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**ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN EGYPT
AND THE WORLD**

Edited By

NICHOLAS S. HOPKINS

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS IN EGYPT*

SALWA SHARAWI GOMAA

The environment has become an increasingly important policy issue through the world. Robert Nisbet's prediction that the history of the twentieth century will possibly be the history of environmentalism seems well on the way to being fulfilled.¹

In Egypt, environmental concern has only recently developed into an "issue area" involving legislatures and political activities, both inside and outside the government.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and explain the nature, development, and, finally, possible implications, of environmental concern as a political issue in Egypt. Specifically, questions to be addressed are the following: Who are the actors involved; how effective are they; and what might the development of environmental concern imply for Egypt's political system?

Most studies of environmental consciousness in the industrialized world tend to explain the rising of environmental concern by relying on one or both of the following explanations:

First, there is the contention that concern for the environment is a consequence of broad changes in mass belief systems. These, it is held, led to a shift from an overwhelming emphasis on material values and physical security to greater concern with the quality of life. This interest in "post-materialist"² values made people throughout the Western World more concerned with environmental issues.³

A second, but not mutually exclusive, view argues that exposure to environmental hazards produced high environmental concern. According to this outlook, the industrialized world became concerned with the environment

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¹ R. Nisbet, *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982) p.101 mentioned in: Synton Coldwell "A Constitutional Law for the Environment, 20 years with NEPA Indicates the Need", *Environment*, vol. 31, No. 10, Dec. 1989, p. 7.

² For more details about the "post-materialism" argument see, Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), ch.2. also, R. Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

³ James McEvoy, "The American Concern with Environment" in W.R. Burch, et al., eds., *Social Behavior, Natural Resources, and the Environment* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) p. 214-36; also: Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in The United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

because growing environmental risks were perceived by the public-at-large and this led to popular demands for corrective and preventive actions.⁴

Such explanations are not applicable to Egypt's case. Egypt is a poor country that is still struggling to move away from the status of a "Lesser Developed Country." It can hardly be argued that Egyptians have satisfied their basic needs and that their concern with the environment reflects a change in their value system i.e. a desire to satisfy post-material demands. On the other hand, the second explanation of Western environmental consciousness assumes a high level of awareness of environmental hazards and their impact on human life. This awareness is not yet widely spread among Egyptians. On the contrary, in today's Egypt those who are the least likely to be exposed to environmental hazard are the most concerned with the environment. This seems attributable to factors related to socio-economic status, which in turn have a direct bearing on education and levels of interest in public affairs.

The growth of environmental concern in Egypt appears to be an interplay of three factors. One is external pressure from foreign donors on the Egyptian government to meet certain environmental standards and willingness of these donors to support financially these environmentally sounder projects.

A second factor is the Egyptian government's desire to pursue the goal of sustainable development. The Egyptian government has realized that sustainable development is vitally necessary to deal with the imbalance between the country's overpopulation and its limited resource. In short, policymakers seem to recognize that development and environmental protection are mutually dependent.

Finally, Egypt's government desires to be a role model for developing countries and to maintain a position of leadership in the Arab World by following the international community in its environmental concern.

Several indicators lend support to this explanation. For example, qualitative content analysis of formal official rhetoric on the environment reveals the following themes:

(1) Egypt, as a civilized country, cannot but follow the civilized world in its quest for protecting the environment. This theme was repeated in government documents, Shura Council reports, and the "Development and Environment" magazine. Even *Al-Ahram* newspaper in covering the celebration of completing a sewage system project, financed by the U.K., appeared with the headline, "The Sewage System Project is an Asset to Egypt's Civilized Image".⁵

(2) Environmental concern was first initiated by the pharaohs. Messages on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples establish that environmental awareness was one of the most important features of that period of

⁴ Detlef Sprinz, "Environmental Concern And Environmental Action In Western Europe: Concepts, Measurements, And Implications," A paper delivered at the 1990 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 30 through September 2, 1990.

⁵ *Al Ahram*, 14 Nov., 1991, p.1.

history. Ancient Egyptians were warned that they would be asked in front of their gods whether they had polluted the waters of the holy river.⁶

(3) Egypt's active participation in regional and international activities related to the environment establishes the sincerity and depth of its environmental concern. In fact Egypt participated in all declarations related to the environment from the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 to date. Egypt has also ratified 34 conventions relating to environmental activities. Egypt also took part in the African Ministerial Conference of the Environment, the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the environment, the Mediterranean Ministerial Council for the environment, and the Organization of Cultural and Technical Cooperation.⁷

Official discourse regarding Egypt and environmental issues is not slow to point to this record.

