to the war on terror and the historic role of the military as a source of stability to gain legitimacy (van de Bildt, 2015); and
- A referendum and elections including the admittance of international observers further facilitated legitimacy for the military government (Dunne, 2014).

Fear of another mass protest and perceptions that the Mubarak government was lenient encouraged the Sisi government to pursue authoritarianism (Hamzawy, 2017; Transparency International, 2018). The repression takes place against a background of rising economic and social crisis, political tension and failed promises by the military government (Transparency International, 2018). The following new legislation and legislative amendments were introduced by the Sisi government to suppress civil society and protest action:

- A new Protest Law, amendments to the NGO Law and the Penal Code (Hamzawy, 2017); and
- The Terrorism Law and referrals to military courts are applied broadly to subdue the activities of extremists as well as human rights activists.

The new laws have enabled the government to suppress a range of civil society organisations, including those which provide services to the poor. There is no evidence that the government is able to fill the service vacuum created by such oppression (Brechenmacher, 2017). In addition, intimidation and police brutality are used to suppress the opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, political parties and human rights activists (Brechenmacher, 2017; Hamzawy,

2017). A variety of narratives including nationalism, religious veneration of the president, conspiracy theories and defamation of opponents are used to bolster the legitimacy of and support for the military government (Hamzawy, 2017; van de Bildt, 2015).

In Egypt the military is an important economic actor and has expanded its business activities since 2014. The military is involved in several large-scale infrastructure projects which are prone to corruption (Reuters, 2018; Transparency International, 2018). However, the literature does not discuss how these developments affect the legitimacy of the government.

Although there was no specific reference to gender or disability in the literature, it is noted that the 2012 constitution did not protect the rights of women (Pinfari, 2013) and female activists have been murdered by the authoritarian regime (Hamzawy, 2017).

2. Background

After the 2011 revolution there was a short period of openness during which civil society and political parties could freely express their opinions or engage in politics (Dunne, 2014). In 2013 there was a military coup which removed President Morsi from office followed by a referendum (Pinfari, 2013). The military was able to justify the coup due to the failures of the Muslim Brotherhood (Khan, 2014). Dunne (2014) argues that international observation of the referendum lent legitimacy to a flawed process. Due to dangerous conditions several institutions, such as the Carter Centre and the European Union, sent small groups of experts to observe the process. In addition, the Egyptian electoral commission authorised several domestic NGOs to deploy observers, although most lacked the resources to implement widespread observation (Dunne, 2014).

The military government was keen to establish legitimacy and therefore submitted to processes like international observation (Dunne, 2014). However, soon after the 2013 military coup the state once again resorted to violence and human rights abuses. The military and President Sisi positioned themselves as the "ultimate guarantor of restoring stability and improving the living conditions" for the majority of Egyptian people (Hamzawy, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, the 2012 constitution was weak in terms of protecting freedom of expression as well as the rights of women and minorities (Pinfari, 2013). During the transitional government after the coup the military took advantage of the uncertainty and insecurity by introducing several repressive laws which have remained in force (Brechenmacher, 2017).

3. Legitimacy of the state

After the 2013 coup the military government sought legitimacy by demonising the Muslim Brotherhood and fostering historical narratives which venerate the Egyptian army and justify its continued prominence in the country's politics (van de Bildt, 2015). The military government promised improved economic conditions and security and although it continues to adhere to these promises, there is little evidence that they are succeeding. Social conditions have worsened rather than improved, while the threat of terrorism mainly in the Sinai region has not abated (Hamzawy, 2017). Since 2013 terrorist attacks have continued and the government's use of indiscriminate killings and other human rights abuses in Sinai make many Egyptians question the effectiveness of the government's strategy in this region. Radical sentiments are rising among thousands of young Egyptians who are detained in prisons or harassed by the security services. Several small groups have splintered from the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist

movements, further contributing to a proliferation of religiously orientated groups in Egypt (Hamzawy, 2017).

