

# ELITE



Meeting  
**Dr  
Ayman  
Abdel  
Wahab**

Deputy Director of Al-Ahram  
Center for Political and Strategic  
Studies



**BOARD CHAIRWOMAN**  
Prof.Hanan M. Aly  
**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Dr. Ramy Magdy Ahmed

# ELITE



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FEPS, WHERE ELITES ARE MADE

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## FEPS Accredited Internationally by ASIC



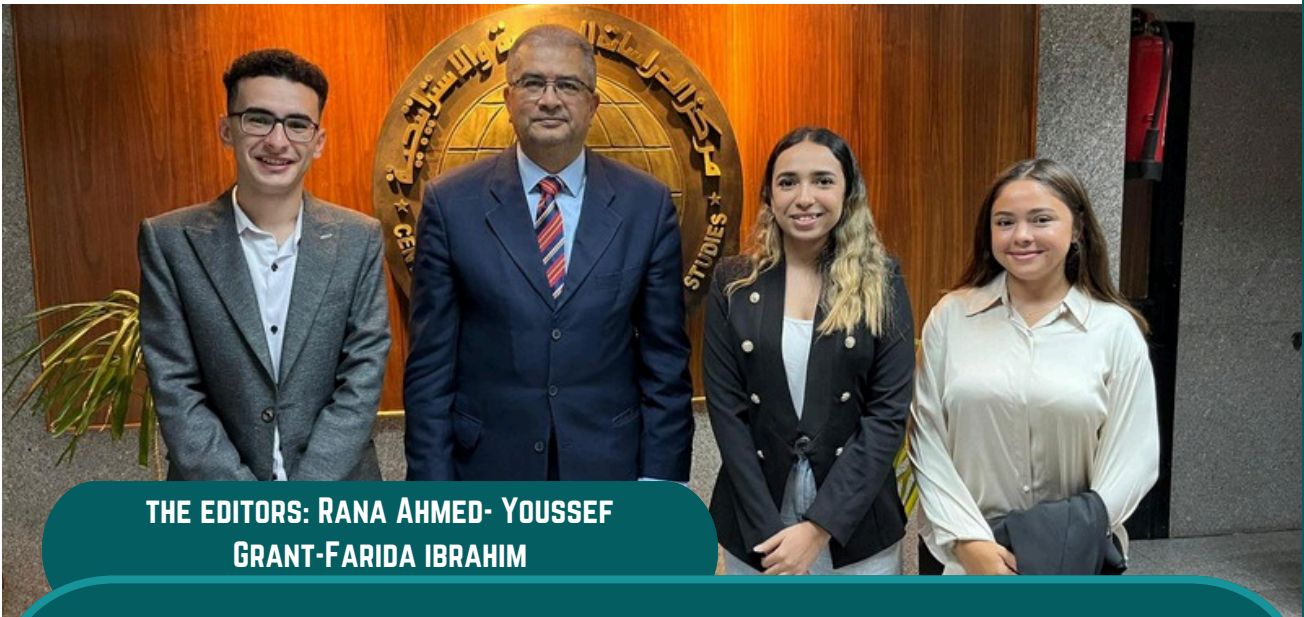
## FEPS IS NOW INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED

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## **MEETING WITH DR. AYMAN ABDELWAHAB DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AL-AHRAM CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC STUDIES**

In a meeting with Dr. Ayman Abdel Wahab, deputy director of the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, the editors of elite newspaper discussed many national, regional, and international issues, as well as getting acquainted with the biography and personal experience of the researcher by asking him questions, which came as follows:

**Q1** Is the reason why you chose Faculty of Economics and Political Science really a fatality Or was it a goal from a young age? How did attending college affect your personality?

Joining the Faculty of Economics and Political Science has been my goal and choice since childhood, I wanted to join the political science department because of my love of reading in all fields,

and learning about various local and global issues, as well as being influenced by distinguished models that have influenced the Egyptian society. I also loved cinema and films with political connotations and projections, and novels by Naguib Mahfouz, Youssef Idris, Youssef Sabai, and Yahya Haki; where they contributed to satisfying emotions, understanding and interpreting Egyptian reality with its complex social networks, and their novels contributed to provide a lot of space for imagination and thinking.

So I saw college as a great place to start. I ensured this immediately after attending the first lecture of Dr. Khairy Rizk, who has always tried to simplify the information and relied on easier methods in explaining and interpreting various issues and phenomena.

**Q2** In all the positions that you have held since working at the journal in 1988 such as the Israeli anthologies, the Arab strategic report,

editor-in-chief of the Egyptian Conditions magazine, and the Egyptian Studies Unit, what is the position closest to your heart and what is the reason behind this attachment?

