



Toward a New Paradigm of World Governance

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Abstract

The article presents a critical analysis of the existing order of globalism, which imposes Western values and constructs on the human universe. This in turn leads to adverse results. It produces tensions, wars, conflicts and racial and cultural divides. Alternatively, this analysis puts together ideas from the Ancient Egyptian vision of world order and universal stability with contemporary experimental modes of governance, as represented by Egypt's post-revolution (2011-2013) model. The innovative kind of governance that the model embodies was born out of Egypt's historical identity, the national character of Egyptians, and the unique societal fabric of integrated diversity that rejects extremism and western-imposed models. This article also invokes some ideas on conceptualizations of governance from China, to propose an out-of-the-ordinary and a new paradigmatic path.

This article proposes a new paradigm of and for governance, nationally and globally. It is largely informed by analysis of the recent experiment in Egypt following the two-phase Revolution (2011-2013), in which a nonviolent popular movement by the people removed two Presidents, former President Mubarak and former President Morsi, within a period of two years. Removal of these Presidents, who were disapproved of by the majority of the population, was the central demand of the people. Millions remained in the streets, particularly in the central Tahrir Square in Cairo, until their demand was met.

In addition to ideas derived from Egypt's nascent experiment in governance, other ideas from various sources were integrated to provide a basis for formulating a new model of governance that combines the global, the national and the local. The paradigm integrates analytical criteria in a new way.

These and other ideas were recently presented at the roundtable held at the World Bank Headquarters, Washington, D.C., on 5-6, November, 2018.*

This Roundtable[†] was sponsored by the World Academy of Art & Science and the World University Consortium with the goal of exploring "the governance challenges and

* See <http://worldacademy.org/conferences/governance-law-de-nov-2018> The event was conducted in collaboration with The Millennium Project <http://www.millennium-project.org>, "which connects futurists around the world to improve global foresight." It was founded in 1996 after a three-year feasibility study with the United Nations University, Smithsonian Institution, Futures Group International, and the American Council for the UNU. It is now an independent non-profit global participatory futures research think tank of futurists, scholars, business planners, and policy makers who work for international organizations, governments, corporations, NGOs, and universities. The Millennium Project manages a coherent and cumulative process that has been collecting and assessing judgments from over 3,500 people since the beginning of the project.

† The Roundtable stated that "[t]he rapid evolution of society continues to outpace the development of institutions to guide, monitor and manage the increasing range and magnitude of the opportunities and challenges that arise. The growing gap between the needs of humanity and its prevailing system of institutions severely retards our collective progress and threatens to undermine the developmental gains of the past half century and achievement of the ambitious goals set for in the SDGs."

opportunities generated by the complex nexus of forces impacting on human aspirations for freedom and development, peace and security, employment and equality, technological advancement, access to education and information, immigration and multi-culturalism, ecological stability and security in rapidly globalizing society today.” *Special emphasis was on the effective rule of law, governance and public participation for achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.*

“[The ancient vision] embraced a worldview that is an integrated whole, bringing specific elements together to weave a governing paradigm, one that is kinder to people and which invokes a balance, a wholesome worldview that inspires the population to live and work towards a promising future.”

Aspects of the proposed new paradigm developed in this article grew out of two specific presentations made at the Roundtable. Both sessions placed emphasis on the component of ‘people’ and participatory development and governance. This is precisely the element focused on for the proposed new paradigm.

1. Stability Versus Chaos

The notion of stability has been used and abused by different leaders. In the case of former President Mubarak who ‘reigned’ in Egypt for more than three decades, he declared himself President for Life and was preparing his son to become ‘heir’ in a Republic that overthrew its monarchy in a major Revolution in 1952. He was popularly ousted by the people in 2011. During his rule, Mubarak tried to give a benign face to ‘stability’, which in reality came down to brutal security clampdowns and excessive police force mounted against civilians with the goal of controlling the population. He saw this as producing stability—a form of stability that resorts to population control and exploitation of a nation’s resources for its own benefit; this is not the stability that people seek.