The State as an Environmental Actor

If the 1970s has been recognized as the decade of environmental awareness in the industrial world, the 1980s marked the rise of environmental concern in Egypt. Unlike the industrial states in Europe and the U.S., where environmental concerns started as "grassroots" movements and managed within a relatively short time to influence decision-makers and to put environmental issues on national and then international political agendas, in Egypt it was the state that first demonstrated interest in environmental issues. In its initial form, this was manifested as a concern related to the need to stem the country's high rate of population growth. The state's concern with environmental affairs was reflected in large number of laws related to the protection of the environment and, more importantly, in the creation of an institutional framework for environmental affairs in Egypt.

The Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency (EEAA)

The Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency (EEAA) was established by the Presidential Decree No. 631 of 1982 in order to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To create a "Pollution-Free" environment for the Egyptian citizen
- b) To protect Egypt's natural resources
- c) To avoid any negative impact, caused by development, on the environment.⁸

⁶ *Development & Environment*, No. 4, January 1987, p. 23.

⁷ M. El Kassas, "Al Kadaya Al Beiya Al Eklimiya wa Al Dawlia: Manzour Massry" unpublished paper presented to the Meeting of Working Groups on the National Environmental Plan in Egypt, Cairo 24-26 December 1991; also The Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency, "Report on Environmental Policy in Egypt", September 1991.

⁸ *Environment and Development*, vol.1, April 1986, p. 73.

Though some of these objectives were idealistic and unrealistic, the third touched directly on the whole issue of sustainable development. It also reflected official realization, at least in principle, that development is ultimately unsustainable when achieved at the expense of environmental destruction.

Article 3 in the Presidential Decree No. 631 explained how the agency was to go about fulfilling its mandate.⁹

It was to develop a National Environment Protection Plan, determine priorities and follow up on the implementation of approved plans and programs; and it was to provide concerned authorities with the instructions and information necessary to implement the national plan and follow up whatever measures and actions these authorities are undertaking. It would also establish adequate minimum environmental quality standards which should be met to protect health and conserve the environment as well as to study environmental legislation in developed countries and prepare accordingly drafts for environmental legislation suitable for the Egyptian environment.

It would also develop mass-media programs to promote environmental awareness nationwide and it would arrange for the exchange of information concerning environmental issues on both national and international levels.

Finally, it would establish a national emergency system to respond to and control environmental pollution and revise it regularly.¹⁰

Since then, the EEAA has passed through two phases of organizational development. The first one was in 1985 and the second one came as a result of the Ministerial Decree No. 30 of 1991. Comparing these two structures (Appendix I), it is clear that the first structure was very general and relied on only a few offices. The current structure is more comprehensive. The number of offices has increased from 7 to 15, and these also became more specialized. This reflects to a great extent the growing concern with the environment and a more sophisticated understanding of Egypt's environmental problems. Moreover, the new structure includes an office for "International Relations" responsible for dealing with international assistance programs and international organizations concerned with the environment.

This is hardly fortuitous. The World Bank and United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) are now helping Egypt deal with its environmental problems. Moreover, Egypt managed through technical assistance programs, from Germany, France, Denmark, U.K., Canada, and the Commission of European Community, to accomplish several projects related to the field of environment.¹¹

Under the new structure a Board of Directors has been established. This is headed by the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Administrative Development,

⁹ *Environment and Development*, April 1986, p. 72.

¹⁰ For more detail see: El Mohamady Eid "The Role of The Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency, Cabinet of Ministers in Protecting the Environment of the Arab Republic of Egypt", *Environment and Development*, vol. 27, Feb. 1989, pp.1-4.

¹¹ *The World Bank and the Environment, A Progress Report Fiscal 1991* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1991).

Dr. Atef Ebeid. It includes experts on environmental affairs and representatives from various ministries and official bodies concerned with the environment. The purpose of this arrangement is to allow the EEAA to play the role of coordinator among government agencies, or among actors on environmental issues and to guarantee their full participation and cooperation in environmental policies.

While the 1985 organizational structure emphasized the role of the Agency's branches in the provinces, the new structure excluded them from the organizational chart. This may be due to the fact that the new structure was established along sectoral lines.

Under the new organizational structure a representative for non-governmental organizations has been included on the Board of Directors. The individual who currently occupies this post is Mr. Said El Tawil, head of the Businessmen's Association. This may be due to the fact that the Businessmen's Association, though not heavily involved in environmental issues, has strong relations and an equally strong networking system with external actors. Mr. Tawil's appointment also reflects the government's wish to bring the private sector into the mechanism of environmental policy making.