Before moving on to talking about positions, I want to mention the period of me joining the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, which served as the second stop in my life, as it suited my personality. I also realized that joining it was a great opportunity to invest what I learned during my four years at the college; because of its great history and my admiration to the great imprints left by its early founders in the research field, I wanted to be among that scientific and research Constellation; I didn't think of any other alternatives. The strong collaborative bond between the faculty and the first-generation scholars at the center also served as a catalyst that facilitated integration into the center and created a sense of familiarity. This stage began with an internship that lasted for five years before the appointment, but my love for research work prompted me to continue learning and gaining experience, as it was a period full of knowledge sharing and brainstorming, it was a cumulative scientific building accompanied by the support and encouragement of senior professors.

As for the promotion at the center, I have worked in all units, whether Egyptian, Arab, international, law, or sociology. Although this phenomenon was not widespread among young people, I desired to get as much information as possible. I learned from Dr. Yassine how to build a distinctive personality for a researcher, whether at the scientific, psychological, or moral level, as well as not to engage in political work in order to try to maintain credibility, neutrality, and professionalism. During that period, I worked in an Israeli anthology and specialized in Arab 48, The Strategic file on estimating situations that present many issues, the Arab Studies Unit, the Arab strategic report, and then the editor-in-chief of Egyptian conditions, which taught me to follow the intellectual development between generations. There was that pairing between the administrative and scientific part, which taught me how to manage research centers and deal with researchers in a collaborative framework that maintains a balance between the cognitive and psychological side of the researcher, I have always been proud to supervise the training of students of Economics and political science.



**Q3 Congratulations on assuming the position of deputy director of the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, What did this position add to you, and what do you intend to add to it?**

For a researcher, positions are nothing but an opportunity through which he exchanges experiences with his colleagues. It is an administrative burden that has nothing to do with the love of the job, so it should be viewed as an opportunity to master the work within research centers and organize the collective mind, especially within a large institution like the journal, as well as developing it to the extent that it keeps pace with the developments, so consider it an intellectual or research work mainly containing responsibilities for organizing work and not vice versa, and always give weight to the research side.

**Q4 You have several important writings on civil society as an expert in civil society affairs, and it was also your doctoral subject, what is the motive behind your interest in this field?**



I liked to find research gaps that the previous researchers had not delved into, so I preferred to work on Africa, specifically the Egyptian foreign policy towards the Nile Basin countries in my master's thesis at the beginning

of the nineties, where the water issue was not a big pressing issue at that time. Turning to the doctoral thesis, the focus was on the process of democratic transformation, so I wanted to touch on civil society, indicating a course in that transformation in the Arab world specifically. The problem was that the concept or culture of democracy has not taken root except within very simple limits in the Arab world due to the spread of institutions dominated by traditional character or culture, but at the same time, I noticed the spread of civil societies, so I worked to clarify the ways and mechanisms through which these civil societies can be a supporting element for existing civil society organizations through the value system.

**Q5 You have several writings in African Studies, in light of a continent fueled by conflicts, how do you assess the situation in Sudan?**

As for Africa, I see that its biggest problem is the existence of a defect in the process of nation-building by trying to impose and build the concept of a modern state within traditional societies mainly based on race and ethnicity. This problem, of course, is not born today, but since colonialism divided the borders until now, in addition to the failure of development models and,



the failure of integration plans due to their impact on external factors and increased competition for natural resources by international forces, which would increase the intensity of conflicts and fueling crises such as the division of Sudan

**Q6** How do you see the situation in Egypt, is Egypt still a leader at the African, Arab, and regional levels?

For Egypt, it is a big country with prestige, capable of leadership. At one point, it had what its peers did not have, so it was the one that was leading, but now the rest of the countries had many gains and strengths. However, in my estimation, Egypt still owns more than any other country in the region, which is the Egyptian identity.

Therefore, in 'Ahwal Masreya', we strive to build a modern development model based on the Egyptian collective identity-not subsidiary - and retain its specificity, as we did in the number of Egypt between twenty and so on, in the belief that successful models around the world were able to carry out the development process in light of its adherence to its identities, such as China, India, Japan, and Indonesia.

**Q7**How can You explain the state of uncertainty in the analysis of the global political situation, and current events regionally and globally?



