

تكافل: من الحماية الاجتماعية إلى خلق حلول تنموية مستدامة¹

دراسة حالة وأصوات من الميدان

ورقة عمل

مقدمة إلى

مؤتمر: العطاء الاجتماعي في المرحلة الانتقالية:

استكشاف الطرق المؤدية إلى تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة

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مشروع تنمية المنشآت الصغيرة والحرفية

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¹ هذه ورقة بحثية تعبر في المقام الأول والأخير عن وجهة نظر مقدمتها. والآراء الواردة فيها تخص الباحثة ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن آراء المؤسسة موضع دراسة الحالة. هذا دون أدنى مسؤولية عن جهة العمل أو غيرها.
² عن الباحثة: حصلت الباحثة على درجة الدكتوراه في الفلسفة عام 2015 بمرتبة الشرف الأولى وتوصية بالنشر من جامعة طنطا. وحصلت على درجة الماجستير بامتياز من جامعة الأسكندرية عام 2005. تخصصت في الفلسفة السياسية وعلى وجه التحديد الفكر السياسي الأمريكي المعاصر. لها ثلاثة مؤلفات تتصل بالحوار بين الثقافات وأعمال أدبية. حصلت على زمالة برنامج هيوبرت هيمفري بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وتخصصت في الاتصال وحشد الآراء. لديها خبرة تتجاوز 15 عاما في الاتصالات من أجل التنمية ودعم المرأة والكتابة الإعلامية. تعمل حاليا مديرة العلاقات العامة المساعد بجمعية رجال أعمال أسكندرية ورئيس تحرير النشرة الدورية للجمعية باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. وتعمل لأكثر من تسع سنوات في التدريب وبناء القدرات وتخصصت في "القيادة الفعالة". أنظر:

<https://www.humphreyfellowship.org/news/egyptian-humphrey-alumna-teaches-leadership-skills-through-training>

قامت بإخراج ثلاثة أفلام قصيرة تعني بمشاكل الفقراء ودعم المرأة. أنظر: فيلم تسجيلي من إعداد وإخراج الباحثة بعنوان: "صدى أصوات غير مسموعة: ماذا تريد المرأة حقا."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcNU5gFTB4>

ومتحدثة بالعديد من البرامج التليفزيونية، أنظر

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOAjky8u1il>

نبذة مختصرة

الغرض:

يتمثل الهدف الأساسي من هذه الورقة البحثية في العرض لأحد البرامج التنموية التي تتبناها واحدة من كبرى منظمات المجتمع المدني في مصر كنموذج للتكافل والحماية الاجتماعية مع اتصاله الوثيق بتحقيق تنمية مستدامة.

أهمية البحث

يتناول هذا البحث بالتحليل والدراسة برنامجا تنمويا تُنفذه إحدى جمعيات المجتمع المدني الرائدة ويسهم بشكل كبير في تغيير مفاهيم العمل الاجتماعي ومفاهيم التكافل والحماية الاجتماعية التقليدية. كما يعرض لنتائج وتوصيات تصب في دعم العمل الخيري التنموي المستدام وتسهم في الانتقال من مفهوم الحماية الاجتماعية إلى تحقيق تنمية مستدامة.

المنهج:

استخدام المنهج التحليلي المقارن. وكذلك المنهج النقدي إذا لزم الأمر. وفي جمع المادة العلمية تم الاستناد إلى ما نُشر ورقيا وإلكترونيا من معلومات متصلة. بالإضافة إلى عدد من الزيارات الميدانية للفئة المستهدفة وغيرها.

تحديات البحث:

ندرة المراجع المستقلة المتصلة بالموضوع وعدم توفر دراسات حولها. فضلا عن صعوبة وجود دراسات قياس الأثر لعدد من برامج الحماية الاجتماعية والتكافل في مصر.

نتائج الدراسة:

تؤكد الدراسة أنه من أجل حقا تحقيق تنمية مستدامة، يجب تبني برامج تنموية طويلة الأجل تسهم في تحقيق تغيير حقيقي في حياة المستهدفين. فلا يقتصر دور برامج التكافل والحماية الاجتماعية على سد احتياجات متجددة لا تنتهي بتقديم المساعدة. ويلقي هذا الضوء على أهمية الحالة موضع الدراسة والتي تتبناها جمعية من كبرى منظمات المجتمع المدني في مصر حيث لا تنصب مثل هذه البرامج على دعم المهمشين والمستبعدين اقتصاديا بتقديم مساعدات عينية وإنما بتوفير منح تستخدم لبدء نشاط متناهي الصغر.

مصطلحات متصلة: تنمية، الأهداف الإنمائية المستدامة، تكافل وكرامة، معدلات البطالة، تمويل متناهي الصغر.

طبيعة العمل: ورقة بحثية / ورقة عمل.

مما لا شك فيه أن هناك جهدا كبيرا يُبذل في سبيل تحقيق تنمية مستدامة³ وذلك على صعيد الحكومة، ومنظمات المجتمع المدني، والقطاع الخاص فضلا عن دور المنظمات الدولية التنموية. بيد أن عددا من التساؤلات يفرض نفسه وبقوة، مثل: إلى أي مدى يتحقق التعاون والتنسيق بين الجهات المختلفة في تنفيذ فعاليات وإطلاق برامج ومبادرات متصلة؟ ثم هل تعمل مثل تلك المبادرات على تحقيق تنمية مستدامة بمفهومها الشامل طويل الأجل؟ أم أنية التنفيذ وقتية الأثر؟! ثم من يقيس الأثر؟ وما هي أهم برامج التكافل التي يمكن أن يُحتدَى بها في سبيل تحقيق تنمية مستدامة؟

برامج الحماية الاجتماعية والتكافل

ساد في الفترة الأخيرة اهتمام هائل وزخم كبير انصب على قضايا بعينها، مثل: زيادة الأعمال، وتمكين المرأة. وهذا في ذاته أمر مشجع ومطلوب. ولكن إلى أي مدى كانت الفعاليات المُنفَّذة، بكل ما بذل فيها من جهد ووقت وأموال، مكملة لبعضها البعض في تحقيق تنمية مستدامة حقيقية، وليست تكرارا مشوبا؟!

والأكثر أهمية واتصالا، أسهمت برامج الحماية الاجتماعية التي يتم تنفيذها منذ عامين في مصر في توفير معاشات وإعانات للملايين⁴. فوصل عدد المستفيدين، على سبيل المثال، في برنامج تكافل وكرامة حتى مايو 2017 "مليون و700 ألف مواطن"⁵. وتضاعفت الموازنة المطروحة لبرامج الحماية الاجتماعية من 8 مليارات جنيه إلى 15 مليارا و400 مليون جنيها⁶. مرة أخرى، هذا أمر طيب في ذاته؛ توفير تكافل للفئات الأشد احتياجا. ولكن هل الإنفاق على مثل مشروعات الحماية الاجتماعية هذه وما يتصل بها هو مُداواة للأعراض أم علاج للمسببات؟! في حديثها مع جريدة الشروق، ترى الدكتورة هانيا الشلقامي، الأستاذة بمركز البحوث الاجتماعية بالجامعة الأمريكية ومهندسة برامج تكافل وكرامة، بحسب جريدة الشروق، أن: "التركيز على الخدمات التي تقدم للفقراء دون دراسة أسباب انتشار الفقر وكيفية معالجته ليس حلا"⁷.

من هنا يتضح أهمية دراسة الحالة موضوع هذا العرض، ألا وهي "برنامج الخير لمن يعمل" Toward-Self Employment Program. وهو أحد البرامج التنموية الذي تتبناه واحدة من كبرى الجمعيات الأهلية غير الهادفة للربح في مصر وهي جمعية رجال أعمال

³ تعرف التنمية بأنها "تحسن الأحوال الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لدولة ما." وعلى نحو أكثر تحديدا، تشير إلى التحسن في آلية إدارة الموارد الطبيعية والاجتماعية في منطقة ما. وذلك من أجل خلق الثروة وتحسين حياة الناس." أنظر:

<http://www.sociologydiscussion.com/society/development-meaning-and-concept-of-development/688>

وتعرف التنمية المستدامة وفقا لوثائق هيئة الأمم المتحدة بأنها "التنمية التي تلبي احتياجات الحاضر بدون تقويض قدرات الأجيال القادمة في تلبية احتياجاتهم." أنظر:

<http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm>

⁴<http://gate.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/244/1518307.aspx>

⁵ غادة والي، وزيرة التضامن (خبر نُشر في جريدة اليوم السابع، الثلاثاء 23 مايو 2017).

⁶ نفس المرجع السابق.

⁷ هانيا الشلقامي، في حديث نشر بجريدة الشروق، الإثنين 5 يونيو 2017

أسكندرية - مشروع تنمية المنشآت الصغيرة والحرفية. وسيتم الإشارة إليه فيما يلي فضلا عن بعض النقاط الأخرى المتصلة.

نموذج لبرنامج حماية اجتماعية من أجل التنمية المستدامة

مشروع تنمية المنشآت الصغيرة والحرفية⁸

جمعية رجال أعمال أسكندرية هي منظمة مجتمع مدني لا تهدف للربح. وقد أنشأت إدارة الجمعية "مشروع تنمية المنشآت الصغيرة والحرفية" في عام 1990 بهدف توفير الدعم المالي وغير المالي للفئات الأكثر احتياجا. وامتد نشاط المشروع ليشمل من لديهم نشاط قائم بالفعل أو من لديهم استعداد لبدء نشاط بمجرد الحصول على التمويل اللازم. وفي سبيل ذلك دشّن المشروع عددا من الخدمات الفنية المتصلة لمساعدة العملاء وتمكينهم مهنيا وفنيا.