2. Chaos

In a recent publication (El Guindi, 2018), I described the Egyptian popular revolt in these terms: “people were fed-up of the 30-year rule by President Mubarak who installed himself as President for Life with his corrupt son as unelected ‘heir’, a reign of unprecedented corruption, poverty, and abuse of Egyptian resources. A close circle of Mubarak was getting very rich, the people were becoming poorer and poorer, institutions were gradually dismantled, rule of law was falling apart, there was open brutality by the police force (endorsed at the top), and so on.” (El Guindi, 1982; 1986; 1993).

* See my Op-Ed published in *The Los Angeles Times* El Guindi, F. 1993 “Mubarak Should Call an Election and Step Aside” which foresaw events of January 25, 2011

Keeping the population poor and controlled was former President Mubarak's vision of stability. It was clear to observers that Egyptians during that period had lost all freedoms and forms of self-expression. They were visibly depressed. Productivity was at its lowest. Corruption at all levels followed the model of the governing elite who openly exploited Egyptian resources. It ran deep and cut through all layers of society. Unskilled laborers would make a statement like: "I do business, import-export", while in fact being engaged in illegal economic transactions, bribery, drug trafficking, body organ trafficking, sex slavery, child abuse, etc. Actions seemed justified in light of the bigger violations by the government and the ruling elite. There were two kinds of theft: big theft and small theft. Working for a living became devalued. People did not get the money they wanted. Lower wage rates did not give them 'prestige'. Law and order were exploited against the people rather than being deployed for the general good of disciplined manners and transactions. If one can measure a nation's morale by its people's state of mind, this was a period in which Egyptians had very low self-esteem. It is different today. There is an emergent optimism and sense of renewal visible all over Egypt both in people's behavior and in the pace of change and development throughout the country.

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But this approach to 'stability', adopted by Mubarak, has been shown to be the wrong path to building nations and instilling confidence and self-esteem in people. The people thus reacted strongly. An alternative Egyptian way toward 'Stability' had emerged millennia ago during the time of state-building in ancient Egypt, and is re-emerging in contemporary form today. First, let us analyze the ancient vision. It embraced a worldview that is an integrated whole, bringing specific elements together to weave a governing paradigm, one that is kinder to people and which invokes a balance, a wholesome worldview that inspires the population to live and work towards a promising future.

3. Balance and Stability

By ancient Egyptian standards, today's world would be considered to be in a state 'ruled' by *Isfet*, that is, a state of chaos. There is discontent among populations in much of Europe and the United States. Questions are raised whether 'democracy' works for managing the domestic political landscape. Others question the legitimacy of unilateral actions by dominant countries destabilizing other countries (e.g. the Balkans, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen). Unilateral measures sanctioning nations subjectively considered to be "an enemy", thereby enforcing economic limitations that strangle livelihoods, are no more tolerated. Regime change, rebuilding and destabilizing nations along ethnic or sectarian fault lines are arrogant and should not be a feature of global cooperation. Challenging the authority of the global body of the United Nations and its subsidiaries to maintain order and mediate conflicts,

and the World Court to maintain justice has destabilized the World Order. Globalization has turned corporate capitalism into a savage beast devouring people's lives rather than serving populations and allowing them to achieve quality in their lives. Over and over again, corporate projects use people's fresh water for mercenary reasons (see the brave women of Bosnia), access to healthcare, access to education, safe food (El Guindi, 2014), etc. Bosnian women have been trying to save their fresh water in the face of corporate-funded, corporate-run dams which divert environmentally safe fresh water streams that are the basis of their livelihood away from local populations.

Eurocentric, often racist attitudes toward emergent nations run deep. There is an arrogance in judging other people's cultural traditions (El Guindi, 2006) and their religions (El Guindi, 1998; El Guindi, 2003; El Guindi, 2008) and other people's needs and territory (El Guindi, 2005), as inferior to those of Europe. There is also the ideological antagonism toward visions coming out of China. There is an urgent need to open our thoughts and hearts, without any kind of preconceived bias, to ideas and models that would work for the general well-being of our social world and our physical planet.