I see that the world is moving towards what can be called the global risk community, which is a product of human interventions and crude policies. For example, climate change was a product of the exploitation of resources by major industrialized countries, which in turn caused an imbalance in the balance of nature. As for epidemics such as Covid 19, in the end it is part of the global industry with great economic interests, where sometimes some epidemics are launched-whether intentionally or accidentally - to test them, which may lead to their spread. This is in addition to the rhetoric about the possibility of a third World War. Although all this reflects a state of future uncertainty, we should not succumb to these ideas to the point of exaggeration, and at the same time developing countries should prepare to keep up with such developments

**Q8 Do you consider the level of academic researchers increasing or decreasing over time?**

I see that we are in facing a new stage of research work due to the technological developments that have produced chat GPT and the increase in quality but a decrease in the degree of creativity, but I believe that this generation is smart enough to be distinguished, but it lacks some frameworks that regulate the process of its formation in order to be able to analyse reality by interacting with

**Q9 What are the important topics that are not widely discussed in the Arabic library, despite their importance**

I think that one of the issues that need further discussion are the problematic of Arabism, do we need to reconsider its definition as limited only to language, or do we need to build a new concept based on a higher degree of commonality based on commonality, in addition to more research towards the concept of the national state, but in the Twenty-First Century, and to delve into the study of Generation Alpha and Generation Z. At the end of my speech, I would like to thank you, Dr. Hanan Ali, Acting Dean, and Dr. Rami.



**FEPS Accredited Internationally by ASIC**



## **FEPS is now INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED**

The Faculty of Economics and Political Science extends its congratulations to all its members: academic faculty, alumni, current students and administrative staff for the faculty having received international institutional academic accreditation from the British “Accreditation Service for International Colleges”(ASIC). This achievement came as a result of a thorough visit in which experts from the ASIC agency conducted an examination and evaluation of all the Faculty’s practices and activities.

ASIC is a British accreditation agency for universities, institutes and international academic entities. It’s a world-recognized international academic accreditation agency that is also recognized by the UK government. It operates under the supervision of the British education and social services institution of the British Department of Education. It is a member of the British Quality

Foundation (BQF) and the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). It is also accredited by the US CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG). It is among the world’s most prominent accreditation agencies, having accredited hundreds of universities and faculties in more than 65 countries.

It is worth noting that this agency has accredited FEPS as a “Premier Institution”, which is this agency’s highest ranking. ASIC only awards this accreditation to faculties having achieved all conditions of accreditation, which are the following:

- 1-Governance, Management, and Staff Resources
- 2-Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- 3-Systems Management
- 4-Learning, Teaching, and Research Activity
- 5-Awards and Qualifications
- 6-Student Welfare
- 7-Premises and Health and Safety
- 8-Marketing and Recruitment of Students





The Faculty has received “commendable grades” in all of these areas, reflecting the level of excellence it has achieved.

Dr Hanan Mohamed Ali, Acting Dean of the Faculty, notes that ASIC has accredited FEPS as a Premier Institution, which is the agency’s highest ranking, awarded only to institutions having achieved accreditation conditions in all required areas.

This accreditation was only awarded after a thorough inspection by the accreditation

agency, which involved the participation of faculty alumni, academic faculty, volunteers, administrative staff and students. It is a testament to the close-knit community of our Faculty and its commitment to raising its status and presenting the best education to the upcoming generations. This is all part of FEPS’ participation in Cairo University’s sincere efforts to transform into a fourth and then fifth generation Smart University, and a part of the Faculty’s strategy to present only the very best in education, research and community development.

This accreditation will allow the Faculty to attain a higher ranking and form deeper local and international partnerships. It also testifies to its prestige and improves the local and international work opportunities of its students and alumni, as well as their position in the most prestigious local and international educational and research communities.

For this reason, the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, represented by Dr Hanan Mohamed Ali, Acting Dean, presents its deepest gratitude and thanks to everyone who contributed their efforts and ambitious ideas, which were then defined during a period of hard and impressive work by the international accreditation team, as well as the prestigious image showcased by the faculties’ members during the accreditation agency visit.

All thanks to the international accreditation team, all members of the academic faculty, alumni, students and administrative staff of our Faculty: every new achievement is built on your hard work, and every brighter future is based on your efforts.

May FEPS always remain the crown jewel of Cairo University and a home of Commitment, Excellence and Distinction



KENZY TAMER- FIRST LEVEL

## 2024 US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: “MOMALA” OR TRUMP THE “MARTYR”?

From Donald Trump’s assassination attempt, to Kamala Harris getting nominated to represent the Democratic party after Joe Biden’s “tremendous failure”. The United States 2024 presidential elections, has put the American Voters in a very difficult choice between the incarnation of freedoms and nationalistic motives to “make America great again.”