وعلى مدار العقود الثلاث الماضية، تمكن المشروع من توفير دعم لأكثر من مليون مستفيد، بمعدل خمسة مليون مواطن بمتوسط عدد 5 أفراد للأسرة الواحدة المستفيدة. وقد تم تنفيذ ذلك في سبع محافظات وهي الأسكندرية، والبحيرة، والمنوفية، وكفر الشيخ، ومرسى مطروح، والشرقية، والغربية. وبلغت محفظة التمويل الممنوحة 8,767,652,751 جم (ثمانية مليار وسبعمائة وثمانية وستون مليون جنيها مصريا).⁹

ويعد "برنامج الخير لمن يعمل" أحد أهم المشروعات التنموية التي دشّنها المشروع والذي سيتم العرض له باعتباره دراسة حالة تستوجب التدقيق والعرض.

برنامج الخير لمن يعمل (نموذج): إيجاد حلول مستدامة لمشكلات مزمنة

لا يخفي على أحد أن واحدة من أكبر التحديات الراهنة هي مشكلة البطالة حيث تصل معدلاتها إلى 12.4% (ل الربع الأخير من عام 2016)¹⁰. ويُحدث ذلك بدوره تأثيرا بالغا على دائرة الاقتصاد بإجماله محدثا مشكلة دائرية التأثير Cyclical problem¹¹؛ فتتخفف القوى الشرائية، فيتراجع الطلب على المنتجات والخدمات، وبدوره تضعف عجلة الإنتاج مما يؤدي إلى انخفاض الطلب على العمالة والتوظيف، وفي حالات أخرى تسريح عمالة، فتزيد مرة أخرى معدلات البطالة فيما يسمى "التأثير الدائري للبطالة" cyclical effect of unemployment!

ولمواجهة هذه المشكلة، أطلقت جمعية رجال أعمال أسكندرية برنامج "الخير لمن يعمل" "Toward Self-Employment Program". وتقوم فلسفة البرنامج على مساعدة المتعطلين عن العمل من أشد الفئات فقرا لبدء نشاط متناهي الصغر خاص بهم وذلك من خلال تقديم منح لا ترد بشرط العمل. وقد تم تدشين هذا البرنامج في عام 2000. ويقدم أيضا حزمة

⁸www.aba-sme.com

⁹http://www.aba-sme.com/Assets/PDF/042017/acc_04-2017.pdf

¹⁰<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview>

¹¹<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/overall-effects-unemployment-37104.html>

من الخدمات الفنية والإدارية المتكاملة لتمكين المرشحين المرتقبين من إدارة رأس المال المقدم لهم وحسن استثماره، والأهم، تحقيق الاستدامة والاستمرارية.

وقد بلغ عدد المستفيدين من برنامج الخير لمن يعمل حتى أبريل 2017 عدد 51 ألف مستفيد ومستفيدة. وبمتابعة وقياس الأثر وجد أن ما لا يقل عن نسبة 41 % من المستفيدين قد استمر فعليا في نشاطه الاقتصادي المدر للدخل. وصعدت نسبة 7% ممن حصلوا على منح خيرية لا ترد إلى برامج تمويل بما يعني التوسع في النشاط. وهكذا تمثل هذه التجربة نموذجا لبرنامج تنموي يسعى لتحقيق أهداف تنموية مستدامة من محاربة الفقر والقضاء على البطالة فضلا عن تمكين المرأة؛ لما يوليه من أهمية خاصة للمرأة.

وبمقابلة عدد من المستفيدين من البرنامج في عزبة باب العبيد بمنطقة أبيس بالأسكندرية أفادوا بالتالي:

"نعم المنحة مفيدة وتنفع"، هكذا تخبرنا صباح، 34 سنة متزوجة ولديها أربعة أولاد. حصلت على المنحة وعملت بها في بيع خضروات، مثل الجرجير والبقدونس، وتضيف: "المنحة تبني مشروعا يدخل ربحا". من خلال عملها دخلت في جمعية مع الجيران بـ 50 جنيها في الأسبوع ستقبضها (3000) جنيها. وتعتبر هي العائل الأساسي لأسرتها وخاصة لأن الزوج يعمل في تصليح "الدش" وهو عمل غير مستقر ومصاب بأمراض صدرية.

مرضية، 67 سنة، أرملة، حصلت على منحة من الخير لمن يعمل وتبيع بسكويت وكراتيه. تعيش بمفردها حيث تزوج ابنها وابنتها. وهي العائل الأساسي لنفسها.

سامية، 43 سنة، لديها أربع أولاد، تعمل في صناعة الكلور والصابون.. وهي العائل الأساسي لأسرتها حيث أن زوجها مسن ولا يعمل عملا ثابتا وإن كان يساعدها بشكل كبير في عملها في شراء المواد الخام وفي التسويق معه في الأسواق. بالإضافة إلى صناعة الكلور والصابون تعمل أيضا في تسليك الجلد، حيث تقوم بتسليك الكاوتش / الجلد من الأسلاك الموجودة بداخله.

نقاط القوة:

- تتمثل أهم نقاط القوة لبرنامج الخير لمن يعمل في تحويل إنسان متعطل عن العمل لديه الاستعداد ليعمل إلى إنسان فعال منتج وما يعنيه ذلك من تنمية روح الريادة والعمل لدى المستفيدين؛
- المساهمة في القضاء على الفقر وما يتصل به من جهل وتراجع في الصحة والتعليم وكافة نواحي الحياة المختلفة؛
- وجود جمع وتحليل للبيانات مما يسهم في الكشف عن نسب الاستمرارية والاستدامة وتقديم التوصيات.

نقاط الضعف:

- تفشي ثقافة التقليد؛ فعندما تقوم مستفيدة بالعمل في بيع، على سبيل المثال، البقالة، يعمل معظم المستفيدين حولها في نفس النشاط مما يحد من فرص البيع الجيد ويضعف القوى الشرائية لعمل معظم الأفراد في نفس المجال في نفس المنطقة السكنية؛

- ضعف المبالغ المالية المقدمة. مع حالة التضخم الهائلة في الأسواق تتراجع القيمة المالية لمبلغ محدد سلفا ربما كان ملائما منذ عشر سنوات مضت؛
- التدريب الإداري المقدم بحاجة إلى أن يفتقرن إلى تدريب تقني بحرف ومهارات عليها طلب تسويقيا.

وهكذا يمثل برنامج "الخير لمن يعمل" نموذجا عمليا في تحقيق تكافل يرتقي من مجرد حماية اجتماعية إلى تحقيق تنمية مستدامة.

أصوات من الميدان - استكمال الحلقات المفقودة

عودة إلى ذي بدء، إلى أي مدى وإلى متى يتم مداواة أعراض المشكلات دون إيجاد حلول جذرية للمسببات؟! سؤال ملح وتفرضه الظروف الراهنة التي نمر بها جميعا مما يتطلب توحيد وتكثيف الجهود المخلصة لتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة. ولزيادة الأمر وضوحا، نقف عند بعض المشكلات الخطيرة التي نمر بها حاليا. تخصص الدولة 3 % من الميزانية لعام 2016 - 2017 للصحة بمعدل EGP 42.4 bn (42 مليار جنيها)¹². ولكن كم من الأموال يتم تخصيصها لمعالجة الأسباب المؤدية إلى انتشار الأمراض المدمرة لصحة الإنسان المصري؟! كم من الأموال تخصص لتحقيق الرقابة الفعالة على سوء حالة الخدمات والمنتجات المسببة لتفشي أمراض مهلكة؟! المياه مثلا. غير معروف! ولنجعل المثال أكثر قربا بمطالعة هذا العنوان: "مصر تصدر القائمة العالمية في معدل وفيات الفشل الكلوي"¹³. ويواصل الخبر التنويه عن الأسباب المؤدية لذلك ألا وهي "الأطعمة المسرطنة والمياه الملوثة أبرز أسباب انتشار المرض!! ثم تتفق الدولة أكثر من 900 مليون جنيها سنويا لعلاج الفشل الكلوي!! وتصل نسبة وفيات مرضى الفشل الكلوي إلى 25 % من المرضى، في حين لا تتجاوز النسبة العالمية بهذا المرض 10 % فقط! بل إن مراكز علاج هذا المرض تحولت نفسها إلى مستنقع وبائي لنشر الأمراض الأكثر فتكا. وهكذا نعالج الأعراض دون المسببات!

حالة أخرى يعرضها مواطن مصري¹⁴ في حوار مع كاتبة هذا المقال. يقول: "تجرم الحكومة علينا وتحرم زراعة الأرز في الدلتا لتوفير المياه. ألا تعلم الحكومة أن التربة المفترضة أنها تمتد أراضيها الزراعية بالمياه جفت منذ ما يقرب من عشرين عاما، وضاعت أصواتنا لتوصيلها إلى السادة المسؤولين لإنقاذنا وإنقاذ أرضينا من الهلاك!!"

ويضيف أنه لمواجهة جفاف ترعة "لاظة"، المتصلة بأراضيهم، والمتفرعة عن ترعة المحمودية، اضطرت الأهالي إلى حفر آبار ارتوازية لتروي أراضيها. ومع ذلك، كما يضيف، فالحكومة يقظة للغاية لأية مخالفات من قبل المزارعين، فهم يكتشفون على الفور إذا ما زرع

¹²<http://www.dailynewseggypt.com/2015/03/26/3-of-gdp-in-20162017-budget-to-go-to-health-6-to-education-dimian/>

¹³<http://www.masress.com/fjp/27499>

¹⁴الحاج عبد الرحمن محمد، مزارع مصري يسكن في قرية قمحة - عزبة راشد بمدينة الدلتا - محافظة البحيرة، تم الحوار في 23 مايو 2017.

