

Good Governance and Covid-19: the Case of Egypt

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review the interventions adopted by the Egyptian state regarding the handling of the global outbreak of the novel corona virus (COVID-19) in early 2020. Despite of the repeated criticisms pointed to the slow, rigid, and reactive public governance mode adopted by the Egyptian state towards most of the old fashioned or the newly arising problems, there has been a clear fundamental change in how the state is dealt with the recent COVID-19 challenge. A new Egyptian state's approach to public management in general and crisis management in specific emerged in the efforts to contain COVID-19, in which the state showed a preemptive, coordinated, robust, and effective public governance that resulted in both local and international praise. The scope of this paper lies in reviewing the Egyptian government and other Egyptian state institutions' interventions in the COVID-19 crisis and the extent of compliance of these interventions with the identified governance standards. The authors do not try to claim that state interventions regarding COVID-19 containment in Egypt were the sole reason for the comparatively better national results, but rather conclude that these interventions were of paramount positive significance in containing COVID-19 outbreak in Egypt. By analyzing data derived from the World Health Organization and qualitative research methods, this paper answers the question of whether there is a relation between the compliance of the the Egyptian government and other state institutions with the governance standards identified and the pattern of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The qualitative part of the research method was conducted through a review of secondary sources and the analysis of official documents, reports and publications issued by the Egyptian government and different state institutions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Egypt, state institutions; good governance, COVID-19

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لرصد القرارات والخطوات التي اتخذتها الدولة المصرية بشأن جائحة فيروس كورونا المستجد. فبالرغم من وجود العديد من الانتقادات الموجهة للدولة المصرية فيما يتعلق بمنهج الإدارة والحكم الرشيد للعديد من المشكلات، إلا أنه من الواضح ظهور نمط جديد لأداء الدولة المصرية في التعامل مع التحديات المختلفة وتحديداً أزمة جائحة فيروس كورونا المستجد: كوفيد-19. لقد تغير منهج إدارة الدولة المصرية من البطء والجمود ورد الفعل المعتاد، إلى منهج يتميز بالتخطيط الاستباقي وسرعة اتخاذ القرارات ومرونة التنفيذ والتنسيق بين جميع الفاعلين. ولا يحاول الباحثين الادعاء بأن تدخل الدولة المصرية لاحتواء جائحة فيروس كورونا المستجد هو السبب الوحيد للأداء الجيد نسبياً مقارنة بالدول الأخرى، ولكن من الممكن القول بأن الخطوات التي اتخذتها الدولة المصرية ساهمت بشكل واضح وإيجابي في التعامل الفعال مع الأزمة. وبهدف الإجابة على تساؤل الدراسة عن وجود علاقة بين ما قامت به الدولة المصرية ومعدل انتشار فيروس كورونا المستجد قام الباحثين بتحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من منظمة الصحة العالمية. وفيما يتعلق بالشرح الكيفي للدراسة، تم الاعتماد على رصد وتحليل محتوى المصادر الثانوية وكذلك التقارير الرسمية الصادرة عن الحكومة المصرية ومؤسسات الدولة المختلفة.

الكلمات الدالة: مصر، مؤسسات الدولة، الحوكمة الجيدة، جائحة كورونا

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1. Introduction

This study focuses on reviewing the action plan and measures taken by the Egyptian government and the different state institutions to mitigate the expected negative effects of the global outbreak of COVID-19 on Egypt's different sectors. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) interim guidance document, each country could adopt a different set of actions according to the level of spread and outbreak of the COVID-19¹. This study does not discuss the performance of the Egyptian Ministry mandated directly with the COVID-19 crisis, namely the Ministry of Health, but rather explores the governance practice across the different areas, and a more comprehensive look is taken at the different ministries and state institutions involved in managing the crisis, including almost every Ministry in the Egyptian Cabinet, The Egyptian Parliament, and the Central Bank of Egypt. Good governance covers the idea of how state decisions take place from a political and administrative perspective, and how these decisions respond to their relevant societies in an efficient manner.² What constitutes good public governance ranges over time and space, although most literature defines it through a range of attributes including effectiveness, accountability, transparency, rule of law, efficient spending; responsiveness; quality service delivery; equitable distribution of services, citizen engagement, participation and inclusiveness; citizen safety and equality, decentralization.³ Within the context of this study, there are outcomes of governance that are reflected via the data analyzed in this study, that show that the engagement by the Egyptian state resulted in more favorable and successful results in dealing with the crisis.⁴

2. Background of this Study

In December 2019 a highly contagious virus in Wuhan, China was newly identified causing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The virus started to spread all over the globe resulting in the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak.⁵ By the end of January 2020 the WHO labeled the outbreak as a “public health emergency of international concern”,

¹ World Health Organization, (2020a). Critical preparedness, readiness and response actions for COVID-19.

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331511/Critical%20preparedness%20readiness%20and%20response%20actions%20COVID-10%202020-03-22_FINAL-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
Published March 22,2020. Accessed March 24,2020.

² Grindle, M. S. (2017). Good governance, RIP: A critique and an alternative. *Governance*, 30(1), 17-22.

³ Fukuyama, F., & Fukuyama, F. (2011). *The origins of political order: From Prehuman times to the French Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2015). Public sector management reform in developing countries: Perspectives beyond NPM orthodoxy. *Public Administration and Development*, 35(4), 222-237; Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Wetterberg, A. (2016). Gauging the effects of social accountability on services, governance, and citizen empowerment. *Public Administration Review*, 76(2), 274-286.

⁴ Andrews, M. (2013). Rethinking Governance Indicators. *APSA-Comparative Politics Newsletter*, 23 (1), 5-7.