Kamala Harris was nominated by her party and endorsed by the President Joe Biden after he stepped down due to his health conditions and “really poor performance” in his debate against Trump. But the question here is: Will Kamala be able to win the elections and guarantee the majority to the Democratic party? Is she going to be able seduce American Voters? Well... her famous slogan says that “Yes SHE can!” It is important to say that she gave a high sense of optimism to her party, because polls show that 39% of voters think that she has a better shot to capture the White House than Biden. However, in that same survey released on the 27th of April the by Yahoo News/YouGov, 25% percent of the voters are unsure about whether Trump or Harris will claim the presidency.

It is indeed a tough choice between the two candidates, because both of them have their strength and weaknesses in relation to different dilemmas and issues that interest the American voters, but also according to their personalities presented to the public. For example, Trump’s program addresses in details the immigration crisis, while the Biden administration -and Kamala herself- have failed to manage. But also, voters seek Trump’s help to “make their wallets great again”, because of the rough economic situation in the US. On the other hand, Harris’ vision, passion in addition to her cultural and political background make her a closer candidate to the voters.

Although they both have an important aspect in common, which is the persona or the character that each candidate has built to win over votes in the different states, especially the “swing states” that don’t have electoral habits by always voting red or blue.



First of all, starting with Kamala Harris, a woman raised in an Indian-Jamaican household, Kamala's playing the game of identity politics: she's gaining votes based on her personality. According to the Daily Show, Harris is just what the US needs she's a "just normal" president: she's able to make a full sentence, she's not a convicted felon and she's not too old.

Being a woman is a standing point in Harris' campaign, she was the first Black and Asian Woman to become Vice President -and if she won- then she'll be first to become the president of the USA. Kamala, or as her step-children call her: "Momala" is "a caring auntie", a "patient step mom" and a woman devoted to her family and to her country ready to guide the country forward. Kamala's identity game is her main advantage against Trump, she's a woman of the people who acts rationally and understands their reality. Momala as a President will always defend the rights and liberties of the American people.



She's also working on checking every box. Meaning, that she's working on attracting people from every demographic community in order to win their votes, because Trump's advantage in those elections is winning the votes of mostly white, old and conservative Republicans. Therefore, Harris is trying to diffuse her program to young voters and minority groups.

In addition, winning young voters aged between 18-34 years old, and especially Gen Z is an essential task, because young people are the base of the party and their support is crucial. After, Biden's failure in many sectors such as maintaining the powerful image of the US, young voters have lost confidence in him, and according to polls a significant part of that demographic were not going to vote. However, the number of Voter Registrations spiked 48h after Kamala was nominated, and 83% of these new registrations are people between the ages of 18 and 34. This change of heart, is due to the appearance of Harris as "the knight in a shining armor" carrying Biden's and the Democratic party's policies while actually bringing change.

Her energy, her bubbly and friendly personality were the main reasons behind all that Gen Z support, that was showcased through her popularity on Tiktok. For weeks since July 21st, Harris HQ was outperforming, even if Trump's Tiktok account had a high engagement. Kamala played well the Tiktok game, the huge buzz around her campaign is important to her, young Americans have been making edits of her old speeches and remarks creating the Coconut tree and the Venn Diagram trends, and also creating videos with her loud laugh. Although these trends have dramatically increased her popularity, the Tiktoks are marketing Harris' persona and not her program, which makes them quite shallow sometimes...



On the other hand, Trump has also appeared with famous social media influencers and content creators such as Logan Paul for example. It's important to say that Trump doesn't need Gen Z support as much as Harris. Because since the start of the elections, some young voters opted for an "anything but Trump" strategy because they refuse to repeat his time in Office. Therefore, comparing him to Harris, she's winning Gen Z.



The 59-year old candidate became an important factor in favor of the Democrats. Consequently, the main argument used by the Republicans in their debates were always slamming Biden because of his age, Trump now has the age disadvantage.

According to Tiktok and the singer Charli XCX, Kamala is "brat", some people may think that there's has a negative connotation behind that expression. However according to the Gen Z vocab, brat means being yourself: your best chaotic self. It is a very important label highlighting the authenticity, and vibrance in Kamala's personality. However, in his speeches Trump uses her personality to show her inferiority and disqualify her, by mocking her laugh or showing how unserious she is. This gives Trump the opportunity to let his confident dominant, and sometimes egoistic personality shine, his charismatic personality galvanized on the American's need to have a powerful leader and insist on American dominance supremacy around the world.



Let's get back to the fact that she's a woman, because it is a point of strength in her campaign this election will be the time for women to shine: educated women, rich women, suburban women, young women... One of the strongest points in Harris' campaign is her advocating for abortion rights, as she said "how dare They?" Kamala stands firmly against abortion laws imposed by Republicans in some states. Which is a huge disadvantage for Trump. On the other hand, it is important to mention how Trump has a strong popularity between rich white women since his last electoral race against Hillary Clinton. However, being convicted of sexual assault and his overall sexist and misogynistic claims are not a good image for him.