أحد الأهالي أرز، وبسرعة فائقة، يتم تحرير محضر مخالفة، وغرامة خمسة آلاف جنيها وقد يتعرض للسجن!

وهكذا وأكثر من أي وقت مضى، تتصاعد الحاجة الملحة لتوحيد وتنسيق الجهود من كافة الجهات المعنية للعمل سويا على نحو منسق ومتكامل لإيجاد مبادرات تنقلنا خطوة للأمام من حالة الحماية الاجتماعية إلى خلق حلول تنموية مستدامة.

توصيات البحث:

- العمل وفق إستراتيجية قومية شاملة وخاصة عندما يتعلق الأمر بتمكين المرأة أو زيادة الأعمال لدى الشباب؛
- تحقيق التنسيق بين الجهات المختلفة والمعنية بقضايا متصلة على نحو يحدث التكامل وليس التكرار والمنافسة وإهدار الأموال الطائلة فضلا عن الجهد والوقت؛
- تبسيط قوانين الاستثمار وتفعيلها لإتاحة فرص عمل للمتطلين عن العمل ودفع عجلة التنمية قدما؛
- إطلاق حملة قومية لزيادة الوعي بخطورة الزيادة السكانية؛
- تبني الدولة لمحفزات تشجع على تبني الجماهير وخاصة الشباب والمقدمين على الزواج لفكر تنظيم النسل؛
- إطلاق دراسات قياس الأثر للمشروعات التنموية الرائدة بما في ذلك برامج الحماية الاجتماعية للوقوف على عوامل القوى والضعف وبناء وتبني سياسات متصلة تتلائم مع نتائج التقييم؛
- استحداث وسائل ناجعة للتفاعل مع مشاكل المواطنين وتلافيها؛
- تفعيل مبدأ الثواب والعقاب في كافة قطاعات الدولة وتعظيم مبدأ الشفافية وحكم القانون؛
- إنشاء وزارة للدولة لشئون المرأة والطفل تعمل تحت مظلتها كافة الهيئات المعنية بالمرأة والطفل من أجل تنسيق الجهود والعمل وفقا لرؤية شاملة وتوفير الطاقات والموارد؛

Excellence Vs., Equality:

Will Strauss's Excellence Lead to a "Good" Society?!

A research presented to

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Abstract

Social sciences in general and political philosophy in particular aim, at the far end, at achieving the welfare and development of human being. Education is a major component of any development and it is, at the same time, one of the topics that political philosophy has a rich contribution in it. This research seeks to unveil the philosophy of education of the prominent, yet, controversial philosopher Leo Strauss by trying to find answers to the following questions: In what way and why he gives priority to human excellence rather than human equality? Who is the 'noble' man, good-man? What is liberal education? How can liberal education help societies advance? Answers to these questions will be explored from Strauss's perspective. It will be then followed by a critique of his ideas, in which insights of other prominent philosophers and intellectuals will be presented, and conclusion and recommendations. We may agree or not agree on the philosophy of Strauss, but it is difficult to deny how his thought and ideas are truly profound, worth-reading and worth-teaching. His writings are not that for one-time reading, but rather for reading, re-reading and then thinking in how to find solutions to our persistent problems. One of the major findings of the research is that liberal education should not only focus on "specialization" but it should extend as well to be 'interdisciplinary'. Educated-man is not only the 'specialist' but also the person who can find his way to greatest minds by reading the works they left. On contrary to Strauss, we will not sacrifice 'equality' for the sake of 'excellence'; however, his thought draws an attention to big and important issues such as the quality of life we live; how, as much as possible, we select the best to rule us; the importance of critical thinking, how to be a wise man, and how to solve education and finance issues.

Key words: human excellence, noble man, liberal education, great books, human rights,

Introduction

Social sciences in general and political philosophy in particular aim, at the far end, at achieving the welfare and development of human being. Education is a major component of any development and it is, at the same time, one of the topics that political philosophy has a generous contribution in it.

From Socrates in the ancient Athenian city-state in the 4th century BC to John Dewey in post-modern America in the 20th century, and to present, education has been one of the major themes of writings of great prominent philosophers. One of the profound, yet

controversial, contributions is undoubtedly that of Leo Strauss¹. Strauss thoroughly and closely represents the link between what is ancient by focusing on values of that times and what is modern by disclosing troubles of today.

Nevertheless, Strauss never emphasized that education should be for "all" nor he admitted that democracy can be a trusted ruling system! He, oddly enough, gave the priority to "excellence" against "equality. Moreover, he defined "liberal" to be understood at the first glance as "illiberal"! Hence, how could, or could not, his philosophy in education be a contribution towards a "good society" and a "good citizen"? This study tries to figure out an answer. Not only will it be achieved by presenting Strauss's philosophy, with its importance, but also by putting his ideas under examining to disclose what we can take and what we can leave for establishing a "good-educated society".

Most of writings about Leo Strauss were confined to be whether extreme approval or disapproval by his followers or detractors, respectively. Works of Allan Bloom, Thomas L. Pangle and Steven B. Smith on one side and that of Shadia Durury, Nicholas Xenos and Seymour Hersh on the other one is an example. In addition, the basic concern of most of that debate concentrated on the "conservatism" of Strauss and how he was, or was not, the godfather of neo-conservatism in the USA and how he, or actually his writings and followers, were the inspiring engine to Bush administration (Jan. 2010 – Jan. 2009). This paper, therefore, seeks to take in hand Strauss's related ideas from a broader unbiased perspective, to avoid being impounded within certain already discussed topics. This is to immensely reveal some important sides that are relatively overlooked, mainly education.

Yet, the basic difficulty of this study is the ambiguity of Strauss's writing style. Many of English native speakers who analyzed his texts admitted that. It becomes more difficult for non-English native speakers! Moreover, difficulty is not only in the language as a language in itself, it is also in the esoteric manner of the philosopher himself. Thus, to understand what the philosopher would like to say, or to pretend you do so, requires to read him several times and to head towards the original texts of philosophers he discusses them.

The research will focus on trying to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the ethical approach of Leo Strauss? Why "excellence"?
- 2) What is liberal education of Strauss? How can liberal education lead to a "good" society?
- 3) Critique of Leo Strauss's perspective.

¹ Leo Strauss (1899 – 1973) was a twentieth-century German Jewish émigré to the United States whose intellectual corpus spans ancient, medieval and modern political philosophy and includes, among others, studies of Plato, Maimonides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Nietzsche. He is author of many books such as: the argument and the action of Plato's laws, the city and man, history of political philosophy, on tyranny and others. See: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/strauss-leo/>
<https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/leo-strauss-books-english>

The first and the second points will be discussed from the perspective of Leo Strauss, the third will be a critique of his opinions, and, then, it will be followed by conclusion and recommendations.

The Ethical approach of Leo Strauss

Dedicated to interpretation of the works of ancient political philosophers, Leo Strauss unceasingly sought to connect the past with the present and to find out solutions from the past that can be considered as platform for enlightening and redirecting our contemporary life. Education or rather liberal education, as he prefers to call it, is one of the most profound insights of Strauss. However, before discussing education, I think we should go first through what we can call the ethical philosophical base of Strauss's thought. At this regards, some questions raise themselves as following: what is the ultimate end of human being? Who is the noble man? How can democracy harm the well-being of us? The following pages will try to find an answer to these questions from the perspective of Strauss.

Human Excellence and Good Man

Strauss considers human excellence as the ultimate end of human being, "...we cannot forget the obvious fact that by giving freedom to all, democracy also gives freedom to those who care for human excellence"². It is not to live any sort of life but to have a true "rational human existence"³. Hence he gave a great consideration to the Socratic way of life in which one can find "the model of a truly free, truly awakened, truly rational human existence; that this way of life affords the firmest foundation for lasting friendship and true generosity"⁴ in such life and according to the classical political philosophy, Strauss fascinated by, "the goal of political life is virtue, and the order most conducive to virtue is the aristocratic republic, or else the mixed regime."⁵

Who will rule in such aristocratic republic? The claim to rule is based on merit, on human excellence, on "virtue": courageous and skillful generals, incorruptible and

* The whole ethical standpoint of Leo Strauss exceeds the limits and the purpose of this research. Hence this paper will partly focus on that aspect of Strauss's philosophy without any disruption, bias or prejudice, as much as the author can.

²Leo Strauss, "Liberalism ancient and modern, foreword by Allan Bloom", (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press Ltd., 1968), P. 24.