⁵ Hui, D. S., I Azhar, E., Madani, T. A., Ntoumi, F., Kock, R., Dar, O. & Zumla, A. (2020). The continuing 2019-nCoV epidemic threat of novel coronaviruses to global health—The latest 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 91, 264-266; World Health Organization, (2020b). Pneumonia of unknown cause—China. *Emergencies preparedness, response, Disease outbreak news*, World Health Organization (WHO). <https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unkown-cause-china/en/>. Published January 5, 2020. Accessed March 15, 2020.

and by Mid-March 2020 it declared COVID-19 as a pandemic.⁶ Already by that time the situation was clear to countries all over the globe that a crisis was imminent and that every single resource had to be mobilized to face the pandemic, as numbers started to grow exponentially and a couple of nations already seemed to have been caught off guard with Italy reporting 27980 cases and 2158 deaths with an estimated case fatality rate of 7.7%, and Spain reporting 7753 cases and 288 deaths and an estimated case fatality rate of 5.7% and most notably, the united kingdom with an alarming 3 million cases and 87,000 death.⁷

Few countries showed their ability to hold back the outbreak and contain the COVID-19 virus. However, most nations faced the reality of the lack of medical and management capabilities and resources, and as the pandemic's threat grew even bigger, every nation started its own policy to contain the crisis.⁸ Even countries with advanced medical capabilities like the united states and United Kingdom faced challenges controlling the pandemic with the increased cases and the number of medical staff available. Policy makers all over the globe had to take national decisions that balanced between health, economic, and social dimensions. National policies ranged from a smart lockdown to a complete one with all the social distancing restrictions applied, in order to lead to a decline in infections and deaths, and eventually reaching the long awaited herd immunity.⁹ This global crisis exposed world governments and showed their level of preparedness to handle emergencies, and the case became a sudden test for all world countries, and Egypt as a leading country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region had to demonstrate its capacity and willingness to manage the crisis, as this region was classified as high risk due to international travel exchange with China and because of the fact that a lot of this region's countries were either having inept medical systems or were just picking up from political and economic hurdles, and by the 15th of

⁶ World Health Organization, Statement on the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)). Published January 30, 2020. Accessed March 15, 2020; World Health Organization, WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>. Published March 11, 2020. Accessed March 15, 2020.

⁷ Italian Ministry of Health, 2020. Ministero della Salute, 2020. Covid-19 - Situazione in Italia. Roma, I: Governo - Repubblica Italiana. <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioContenutiNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=italiano&id=5351&area=nuovoCoronavirus&menu=vuoto>. Accessed March 20, 2020; World Health Organization. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation report—56. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>. Published March 16, 2020. Accessed March 17.

⁸ World Health Organization, (2020d) WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>. Published March 11, 2020. Accessed March 15, 2020.

⁹ Barry, J. M. (2009). Pandemics: avoiding the mistakes of 1918. *Nature*, 459(7245), 324-325; Correia, S., Luck, S., & Verner, E. (2020). Fight the Pandemic, Save the Economy: Lessons from the 1918 Flu(No. 20200327). Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

February 2020 eight COVID-19 cases were reported in the United Arab Emirates, and one case in Egypt¹⁰. Egypt also faced a challenge pertaining the huge gap between different socio-economic classes that were reflected in the degree of acceptance of covid-19 as a serious disease and accordingly following the governmental guidelines. The WHO provided countries with a strategic plan to tackle the COVID-19 crisis with three aims including slowing down the transmission and delaying the spread of the virus to hinder the outbreak; providing health care for the infected cases and offering special care to the ones at risk; reducing the negative effects of the pandemic on health, social, and economic activities.¹¹ Each country had to work through a broad action plan inclusive of all state institutions and stakeholders and to tackle the governance standards identified as the 5 Ps namely prevention; preparedness; public health; political leadership; and people as illustrated in figure 1.¹² The Prevention governance standard refers to the concrete plans formulated by the state and communicated to both central and local levels ahead of a disaster.¹³ Preparedness refers to a continuous cycle of activities involving financial, human, and physical resources aimed at controlling the current situation as well as any future health crisis.¹⁴ People refers to the reactions from citizens and their response to the state's interventions. Researchers must differentiate between the masses among the population, in our case, the citizens and the people who are responsible for controlling the pandemic. On one hand, the citizens are more emotional, diversified and need guidance from others who should provide leadership; and on the other hand, the political leaders which make people the most challenging aspect of the 5Ps to control due to the different values, characteristics and upbringing seen in any nation.¹⁵ Political leadership refers to interventions initiated by particular political leaders from a position of power to control the disaster. Any crisis situation needs prudent political leaders to control and manage particularly when the crisis in question creates direct threat to peoples' lives. Nations look for leaders who not only have the competencies required to manage a crisis, but the interpersonal skills to manage fear and spread awareness. Interpersonal skills and managerial skills are two sides of the same coin and a successful leader needs both to

¹⁰ Al-Mandhari, A., Samhuri, D., Abubakar, A., & Brennan, R. (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 outbreak: preparedness and readiness of countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. *East Mediterr Health J*, 26(2), 136-137. Published 2020 Feb 24. doi:10.26719/2020.26.2.136

¹¹ World Health Organization, (2020). Critical preparedness, readiness and response actions for COVID-19.

¹² World Health Organization, (2020) WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19.

¹³ Das, U. S., & Quintyn, M. (2002). Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management: The Role of Regulatory Governance. *International Monetary Fund*.

¹⁴ Braun, B. (2015). Preparedness, Crisis Management and Policy Change: The Euro Area at the Critical Juncture of 2008–2013. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17(3), 419-441.