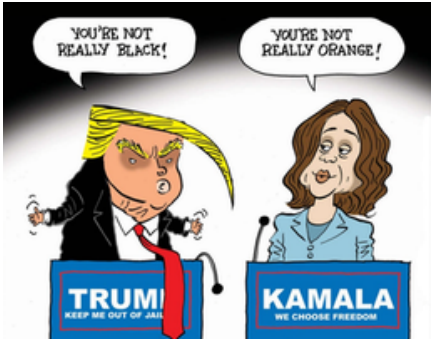


Finally, black and South Asian-American voters have also organized events and fundraisers supporting Harris' campaign. Some people say that she's the "heiress" to the Obamas' political path, because she shares their passion for creating a unified multicultural America. An important part of the members in the LGBTQ community also strongly support her campaign because she values their rights. Concerning minorities, Trump has attracted some black voters when Biden was running.

However after Kamala ran for the elections the votes clearly shifted. A disrespectful and by far racist claim was made by Trump questioning her Afro-American and South Asian-American heritage. “I don’t know, is she Indian or Black?” incarnates “Trump’s America” that doesn’t and won’t tolerate America’s cultural differences.



And Trump is indeed a “Big man” because he has a strong ability to command and to represent the populations political aspirations, his main nationalist slogan seeking to “make America great again” attracts voters and represent the need and strong desires of his community.



Both candidates’ positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are aspects of interest to the public especially for young people and Arab-American communities. Trump is a firm supporter of Israel since a very long time. However, Harris’ situation is somewhat interesting because she acknowledged and shed light on the atrocities happening in Gaza, which has attracted an important number of Arab voters. However, it’s always known that she’s a firm supporter of Israel. So, is it just pandering to be able to win Arab and Gen Z voters, or would she actually make a difference?

It’s important to highlight that this unexpected event has permitted Trump to appear as mythological hero or a biblical martyr figure. Indeed, this image is clearly sent, after he posed right next to the American flag with his fist in the air shouting “fight, fight, fight”. In addition to his bloody face and ear, Trump is literally rising and surviving in order to protect his own country and people. Another symbolic fight that Trump is having to go through is his fight against the lawsuit: the criminal is becoming the people’s hero; the people identify to his fighting. That’s Trump’s iconic way of presenting himself as the man of the people.



Second of all, Trump’s assassination attempt actually did him more good than bad. After the assassination attempt Trump’s “Big Man” persona has shined. The “Big Man” persona mainly defines a strong charismatic man, eloquently using his soft power.



A main demographic from Trump's supporters are Christian groups and communities, therefore the use of religious expressions and references in his speeches is key. Some of his Christian supporters describe that "God sent angels to save the American Lion who roared in front of the devil with the riffle and his political opponents during the assassination attempt". This strong association to religious symbolism, creates the strong persona qualifying Trump as the savior of the American people and endorses the voters' support.



Another way that Trump is using to portray himself is the very masculine, very strong, very presiding figure, that is going to give the American people a real affirming leader, who is going to restore the lost masculinity. Of course, this has a very misogynistic and patriarchal point of view that's completely the opposite of Harris' beliefs. The assassination attempt really help the "Strong man" Trump to go this far into structuring his persona.



Trump's greatest strength in front of Harris, is his strong program by taking advantage of the economic situation. An issue for Harris is that she is very much tied to the Biden administration, so Trump will use the economic "weapon" to formulate his arguments. Another very important issue in the United States is the immigration problems, showcasing Harris' failure to solve or even limit immigration numbers, her speech "do not come" was definitely not enough to stop the flow through the borders.

Trump's advantage on these matters could be probably be a turning part for the elections, but in reality, no one knows! the next debates -or maybe plot twists- will show who is the stronger candidate. Kamala's taking advantage once again of her political background as a prosecutor debating with the fighting convicted felon.

In conclusion, both candidates have built these personas in order to attract votes and touch different demographic communities. However, the main question here is: are the results going to favor the identity of the candidate over his program?





**ABDELRAHMAN SAKR**  
THIRD LEVEL-ECONOMICS

## HOT MONEY, FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT, EXPORTS , AND EGYPT'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

“We have learned from our mistake and won't rely on hot money again”, said Dr. Mohamed Maait, in July 2022, during the hustle of the outflow of hot money from Egypt and currency devaluation. Dr. Maait was mainly doing his government's main policy, paying lip service. Two years later and still Egypt depends, though less excessively, on hot money. Although Dr. Maait is no longer in charge, his policy of dependence on hot money and excessive external borrowing still throws its weight over the country as he left behind him a huge pile of debt and witnessed the return of hot money in March 2024.