³Leo Strauss, "the Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism, an introduction to the thought of Leo Strauss selected and introduced by Thomas L. Pangel", (Chicago: the University Chicago Press Ltd., 1989), P.xii.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Leo Strauss, "What is political philosophy? And other studies", (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 40.

equitable judges, wise and unselfish magistrates, are generally preferred to rule.⁶ Strauss argues that aristocracy, the rule of the best, presented itself as the natural answer of all good men to the natural question of the best form of government.⁷ This gives rise to another question: how can we define "good man"? Strauss replies that what to be understood by "good men" was known also from political life: "good men are those who are willing, and able, to prefer the common interest to their private interest and to the objects of their passions, or those who, being able to discern in each situation what is the noble or right thing to do, do it because it is noble and right and for no ulterior reason."⁸

However, are good things always done by "good men"? It can be and it cannot be at the same time. At this regard, in his "Human society in ethics and politics", Bertrand Russell warns us that we should not judge things and matters accounting only on their own sake. He contends that a thing is "good", if it is valued for its own sake, and not only for its effects. We take nasty medicines because we hope they will have desirable effects, but a gouty connoisseur drinks old wine for its own sake, in spite of possible disagreeable effects. The medicine is useful but not good, the wine is good but not useful. When we have to choose whether a certain state of affairs is to exist or not, we have of course to take account of its effects."⁹

Strauss reflects on his definition of "good man" by adding that that results which are generally considered desirable can be achieved by men of dubious character or by the use of unfair means. He, therefore, concludes a remark of overwhelming political significance; that "just" and "useful" are not simply identical; that virtue may lead to ruin.¹⁰

The aristocratic society in which one pursues "human excellence" requires some supportive factors; education or rather liberal education (will be discussed later) is one of them. This is the society in which "truly free men" live. Strauss defines them as following:

"The truly free man who can live in manner becoming a free man is the man of leisure, the gentleman who must possess some wealth -- but wealth of a certain kind: a kind of wealth the administration of which, to say nothing of its acquisition, does not take up much of his time but can be taken care of through the supervision of properly trained subordinates."¹¹

Hence, truly free men are not only people who have wealth, but also who have time to exercise rational life. Free men with no leisure are not free! However the way of

⁶Strauss, "The rebirth of classical political rationalism", p. 55.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Bertrand Russell, "Human society in ethics and politics", (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954), p. 51.

¹⁰Strauss, "The rebirth of classical political rationalism", p. 55.

¹¹Leo Strauss, *Liberal Education and Mass Democracy*, Published in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy: The Crisis of the Few and Many*, ed. Robert A. Goldwin (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1967), pp. 73-96. (in <http://www.ditext.com/strauss/lib2.html>)

Note: the same article published with slight changes under the title: "liberal education and responsibility" in Strauss's book: "Liberalism ancient and modern", pp. 9-25.

life of those gentlemen are not secure "if they are not the unquestioned rulers of their city; if the regime of their city is not aristocratic"¹²

From a passage such this, can we deduce that Strauss points out that a society, any society, normally has two classes; rich minority and poor majority? And the answer is "yes". He confirms that in another text by saying: "Now, as regards wealth, it so happens, as Aristotle observes, that there is always a minority of well-to-do people and a majority of the poor, and this strange coincidence will last forever because there is a kind of natural scarcity." "For the poor shall never cease out of the land."¹³

In such a society and to secure the life of the "elite", according to Strauss, aristocracy is the best regime as democracy harms 'human excellence'. However, does aristocracy naturally lead to the elimination of rights of the majority, for the sake of minority? And, how does democracy harm human well-being? This is what will be discussed in the next point.

Aristocracy Vs., Democracy

Strauss starts with defining what do we mean by democracy' or, more precisely, 'democracy as existed and practiced in ancient times. Democracy, of the past, is the regime that stands or falls by virtue: a democracy is a regime in which all or most adults are men of virtue, and since virtue seems to require wisdom, a regime in which all or most adults are virtuous and wise, or the society in which all or most adults have developed their reason to a high degree, or the rational society.¹⁴ Moreover, he considers that democracy, at that sense, was equivalent to aristocracy not only linguistically but also methodologically. He added: "Democracy in a word is meant to be an aristocracy which has broadened into a universal aristocracy."¹⁵

Strauss, then, implicitly raises expected questions; does democracy with that qualifications can be existed in our times? In other words, do we live in a society in which all people are wise and virtuous? He, subsequently, comes to the point that "prior to the emergence of modern democracy some doubts were felt whether democracy thus understood is possible."¹⁶

It is thus very obvious that Strauss refers not to the weakness of the democracy itself as a regime but to the qualities of those who seek to live in a democratic society. This is what exactly Jean-Jacques Rousseau assured in his 'Social contract': "if there were a nation of gods, it would be governed democratically. So, perfect government is unsuited to

¹²Ibid.

¹³Strauss, "What is political philosophy?" , p. 37.

¹⁴ Strauss" Liberal education and mass democracy" in in Higher Education and Modern Democracy: The Crisis of the Few and Many

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

men."¹⁷ And, he added: "Taking the term in its strict sense, there never has existed, and never will exist, any true democracy."¹⁸

Rousseau, whom Strauss influenced by, does not judge one form of government to be ever the best as we should consider the fact that each of them is the best in certain cases, and the worst in others.¹⁹ The size of population is considered as well. "If, in the different States, the number of the supreme magistrates should be in inverse ratio to that of the citizens, it follows that, in general, democratic government is suitable to small States, aristocracy to those of moderate size, and monarchy to large ones."²⁰

On contrary to Rousseau, Strauss insists that democracy is not a suitable political regime. If democracy was once defined by Abraham Lincoln as "government of the people, by the people, for the people"²¹, Strauss has developed a relatively new definition; democracy is not mass rule but rather culture rule.²² He continues that one of the most important virtues required for the smooth working of democracy, as far as the mass is concerned, is said to be electoral apathy, i.e., lack of public spirit; not indeed the salt of the earth but the salt of modern democracy are those citizens who read nothing except the sports page and the comic section.²³ It is then mass culture.

Influenced enough by Socrates and his great descendants, Strauss continued the classical criticism of democracy and, indeed, applied and extended that criticism to the new or modern form of Western liberal democracy.²⁴ Yet, Strauss presents himself as a friend of democracy by emphasizing that to be a friend doesn't mean to be a flatterer; "we are not permitted to be flatterers of democracy precisely because we are friends and allies to democracy."²⁵

However, why to criticize democracy, liberal democracy? "Strauss replies that democracy is the regime in which the majority of adult free males living in a city rules, but only a minority of them are educated. The principle of democracy is therefore not virtue but freedom as the right of every citizen to live as he likes. Democracy is rejected because it is as such the rule of the uneducated."²⁶

As discussed above, democracy is not a mass rule but a culture rule. Strauss defines a mass culture: "a culture which can be appropriated by the meanest capacities without any intellectual and moral effort whatsoever and at a very low monetary price."

¹⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The social contract and discourse on the origin of inequality*, edited and with an introduction by Lester K. Born (New York: Pocket Books, Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 71.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Barend Ter Haar, "government of the people", *Clingendael magazine*, Netherland Institute of International Relations, July 9, 2016, in <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/government-people-people-people>

²² Strauss, "Liberal education and mass democracy", in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Strauss, "The rebirth of classical political rationalism", p. xii.

²⁵ Strauss, "Liberal education and responsibility", in "Liberalism ancient & modern", p. 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁷What is more, according to Aristotle, few have wealth and opportunity to learn. For that reason, Strauss finds that democracy, the rule of majority, is government by the uneducated. And no one in his sense would wish to live under such a government.²⁸ Thus, aristocracy, rule of the best, presented itself as the natural answer of all good men to the natural question of the best political order. As Thomas Jefferson put it, "that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of (the) natural *aristoi* into offices of the government."²⁹

To summarize, Strauss considers that human excellence is the main end of human being. This end can't be achieved in a society that is ruled by uneducated people but rather in an aristocracy society where rulers are the best in terms of wealth and education. How should this education be, for whom, why? This turns us to the next topic of the research.

Liberal or illiberal?

On Strauss's concept of liberal education

"American society is in danger,"³⁰ Strauss warns. The reason is because of becoming ever more amass society which is "informed" in the common and in the metaphysical meaning of the term by mass communication, by the mass communication industry, the most visible and audible part of which is the advertising industry.³¹ He contends that democracy has nothing to do in particular with reforming education. What about current liberal education? Strauss points out that "it is liberal only in name or by courtesy."³² He says:

Nor can we say that democracy has found a solution to the problem of education. In the first place, what is today called education, very frequently does not mean education proper, i.e., the formation of character, but rather instruction and training. Secondly, to the extent to which the formation of character is indeed intended, there exists a very dangerous tendency to identify the good man with the good sport, the cooperative fellow, the "regular guy," i.e., an overemphasis on a certain part of social virtue and a corresponding neglect of those virtues which mature, if they do not flourish, in privacy, not to say in solitude: by educating people to cooperate with each in a friendly spirit, one does not yet educate non-conformists, people who are prepared to stand alone, to fight alone, "rugged individualists." Democracy has not yet found a defense of privacy which it fosters³³

How the society can be remedied? How to contribute in healing our societies? Strauss is ready with the solution. It is all about liberal education' which is "necessary endeavor to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society. Liberal education reminds those members of a mass democracy who have ears to hear, of human greatness."³⁴ What is liberal education? Why it is necessary? How it can save our modern democratic societies? This is what will be discussed soon.

What is liberal education?

²⁷ Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

²⁸ Strauss, "what is political philosophy", p. 37.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 85 - 86.

³⁰ Strauss, "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 263.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

³³ Strauss, "what is political philosophy", pp. 37-38.

³⁴ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in "Liberalism ancient and modern", p. 5.