¹⁵ Moffitt, B. (2015). How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism. *Government and Opposition*, 50(2), 189–217.

flourish.¹⁶ Finally, Public health refers to the interventions on behalf of public health officials to ensure that the needed number of resources whether hospital beds, medicine or medical staff is directed towards ensuring the safety of the public. Public health intervention differs in a pandemic and a non-pandemic situation.¹⁷ This indicates that all eyes suddenly switch towards the public health response to the disaster. It also indicates that the public health officials do not only have to deal with the crisis at hand, but also have to convey to the public and all the different stakeholders the official figures and status updates regarding the cases in a country. Any attempt to control the pandemic has to be in regards with WHO recommendations, putting more pressure on the public health officials than any other era.¹⁸ The researchers conclude that due to this revelation, while the 5Ps are present in every crisis, the intensity of their inclusion differs from one crisis to the other.

It is also crucial to highlight an important governance standard that is not included within the 5ps; government involvement. Government involvement refers to any decision or action taken by government officials that affects the overall economic performance and status of the nation. The government relationships and responsibilities differ depending on the desired objectives and accordingly the intensity of the involvement differs from one crisis to the next depending on the severity of the situation.¹⁹ In the case of COVID-19, the government involvement is reflected across the 5PS and the degree of involvement varies across the 5 factors. For example, the governmental decisions regarding public health procedures have to be coherent with the WHO practices, so there is not much independency when it comes to decisions. However, regarding political leaders, the decisions for each ministry was adjusted to fit the cultural needs of the country. While the government involvement is not the focus of the study, it affects the study externally from many directions.

The 5 Ps model represent important factors facing any state dealing with a health crisis. Preparedness and prevention are both crucial in crisis management. Preparedness allows states to assemble all essential resources in anticipation of a crisis, allowing governments to have the necessary strategies, workforce, communication plans and supplies to support the nation. Thus, well prepared government institutions will prevent a foreseen crisis or at least reduce the impact of the disaster, while the people component represent the key ingredient in any crisis as their reaction to the government's interventions and their response rate will either support or hinder the government's plans to manage the crisis.²⁰ The public health

¹⁶ Körösényi , A., Illés , G., & Metz, R. (2016). Contingency and Political Action: The Role of Leadership in Endogenously Created Crises. *Politics and Governance* (, 4(2), 91-1.

¹⁷ Garfin, D. R., Silver, R. C., & Holman, A. (2020). The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Outbreak: Amplification of Public Health Consequences by Media Exposure. *Health Psychology*, 39(5), 355–357.

¹⁸ World Health Organization, (2020g). Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports—<http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-delegation-concludes-covid-19-technical-mission-to-egypt.html> Published March 25,2020. Accessed April 9,2020.

¹⁹ Brown, C. S., Mistry, R. S., & Bigler, R. S. (2007). Hurricane Katrina: African American Children's Perceptions of Race, Class, and Government Involvement Amid a National Crisis. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 7(1), 191-208.

²⁰ Ibid.

governance standard refers to the government's ability to provide medical equipment, staff and infrastructure to control the disease, and the government's success to contain the pandemic highly depends on it.²¹ Finally, no crisis will be dealt with efficiently without profound leadership that is trusted by the people and have the needed competencies to deal with disasters.²²

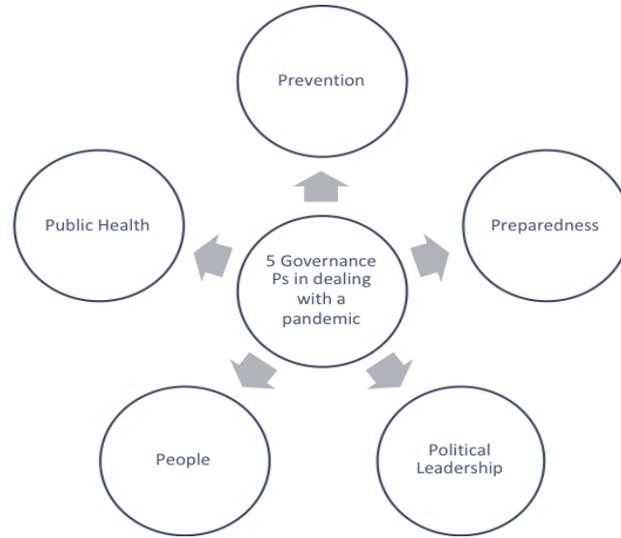


Figure (1): Five governance Ps in dealing with COVID-19 pandemic

Source: World Health Organization, (2020) WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19

3. Research Problem

According to preliminary review of the current Egyptian case of compliance with the identified good governance standards, there is a need to assess the extent to which these interventions comply with the 5Ps to control the COVID-19 crisis.

This research study is mainly directed towards assessing the five identified governance standards namely prevention, preparedness, public health, political leadership, and people. Despite the complexity and different aim of assessing peoples' perceptions towards state interventions, the authors are venturing to capture a glimpse of people's response to the state interventions. Each of the state interventions are presented in tables 1-5 with the right column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the 5 governance standards.

As of March 17th, the Egyptian Ministry of Health's spokesperson announced that Egypt recorded 30 new COVID-19 cases with positive results to reach a total of 196 cases in the country plus 2 new COVID-19 related deaths, and that all the newly identified cases were for

²¹ Das, U., & Quintyn, M. (2002). *Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management The Role of Regulatory Governance*.

²² Körösényi, A., Illés, G., & Metz, R. (2016). *Contingency and political action: The role of leadership in endogenously created crises. Politics and Governance, 4(2)*.