The agency obtains financial resources from three sources. The first of these are funds allocated by the Egyptian Government for the environment according to the national Five Year Plan. Its budget is enhanced by infusions from "The Environmental and Touristic Services Fund". Under this arrangement (Law 101/1985) a ten percent tax is levied on airline tickets issued in Egypt in local currency and allocated for environmental and touristic programs.

Finally, the EEAA benefits from external sources of funds through the World Bank, UNEP, and other foreign assistance programs. Interestingly enough, according to Dr. Salah Hafez, the head of the environmental agency, external funds constitute 75% of the EEAA's budget.¹²

Societal Environmental Actors

The Green Party. Functioning within Egypt's "officially recognized" political structure, yet not as a governmental organ, only one organization exists that is devoted to environmental issues. This is the Egyptian Green Party. Although most of the industrialized countries have "Green" or environmentalist parties that are or have been represented in the legislature, Green parties are still in their infancy in developing countries. The Green Party in Egypt is no exception. In fact, the party's establishment, the first such event in the Arab World, was a clear example of a growing societal concern, and an effort to influence the government environmental policies.

In an attempt to explain the emergence of the greens in Europe, Rudig and Lowe argue that "The development of the greens cannot be understood without

¹² Personal interview with Dr. Salah Hafez, Nov. 1991, Cairo.

consideration of the emergence of particular issues, protest movements and the concrete circumstances of party formation"¹³ and that any adequate analysis of Green politics should go beyond the traditional study of voting behavior. In the same vein, the Green Party in Egypt will be analyzed by looking at the formation of the party, its ideology, objectives, membership, and its relations with the government and environmental associations (NGOs), believing that "electoral success [or lack of success in the case of Green Egypt--SSG] might not be the sole purpose, nor a precondition for continued existence, nor indeed the only determinant of a party's wider political impact."¹⁴

All Green parties were created as a result of a particular environmental problem: nuclear energy in Germany, new airports in Japan, hydro-electric dams in New Zealand, or preserving the wilderness in the USA.

The Green Party in Egypt was established as a reaction to a contaminated shipment of food that found its way to the country from West Germany in 1987. The issue was politicized by the Greens in Germany. Egyptian newspapers covered the event and some commentary expressed the advisability of establishing a similar party in Egypt to protect the environment and the people from pollution. Abdel Salam Daoud's column in *Al-Akhbar* newspaper became the platform for those interested in establishing a Green Party. Eventually, concerned activists formally requested approval from the "Parties Committee" for the establishment of the Green Party. When the committee rejected the idea, the party activists took the case to court, and the party was legally recognized on April 14, 1990.¹⁵

Unlike the European Greens, Egyptian Greens consider themselves not so much a political party as the conscience of a nation. They view their mission as protecting the environment from pollution.¹⁶ In this respect they are closer to a policy party than a power party. This was very clear in the party performance in the legislative election 1990, where the party had 17 candidates nationwide, knowing very well that those candidates would never make it to the Assembly. Nevertheless the party decided to participate in order to explain its policy and to attract supporters.¹⁷ The party's program emphasized the relation between environmental protection and economic development. Egyptian Greens view poverty as the worst form of pollution, and urge continuous economic development and environmental awareness as the solutions.

Unlike the industrialized world where the Green party members tend to be young, well educated and liberal-to-radical in the political orientation, Greens in Egypt are older conservative academics, and scientists more than activists. While in most of Europe the Greens moved from student politics to Green politics, only 25% of the Egyptian Greens are under age 40, and only 8% of

¹³ W. Rudig & Philip Lowe, "The Withered Greening of British Politics: A Study of the Ecological Party", *Political Studies*, vol. 34, 1986, p. 265.

¹⁴ Rudig & Lowe, p. 265.

¹⁵ *Al Ahram*, April 15, 1990.

¹⁶ The Program of the Egyptian Green Party, p.1.

¹⁷ Refaat Rashad, "The Greens in Election", *Al Akhbar*, 20, Nov., 1990, p. 4.

the 1,500 members are women.¹⁸ The composition of the Egyptian Greens tends to confirm the correlation between level of education and the Green movement that has been proved in many studies in other contexts.¹⁹ In terms of relation between age and membership in Green movements, the general rule, as most studies show, is that Green values are associated with young age. Nevertheless the Egyptian case tends to confirm a less significant correlation between these two factors. In this regard, it conforms to the studies by Laura Lake on the US²⁰ and Addbjorn Knutsen on Nordic countries.²¹

Critics of the Egyptian Green Party explain the lack of enthusiasm on the part of young Egyptians to join the Greens in terms of factors characterizing the party itself. The Green Party, in their view, failed to attract popular support because it is organized by people with no political experience, it is seriously handicapped by internal disorganization and crippling underfunding, and it has a low profile public image.