In 2016 the government launched a reform programme approved by the International Monetary Fund[1] which aims to address structural issues, such as the large budget deficit, government overspending, state subsidies and currency fluctuations. However, this programme has few prospects for improving economic conditions in the short-term. Currently around 28% of Egyptians live in poverty and the unemployment rate was 12.6% in 2016 (Hamzawy, 2017). Moreover, poor and vulnerable segments of the population have been negatively affected by the reform package. High inflation rates of 25% in January 2017 and the devaluation of the currency by almost 50% have affected the middle classes as well as the poor. There has been a decline in financial support from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates since 2015, while investment from the West has increased little (Hamzawy, 2017).

Several economic, social and development policies implemented by the government have been unsuccessful. These policies include large investments of public resources in mega construction projects that have uncertain returns and which were implemented with little public scrutiny or oversight (Hamzawy, 2017; Transparency International, 2018). Projects such as the second Suez Canal and the new administrative capital are controlled directly by economic organisations linked to the military establishment and therefore escape any demands for transparency or accountability. So far only a few programmes, such as a cash transfer programme called the Solidarity and Dignity programme (*Takaful wa Karama*) implemented by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, are considered successful (Hamzawy, 2017).

Strategies for maintaining legitimacy

The War on Terror

The military propagated the War on Terror as a narrative to justify its authoritarian stance. In 2013 the Chief of the Armed Forces (later President Sisi) made a speech in which he called on the Egyptian people to give the military "a mandate to confront violence and terrorism" (van de Bildt, 2015, p. 257). The discourse of security gave the military government free reign to dismantle the Muslim Brotherhood and other political opponents. There is no distinction between peaceful protesters and violent extremists. All opponents of the state are automatically labelled as traitors or terrorists and subjected to violent suppression. The media (radio, television and print) plays an important role in supporting this narrative. Hani Shukrallah, an Egyptian political scientist, has criticised media support for the state which he calls "a dictatorship of opinion" (van de Bildt, 2015, p. 258). Even religious structures such as mosques are monitored by the state to ensure that they do not deviate from the government narrative.

The close alignment between national interests and national security allows the military to discredit those who support pluralism, civilian institutions and civilian politics (Hamzawy, 2017). Civilian leaders are characterised by the military as lacking the capacity to safeguard the nation and provide for the welfare of the country. Furthermore, civilian groups are portrayed as opportunistic and seeking to pursue their own interests. In contrast, the military are portrayed as

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[1] This entailed an extended fund facility of around US$ 12 billion (Transparency International, 2018).

true nationalists and members of the only institution capable of promoting stability and prosperity in Egypt (Hamzawy, 2017).

Ultimately, Egyptians are led to believe that there are no credible alternatives to the military (van de Bildt, 2015). Phrases such as "the president is working, but some institutions and agencies limit the success of his policies", "the president is the only one aware of the magnitude of the responsibility placed on his shoulders and that is why he does not sleep except for a few hours daily" are repeated in the security controlled public and private media outlets to reinforce the narrative that the president is a saviour and build a personality cult around him (Hamzawy, 2017). Moreover, the military establishment and security services are also portrayed as those who fight corruption in civilian institutions and guide policies towards greater efficiency. Civilian policies and politics are derided and described as sophistry.

Nationalism and populism

Nationalistic populism enables the military backed government to evade constitutional, legal and political accountability (Hamzawy, 2017). The military utilises notions of religious and nationalistic populism to control the society. Such religious narratives elevate the president to a level where he becomes a "moral paragon" and therefore has the right to speak in the name of religion, as well as in terms of citizens' private lives and ethics. Both official Islamic and Christian institutions are used by the government to impose its own interpretations of religion on society. "First the government frames obedience to the ruling general and approval of its policies as a religious duty. Second, the generals' claim that the government-promoted understanding of religion is moderate, so anything that goes against it can be labelled extremist. This extends from the religious-based platforms of non-violent opposition movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, to violent jihadist groups. Third, they depict the ruling general as a protector of dignified morals and values, so diverging moral conceptions can be denounced as inappropriate for Egypt – a denunciation frequently addressed to human rights activists and pro-democracy civil society organisations. And fourth, the generals use religious symbols and statements in the public space to rationalise repression and human rights abuses and to demand popular support for the Messiah in uniform" (Hamzawy, 2017, p. 5).