Egyptians who were in contact with the previously positively identified and announced cases. The spokesperson added that Egypt's Ministry of Health was operating according to the monitoring and investigative guidelines provided by the WHO and that the 2 new deaths were for a 78 years old Italian citizen and a 70 years old Egyptian citizen who both passed away in the quarantine, and that the authorities were handling all the precautionary measures regarding their families and the people who were in contact with them. Moreover, the ministry official announced that all positively identified cases were hospitalized in the quarantine according to WHO procedures, and that a total of 26 out of 34 have tested negative and after supervision have been discharged from the quarantine, and that the total COVID-19 related deaths were 6. The spokesperson added that Ministry of Health was on full alert and preparedness and was taking all precautionary measures to contain the pandemic, and that the dedicated hotline 105 was created to answer any inquiry regarding COVID-19.²³

For many of the local and international observers, it would not be surprising if the Egyptian state flopped in handling the COVID-19 crisis, since based primarily on past experiences Egypt as many other Middle Eastern and North African countries face many hurdles in attaining good governance.²⁴ Within the Egyptian context, it is understandable that certain inherent historical and cultural attributes constitute the somehow unique Egyptian governance model. With a Pharaoh based heritage, a hydraulic society, and a highly religious patriarchal tradition, public governance in Egypt is characterized by high levels of centralization, poor coordination, inefficiency, rigidity and ambiguity.²⁵ However, contrary to the expectations, the Egyptian state's response towards the COVID-19 crisis, managed to strike the balance between saving lives and maintaining the economy.²⁶ This balance has always been a challenge for any nation, since it meant that decision makers had to choose between many priorities, so that the intervention would both avoid spikes in the outbreak resulting in a collapse of the health care system, and at the same time keep the economy running within

²³ Egyptian Ministry of Health, 2020. Health Ministry's releases on COVID-19. Published March 18, 2020. From <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/144126/Health-Ministry's-releases-on-COVID-19?lang=en-us> [Accessed March 25, 2020].

²⁴ Ali, H. E. (2018). State transitions from rigidity to fragility and failure: The case of Middle East and North Africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 41(10), 765-771; Schomaker, R. M., & Bauer, M. W. (2020). Public Governance in the MENA Region: Reform Trends and Patterns. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(5), 378-391; World Bank (2019). Governance indicators data base. <http://ezproxy.bue.edu.eg:2201/governance/wgi/#home>.

²⁵ Ayubi, N. N. (1989). Bureaucracy and development in Egypt today. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 24(1-2), 62-78; Hopwood, D. (1993). *Egypt, politics and society, 1945-1990*. Psychology Press; Shahin, A. I., & Wright, P. L. (2004). Leadership in the context of culture: An Egyptian Perspective. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25, 499-511; Sayed, F. (2004). *Innovation in public administration: the case of Egypt*. United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA); Halim, A. A. (2005). *Supporting public participation in Egypt*. Al Ahram Regional Press Institute.

²⁶ فريد، سالي، محمد، تداعيات كورونا وأثرها على العوائد المصرية من النقد الأجنبي، التداعيات المحتملة لأزمة كورونا على الاقتصاد المصري، سلسلة أوراق السياسات، 17، 3-26، معهد التخطيط القومي، يونيو 2020 <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4834>

convenient levels.²⁷ Countries were categorized on a 5 point preparedness capacity index with 5 being the highest level of preparedness capacity and according to their corresponding level of virus transmission scenario ranging across "preparedness, high-risk of imported cases, imported cases, localized transmission, and community transmission".²⁸

4. Research Methodology

The time frame of this research study covers the period of the first wave of COVID-19 in Egypt from February 2020 till May 2020, in which the Egyptian government and other Egyptian state institutions' intervened through a set of diverse decisions that that affected the national economic and social situation for Egyptians. The research methodology of this study depends on a graphical analysis of data derived from the WHO, to illustrate the relation between the Egyptian government and other state institutions' interventions and the spread of the COVID-19 virus. For a deeper understanding of the analysis, the qualitative part of the research method is conducted through a review of secondary sources and the analysis of official documents, reports and publications issued by the Egyptian government and different state institutions regarding the COVID-19. The authors reviewed many actions, decisions, and decrees taken by the Egyptian state, but opted to highlight the ones related to the above mentioned five Ps of governance in dealing with a pandemic as shown in figure 1.

5. Results of this Study

The Egyptian state has been highly proactive in its action plan to contain the outbreak of COVID-19. On almost every state level, major decisions and actions have been taken in what appears to be a highly coordinated indigenous effort guided by international experience from the WHO.

According to the WHO's delegation to Egypt that finished their inspection and review of the Egyptian situation regarding COVID-19, that although Egyptian state exerted extensive effort and assigned more financial, human, and physical resources to contain COVID-19 outbreak, yet even more efforts and resources were needed to continue the ongoing battle against COVID-19.²⁹ While on the economic front Minister of Planning and Economic Development Dr. Hala El Saeed assured that the Egyptian state has marked the health sector and every aspect related to life saving as a priority, and that Egypt has managed to absorb a huge part of

²⁷ Hollingsworth, T. D., Klinkenberg, D., Heesterbeek, H., & Anderson, R. M. (2011). Mitigation strategies for pandemic influenza A: balancing conflicting policy objectives. *PLoS computational biology*, 7(2); صالح، حسين، تداعيات ازمه على ميزان المدفوعات المصري، التداعيات المحتملة لازمة كورونا على الاقتصاد المصري، سلسلة أوراق السياسات، 5، 17-5، معهد التخطيط القومي، مايو 2020 <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4844>

²⁸ World Health Organization. (2020). 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=CjwKCAjw8df2BRA3EiwAvfZWaJOtp3OZ61g7X62PMAfRI9CCwKq8GLTRKZtcDaljCZbcFrUtj8t5BxoCDHYQAvD_BwE

²⁹ World Health Organization, (2020g). Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports— <http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-delegation-concludes-covid-19-technical-mission-to-egypt.html> Published March 25,2020. Accessed April 9,2020.

the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis due to the successful reforms adopted over the past four years, and that most international financial institutions expect the Egyptian economy to keep growing slowly but positively, unlike many other world economies that will witness negative growth rates.³⁰ (Amin, 2020; Rabea, 2020).