The latest net outflow of hot money in the beginning of August was caused mainly by two factors. First, the fear of recession in the US, which drove investors to stock their investments in safe assets, particularly US Treasury bonds. Second, uncertainty regarding the Egyptian economy fueled.

The IMF stressed that Egypt must adhere to the flexible exchange rate policy in the third review in late July 2024, which signaled that the EGP may fall against the USD, against what investors expected a few months ago. Another reason of uncertainty is geopolitical risk. The fear of a regional war is kicking investors out of the country as they fear Egypt will not be able to meet its obligations. The war in Gaza has already harmed Egypt by dampening its current account deficit, due to the slump of Suez Canal revenues, which decreased by 23.4% on yearly basis.

Although the amount of the outflow was small, around 8% of total available foreign currency, and that the EGP fell against the USD by only 2%, the event highlights the government's failure since 2016 to adopt structural reforms to increase foreign direct investment and decrease the current account deficit,

and its over dependence on hot money to provide foreign currency for external debt payments. Given its huge needs in the short term, the government still relies on hot money, which gets in and out in a glimpse, even in a world of high risk and uncertainty. (check the chart)

The two agreements with IMF in 2016 and 2022 mentioned increasing FDI and decreasing the current account deficit, which barely moved since 2016, excluding the first quarter in 2024 due to Ras-Al Hekma deal effect.

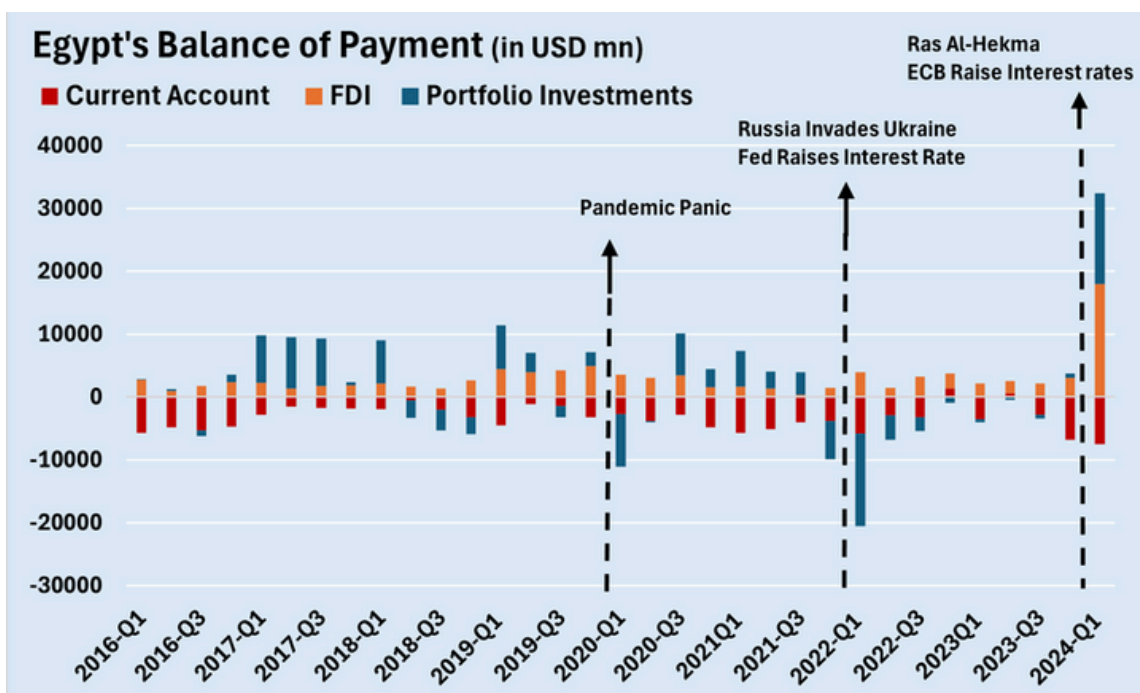
One of the main reasons that FDI and the current account (through its effect on exports) are stalling is the unfair competition with military enterprises, which discourages both domestic and foreign investments. In 2022, the IMF mentioned clearly decreasing the role of military in the economy as part of the agreement, yet not a single military enterprise has been sold, nor has the military control over the economy weakened.

The reason why no actual measures are taken against the increasing

military footprint in the economy is a matter of political economy.