Liberal education is education in culture or toward culture. The finished product of a liberal education is a cultured human being.³⁵ Liberal education for human being is as vital as cultivation of the soil. While the former takes place within agriculture, the first is executed within a culture. "Culture" means primarily agriculture: the cultivation of the soil and its products, taking care of the soil, improving the soil in accordance with its nature. "Culture" means derivatively and today chiefly the cultivation of the mind, the taking care and improving of the native faculties of the mind in accordance with the nature of the mind.³⁶ It is the ladder by which we try to ascend from mass democracy to democracy as originally means. Liberal education is the necessary endeavor to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society.³⁷

'Good' citizens do not exist in a day and night. There are many prior preparations and requirements. Education, high-quality education, is one of these serious preparations, hence liberal education is simply and importantly is an education in "good breeding."³⁸

Strauss considers liberal education as a "constant supply" of new ideas which are the products of creative minds. This is not only required in an aristocratic society but even in any democratic society as liberal education will be the source of innovations. It is highly required in every field. "Even singing commercials lose their appeal if they are not varied from time to time. But democracy, even if it is only regarded as the hard shell which protects the soft mass culture, requires in the long run qualities of an entirely different kind: qualities of dedication, of concentration, of breadth, and of depth. Thus we understand most easily what liberal education means here and now."³⁹

Specialization is one of the characteristics of mass culture that Strauss has not approved. It produces "nothing but 'specialists' without spirit or vision and voluptuaries without heart."⁴⁰ Thus liberal education is the "counterpoising" to mass culture, to the corroding effects of it⁴¹.

On contrary to what is expected, Strauss confirms that liberal education will be in support not only to the 'elite' but also to those "who were in their youth deprived through their poverty of an education for which they are fitted by nature."⁴² Last but not least, according to Strauss, liberal education is concerned with the souls of men and therefore has little or no use for machines. If it becomes a machine or an industry, it becomes undistinguishable from the entertainment industry unless in respect to income and publicity, to tinsel and glamour.⁴³

³⁵ Strauss, "What is liberal education" in Internet Archive, p. 311,

https://archive.org/stream/LeoStraussOnLiberalEducation/Strauss-WhatIsLiberalEducation_djvu.txt

³⁶ Strauss, "What is liberal education" in Internet Archive, p. 311,

https://archive.org/stream/LeoStraussOnLiberalEducation/Strauss-WhatIsLiberalEducation_djvu.txt

³⁷ Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in *Liberalism ancient and modern*", p.5.

⁴⁰ Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Liberal education as presented above contributes in healing individuals and societies; education in "good breeding"⁴⁴, cultivates minds, source of innovation and enlightenment, compensation to underserved persons. However, it raises a relevant question: how? How can liberal education lead us to a 'good' society? This is what will be discussed in the next point.

How will liberal education lead to a 'good' society?

Liberal education is in crisis. Allan Bloom considers that this crisis is a reflection of a crisis of the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles with which we interpret the world, an intellectual crisis of the greatest magnitude, which constitutes the crisis of our civilizations. But perhaps it would be true to say that the crisis consist not so much in this incoherence but in our incapacity to discuss or even recognize it.⁴⁵

Points of weakness cannot be cured unless we identify them. The same is true for education. Thus Strauss emphasizes that "no deliberation about remedies for our ills can be of any value if it is not preceded by an honest diagnosis."⁴⁶ Materials to be taught and mentality of those who will teach them are significantly considered. Strauss therefore places a great importance on teachers themselves as the core of the educational process. Minds, of learners, need teachers just as the soil needs cultivators of the soil. However, the matter with teachers is not as easy as that of farmers. Building the mentality of teachers of generations requires extra work. Teachers that we know in our ordinary life are not only teachers; they are also pupils. For education to be liberal education, we need to get learn from teachers that are not in turn pupils. How can it happen? Where can we meet them?

Strauss answers that "ultimately there must be teachers who are not in turn pupils. Those teachers who are not in turn pupils are the great minds ... the greatest minds."⁴⁷ But such greatest minds, according to Strauss, are extremely rare. Hence, pupils, of whatever degree of proficiency, have access to teachers who are not in turn pupils, to the greatest minds, only through the great books great minds have left behind.⁴⁸ Why should we return to Great Books? Strauss answers by recalling Plat's suggestion that education in the highest sense is philosophy and philosophy is quest for wisdom or quest for knowledge regarding the most important, the highest, or the most comprehensive things; such knowledge, Plato suggested, is virtue and is happiness⁴⁹. Although we don't have access to wisdom, we can trust 'real' philosophers who declared to possess all the excellences of

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).P. 346.

⁴⁶ Strauss, "Liberal education and responsibility" in "Liberalism ancient and modern", p. 24.

⁴⁷ Strauss, "what is liberal education?" in Internet Archive, pp. 311.

https://archive.org/stream/LeoStraussOnLiberalEducation/Strauss-WhatIsLiberalEducation_djvu.txt

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 311- 312.

https://archive.org/stream/LeoStraussOnLiberalEducation/Strauss-WhatIsLiberalEducation_djvu.txt

⁴⁹ Strauss, "what is liberal education" in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 6.

which man's mind is capable, to the highest degree." ⁵⁰ Because we cannot acquire the highest form education, we can't be philosophers. Strauss adds: "We must not be deceived by the fact that we meet many people who say that they are philosophers. For those people employ a loose expression which is perhaps necessitated by administrative convenience. Often they mean merely that they are members of philosophy departments. And it is as absurd to expect members of art departments to be artists." ⁵¹

Liberal education is a powerful call for thinking, but not just any kind of thinking; it is the profound thinking, to listen more than we talk and to respect more those who speak wisely than those who are fond of their loud voices. It consists "in learning to listen to still and small voices and therefore in becoming deaf to loudspeakers. Liberal education seeks light and therefore shuns the limelight" ⁵² Education to achieve what is expected from it, there are certain important conditions. It is the quality of teachers and students at the same time. Strauss doubts that they usually fulfilled, if we seek the highest form of education. ⁵³ How can this obstacle be solved? Strauss doesn't give us a clear solution. However, he insisted that both of teachers and students must be aware of what education means to human being. And for teachers, they must not have too high an opinion of their importance, and have the highest opinion of their duty, their responsibility. ⁵⁴ Students in general and future law makers in particular must be aware of what education means to human being. "To fulfill this function, the lawmakers and ultimately the sovereign must possess both knowledge and good will. The sovereign must be enlightened, free from prejudice; such freedom can be expected to come from exposure science (both natural and social) and its consequences (technology, facility of traveling, and so on)." ⁵⁵ Yet, being liberally educated can not only guarantee that you will become a political power on your own right. Strauss gives examples of Karl Marx, the father of communism, and Friedrich Nietzsche, the step-grandfather of fascism that they "were liberally educated on a level to which we cannot even hope to aspire". ⁵⁶ However, we can conclude some learned lessons from their failures: 1) wisdom cannot be separated from moderation, and 2) understanding that wisdom requires loyalty to a decent constitution and even to the cause of constitutionalism. ⁵⁷ It doesn't mean in a way or another to lessen the importance of liberal education as it was and it will the safeguard of fostering 'civic responsibility' and, most importantly, exercising this civic responsibility. ⁵⁸

Strauss considers that "specialization" is one of the main reasons beyond the collapse of education, as discussed in the previous section. Allan Bloom agrees with him and adds: "it (liberal education) decayed when what lay beyond it were only specialties, the premises of which do not lead to any such vision. The highest is the particular

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

⁵³ Strauss, "what is liberal education" in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 9.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Strauss, "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 263.

⁵⁶ Strauss, "liberal education and responsibility", in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 24.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in in *Higher Education and Modern Democracy*.

intellect; there is no synopsis.⁵⁹ It only "flourished when it prepared the way for the discussion of a unified view of nature and man's place in it, which the best minds debated on the highest level."⁶⁰

A part from specialization, liberal education urges to empower inter-disciplines. It is an ongoing intercourse with great minds. Nevertheless, it is training "in the highest form of modesty, not to say of humility."⁶¹ Strauss is not on controversy with the present because he just admires the past, but rather because he appreciates for the ancients their strong connection with morality. He claims that "their implicit prophecy that the emancipation of technology, of the arts, from moral and political control would lead to disaster or to the d-humanization of man has not yet been refuted."⁶² It means that we live in a time of "d-humanization of man" because we rely more on "freedom" than "virtue".

A conscious return to common sense thinking is need if we wish to counterpart the dangers imbedded in specialization; "as far as these dangers can be counteracted within the social sciences".⁶³ Strauss refers to take into account the perspective of the citizen, to identify the whole, in reference to which we should select themes of research and integrate results of research, with the overall objectives of whole societies, he adds:

"By doing this, we will understand social reality as it is understood in social life by thoughtful and broadminded men. In other words, the true matrix of social science is the civic art and not a general notion of science or scientific method. Social science must either be a mere handmaid of the civic art – in this case no great harm is done if it forgets the wood for the trees – or, if it does not want to become or to remain oblivious of the noble tradition from which it sprang, if it believes that it might be able to enlighten the civic art, it must indeed look farther afield than the civic art, but it must look in the same direction as the civic art. Its relevance must become identical, at least at the outset, with those of the citizen or statesman; and therefore it must speak, or learn to speak, the language of the citizen and of the statesman".

It doesn't mean to abandon specialization. In Strauss words: "We are indeed compelled to be specialists."⁶⁴ But we should be so in the one thing needful and to, always, be in communications with humanities. He clarifies: "As matters stand, we can expect more immediate help from the humanities rightly understood than from the sciences, from the spirit perceptivity and delicacy than from the spirit of geometry."⁶⁵ Here liberal education will be synonymous with the reading in common of the Great Books."⁶⁶ Thus, if we are impelled to be specialists, we are compelled as well to live with books; "But life is too short to live with any but the greatest books."⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Allan Bloom, PP. 346-7.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 8.

⁶² Strauss, "what is political philosophy", p. 37.

⁶³ Strauss, " the rebirth of classical political rationalism", p. 4.