The following tables summarize the most important decisions from different state institutions regarding the containment of the COVID-19 outbreak. Although much more decisions were taken by the government and other state institutions, yet the authors favored highlighting the decisions that had instant health and medical, economic, and social, effects on the different sectors in Egypt. It should be noted however, that the Egyptian state's new mode of management resulted in the formation of the Higher Committee to Combat Coronavirus directed by Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly. The formation of the Higher Committee resulted in a much more synchronized state effort and a more efficient crisis management approach.

Table (1): Presidential Decrees dealing with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic

Decision Maker	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
President Abd El-Fatah EL-Sisi	14-03-2020	14-03-2020	Approve EGP 100 billion to mitigate the negative economic effects of the pandemic and to absorb anticipated market shocks in Egypt.	- Preparedness. - Political leadership
	14-03-2020	14-03-2020	Suspend schools and universities for two weeks as part of a comprehensive plan to face the Covid-19 outbreak.	- Prevention; - Preparedness.
	30-03-2020	30-03-2020	Boost the allowance of those working in the medical field by a 75 percent increase as a gesture of appreciation for their current efforts to contain the threat of outbreak.	- Preparedness; - Political leadership.
	06-04-2020	13-04-2020	Approve an emergency allowance of LE. 500 for three months for part-time and irregular labor.	- Preparedness; - Political leadership.

Source: Egypt's government Services Portal. (n.d.). Classification by Ministries.

Retrieved from <https://www.egypt.gov.eg/English/General/about.aspx#Policies>

Note: Fifth column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the governance standards.

³⁰ أمين، خالد زكريا، مراجعته تحليلية للتوصيات المقترحة في التقارير الدولية للتعامل مع التداعيات الاقتصادية والمالية لفيروس كورونا المستجد، التداعيات المحتملة لأزمة كورونا على الاقتصاد المصري، سلسلة أوراق السياسات، ٣، ٣-٤، معهد التخطيط القومي، مايو ٢٠٢٠ <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4842>

ربيع، حسن محمد، كورونا والطباعة ثلاثية الأبعاد، التداعيات المحتملة لأزمة كورونا على الاقتصاد المصري، سلسلة أوراق السياسات، ١٣، ٢-٢١، معهد التخطيط القومي، يونيو ٢٠٢٠ <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4877>

Table (2): Prime Ministerial Decrees dealing with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic

Decision Maker	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly	19-03-2020	19-03-2020	Enforcing a nationwide partial curfew from seven in the evening until six in the morning. Violation of the curfew could result in a 4000 EGP fine and possible imprisonment.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Stop all public and private mass transportation from 7 pm to 6 am	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Closure of all commercial shops from 5 pm to 6 am, including shops selling goods and providing services and commercial malls" during the days of the week 24 hours on Friday and Saturday- Supermarkets, grocery shops and pharmacies are exempted.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	All restaurants, cafes, cafeterias, casinos, night clubs, bars, shopping centers (malls), and other local shops to shut down from 7:00 pm (Cairo time) to 6:00 am across the nation. Work in restaurants and similar establishments that offer food is limited to home delivery until seven o'clock in the evening.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Suspending all civil services provided by ministries and governorates. Services provided by the health care are exempted.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Closure of all sports and social clubs, youth centers and gymnastic centers throughout the nation. in addition to closing all cafes, cafeterias, casinos, nightclubs, and similar clubs, establishments, and shops that provide entertainment.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Extend for two more weeks the suspension of the aviation movement in all airports.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	28-03-2020	28-03-2020	Extend suspension 2 more weeks of studies in all schools, institutes and universities, as well as any gatherings of students with the aim of receiving education under any name and nurseries of any kind.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
	08-04-2020	08-04-2020	Salaries of the Prime Minister and all cabinet members to be cut by 20 percent for three months to support precarious employment.	- Preparedness. - Political leadership.

Source: Egypt's government Services Portal. (n.d.). Classification by Ministries.

Retrieved from <https://www.egypt.gov.eg/English/General/about.aspx#Policies>

Note: Fifth column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the governance standards.

Table (3): Ministerial Decrees dealing with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic

Decision Maker	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
Minister of Planning and Economic Development	19-03-2020 26-03-2020 05-05-2020	19-03-2020 26-03-2020 05-05-2020	-Provide additional budget funding of EGP 200 million Ministry of Health for the fiscal year 2019/2020 to support its efforts and strengthen its capacity to address the pandemic. -Establishing an emergency fund to provide financial support to women and irregular labor and form a committee with other ministries and the National Council for Women to help them with employment. -Launching "Egypt Will Go" initiative to encourage the small and medium size private enterprises to retain employment, and provide new job opportunities.	- Preparedness. - Political leadership
Minister of Health	15-03-2020	15-03-2020	- Create a dedicated website to notify citizens with updates and disseminate information (https://www.care.gov.eg/EgyptCare/index.aspx) - Coordinate with other state institutions on appropriate actions needed to contain COVID 19. - Prohibit smoking of water pipe in public and private places and a fine of 2000 to any shop owner who violates the decree.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health.
Minister of Communications and Information Technology	15-03-2020	15-03-2020	- An additional 20% internet download quota for free to home subscriptions in coordination with service providers, at a cost of 200 Million EG Pounds paid by the state. - Provide free access to the websites of the Ministry of Education and Technical Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's websites and e-learning platforms.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.
Minister of Local Development	15-03-2020	15-03-2020	Directing all local authorities to control the markets and ensure all is abiding by the precautionary and preventive measures announced by the government.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.
Minister of Interior	19-03-2020	19-03-2020	Enforcing the curfew with that has been applied from 19-03-2020 until further notice	- Prevention. - Preparedness
Minister of Defense	22-03-2020	23-03-2020	- Production of anti-infective supplies and face masks - The Egyptian Armed Forces sterilized sites and streets subject to	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
Minister of Civil Aviation	16-03-2020	19-03-2020	Suspending the aviation movement in all airports starting until March 31. Decision was extended until May.	- Prevention. - Public health