Conspiracy theories and defamation

The Egyptian government is unable to justify its repression given its lacklustre performance with regard to restoring the economy or security (Hamzawy, 2017; van de Bildt, 2015). Hence, they have employed a multitude of narratives to justify their approach including conspiracy theories and defamation of individuals who criticise the state. These messages are spread using the security-controlled public and private media institutions. The government blames its failings on opposition movements as well as pro-democracy groups to divert blame away from high-ranking military generals. Conspiracy theories are used to accuse civil society organisations of serving the interests of foreign governments. Public and private media outlets controlled by the Egyptian security forces deny accusations of human rights abuses, such as the death of the well-known left-wing activist, Shaimaa al-Sabbagh. She was shot in 2015 during a peaceful march to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the 2011 revolution (Hamzawy, 2017). Defamation campaigns are used to discredit young activists and other dissenters. "In a public space in which free speech about the failures and transgressions of the government is not allowed, these narratives amount to a systematic effort to brainwash the population and permeate debates

about public affairs with incorrect information, fake news and outright lies" (Hamzawy, 2017, p. 5).

4. Corruption and legitimacy

There is a strong perception in Egypt that one has to have connections to get access to jobs, services or business opportunities. This concept of nepotism is referred to as *wasta* (Transparency International, 2018). In general, the state is expected to provide jobs, subsidised goods, free education and health care in exchange for public tolerance of elite corruption. However, pervasive corruption and the inability of the state to deliver jobs and public services was a key driver of the 2011 protests (Fayed, 2017).

Military dominance in the economy

The military has been close to the government since 1952. The 2014 constitution award special status for the military establishment. The defence budget cannot be discussed in a transparent manner and there are unknown mechanisms of oversight for the Armed Forces (Dunne, 2014). The Defence budget was US$ 4.5 billion in 2016 but its breakdown is a state secret (Transparency International, 2018).

The Egyptian military is a major player in the economy. During the liberalisation of the economy which occurred in the 1990s, the business activities of the military expanded into infrastructure, agriculture and mining. Enterprises owned or operated by the military benefited from tax breaks, preferential access, conscript labour, secretive bank accounts and lack of effective oversight (Transparency International, 2018). It is estimated that up to 40% of the Egyptian economy is controlled by the military, but such estimates vary considerably and some contend that the military only controls 1.5% of GDP (Transparency International, 2018). The military runs its businesses through the National Service Products Organisation (NSPO) which was established in 1979 by presidential decree. There is no information on the revenue, profits or tax compliance of the NSPO. According to its website, it owns 21 companies in many sectors. The National Authority for Military Production and the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation and the Armed Forces Engineering Authority are key organisations in the military business conglomerate.

Figure 1 depicts the concentration of military businesses by sector and also indicates whether the businesses are aligned to the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Military Production or the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation. See: **Figure 1: Egyptian military business interests[2] , Reuters (2018),** https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/egypt-economy-military/#interactive-egypt

Since 2013 the armed forces and President Sisi have prioritised mega projects such as the Suez Canal Corridor Development Project, the expansion of six Egyptian ports, the construction of many tunnels and industrial zones and dredging of a parallel canal to allow for two-way traffic. In addition, the government is investing in building a new capital city. Such mega projects are prone

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[2] Reuters (2018) obtained the data from websites of Egyptian ministries, phone calls to ministries, a CIA report and an academic dissertation on the topic.

to corruption. There is no information on the number of contracts which the army may have. In 2013 the government amended the 1998 Tenders Law to allow ministers to by-pass tender processes (Transparency International, 2018). The military has expanded and diversified its economic portfolio since 2014. This is part of a deliberate strategy by President Sisi, who argues that awarding the army with major contracts would help to revive the economy. There is little information about the revenue and profits earned by economic entities associated with the military. Foreign investors are reluctant to invest in sectors which are dominated by the military (Reuters, 2018).