⁶⁴ Strauss, "liberal education and responsibility", in liberalism ancient and modern, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in liberalism ancient and modern, p. 6.

Allan Bloom recommends that Great Books should make up a central part of the curriculum. This will help students be aware of big questions and get experiences from the university they can't get elsewhere.⁶⁸ While it (liberal education) requires from us to communicate with the works of greatest minds it asks us go break with "the noise, the rush, the thoughtlessness, the cheapness of the Vanity Fair of the intellectuals as well as of their enemies."⁶⁹ once again, Strauss assures how it is vital to think thoroughly; to accept agreed views as they actually are; mere opinions not facts. It is "liberation from vulgarity."⁷⁰ More to the point, liberal education is not in any manner indoctrination. Strauss tells us that returning back to great minds will enable us broadly think and meditate. "Great minds do not tell us the same things regarding the most important themes; the community of greatest minds is rent by discord and even by various kinds of discord. Whatever further consequences this may entail, it certainly entails the consequence that liberal education cannot be simply indoctrination."⁷¹

Critique of Leo Strauss's perspective.

It's now the time to put Strauss's ideas under examination as following:

Human excellence or elite excellence?!

Strauss highly estimated human 'excellence'. He considered it not only the aim of education, but the aim of human existence. He assured that the 'good' man, the noble, is the man who has wealth in order to have the enough time to think, meditate and reflect.. to be human. Wealth and time are the main conditions to be 'good' man, to be noble. Here is the trouble in Strauss' thinking. Here is the discrimination against 'human beings'. What is the guilty of the poor to be deprived from acquiring equal opportunities in life? Moreover, is not it extremism, radicalism, to draw such permanent separation among people by classifying them into only two categories; poor and rich? The rich are naturally the 'noble' and the poor are naturally the 'slave' whose existing guarantees to the rich to stay forever the noble. What about the dynamism of life and social change, the rich can become poor and vice versa. Strauss denies the equal rights within the one society what bout considering them globally? How should rich nations deal with poor nations? Is it a green card that the strong impose his power over the weak? I just wish to recall these good words of Eleanor Roosevelt on how it is more than important to respect and appreciate equal 'human' rights:

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning

⁶⁸ Allan Bloom, "the Crisis of American mind", p. 345.

⁶⁹ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 8.

⁷⁰ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 8.

⁷¹ Strauss, "what is liberal education", in Internet Archive, p. 312.

anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close, we shall look in vain progress in the larger world."⁷²

Strauss seeks a "good" society, but how this society can be reached with the exclusion of a major component of it, its poor people? Let's consider John Rawls's words: "I characterized a well-ordered society as one designed to advance the good of its members and effectively regulated by a public conception of justice. Thus it is a society in everyone accepts and knows that the others accept the same principles of justice, and the basic social institutions satisfy and are known to satisfy these principles. Now justice as fairness is framed to accord with this ideas of society."⁷³

Majority Rule.. to be abandoned?!

Two unpleasant presidential elections have taken place over the last few years. The first was in electing the former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi in 2012 and the second was in electing the American President Ronald Trump in 2016. Both of them are lack the necessary political experience and diplomacy awareness to lead a "nation", not to mention to 'direct' the world, as in the USA experience. Nevertheless, both of them came to power by majority decision, by 'fair' elections. Does it reflect in a way or another how Strauss was wise in criticizing majority rule?! However, what is the alternative? Is it to "accept that on some occasions the will of the majority should not govern"⁷⁴ ? Honestly speaking, it is a grave setback in how we understand and practice democracy. Does it, again, reflect the deep thinking of Strauss concerning how much it is important to spread the culture of 'liberal education' among citizens in general and lawmakers and politicians in particular? I think the answer is "Yes"!

Additionally, Strauss criticizes democracy in favor of aristocracy. However, he has not clarified how aristocracy be suitable in our days, or rather how it will work. He takes literally the model implemented by ancients to be a model for today, but how? It was not clear in his discussions.

Liberal or illiberal education?

Liberal education in terms of returning to great minds, the great books is very required. It is highly required to teach our students not only how to learn but rather how to think. At this regard, Strauss was pioneer in emphasizing the importance of what we call now the "critical thinking" to be imbedded in curriculum regardless the major specialization. Nevertheless, it is not or should not, according to Strauss, be accessible to all: "we must not expect that liberal education can ever become universal education. It will be always

⁷² Eleanor Roosevelt, "where, after all, do universal human rights begin?" Sondra Myers (editor), the Democracy Reader, (New York: the international Debate Education Association, 2002)

⁷³ John Rawls, "a theory of justice", (Harvard University Press, 1971). Pp. 453-454.

⁷⁴ Ronald Dworkin, freedom's law, the moral reading of the American Constitution, (in) Sondra Myers (editor), the Democracy Reader, (New York: the international Debate Education Association , 2002), p. 227.

remaining the obligation and the privilege of a minority." ⁷⁵ Once again, it is not but unjustified discrimination and inequality. Strauss justifies his belief by referring that people are born unequal and "it is just to give equal things to equal people and unequal things to people of unequal merit."⁷⁶ He goes against the common sense believing that he is right! Isaiah Berlin was right when he said: "it is a terrible and dangerous arrogance to believe that you alone are right; have a magical eye which sees the truth; & that others cannot be right if they disagree." ⁷⁷

On contrary to Strauss's view that wealth is a prior condition to good education, experts on education assure that finance is not everything; ".. as in industrialized countries there can be no argument about the provision of universal primary education to all children, so also in developing countries first-call financing has to be allocated to these basic social services for children. Lack of finance is no valid argument against human rights."⁷⁸

Most importantly, will not such class-distinctions lead to hatred among people belong to different classes? Bertrand Russell in his "education and social order" warned us that just unjust inequalities exist, all parts will suffer. A man who profits by them does his best to defend the *status que* in addition he always feels superiority that he is some way better than those who are less fortunate. On the other hand, less fortunate members of the community " must either suffer such intellectual atrophy that they do not perceive the injustice of which they are the victims, and such moral loss of self-respect that they are willing to bow down before men intrinsically no better than themselves, or they must be filled with anger and resentment, protesting indignantly, feeling a continual sense of grievance, and gradually coming to view the world through the jaundiced eyes of the victim of persecution mania."⁷⁹ Consequently, According to Russell, "wherever class distinction exists, education necessarily has two correlative defects: that of producing arrogance in the rich, and that of aiming at irrational humility in the poor."⁸⁰ You can or can't accept Strauss views, but in all cases it is very hard to be tolerant with an attitude that promotes injustice. It is expected from education to build and to achieve development and to free our minds, not to undermine our society depriving our citizen from being educated. John Dewey confirmed it when he says: "education is development."⁸¹ He added: "modern

⁷⁵ Strauss, "liberal education and mass democracy", in "liberalism ancient and modern", p. 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Isaiah Berlin, "notes on Prejudice", edited by Henry Hardy (in) Sondra Myers (editor), the Democracy Reader, (New York: the international Debate Education Association, 2002), p. 91.

⁷⁸ James Lynch, "education and development: a human rights analysis", introductory volume, (London, Cassell Wellington House, 1997), pp. 1 &3.

⁷⁹ Bertrand Russell, "Education and the Social Order", (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 99 &100.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 94.

⁸¹ John Dewey, "democracy and education", an introduction to the philosophy of education, (New York: the Macmillon Company, 1916), p. 59.

life means democracy, democracy means freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness." ⁸²

Conclusion and Recommendations:

1) Generally speaking, we may agree or not agree on the philosophy of Strauss, but it doesn't mean we should not give him the acknowledgment he deserves. It is not difficult that one defends equality, human rights and other relevant issues because they harmonize the common sense. But the difficulty occurs when one goes against the wave and he still provides profound thought deserves to be read and re-read.

2) Despite his 'elite-ness' attitude, there is an obvious consistency on the thought of Strauss; excellence is for the elite who have both wealth and time, liberal education will be as well for this selected elite who should rule their nations in an aristocracy society.

3) The best idea that can be taken from the philosophy of Strauss is that we should not be only specialists but we should have as well a broader knowledge and this can take place within liberal education, as explained by the philosopher. It is a clear call for encouraging interdisciplinary and to be committed to critical thinking. This applies on all disciplinary in general and social science and political philosophy in particular.

4) Strauss draws our attention to very important issue which is 'education' and 'finance'. Yes, finance is not everything but it is important anyhow! Inequality in our schools, universities as well, is strong evidence. Poor people, if they even can afford that, send their children to public, governmental school. Rich people send their children to private, language and international school. Class-distinction, consequently, continues for ever. It isn't only the matter of schools and universities, but it, naturally, goes to include future job opportunities, livelihood means and the stereotypes of each side to the other. This is not, of course, a call for class-conflict, but rather a thought on what should be done to correct many inhabited unjust matters. I think this the responsibility of:

a) Governments: they should give a special care to the curriculum taught in schools, public or private. Some same materials, in particular that encourage human development and give esteem to student because he is a human being and deserve recognition regardless his family wealth, race, religion..etc, should be shared in both of them. Officials should reserve a reasonable allocation of budget to education and its supplements issues such as health care, encouraging learning environment, good nutrition...etc. Periodical monitoring and evaluation on the educational process is a must.

b) Civil society associations – civic society: CSAs have an integral role to that of governments. Unfortunately, most of NGOs, CSAs, for example in my country Egypt, focus on providing financial and nonfinancial services to relevant beneficiaries. Both services are mainly for supporting businesses of adults. Few of those CSAs that provide services that care about human's well-being, self-esteem. Enhancing mentality should be considered not only for adults but for all ages preferably at earlier life stage. One should not be with disability or special needs to find, if he finds!, an association to care of him and his educational advance.