Supporters of the party do not deny the fact that it needs a lot of publicity, nor that most Egyptians have not heard of it. On the contrary, they see the party's major problem as its lack of financial capability. The party does not have the financial means to have its own newspaper nor to carry out projects on its own. Even when the party decided to participate in the parliamentary election in 1990, its candidates were chosen for their ability to finance their own campaigns.²²

On the other hand, supporters of the party blame Egyptian legal requirements that prohibit opposition parties from accepting foreign donations. Unlike other environmental associations, the Green Party cannot accept money from UNEP or international NGOs or even other Green parties.²³

The party is trying hard to improve its financial position. One may look at the party's campaign against smoking in 1992, when the party invited a Swiss physician to help the participants quit smoking and charged every participant one hundred US dollars, as a fund raising attempt.

The party's failure to win parliamentary seats limited its ability to have an impact on environmental policy and to influence the government from within the system. Having failed to have its candidates in the parliament, the Green Party is now trying to recruit some members of the parliament. The party's composition and its type of leadership to great extent affect its tactics. The Greens are very passive, slow and always prefer to get governmental approval before undertaking any popular activity. For instance A. Daoud, the new leader of the party, had to obtain permission from the Minister of Interior for a

¹⁸ Jennifer Reidy, "Keen But Green", *Cairo Today*, Vol. 12, No. 5, 1991, p. 51.

¹⁹ See for example. J.F. Pilat, *Ecological Politics: The Rise of the Green Movement* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980).

²⁰ Laura Lake, "The Environmental Mandate: Activists and the Electorate", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 98, No. 2, Summer 1983.

²¹ Addbjorn Knutsen, "Materialist and Postmaterialist Values and Social Structure in the Nordic Countries", *Comparative Politics*, October 1990.

²² Refaat Rashad, "The Greens in the Election" *Al Akhbar*, Nov. 20, 1990, p. 4.

²³ Jennifer Reidy, op. cit., p. 55.

march to protest against air pollution in Cairo's outlying Helwan district.²⁴ This is understandable, of course, in light of internal politics in Egypt, where the emergency law prohibits gatherings and demonstrations. In fact the nature of party system in Egypt has a great impact on the action of its Green Party. Although Egypt is a country that theoretically adopts a multiparty system that includes eleven parties, in reality the party system is dominated by one party: the National Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP has close relations with some environmental organizations because of overlapping membership, a factor that affected Green Party attempts to coordinate its efforts with NGOs. The political loyalty of NDP members to their party has been an obstacle to attempts by the Greens to rally those organizations to their side.²⁵

In fact, studies of other Green parties tend to prove that Green parties "will be more likely to develop, the less the political system is able to integrate environmental demands by other means."²⁶ In Egypt it seems that the government, because of party politics, is willing to deal with some NGOs more than the Green party, a matter which raises questions about the future of the party.

Non-Governmental Organizations. Apart from environmentally-concerned organizations that are either part and parcel of the Egyptian bureaucracy or recognized "political actors" (i.e. parties), Egypt has in recent years witnessed the emergence of civic groups organized for an explicitly environmental conscience. These environmental non-governmental organizations constitute a new force in Egyptian politics that emerged in the 1980s. By early 1990s it was estimated that approximately 80 environmental NGOs existed.²⁷ NGOs are defined as any of those organizations which are not part of the government and pursue non profit-making aims. In this regard, NGOs can be research institutions, professional associations or youth organizations.²⁸ These organizations differ according to their interest or orientation (i.e. single-issue vs. multiple-issue), size (large or small membership), and whether they are open or closed organizations.

Currently, three types of NGOs are active in the country's environmental politics.

The First Type: Organizations with a broad interest in the environment as a whole (multiple-issue), that is, open to anyone who likes to join, and usually with a fairly large membership. These organizations are also a part of a larger international network of affiliated organizations and are connected with international organizations that deal with the environment. Examples of this

²⁴ *Al Ahaly*, April 1, 1992, p. 7.

²⁵ Interview with Dr. Ibrahim Kerdany & Mohammed Ramadan, members of the Green Party, conducted by Eric Diverres Cairo, April 1991.

²⁶ W. Rudig & Lowe, p. 268.

²⁷ This is the official number, but the actual number is much less (See Appendix II).

²⁸ See definitions of NGO's in Marco, Padron "Non Governmental Development Organization: From Development Aid to Development Corporations", *World Development* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987).

category are the Arab Office of Youth and Environment, The National Association for the Protection of the Environment, and Friends of the Environment Association.