The recent and continuing events in Paris in November-December 2018, the *Gilets jaunes*, are clearly about economic discontent in a country that favored the rich with impunity, relieving them from taxes, while unequally and excessively taxing working people. The recent announcement in France of instituting a higher fuel tax was the trigger. Discontent already existed. The strong response by the people, and the ensuing violence in the streets of Paris, pressurized Le Président to backtrack and cancel the proposed fuel tax. It was too little, too late. The movement had started and could not be reduced to fuel tax.

Some observers used the analogy of a Band-Aid approach to reform to describe the attempt by Le Président Macron to quell the angry tide. The French President has been openly promoting 'globalism'. According to a news story by the Associated Press, "[L]ess than a month ago, French President Emmanuel Macron staked his claim as the flag-bearer for globalism. In a speech to 60 world leaders at the Arc de Triomphe, he eulogized the United Nations and declared nationalism the "betrayal" of patriotism. Recently, tear gas and cobblestones flew in the same part of Paris as protesters trashed the iconic monument and demanded that Macron's embattled government withdraw a proposed fuel-tax increase. For the first time in his presidency, he backed down."* Protests by the French people demanding social justice forced the President to propose some economic reforms: a government-funded 100-euro increase in the minimum wage starting at the beginning of the new year; the abolition of taxes on overtime pay in 2019; asking profit-making companies to give workers tax-free year-end bonuses; slashing a tax hike on small pensions, acknowledging it was "unjust."

I contend that globalism is insensitive to people and their needs. It cannot be adopted as a model of world governance. It is 'globalism' versus social justice. Associating globalism with liberal democracy is faulty to the core. But fixing the situation cannot be done properly by adding or removing elements while leaving the 'model' intact. It calls for a new paradigm.

* Sylvie Corbet and Angela Charlton, "Macron vows tax relief, urges calm in bid to quell protests" *Associated Press* December 10, 2018 <https://apnews.com/e3788b2dc7b14229be0eaadc7cc8b450>

The Ancient Egyptian worldview consists of a vision that integrates morality-justice-truth (the feather), with governance (the scepter), with nature-culture-gender-cosmology-animal life (ankh = life), in order to attain balance in the human order. It is with such a balance of forces that stability is achieved.

4. Today's Egypt

I summarize by using a graph, see figure 1, the model of governance followed in Egypt today, after the two-phase-Revolution (2009-2013), in an experiment that is now six years old. It integrates the global, the national and the local. It aims to place the human component at the center. It takes into consideration Egypt's historical, cultural and social context. The current new model developed by the present government can be referred to as a Globalized Nation-State model engaging in bilateral partnerships that is represented in Figure 1 as a radial graph linking the nation to the global world, and including local communities and the human factor through initiatives that emerge out of the needs of the people. In this model, the nation-state recognizes the global spheres (economic development and social media) and existing global institutions (such as the United Nations and the International Court. It seeks to empower, not weaken, global institutions which function as an oversight: mediation, peace, justice, protection of people and their heritage. Bilateral partnerships are marked by mutual interest and characterized by mutual respect.

Figure 1: A Graphical Analysis of Egypt's Current Experimental Model of Governance, Combining the Global, the Local, and the National with Human Factor as Central to Local Governance



5. What Would a New Paradigm in Global Governance Look Like?

It is instructive to consider the Chinese vision to Global Governance. Chinese President Xi Jinping recently reaffirmed China's "community of common destiny" as central to the future of the international order. This is based on the new book he published in October 2018 on the theme "community of common destiny for mankind" (Tobin, December 2018). Its *official* English translation is "community of shared future for mankind."

Observers might see this as indicative of Beijing's strategic intentions and China's approach to foreign policy issues as diverse as trade, climate change, cyber operations, and security cooperation.

Tobin clarifies: "The phrase expresses in a nutshell Beijing's long-term vision for transforming the international environment to make it compatible with China's governance model and emergence as a global leader." Chinese officials make it clear that the concept has become central to Beijing's foreign policy framework and overall national strategy.