Military businesses crowd out the private sector as they enjoy many advantages. In addition, the military has preferential access to land which it uses to enhance its business advantages (Transparency International, 2018). The military sustains a patronage network and uses its agriculture sector firms to provide cheaper food. The military's role in the agricultural sector enables it to attain some legitimacy. For example, when there was a shortage of baby milk powder in Egypt, the military stepped in to increase imports of the product and portrayed itself as a promoter of national interests (Transparency International, 2018, p. 12).

In addition, the military is consolidating its power in other ways which lead to less accountability (Transparency International, 2018):

- Military officers are in senior government positions;
- Former offices hold senior positions in the civil service; and
- Ousting of auditors and judges who cannot be controlled.

In 2015 several retired military and police officers stood for parliamentary elections and this represented a further extension of the military's influence. In parliament retired officers have become heads of blocks and subcommittees. The dominance of former military and police officers in the legislative and judicial branches of the government has eroded checks and balances in the political system and facilitated the passing of repressive laws and other antidemocratic policies (Hamzawy, 2017). Monitoring agencies such as the Central Auditing Organisation lack the authority to hold the military accountable. The number of military and security generals appointed to key executive committee positions in Parliament has also been on the rise (Transparency International, 2018).

5. Security and justice institutions

A new authoritarian regime has emerged in Egypt. The country is ruled by the military establishment, security services and intelligence agencies (Hamzawy, 2017). The Mubarak government was assumed to have been a model for partial liberalisation which opened the path for mass protests. The repression introduced by the Sisi government is driven by fear that there could be further mass protests (Brechenmacher, 2017). Human rights abuses are justified on the grounds that they will save Egypt from civil unrest, terrorism and economic decline.

In terms of regional security Egypt plays a limited role and shares the burden of providing regional security with other countries in the region. Moreover, Egypt can be regarded as a free rider which has neglected its responsibilities in the region (Pinfari, 2014).

Legislation

Overall, the legislature has become a rubber stamp which authorises repressive laws with little debate or scrutiny. The following legislation or legislative amendments enabled the government to engage in widespread repression. Between 2013 and 2016, 60,000 persons were detained or imprisoned. There have also been mass killings and local human rights organisations claim that 754 extrajudicial killings occurred in the first half of 2016 alone (Hamzawy, 2017; Transparency International, 2018). Furthermore, there is extensive torture in prisons and medical neglect which leads to a high death rate (Hamzawy, 2017).

The Protest Law

in November 2013 the interim president, Adley Mansour, used his temporary legislative powers to issue the Organising the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations law. This became known as the Protest Law. Under the Protest Law citizens are required to give notification at least three days before and no more than 15 days in advance of any organised meeting, procession or protest (Hamzawy, 2017). The security services have the absolute power to cancel or postpone a demonstration. They can also change the location and modify the path on the grounds that they have credible information or evidence that there will be a threat to security and peace. This law has effectively eliminated citizens' right to peaceful assembly and demonstration. The law also allows security services to prevent civilians from protesting in front of public offices. Security services are allowed to delineate secure zones around public institutions and facilities in which demonstrations and rallies are prohibited. Consequently, it has become unlawful to protest near the legislative, executive and judicial institutions and other institutions that would attract attention to citizens with grievances.

The government is able to ban meetings, rallies, marches and demonstrations which it views as disturbing societal peace or potentially resulting in the damage of public or private property (Hamzawy, 2017). Protests can also be banned if they could lead to road blockages or prevent other citizens from exercising their rights. Rallies, strikes and sit-ins that could lead to damage of state-owned means of production or individual businesses are also prohibited. The law also entitles the police to use batons as well as rubber and non-rubber bullets to disperse meetings, rallies, marches and demonstrations which are deemed unpeaceful. Consequently, there has been an increase in the use of violence to disperse protests. Fines and imprisonment are used to punish those who violate the Protest Law (Hamzawy, 2017).

The Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) struck down in Article 10 of the Protest Law in December 2016. According to the SCC it was unconstitutional for the security services to regulate or prevent demonstrations (Hamzawy, 2017). The SCC also ruled that the duty of citizens to notify security services of their intention to demonstrate was not designed to empower the government to restrict constitutional rights. Moreover, only a competent court in accordance with due process has the right to impose restrictions on the constitutional right to protest.

The NGO Law

Since 2013 the government regards civil society organisations, especially those involved with human rights or legal assistance, as seditious elements (Hamzawy, 2017). In 2002 the NGO law was introduced which allowed the government to restrict the establishment of NGOs, subject them to heavy bureaucratic control, limit their funding and generally compromise the

independence of civil society (Brechenmacher, 2017). Moreover, the security and intelligence services were permitted to monitor (including surveillance) and disrupt civil society activities. There was no attempt to amend the NGO Law after the coup. However, in 2016 new legislation was proposed by a pro-government parliamentarian (Brechenmacher, 2017). Although the new law acknowledges that NGOs have a right to exist, they are compelled to register with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the ministry has the power to decline registration without judicial approval for many reasons. NGOs which engage in activities undertaken by political parties remain banned (Brechenmacher, 2017).

The new NGO legislation extends the ban on organisations to trade unions, labour movements and professional syndicates. It also bans organisations in areas which are labelled as harmful to the nation (Hamzawy, 2017). Civil society organisations are not permitted to engage with professional syndicates, such as journalists or doctors syndicates. Groups like the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights or the Centre for Trade Unions and Workers Services are not permitted to register as NGOs and therefore cannot operate legally. The legislation establishes a new government body, the National Agency for Organising the Cooperation of Foreign NGOs. This agency has jurisdiction over approving the establishment of foreign NGOs in Egypt and enables governments to administer the affairs of domestic and foreign NGOs (Hamzawy, 2017). The agency also monitors the transfer of funds from international NGOs to their offices in Egypt, the receipt of foreign funds by domestic NGOs and donations to NGOs from groups and individuals within Egypt and from abroad. NGOs are expected to prove that approved funds are spent on approved activities. A further layer of scrutiny is added because NGOs are overseen by the Central Auditing Agency. It is anticipated that these restrictions will discourage Egyptian people from donating local NGOs and thus curtail their capacity and influence (Hamzawy, 2017).

The Penal Code

In 2014 Article 78 of the Penal Code was amended by the legislative prerogative of the interim president Sisi (Hamzawy, 2017). The amendment enabled the government to criminalise several acts without defining them in an objective, legal manner. For example, it is possible to criminalise acts which could harm the nation's interest or breach public peace and order. Such legal ambiguities enable the government to use the Penal Code as a tool of repression. Article 78 enables the government to blur the distinction between those who have committed acts of terror versus those working in civil society to promote human rights and freedom (Hamzawy, 2017).

The Terrorism Law

In 2015 the law of Organising the Lists of Terrorist Entities and Terrorists, otherwise known as the Terrorism Law, was enacted. This law enables the government to legally keep under surveillance and penalise individuals and organisations involved in peaceful activities which oppose the government's policies. Accusations of terrorism can be widely used without legal restraint against opponents of the government (Hamzawy, 2017). Vague terminology enables the label of terrorist to be widely applied and the government is not required to prove its accusations against alleged terrorists through transparent, judicial procedures. Organisations and individuals can lose their assets, licences, reputations and passports and also be banned from travel by the Terrorism Law (Hamzawy, 2017).

Military Court Law

Since 2014 the army was permitted to assist the police in securing and protecting public institutions, offices and facilities (Hamzawy, 2017). Such sites, which include public universities and government-owned industrial facilities, fall under the jurisdiction of the military court system. In addition, the law has been used to refer civilians to military tribunals which lack transparency and safeguards of fairness. University students, workers and labour activists participating in peaceful protests can be referred to military tribunals. There are more than 7,000 civilian cases which were referred to military courts between 2014 and 2015 (Hamzawy, 2017).