The Arab Office of Youth and Environment (AOYE) was first established as part of *Al-Ahram* newspaper's science clubs in December 1978 and continued to work within *Al-Ahram* until 1990 when it was registered as a non-governmental organization. The National Association for the Protection of the Environment (NAPOE) was established in 1989. The Friends of the Environment Association is a more recent organization that was established in 1991 in Alexandria. The three organizations share a common interest in environmental problems as a whole. Their main objective is to protect the environment and promote environmental awareness. AOYE emphasizes that its activities are based on "the fact that awareness is the key to environment problems, noting that man is the problem and solution for the environment".²⁹ AOYE has organized several environment education programs in high schools and offered training courses in four different governorates (Cairo, El Minya, El Mansura and Asyut) to train university students in attacking environmental problems in their communities.

Among the objectives of Friends of the Environment Association (FEA), that differentiates it from the other organizations, is its emphasis on protecting the buildings and biophysical environment in Alexandria.

While NAPOE is similar to AOYE and FEA in being a multiple issue organization, its interest in the protection of the antiquities gives the organization a distinctive character.

Regarding networking with other international NGOs, the three organizations have connections, but the AOYE and NAPOE are better known internationally. AOYE joined the International Youth Federation for Environmental Studies and Conservation (IYF) in Denmark in 1980 and has since played a very active role in that context. Consequently, one of its members has been chosen to join the IYF's board of directors. In 1981, AOYE also joined the Environmental Liaison Center (ELC) affiliated with United Nation Environmental Program (UNEP) in Nairobi. This facilitated more networking with some 800 non-governmental organizations from all over the world. The office also was one of the creators of the Third World Association for Renewable Sources of Energy and Environment Conservation (REECA).³⁰ On the regional level, AOYE hosted the African Youth Seminar on the Environment in June 1981. This led to the establishment of the African Youth for the Environment (AYE) a non-governmental organization for national youth environmental organizations in Africa. Moreover, the AOYE took the initiative in establishing the Arab Union for Youth and Environment in 1983. This strong networking and coordination with international and regional NGOs

²⁹ Arab Office of Youth and Environment, *Biannual Report*, Cairo, 1990, p. 1.

³⁰ Personal Interview with Dr. Emad Adly, Secretary General of AOYE, Cairo.

led Dr. Emad Adly, the Secretary General of AOYE, to declare that the office is "probably better known outside than inside Egypt."³¹

The National Association for Protection of the Environment (NAPOE) has also developed strong connections with other international NGOs and with UNEP. One of the main reasons behind this connection is the fact that some of its members are internationally well known. Among them are: Dr. El Kassas, a leading botanist and the father of environmentalism in Egypt, Dr. Mostafa Tolba, the Executive Director of UNEP, and Dr. Mounir Neamatalla, the head of Environmental Quality International (EQI), a leading environmental consulting firm. In addition to these persons Dr. Laila Takla is the leading figure in NAPOE. She was elected several times to the legislature and has been a very active participant in various international conferences, in which she represented Egypt and established a good contact with NGOs. This proved to be very useful when she decided to establish NAPOE.

Regarding membership, both AOYE and NAPOE have approximately 250-300 members. FEA has around 160 members. While the size of membership in these organizations might appear small compared to other international NGOs, nevertheless, in the Egyptian context this is a reasonable size taking into consideration the fact that NGOs are still a recent phenomenon. The three organizations are each headed by a board of directors. The AOYE board of directors consists of nine members including two women. Among the members of the board there are four physicians, two engineers, and one journalist. One may trace the high representation of physicians in the board to the fact that the core group who first thought of establishing the AOYE were from medical school. Although all the members of the board are university graduates, there are some members who are still university students. According to Emad Adly, the Secretary General of the AOYE, all the members are between 18 and 40 years of age, while the most active members are between 20 and 30 years old. Dr. Emad also indicated that all the members are from middle class families and that the AOYE does not include in its membership any celebrities.³²

On the other hand, NAPOE's board of directors consists of 5 members. Though there is only one woman on the board of directors, Dr. Laila Takla, who is the chairperson of the organization. Mona Kourashy, Secretary General of NAPOE, mentioned that the previous board included three women and two men, and that the drop in the representation of women on the board does not represent a policy of the organization but lack of commitment on part of the women.³³ While the membership in AOYE is dominated by youth, NAPOE includes members from different age categories (20-60), and all are university graduates at the least. Unlike the AOYE, members of NAPOE are government bureaucrats, governors, ministers and ex-ministers. It also

³¹ Personal Interview with Dr. Emad Adly.