⁸² John Dewey, "Education today", edited and with foreword by Joseph Rather, (London: Georg Allud & Unwin LTD, 1941), p. 62.

c) International organizations: they should, must, be respected by all countries worldwide, in particular by those so-called 'great powers'. International organizations work to support peace and development by developing and sustaining governments, civil society and individuals. Allocations from countries in particular rich ones should not be affected when there is a political disagreement. These allocations are given to international organizations to cover their expenditures in pushing development and peace everywhere, not to buy to voices of countries' representatives.

d) Developed, rich, countries: Yes, they have an undoubtedly responsibility toward developing and under-developing countries. Anyone knows the budgets allocated from developed countries to poor countries to support development including education? No one can deny that there are big budgets allocated for this purpose. But one can not overlook that there are other bigger budgets allocated for wars and 'peaces' around the world. Peace in the meaning that one party of the fighting parties at the same nation to be supported to continue fighting his citizen! Emperors of guns in your country are indebted to you with a "thank you"! When there is no peace, it means, consequently, no development, no education but just poverty, extremists and more future wars. How far we are from the 'real' meaning of peace making and true peace makers, President Carter is a true role model. Now, it is the responsibility of you, intellectuals.

e) Intellectuals, lawmakers and philosophers: you are the voice of consciousness on the earth. Or, by the words of Leo Strauss, your voices are 'counterpoising' of the sound of guns, ignorance, arrogance of wealth and power worldwide. Your role is not ever limited, or it should not be limited, by the borders of universities, schools or enterprises. You should have a say in forming the mentality of ordinary people, in influencing lawmaker and senior.. in making a change for the sake of human being's welfare and peace worldwide.

Have mentioned that, I would like to finalize my research with Aristotle's quote:

“Those who educate children well are more to be honored than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well.”⁸³

⁸³ <http://www.simplethingcalledlife.com/stcl/aristotle-quotes-to-live-by/>

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Contemporary Political Ideologies in Egypt .. facts and discussions

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Introduction

What is ideology? It is necessary to define it first before going through more discussions. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, ideology is "a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it."¹

It is also "described through citing principles and tenets advocated and shared by its proponents²" without neglecting the mechanism by which an ideology will be functioned.

The term "ideology", therefore, used at this context means what developed as a set of ideas and associated with practice, action and, furthermore, impact. When it comes to politics, the writer agrees with the definition provided by John Levi Martin in his research titled "what is ideology?" in which he affirms that "political ideology can best be understood as actors' theorization of their own position, and available strategies, in a political field."³

Challenges of the Study

At this regard, this study highlights the contemporary ideologies that have an impact on the political Egyptian arena, *if any*. The major challenge, however, is that there is no direct or clear criteria or indicator by which one can confidently measure the dominance of a specific ideology. Lack of relevant knowledge is a big barrier! In Egypt, we, for example, do not have a mechanism to routinely measure Egyptians' political ideology. This is completely different in some other countries such as the United States of America where you can easily figure out people's ideological affiliations because there are many supporting tools. We, consequently, can know through a recent study published by Gallup News in January 2017 that 25 % of Americans are liberal while 36 % are conservative⁴.

Some major ideologies can also be known through fair presidential or legislative elections that reflect to which ideology or party people give their confidence. This for instance took place in the 2017 French Presidential election as the founder of "En Marche!" Progressive party won the election with 66.1 % of votes⁵. One therefore

¹ Maurice Cranston, Ideology, Encyclopedia Britannica, see:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ideology-society>

²V. Khoros, populism: its past, present and future (Moscow: progress Publishers, 1980). P. 73.

³ John Levi Martin, what is ideology?, University of Chicago, Illinois, October 2014,(in):

<http://home.uchicago.edu/~jlmartin/Papers/What%20is%20Ideology.pdf>

⁴Lydia Saad, US Conservative outnumber Liberal with narrowing margin, Gallup News - Politics, January 9, 2017.

<http://news.gallup.com/poll/201152/conservative-liberal-gap-continues-narrow-tuesday.aspx>

⁵ See:

<https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-defeats-marine-le-pen-to-win-french-presidency-projection/>

concludes that the dominant ideology people support is neither the far right nor the far left, that of opponents, but rather the progressiveness.⁶ The case in Egypt is different. The 2014 Egyptian Presidential election was resulted in the winning of the independent candidate with 96.1 % of votes⁷. Although the independent winner candidate ran the election with a specific agenda, this agenda cannot be considered as an ideology for two reasons: 1) in terms of timing, ideology has long-term dimension while political agenda is correlated with a specific time for a certain reason, i.e., election purpose; 2) on contrary to political agenda, ideology is convinced by many people not only its founder or holder.

One can't also consider what prominent intellectuals believe in to be classed as major ideologies in Egypt. Ideologies in a certain country to be considered "major" should have mass patronage on one side and impact on policy makers on the other side.

However and for overcoming such challenges, this paper relies on measuring the success achieved by different political parties in the latest Parliamentary election in 2015, as an indicator of preferable affiliated ideology of voters. The following table includes names of parties, their political ideologies and the seats gained by them⁸:

⁶ Luis Martin, why French progressives should vote for Macron, OpenDemocracy, May 1st, 2017, (in): <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/luis-mart-n/why-french-progressives-should-vote-for-macron>

⁷Patrick Kingsley, Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi won 96.1 % of vote in Egypt presidential election, The Guardian, Tuesday 3 June 2014 (in): <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/03/abdel-fatah-al-sisi-presidential-election-vote-egypt>

⁸ inter-parliamentary Union, (in): http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2097_E.htm

Facts: political parties' position in the Egyptian Parliament

No	Party	Ideology	Political Position	Number of seats
1	Free Egyptians Party (Al Masreyeen Al-Ahrar)	Liberalism - secularism	Center- right	65
2	Nation's Future Party (Mostakbal Watan)	Populism	Center- right	53
3	New Wafd party (Al Wafd El Gadeed)	Egyptian nationalism - National liberalism	Center-right	36
4	Guards of the Homeland (Homat Al Watan)	Populism		18
5	Republican People's party (El Shaab el Gomhory)	Liberalism		13
6	Conference Party	Secularism	Center-right	12
7	El-Nour	Salafi Islamism - Islamic conservatism		11
8	Conservative Party	Conservatism	Center-right	6
9	Democratic peace party (El Salam El dimuqrati)	Secularism - Liberal democracy - liberal nationalism		5
10	Modern Egypt Party (Masr Al Haditha)	Liberalism		4
11	Egyptian Social Democratic Party	Social Democracy - Social liberalism	Center - left	4
12	Egyptian National Movement (El haraka el Wataneya)	Secularism		4
13	Freedom (Al-Horreya)Party	Liberalism - Big tent		3
14	My country Egypt(Misr Balady)			3
15	Reform and Development Misruna Party	Liberalism	Center	3
16	Progressive Nationalist Unionist Party (El Tagamo El Takadomy)	Left -wing nationalism - Democratic socialism - populism	Left-wing	2
17	Revolution Party			1
18	Free Egyptian Building Party	Islamism		1
19	Arab Democratic Nasserist Party	Arabic nationalism Arabic socialism	Left-wing	1

According to the formal blog of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 44 parties participated in the elections, 19 of which succeeded in securing seats in Parliament. All in all, the political parties currently in parliament, according to the blog, represent all shades of the political spectrum. For instance, the Islamist Al-Nour won 11 seats, while four leftist parties, namely the Arab Democratic Nasserist Party, El-Tagammu' (the National Progressive Unionist Party), the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, and the Popular Socialist Alliance won 8 seats, forming a leftist bloc with other left-leaning independent MPs. Predictably, the three center-right parties – all members of the “For the Love of Egypt” alliance – won the largest number of seats, namely the Free Egyptians (65 members), Nation’s Future Party (53 members) and the historic Wafd (33 seats). The new Parliament is therefore more pluralistic than some commentators would have it seem.⁹

Major political Ideologies

Based on the above, the main political ideologies that will be discussed are liberalism, secularism, Salfi Islamism, social democracy and populism

Liberalism

The word "liberal" derives from the Latin "liber" (meaning "free" or "not a slave"). In everyday use, it means generous and open-minded, as well as free from restraint and from prejudice. Its use as a political term, however, only dates from the early 19th Century.¹⁰ Modern liberalism can be tracked to the writings of John Locke, "Two Treatises of Government" in 1689. In his book, Locke emphasizes that human rights of life, health and liberty and independent are considered as natural rights that can't be violated by any human being"

"The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker; all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by His order and about His business; they are His property, whose workmanship they are made to last during His, not one another's pleasure".¹¹

In her study "a policy for promoting liberal democracy in Egypt"2006, Dr. Hala Mustafa attributed liberalism in Egypt to the era of Muhammad Ali in the early 19th century. She built her point of view based on the state of Egyptians and rulers at that time.