Decision Maker	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
Minister of Trade and Industry	17-03-2020	17-03-2020	Suspend the export of face masks, anti-infective supplies as well as alcohol and all medical supplies related to COVID-19 for three months.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.
Minister of Environment	17-03-2020	17-03-2020	Close all natural habitats and protectorates to reduce group gatherings.	- Prevention. - Public health
Minister of Religious Endowment (Awqaf)	19-03-2020	19-03-2020	Suspend all prayers in all of Egypt's Mosques for a period of two weeks while modifying the call to prayer by adding the phrase "do your prayers at home"	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
Minister of Tourism and Antiquities	24-03-2020	24-03-2020	Sterilize and disinfect all hotels and facilities and tourist sites in Hurghada, Luxor, Sharm El Sheikh	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
Minister of Education and Technical Education	26-03-2020	26-03-2020	- For KG1 and 2 and first and second primary grades, teachers will prepare an assessment report and require parents to ensure students have accomplished the curriculum published on the electronic library. -Students from third primary to second preparatory will not take final year exams this term but will instead prepare a research paper for every course and submit it online within two months. -For third preparatory, third secondary and technical certificate grades, students will take the final year exams as scheduled and inside schools, with full consideration for health precautions and cooperation with all entitled state authorities to protect students. -Grade 10 and 11 students will sit exams online using their tablets and results will be sent out via the Internet.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research	26-03-2020	26-03-2020	-All years except final year will submit a final project instead of the final exam. -Graduating seniors will sit for the final exam when university reopens.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
Minister of Social Solidarity	28-03-2020	28-03-2020	-Early disbursement of monthly pensions.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.

Source: Egypt's government Services Portal. (n.d.). Classification by Ministries.

Retrieved from <https://www.egypt.gov.eg/English/General/about.aspx#Policies>

Note: Fifth column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the governance standards.

Table (4): Other Institutions' decisions dealing with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic

	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
Central Bank of Egypt	29-03-2020	29-03-2020		- Prevention. - Preparedness.
Coptic Orthodox Church	21-03-2020	21-03-2020	All churches to close down and suspend masses. Subject to renewal according to national need. The church also banned visits to monasteries and closed condolences halls attached to churches.	- Prevention. - Preparedness. - Public health
National Research Center (NCR)	01-03-2020	01-07-2020	NCR conducted a survey to measure the reaction of Egyptian citizens to actions taken by government. - More than two-thirds of those surveyed assessed the performance of the Ministry from excellent to very good, while nearly a quarter evaluated the ministry's performance as good. - 90% of participants supported the continuation of the armed forces interventions in performing their supporting role of sterilization and disinfection operations. - A large proportion of the citizens surveyed, reaching two-thirds, agreed to impose a total ban on people's movement, and the proposed period was not less than 10 days and not more than 3 weeks, while a third refused to impose a total ban for fear of its economic repercussions.	- People
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics CAPMAS	01-03-2020	01-07-2020	CAPMAS conducted survey to measure how Covid-19 affected Egyptians. - More than 99.9 % of Egyptians received their news about Covid-19 from social Media and advertising posts - 90% of Egyptians were aware of possible side effects of covid-19 and how to avoid them and what to do in case of infection. - 75.5 % of Egyptians were aware of government interventions to support raised awareness like the "hotline" - 55% of Egyptians experienced reduction in working hours and days while 26% experienced loss of jobs despite wanting to work. - 73% experienced reduction in their regular net salary	- People

Source: Egypt's government Services Portal. (n.d.). Note: Fifth column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the governance standards.

Table (5): Parliament decisions dealing with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic

Decision Maker	Date Issued	Date Implemented	Decision	Governance
Parliament Decision Maker	18-04-2020	Next day to publication of the law in the Official Gazette.	Approve amendments to current emergency law to empower the Egyptian President to take necessary executive decisions and measures during the COVID-19 Pandemic.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.
	21-04-2020	Next day to publication of the law in the Official Gazette.	Approve amendments of two articles of the real estate and property tax law (196/2008) to relieve investors of some tax burdens imposed on their properties when used in industrial and production activities.	- Preparedness.
	21-04-2020	Next day to publication of the law in the Official Gazette.	Approve amendments to current state 2019/20 budget to allocate an additional EGP 10 billion to help fight the negative effects of the pandemic and stimulate the economy at the same time. This amount is mainly geared towards the seasonal workforce negatively affected by the actions taken to contain the pandemic.	- Prevention. - Preparedness.
	21-04-2020	Next day to publication of the law in the Official Gazette	Approve amendments to four articles of the current income tax law (law 91/2005) to strengthen social justice standards, by relieving some of the income tax burden for low-income citizens and state employees.	- Preparedness.

Source: Egypt's government Services Portal. (n.d.). Classification by Ministries.

Retrieved from <https://www.egypt.gov.eg/English/General/about.aspx#Policies>

Note: Fifth column classifying the decisions under the 5Ps from the researchers' interpretation based on the early discussion about each of the governance standards.