³² Personal Interview with Dr. Emad Adly.

³³ Personal Interview with Mona Kourashy, Cairo, Feb. 1992.

includes experts, university professors, the head of the Information Agency, the Head of the Environment Affairs Agency, and some actresses and actors.

The Second Type of environmental NGOs is the single-issue organization, with an open but small size of membership. Examples include the Tree Lovers Association in Maadi district, the Egyptian Association for Wild Life (EAWL), the New Afforestation Association, and the Association for the Protection from Environmental Diseases in Heliopolis. Though those NGOs share common characteristics in terms of size and orientation nevertheless they differ regarding their relationship with the EEAA and local NGOs. In fact, the idea of establishing the Association for Wild Life was first initiated by Dr. Nael Abu Zeid, one of the officials in the Environmental Affairs Agency, and supported by some members of the Shooting Club.³⁴ Consequently, there is a strong relation between the EEAA and the Association. In fact, the EEAA always sends a representative to participate in the Association's monthly meetings.

While the EAWL enjoys a strong relationship with the EEAA, the New Afforestation Association does not have any connection with EEAA. And neither organization has any relation with the Green Party.

Regarding their financial capability, it tends to be generally poor, nevertheless it varies from one NGO to another according to its size, organization, leadership, and networking. For instance, while the Afforestation Association depends mainly on membership fees and contributions from within the Association, the Egyptian Association of Wild Life (EAWL) succeeded in obtaining contributions from the International Council for the Protection of Birds in England, in addition to donations from Egyptian businessmen.³⁵

The Third Type of environmental NGOs is represented by research institutes that deal with environmental problems in Egypt. They have small size memberships which are limited to scientists and researchers. Their impact or influence is a result of the research and technical expertise of their members. Examples of this type are: Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, National Research Center, Environmental Studies and Research Institute, Marine Health Research Center, Desert Research Center, Environmental and Occupation Health Center, and the Egyptian Society for Biological Control.

Some of these institutes have a long history of carrying out research on environmentally related issues, even before the environment found itself on the national agenda. For instance, the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology has been involved in research relating to water pollution since the 1960s. In 1970 Dr. Mostafa Tolba, who was working during this time in the Academy, was chairing a committee from the Academy to prepare Egypt's position in the 1972 Stockholm environmental meeting. Also, Dr. El Kassas and Dr. Shafika Nasser, among other scientists, established the

³⁴ Interview with Dr. Magda Sharaf El Din (member of the board of directors) conducted by Amany El Tarabishy.

³⁵ Interview with Dr. Magda Sharaf El Din.

"Environmental Research Council" within the Academy.³⁶ In late 1980s some members of the Committee became members in the People's Assembly and the Shura Council; in fact Dr. Nasser became the chairperson of the sub-committee for environmental affairs in the Shura Council, within which reports on water and pollution were discussed.

Regarding networking, one may argue that the level of coordination is higher among the scientific community than among the activists. This may be due to the fact that those scientists are members in more than one organization and that the scientific community meets together in conferences and symposia and share their thoughts on the technical aspect of environmental problems. Moreover, the majority of these institutes have a close relation with the government and the EEAA but almost no relation with the Green Party. The government contributes heavily to their budgets, with the exception of a few associations that depend mainly on their membership fees and donations from the Academy of Science.

From the above analysis of the nature of environmental NGOs in Egypt one may conclude that:

- a) The Green movement in Egypt is not a grassroots movement. It is a movement of a "new class"³⁷ of professional, technical, and administrative intelligentsia who, because of their socio-economic status and professional activities, have become interested in the environment. The Greens in Egypt are not the most exposed to the negative impact of industrialization, while being simultaneously dependent on industrialization for their employment.
- b) The Green movement in Egypt tends to focus on local environmental issues more than the global ones. Its immediate concern is water pollution, air pollution, toxic wastes, and desertification. Little has been mentioned about the ozone layer, acid rain or the greenhouse effect. Here is their potential for success, because the more they get closer to the basic needs of the Egyptian citizens, the more support they will get.
- c) NGOs are indirectly influenced by the government and the EEAA. This was reflected in their consensual consultative approach with the government. No attempt has been made to pressure the government or to take environmental cases to courts.
- d) The government welcomes the growing numbers of NGOs concerned with environmental issues because it perceives that environmental problems need popular support and citizens' participation, and NGOs are seen as contributing to this. Moreover, the need to coordinate with NGOs has grown as the government sought to guarantee the fulfillment of its own priorities after foreign donors stated their intention to give their financial assistance to NGOs directly.