The idea of selling military started to be discussed within the government in 2016 and made public in 2018. The President hinted to facing resistance from the military, saying that “listing in the stock exchange has many requirements that I don’t want to talk about.” The resignation of Ayman Soliman, the first chief executive officer of the Sovereign Fund of Egypt, which was given the supervision over the sale of military-owned companies active in civilian markets in 2020, signals that the military has won the battle.

Given the circumstances, Egypt could start working on other reasons that cripples FDI and the current account. The huge fluctuations in exchange rate and the huge gap between the official and unofficial rates discouraged investment and decreased remittances. A more predictable and unified exchange rate would help investors evaluate their investments and predict their profits and





encourage remittances back. The availability of foreign currency is important as well, if the foreign investor won't be able to withdraw his profit and the domestic unable to import his intermediate goods, then why would they invest in the first place. Also, one of the main reasons is bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is recognized as a major obstacle for investments. Establishing a new business in Egypt can be exceptionally challenging due to the complex bureaucratic processes, licenses, and paperwork involved. Private investors are required to submit

a feasibility study to the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones, where 47 different ministries and government agencies review the application. A single rejection from any of these agencies can prevent the establishment of a private company. Last, the government should reach a compromise with the military that prevents the military from entering new sectors and withdraws its control over land licenses. In exchange, the government would not go near military assets. The solution is not ideal, but better than a deadlock.

**Sectors of Economic Activity Involving Military Agencies**

<b>MOD, NSPO, EAF, MOMP, AOI</b>				
<b>Administrative and Regulatory</b>	<b>Shares and Acquisitions</b>	<b>Public Sector</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Production of Civilian Goods</b>
<p><b>FORMAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and licensing use of state land</li> <li>• Telecommunications</li> <li>• Mineral extraction</li> <li>• Residency permits in military and select strategic zones</li> </ul> <p><b>INFORMAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New cities</li> <li>• Water and sanitation</li> <li>• Official statistics</li> <li>• Religious endowments</li> <li>• Audit</li> <li>• Development funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in civilian companies (minority shares)</li> <li>• Transfer of publicly owned companies to military ownership</li> <li>• Acquisition of civilian companies or majority shares</li> <li>• Establishment of joint ventures with Egyptian and foreign companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• New cities</li> <li>• Roads, bridges, and tunnels</li> <li>• Water and sanitation</li> <li>• Agricultural irrigation and storage</li> <li>• Land reclamation</li> <li>• Industrial zones</li> <li>• Ports (sea, air, and dry)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat</li> <li>• Poultry</li> <li>• Medical equipment and pharmaceuticals</li> <li>• Consumer commodities (non-perishables, retail)</li> <li>• Basic and processed food commodities</li> <li>• General procurement for government agencies and services ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household appliances</li> <li>• Electrical appliances and electronics</li> <li>• Industrial and agricultural machinery, components, and tools</li> <li>• Construction materials and building supplies</li> <li>• Industrial chemicals</li> <li>• Fertilizer</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Minerals</li> <li>• Marble and granite</li> <li>• Steel</li> <li>• Cement</li> <li>• Transport vehicles and equipment</li> </ul>

Source: Yazid Sayigh, Owners of the Republic



HANA S.ELBADRY-SECOND LEVEL-  
ECONOMICS

## BEHIND BARS - ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRISONS

### Picture this:

On the outskirts of town, just behind the tree line stood a dark dingy building. The building was dirty - its doors covered in moss and mud, and it reeked of iron as your car passed past it. Still, its sight fills you with comfort - you are grateful for a government that is powerful enough to protect you from the violent transgressors hiding behind those molding walls.

You look at your child whispering that if they continue being naughty then they'll surely be punished and end up in prison.



### What is punishment, really?

It is our only weapon with which we maintain a sense of authority, utilizing it to reform others' behavior and to abandon it, is to leave us empty handed. For many of us, prisons are just one way to give criminals their "just deserts" - those who commit crime deserve to be punished.

In contemporary civilization, prisons serve the purpose of both criminal punishment and reform and have four main justifications: incapacitation, retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation. It then follows that if a carceral system were to check off all 4 aims of imprisonment, then it can be concluded that prison is an acceptable form of punishment in response to an offense.

### Protecting Society

First, incapacitation, thought to be the state's responsibility, is whereby the public is protected because prisoners are incarcerated and thus unable to commit crime, leading to a modest decrease in crime rates outside prison walls. Many studies and research indicate that this protection is associated with the duration of the sentence. However, once the specified period is over and the released individual re-enters society, they become an outcast in a community that does not believe in prison as a means of reform and rehabilitation. The struggle continues for an individual desperately trying to integrate into a society terrified by the mere idea of dealing with a criminal (from their perspective, even if he has served his sentence and proven his good conduct). Thus, from his sense of injustice and exclusion (this time outside the prison walls), a fierce desire for revenge emerges against those who took away his freedom twice: once for his crime and once without cause.