As the above tables show, the Egyptian state managed to carry out an early set of actions to contain the pandemic. These actions show a concern for both the health situation as well as the economic one. The effects of the above intervention efforts show positive contribution to the situation of COVID-19 pandemic in Egypt when compared to many other countries.³¹ With much less economic distress than Europe and the United States, and with fewer restrictions on movement and media as in China³², Egypt struck the balance between a

³¹ كمال، عبد الحميد، المحليات وتأثيرات كورونا وما بعدها، سلسلة أوراق الازمة (كورونا)، ٩، ٢-١٣، معهد التخطيط القومي، يونيو ٢٠٢٠
<http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4875>

³² Fernandes, N. (2020). Economic effects of coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) on the world economy. Available at SSRN 3557504. Accessed April 19, 2020; Zhu, Z. B., Zhong, C. K., Zhang, K. X., Dong, C., Peng, H., Xu, T., & Zhang, Y. H. (2020). Epidemic trend of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in mainland China. *Zhonghua yu fang yi xue za zhi [Chinese journal of preventive medicine]*, 54, E022-E022.

contained outbreak and a rather slowed down but not a shutdown economy.³³ It appears that the Egyptian state was capable through the set of actions taken to comply with the WHO guidance and became ready, prepared, and capable to respond to the corresponding level of threat caused by the pandemic.³⁴

With regards to the implications of the 5ps model, it is clear that not one single nation across the globe was prepared for COVID-19. By the time of declaring the case at hand as a pandemic, it was already late for most countries to have the required level of preparedness to prevent the eminent health crisis, and few country leaders recognized the possible implications and the required health measures needed to contain the spread of COVID-19. Courageously the Egyptian state took preventive measures to control the pandemic without completely disrupting the economy. Despite the severity of some of the decisions by the nation's leadership, these actions were deemed inevitable by world leaders that did not want to jeopardize the whole society at the expense of egocentric choices that might bring personal political glory by catering for responsive rather than efficient public decisions. The public health governance standard was taken as a top priority by the Egyptian political leadership. This priority was conveyed in launching a special website, hotline and psychological and mental help to Egyptians in dealing with the virus. In addition, the priority of public health was also conveyed in providing all the necessary medical staff, beds, hospitals and medicine to the public. From a citizen's viewpoint, it is clear that during the specified time of the research, the public were taking the necessary precautions specified by the government such as wearing masks and maintain social distance. The entrenched perception has usually been negative regarding the health sector in Egypt, spotting insufficient medical experience, and poor funding, as well as inefficient management.³⁵ However, within the COVID-19 outbreak the general sentiment started to change and many people started to appreciate the efforts exerted by the state. According to two studies conducted by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the National Research Center in Egypt to gather citizens' opinion of government performance and evaluate the performance of the Ministry of Health, the results revealed that more than two-thirds of those surveyed assessed the performance of the Ministry from excellent to very good, while nearly a quarter evaluated the ministry's performance as good. Moreover, 90% of participants supported the continuation of the armed forces interventions in performing their supporting role of sterilization and disinfection operations. A large proportion of the citizens surveyed, reaching two-thirds, agreed to impose a total ban on people's movement, and the proposed period was not less than 10 days and not more than 3 weeks, while a third refused to impose a total ban for fear of its economic

³³ الباز، هبة محمود، الشمول المالي كمدخل للتعامل مع تداعيات أزمة فيروس كورونا المستجد، التداعيات المحتملة لازمة كورونا على الاقتصاد المصري، سلسلة أوراق السياسات، ١٨، ٢١-١، معهد التخطيط القومي، يونيو ٢٠٢٠.

<http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4885>

³⁴ عثمان، محمد عثمان، وباء كورونا وتبعاته الاقتصادية، مصر وعالم كورونا وما بعد، سلسلة أوراق الازمة (كورونا)، ١، ٢١-٢، معهد التخطيط القومي، أبريل ٢٠٢٠. <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/xmlui/handle/123456789/4834>

³⁵ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2005. Pro-Poor Health Care for Egypt. Policy Brief # 3, Cairo: UNDP; مرجع سبق ذكره؛ أمين، خالد زكريا، مرجع سبق ذكره؛ ربيع، حسن، محمد، مرجع سبق ذكره؛

repercussions.³⁶ This impression could be assured by the position Egypt received on the index developed by the WHO, as it received a 4 on the country preparedness capacity in a localized virus transmission scenario with clusters of positive cases. This assessment also complies with both the technical mission report to Egypt and this current study. In both reviews and assessments of the governance practice in Egypt it appears that the decisions and actions were effective and resulted in slowing the transmission rate of the virus and that the state's mitigation efforts succeeded in delaying the peak of the spread of COVID-19.

According to Dr. Hutin, Director for Communicable Diseases in WHO's Regional Office and the team leader to the technical mission that visited Egypt to review the country's capacity and preparedness to the crisis, "significant work is being done, especially in the areas of early detection, laboratory testing, isolation, contact tracing and referral of patients,"³⁷. This positive review of the WHO technical mission, coupled with the state decisions mentioned above, the authors of this paper utilized the data from the daily reports of the WHO and analyzed them. The data analyzed included the total number of positive cases, the total confirmed daily new positive cases, the mortality cases, and the doubling time over the period of this study from the first of March till the fifth of June 2020.

The results were all constructed graphically to illustrate the development of the COVID-19 crisis in Egypt. As shown in figures 2 and 3, the total number of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) positive cases and the total daily new cases are having a similar trend line and the curves are not flattened till the end of the study. It should be noted that the actual number of total confirmed cases is likely much higher than the number reported and plotted due to limited testing.