⁹ Ahmed Abu Zeid, Egypt's parliamentary elections: setting the record straight, Egypt Ministry of Foreign Affairs Blog, available on:

<https://mfaegypt.org/2016/01/14/egypts-parliamentary-elections-setting-the-record-straight/>

¹⁰ Luke Mastin, Liberalism, available on:

http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_liberalism.html

¹¹ John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, from the works of John Locke, a new edition corrected in then volumes, Vol. V.(London, printed for Thomas Tegg and others, 1823), p. 107. Available on: www.yorku.ca/comminel/courses/3025pdf/Locke.pdf

According to Dr. Mustafa, there was "formation of well-educated, open-minded Egyptian elite that embraced the distinctive features of liberalism and contributed to Egypt's modernization".¹² Liberal figures emphasized the importance of law and order, judicial independence, national (versus tribal or religious) identity, individual and public freedoms, freedom of the press, public education, the rights of women and minorities, pluralism and trade unionism.¹³ Dr. Refaat ElSaed referred to liberalism as a political theory that can be considered as an ideology with an essential principle which is freedom is the base of progress. He named Saad Zaghloul and Moustafa ElNahas, leaders of Al Wafd Party, as the founders of liberalism in Egypt.¹⁴

As discussed above, the main principles of liberalism is personal freedom, liberty and confrontation with any extreme dogma, religious or non-religious one. At this point, liberalism complies with the secularism as will be discussed below.

Secularism

The word "secular" means in Latin "of this world" and is opposite of religious.¹⁵ George Jacob Holyoake is considered the intellectual who created the term secularism.¹⁶ In his book "English Secularism", Holyoake defines secular "is that, the issue of which can be tested by the experience of this life".¹⁷ "A secularist is intended to be a reasoned.. one who inquired what a thing is, and not only what it is, but *why* it is what it is".¹⁸ Paul Kurtz , the leader of secular humanism in the Unites States mentioned that secular refers to "worldly" or "temporal" values in contrast to the "spiritual" or "sacred."¹⁹ He added: "Secularists believe in the separation of church and state in protecting various public institutions of society from religious intrusions."²⁰

Compounded it with Humanism, Kurtz declared a statement of principles of the secular humanism as following:

¹²Hala Mustafa, a policy for promoting liberal democracy in Egypt, Foundation for Defense of Democracy, White Paper Series: voices from the Middle East on democratization and reform. May 2006. P. 2. Available on:
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/4468918898f8d.pdf>

¹³Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁴ رفعت السعيد، الليبرالية المصرية: المثقفون وحزب الوفد (القاهرة: دار مصر المحروسة، ٢٠٠٢) ص. ١١، ١٢.

¹⁵Austin Cline, origins of Secularism as a non-religious humanistic, atheistic philosophy, March 17, 2017. Available on:
<https://www.thoughtco.com/george-jacob-holyoake-coined-the-term-secularism-250853>

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷George Jacob Holyoake, English Secularism: a confession of belief (Chicago: the Open Court Publishing Company, 1896). P. 58. Available on:
<https://archive.org/download/englishsecularis01holy/englishsecularis01holy.pdf>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹Paul Kurtz, the ethics of Secular Humanism, (in), Sidney Hook philosopher of Democracy and Humanism, edited by Paul Kurtz (New York: Prometheus Book, 1983). P. 157.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 158 .

- We are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems.
- We deplore efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.
- We believe that scientific discovery and technology can contribute to the of human life.
- We believe in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities.
- We are committed to the principle of the separation of church and state.
- We cultivate the arts of negotiation and compromise as a means of resolving differences and achieving mutual understanding.²¹

In Egypt, first experience of secularism started with the British Occupation (1882 - 1952), the atmosphere which allowed the protection of debate²². According to some intellectuals, while it is almost unimaginable that anyone in Egypt now would set up a political party with the name "secular", almost one hundred year ago, the secular party, El-Wafd, as known later, was founded in 1919²³. It was campaigned under the slogan: "Religion belongs to God, the homeland belongs to everyone." The secular party did not oppose religion as such but objected to the Egyptian king's use of religion to boost his authority²⁴.

Both of liberalism and secularism are adopted by the Free Egyptians party. The political ideology of the Conference party is secularism; liberalism is adopted by Republicans' People party.

Salafi Islamism

When it comes to present Islamic movements it is very complicated issue. Although they all work under the name of "Islam", they have totally different principles and approaches. Professor Ahmad Moussali, therefore, differentiates these discourses describing them as "discourses created by different and opposing trends in modern Islamic thought... Islamism, fundamentalism, salafism, neo-salafism, Wahhabism,

²¹ Paul Kurtz, Affirmation of Humanism, Council for Secular Humanism. Available on: <https://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php/12>

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism_in_Egypt

²³ Amr Hamzawy, Michele Sunne, Egypt's secular political parties: a struggle for identity and independence, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 31, 2017. Available on: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/31/egypt-s-secular-political-parties-struggle-for-identity-and-independence-pub-68482>

²⁴ Brain Whitaker, the killing of Islamic secularism, the Guardian, Wednesday April 8, 2009. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/apr/08/middleeast-islam>

jihadism, political Islam, Islamic radicalism and others".²⁵ As titled above, focus will be on Salafism as one of the ideologies adopted by a political party, AlNour, that gained reasonable presence in the Parliamentary election, 11 seats. Salafism, according to Dr. AlMaoussli, started as a trend that finds in the concept of al-salaf al-salih (the pious predecessors) the instrument to either understand the true interpretation and practice of Islam or to reject the cumulative experience of the Muslim community.²⁶ Salafism emerged in a coherent form in the 1300s as a reaction to the rigid institutions and perceived corruption of Islamic faith and practice²⁷. From the Arab peninsula, Salafism entered Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century through the movement in the Levant²⁸.

All formations of salafism are based on reforming individuals and communities on the basis of returning to the pure Islam of the Qur'an and prophetic Sunna as understood and practiced by al-salaf al-salih.²⁹ The decision of Egyptian Salafis to form political parties and enter the realm of electoral politics marks a significant departure from the typical Salafi position³⁰.

Despite of its apparently Islamic approach, the Salafism's party calls for a civil state where all Egyptians live together without discrimination, far from a theocracy that claims the government rules by God's will."³¹

Social democracy

Social democracy is a political ideology that originally advocated a peaceful evolutionary transition of society from capitalism to socialism using established political processes³². Critics of social democracy see it as "an unstable halfway house between Marxism and liberalism.. in this view social democrats are socialists without the courage of revolutionary conviction."³³

On the other side, supporters of social democracy consider the movement as an effort to implement particular policies or uphold certain values... in this view social democrats are basically the champions of the welfare state, ..equality or solidarity.³⁴

²⁵ Ahmad Maoussalli, Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: who is the enemy? A conflicts Forum Monograph, American University of Beirut. January 2009.p. 2. Available on: conflictsforum.org/briefings/Wahhabism-Salafism-and-Islamism.pdf

²⁶ Ibid, p. 11.

²⁷ Jonathan Brown, Salafis and Sufis in Egypt, the Carnegie papers, Middle East, December 2011.P. 3. Available on: carnegieendowment.org/files/salafis_sufis.pdf

²⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁹ Ahmad Maoussalli, Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism, p. 12.

³⁰ Jonathan Brown, p. 4.

³¹ Ibid, p. 9.

See also: http://www.elsyasi.com/civil_detail.aspx?id=56

³² Encyclopedia Britannica, available on: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-democracy>

³³ Sheri Berman, Understanding social democracy, Columbia University, New York, p. 3. available on: http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ces/conferences/left/left_papers/berman.pdf

³⁴ Ibid.

Populism

Populism is the political ideology adopted by the fourth dominated party in the Egyptian Parliament with (18) seats, Homeland defenders. The term "populism" goes back to the farmers' movement of "Grangers" and Greenbackers" in the US in the 1870s - 1890s which resulted in an abortive attempt to form a "third" party in America. In 1892, during the formation of the People's party in the U.S, its activists were searching for a term which would set the new party apart from Democrats and Republicans. David Overmyer coined the term "populism" which rapidly took root³⁵. It has influenced modern nationalism in developing countries³⁶. Its political nature is based on the "acceptance of principle that the source of authority is in the people."³⁷

Conclusion

As it was very challenging to know which ideology to be considered the dominant one, it is more difficult to identify the impact of any of them. Selecting of the political ideologies presented was not because of the great impact achieved by their holders on the ground but rather, as explained before, based on the number of seats they gained in the parliamentary election in 2015!

The first feedback can be given about the programs of political parties believe in such ideologies is that they are almost the same! Despite of the different political ideologies they belong to, there is no distinctive difference in their vision and mission. Moreover, their followers are mostly from the same social class, the elite, not the majority of the people of Egypt. The distance, therefore, between ordinary person and leaders of political parties is so remote. This was not to apply on the banned Muslims Brotherhood and their political party, freedom and justice due to their professional organizing manner and their ultra capacity to reach ordinary man at his home!

When it comes to the ideology formally adopted by the State, the matter will be more obscure! There is no written ideology. The announced one through practices is liberalism. Meanwhile, the executive authority frequently announces protecting poor people through some social solidarity programs, Takaful wa Karama. It means that ideology formally adopted could be social liberalism.

However, there are many points of weakness that can't be overlooked at this context. How liberalism can comply with heavy-loaded government institutions with bureaucracy? Moreover, how liberalism be applied in a society where civil society associations constrained by a new law that paralyzed its work, law 70 of 2017? On the other side, socialism, even compounded with liberalism, is not compatible with the huge wages disparities in Egypt, not to mention the high percentage of people live under the line of poverty, 27.8 %.

³⁵V. Khoros, P. 9.

³⁶Ibid, p. 220.

³⁷Ibid.

Hence, to raise a question "what are the major ideologies in Egypt"? Or to be "optimistic" enough and to ask the same question with an addition: "and what are their impact?" leads us to raise more questions rather than giving answers. This imposes inevitable question: "are there true ideologies in Egypt? Or, the era of ideologies has gone forever?!

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