#### **“An eye for an eye”**

Secondly, another underlying theoretical justification is retribution - the duty of the criminal justice system is to pay back the criminals for their offenses - to cause them misery commensurate to the graveness of the crime committed in an attempt of creating a sort of balance. Behind bars and away from civilized society, is a whole other world called “prison society”.



Here in prison society, prisoners are deprived from normal social interactions, forcing them to adopt a survival instinct where they develop an “inmate code” - their only defense in an environment characterized by overcrowding, poor sanitation, self-harm, debilitating mental health concerns etc. Based on retribution, prisons are made to be miserable on purpose and the more brutal the system is inside those formidable buildings, the better - after all, are criminals not getting their “just deserts”?

It then follows that the thought of prisons, daunting punishments that take away your freedom, your dignity, any potential future opportunities and deprive you of your identity, is enough for some people to not even consider committing a criminal act. Those who actually end up serving behind bars will be so scarred from the experience that it should deter them from committing further offenses.

Unfortunately, we know this is not the case - how many people do you know go to prison and then return to commit further offenses? I might even say that they become immune to prison life - fully integrating themselves into prison society that they find they cannot live anywhere but there.

### Life After Prison

International law signifies that the main goal of imprisonment is rehabilitation; governments that strip individuals of their freedom simultaneously owe them a greater commitment and duty of care. The premise of the criminal justice system is thus "life after prison," wherein ex-offenders who successfully complete intervention programs like education, job training, therapy, and cognitive-behavioral therapy can recover their status as law-abiding citizens. The goal is to maximize recidivism reduction while also preventing them from developing antisocial personalities and criminal thinking.

Second, data reveal that within the first six weeks of release, job and housing possibilities are at an all-time low, prompting questions about whether jails are effective rehabilitation facilities or if they are just institutions in which people's lives are placed on hold.



**Don't expect prisons to reduce crime !**

*Do the justifications of prison contradict each other?*

When you house a bunch of really violent people together where they get acquainted with each other and can train one another in further criminal activity, where they're exposed to inhumane treatment and abuse from other prisoners and staff and then let go of them only to leave them to fend off for themselves with no money, no employment prospects and no new sense of morality, do you truly expect them to be able to function in normal society again!

The only way these criminals could survive in prison is to comply with the rules of prison society and the longer they are there, the more they forget how to function as civilized human beings. Thus, the primary justification for the existence of prisons is incapacitation (making society safer by removing dangerous offenders) and retribution (punishing transgressors). Any other explanation that prisons deter potential offenders from committing crimes and that those who do serve a sentence leave the institution as better people is, unfortunately, not supported by reality.

**What now?**

According to the draft law, Article 306(A) of the penal code will be amended to increase penalties for sexual assault. While no one can deny the importance of facing this crime with serious laws, one cannot help but think how effective this punishment will be in the fight against sexual harassment.

Increasing the severity of punishment by imposing longer prison sentences often provides a false sense of security. While the idea of harsher penalties might seem like an effective deterrent, it can be counterproductive. Lengthy prison terms may only motivate criminals to evade capture more desperately, thus undermining their intended deterrent effect. Research and real-world data suggest that the certainty of being caught plays a far more significant role in deterring criminal behavior than the severity of the punishment. If individuals believe they will inevitably be apprehended for their crimes, the likelihood of committing those crimes diminishes. This concept is rooted in deterrence theory, which posits that the fear of certain and swift punishment is a more powerful disincentive than the fear of severe punishment that is less likely to be imposed.

Surely, if there was a severe punishment (the increase in penalties for sexual assault) but the offender relied on not getting caught (whether this is due to the victim not reporting based on fear or due to issues in the practical application

of said law), then does this lengthened prison sentence deter him from committing the crime?

Even if he were to commit it and serve his sentence and then return to society again, would these 2 or even 4 years of incarceration remodel him into a changed human or will his association with other inmates, possibly sharing his views, only strengthen his violent nature?

Obviously, this analysis is applicable to all sorts of crime. The solution does not lie in either increasing prison sentences or abolishing prisons - instead we must use them selectively and with a clear understanding of their purpose and what they can realistically achieve. Concurrently, the criminal justice system must assess and exhaust all other options when constructing their crime control and reduction strategy before seeking imprisonment as an answer.

Now when you pass those dark dingy buildings, remember that the government's protection of you by incarcerating those violent transgressors will only last a while and that we must rise together as one nation to think of more sustainable solutions that take into consideration the safety, dignity, and future of all those involved.