6. Local governance and civil society relations

There are very few articles which focus on local government in Egypt. There are 29 administrative sections called governorates or municipalities. They vary in terms of size, population and resource allocation. The municipality is further divided into cities and districts which are then divided into smaller entities called neighbourhoods (in urban areas) or villages (in outlying areas) (Abdelsalam, Reddick, ElKadi, & Gama, 2012). This review could not find recent literature on the legitimacy of local government. However, in Egypt several public services which should be provided by local governments are provided by civil society organisations (Brechenmacher, 2017), therefore civil society relations are discussed.

Civil society relations

Initially the repressive tactics were used to dismantle the Muslim Brotherhood which was the main target of the state (van de Bildt, 2015). This includes the murder of a legislator, Nassar al Haffi and a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Office, Mohammed Kamal. Excessive force was used to end protests by Muslim Brotherhood supporters which led to the deaths of almost 1,000 Egyptians. Gradually, civil society leaders opposed to the deteriorating human rights conditions have also become victims of repression (Hamzawy, 2017). For example, in 2015 Heshem Gaafar, a journalist and chairman of the Mada Foundation for Media Development, was arrested and a prominent lawyer, Negad El-Borai, was summoned for questioning before multiple judicial bodies. Ahmed Abdullah, the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedom, was arrested in 2016. Human rights lawyers, like Malek Adly and Haitham Mohamadien, were arrested. There were bans on the Egyptian Democratic Institute, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. By 2017 Egyptian civil society was experiencing more repression than it had witnessed in decades (Brechenmacher, 2017). According to Hamzawy (2017) there is an "ever widening circle of enemies" which includes student protesters, labour activists and groups of young citizens who were involved in the revolution.

The Obama administration and the European Union opted for quiet diplomacy in dealing with the NGO crisis and did not want to jeopardise bilateral relations with Egypt. The Trump administration has opted not to focus on human rights, but instead prioritises counterterrorism in its relations with Egypt (Brechenmacher, 2017).

Service delivery

Local service delivery has been affected by the crackdown on religious charity organisations. For example, El Gameya El Sharey is a religious organisation which offers healthcare services to the poor. The organisation operated 30 medical centres with over 1,000 branches in deprived areas. After the coup El Gameya El Sharey was accused of spreading radical Islam and its assets were frozen. Similarly, other religious charities have been forced to rely on volunteers and cut back on service provision. There is no evidence that the government is able to plug the gap in terms of service delivery (Brechenmacher, 2017). Furthermore, even secular civil society organisations are struggling to provide services due to funding shortages. International donors have also cut back on development projects. Organisations which apply for funding approval to the Ministry of Social Solidarity often do not get replies. They are forced to scale back their work or operate illegally and risk closure. The Catholic NGO, Caritas, won a court case against the Ministry of Social Solidarity which had argued that the German funders of Caritas represented a threat to Egyptian national security. Some civil society organisations are facing the difficult choice of closing down or collaborating with the government in order to remain open and provide services for the poor (Brechenmacher, 2017).

E-government

The few articles which are available on local government relate to e-government in Egypt (Abdelghaffar & Magdy, 2012; Abdelsalam, Reddick, & El Kadi, 2012; Reddick, Abdelsalam, & Elkadi, 2011). Although local entities have a limited degree of administrative freedom they are financially and politically managed by the central government. Egypt has experimented with various e-government initiatives to improve administration at the local level. In 2001 an ICT strategy which became known as the Egyptian Information Society Initiative (EISI) was established. EISI had seven pillars including e-government. Initially e-government consisted of four main sub-programmes which were managed under the Egyptian Local Government Development Programme (ELGDP). ELGDP has three main projects: service enhancement, development of web portals for municipalities and cities and relationship management systems (Klischewski, 2014).

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