³⁶ Interview with Dr. Shafika Nasser, Professor of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University.

³⁷ Robynn Eckersley, "Green Politics and the New Class: Selfishness or Virtue", *Political Studies*, Vol. 37, 1988, pp. 205-223.

The development of environmental concern and the increasing number of environmental NGOs on the one hand, and the government's willingness to coordinate with NGOs on the other hand, provide a potential that might lead to a change in state-society relationships in Egypt.

The work of the NGOs can not only strengthen the civil society in Egypt but also can reduce the burden on the state.

NGOs can promote self-help and support initiatives taken by local communities. In fact the Association for Health and Environmental Development (AHED) is now helping the local community in El Manzala to deal with pollution in Lake Manzala. By so doing AHED is reinforcing popular participation. By working with local communities NGOs can reduce the burden on the state and allow it to focus on other problems.

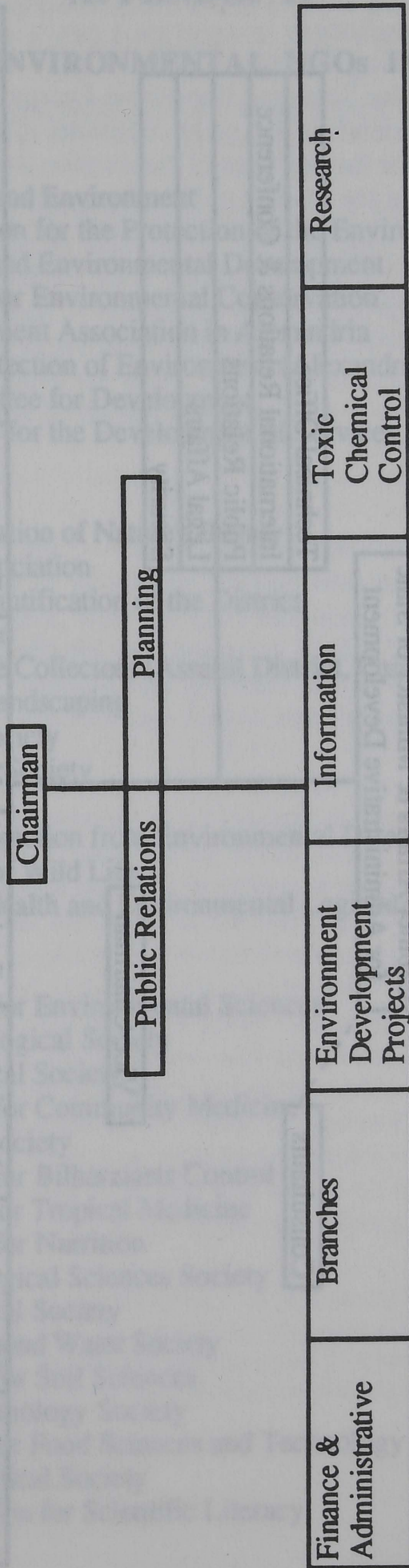
One may also argue that an effective state-society interaction in the domain of environmental affairs might lead to a spillover into other political issues, a matter which might give more influence for Egyptian citizens in the making of public policy in Egypt.

Yet, one has to stress that this change in state-society relations is conditioned on the ability of NGOs to transform the green movement from being a movement of a certain class to a grassroots movement.