Tobin goes on to argue that according to China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi (August 2018), "[B]uilding a community of common destiny for mankind is the overall goal of China's foreign affairs work in the new era. The pathway for building the community, he noted, is the establishment of a "new type of international relations" that supports, rather than threatens, China's national rejuvenation and promotes the building of a community of common destiny." Xi did not coin the phrase (which was already used by his predecessor Hu Jintao), nor did he formulate its core tenets, but he succeeded in making it a hallmark of his diplomacy, which was recognized by Chinese state media that credited Xi with introducing it as a *global* concept in 2013 in Moscow, during his first international trip as President.

The aspirations expressed in this vision were voiced by Chinese leaders since the early days of the People's Republic. In 1954, Premier Zhou Enlai proposed in meetings with India the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence": mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and cooperation, and peaceful coexistence. President Jiang Zemin's "new security concept" in the late 1990s echoed the Five Principles and rejected the "old security concept based on military alliances and build-up of armaments."

In a similar vein, President Hu proposed building a "harmonious world" in his 2005 speech to the United Nations. Hu affirmed his predecessors' concepts and called for reforms to give developing countries a greater voice in global governance. Each of these proposals reflects long-standing Chinese objections to features of the current international order, including US-led security alliances, military superpower, and democratic norms.

China's Xi, however, has gone beyond his predecessors to promote his vision of transforming global governance. For Xi, China's growing comprehensive national power means that Beijing has greater ability—and faces a greater urgency—to achieve its long-held aspirations. In June 2018, (at a Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference), Xi called for China to "take an active part in leading the reform of the global governance system." Previously, he and his predecessors had more modestly called for China to "actively participate" in global

governance reforms. Xi linked his exhortation to his vision of building a community of common destiny.

Taking into consideration the difference in scale, Egypt is also experimenting with a non-ideological vision that builds on its millennia-old worldview, adapted to modern times and its geopolitical position in the global world. Egyptian President Sisi summarized Egypt’s vision at the United Nations in 2018. It prioritizes security over terrorism which is in fact a diminishing but still existing threat to Egypt’s very existence and its people’s security and safety. Figure 2 is a graphical representation of Egypt’s contemporary experimental model of governance.

Figure 2: A Graphical Representation of Egypt’s Contemporary Experimental Model of Governance



But the security achieved by building a strong army and navy is not the whole story. Egypt states among its principles the integration between national strength, building on a very strong Egyptian identity among its population, sustainable development, focusing on the human element, global market and investment, thus linking in its model the national, global and the local. It remains active in the global world and market through what I describe to be ‘radial, bilateral partnerships’ rather than military coalitions. Its vision is more modest than China’s, although the element of harmony must be considered seriously. Egypt states that it seeks to protect its national sovereignty without ambitions of violating the sovereignty of others. Its defense is there to protect it from terrorism and its threat against the security and stability of its population, thus enabling its people to move onto a pathway of sustainable development. It is contributing to the reform of the global governance system without seeking

popularity. It promotes the global tools of peace and conflict mediation, such as international court and the United Nations, by strengthening them and respecting their role and resolutions.

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China might have more ambitious goals, but its success or failure in achieving its vision remains to be seen. Any new paradigm must include equal accessibility of the following human rights to all people: right to adequate health service, right to education, right to safety and security, right to employment, right to nutritious food, right to participate in governance and services, right to secure cultural heritage. These rights must be considered inalienable and must respect cultural uniqueness and integrity. These proposed human rights should be fundamental to a reconsideration of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights.

But regardless of the ultimate outcome of Egypt’s vision, a new paradigm that includes the concerns and identities of the emerging nations of the non-western world is now on the table for the world to consider. We do not need to ‘patch up’ a globalist model of governance, nor accept the unchallenged dominant trope of liberal democracy versus dictatorship, but we need to rethink with fresh ideas as to how we can bring about a new paradigm in governance.

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