APPENDIX I

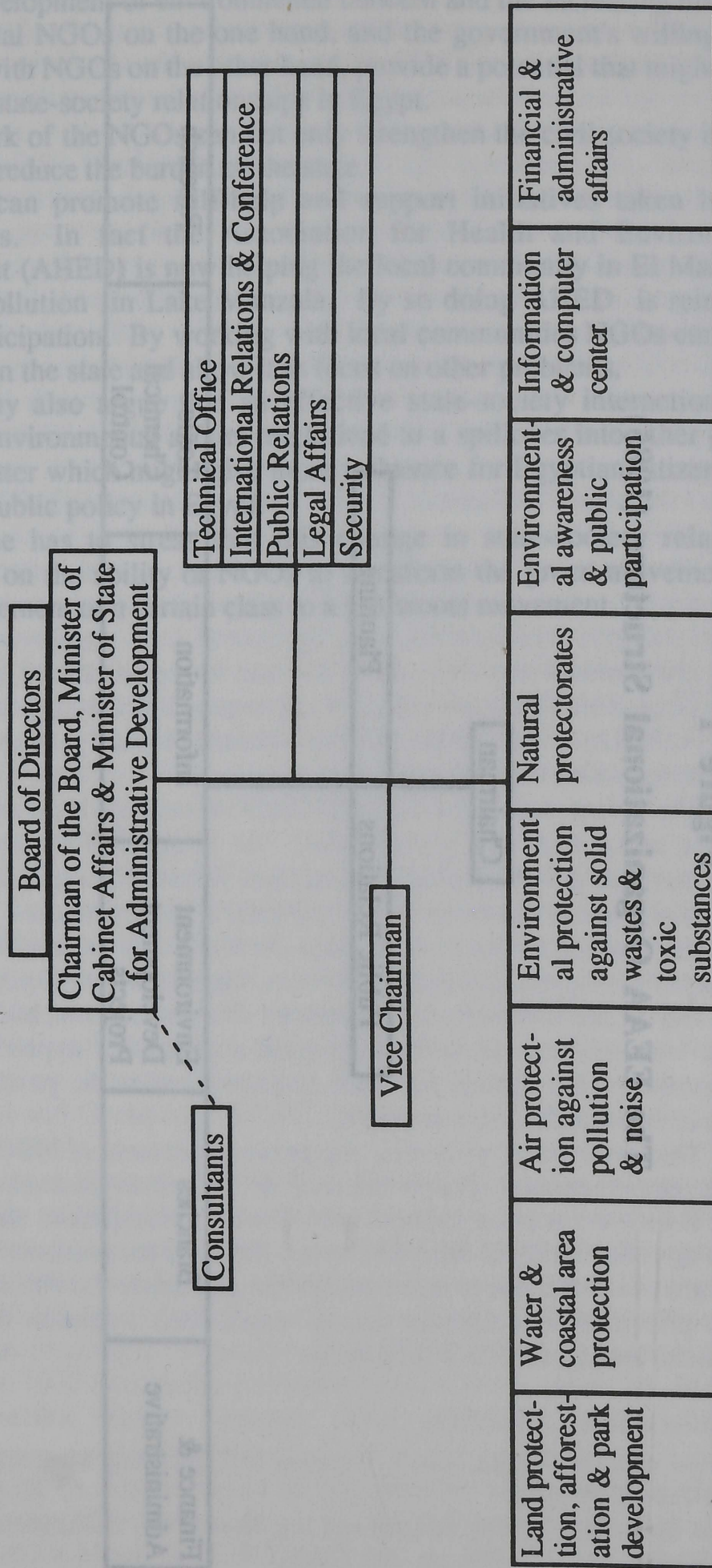
Figure 1

The EEAA Organizational Structure (1985)



Source:
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency

Figure 2
The EEAA Organizational Structure (1991)



Source:
 Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency

APPENDIX II

LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs IN EGYPT

Type One

Arab Office for Youth and Environment
The National Association for the Protection of the Environment
Association of Health and Environmental Development
The Egyptian Society for Environmental Conservation
Friends of the Environment Association in Alexandria
Association for the Protection of Environment (Alexandria)
Arab Women's Committee for Development
The Heliopolis Society for the Development of Services

Type Two

Society for the Preservation of Nature's Beauty
New Afforestation Association
Association for the Beautification of the District
Tree Lovers Association
Association of Garbage Collectors (Assahil District, Cairo)
Egyptian Society for Landscaping
Friends of the Trees Society
Friends of Marine Life Society
Egyptian UN Society
Association for the Protection from Environmental Diseases
Egyptian Association of Wild Life
Egyptian Society for Health and Environmental Legislation

Type Three

The Egyptian Society for Environmental Sciences
The Egyptian Entomological Society
The Egyptian Zoological Society
The Egyptian Society for Community Medicine
The Egyptian Health Society
The Egyptian Society for Bilharziasis Control
The Egyptian Society for Tropical Medicine
The Egyptian Society for Nutrition
The Egyptian Toxicological Sciences Society
The Egyptian Geological Society
The Egyptian Underground Water Society
The Egyptian Society for Soil Sciences
The Egyptian Plant Pathology Society
The Egyptian Society for Food Sciences and Technology
The Egyptian Geographical Society
The Egyptian Association for Scientific Literacy

- The Egyptian Society for Marine Sciences
- The Egyptian Maritime Society
- The Egyptian Engineering Society
- The Egyptian Society for Solar and Renewable Energy
- Egyptian Society of Friends of Egyptian Scientists Abroad
- Arabian Association for the Sciences of Purification and Environmental Care
- African Association for the Studies of Nile Basin
- United Scientists for Projects and Development
- Marine Health Research Center
- Environment and Occupation Health Center
- Egyptian Society of Biological Control

Figure 2
The EEA's Organizational Structure (1991)