³⁶ Capmas . (2020, July 1). *Egypt Statistics* . Retrieved from Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics : <https://www.capmas.gov.eg/HomePage.aspx>; NRC. (2020). *National Research Centre* . Retrieved from ncr.sci: <https://www.nrc.sci.eg/>

³⁷ World Health Organization, (2020g). Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports—<http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-delegation-concludes-covid-19-technical-mission-to-egypt.html> Published March 25,2020. Accessed April 9,2020.

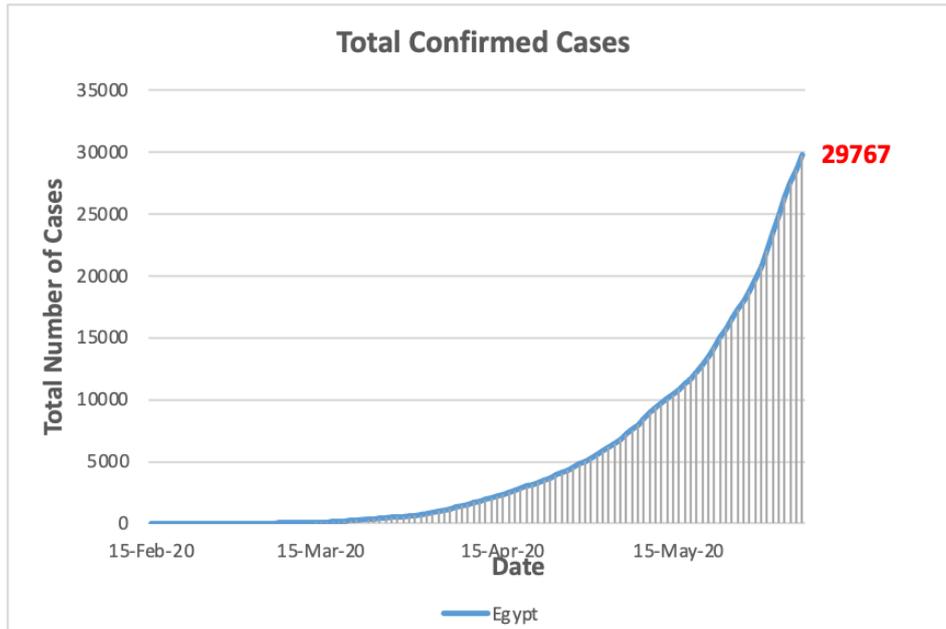


Figure (2): Total confirmed cases

Source: Authors analyzed data retrieved from WHO, (2020f)

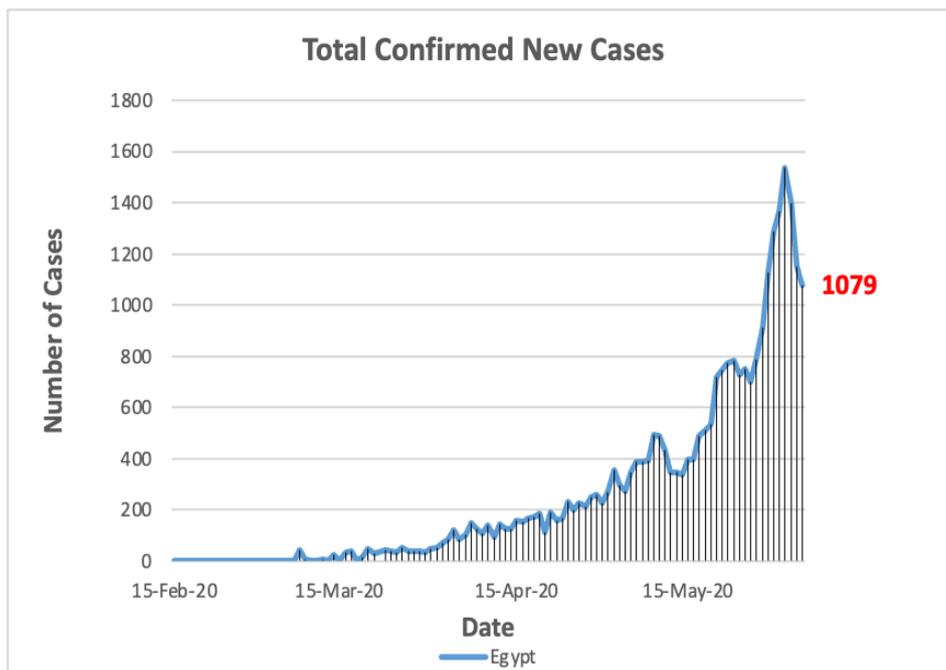


Figure (3): Total confirmed daily new cases

Source: Authors analyzed data retrieved from WHO, (2020f)

As shown above in figures 2 and 3, the rate of total confirmed cases and total confirmed daily new cases increased significantly starting mid May 2020. This could be explained through two different factors. The first is the leniency of the execution of the policies after two months of firm execution, and the second factor is the very high rate of social exchange among family and friends during the holy month of Ramadan which started 23 April 2020,

and followed by the Feast a month later. It should be noted that before mid May the number of confirmed cases was increasing but with an almost constant rate of change, clearly due to the strict implementation of the policies and minimal social gatherings.0

As shown in figure 4 the total number of deaths increased at a different pattern than the number of cases as shown in figure 2. The result was what is illustrated in figure 5, in which a high mortality rate of the PCR positive cases reaches its peak of 7.7% on April 13th, and then the rate started to decline reaching 3.7% by the end of this study. Although this rate is considered high, yet it is decreasing. The authors did not study the clinical, medical nor the demographic data as it is out of the scope of this study, however this should be studied to find out the reason for the fluctuations in the mortality rate, although the authors reckon that this may be due to the eligibility to be tested by PCR and the more testing is conducted the less the mortality rate of the PCR positive cases will become.

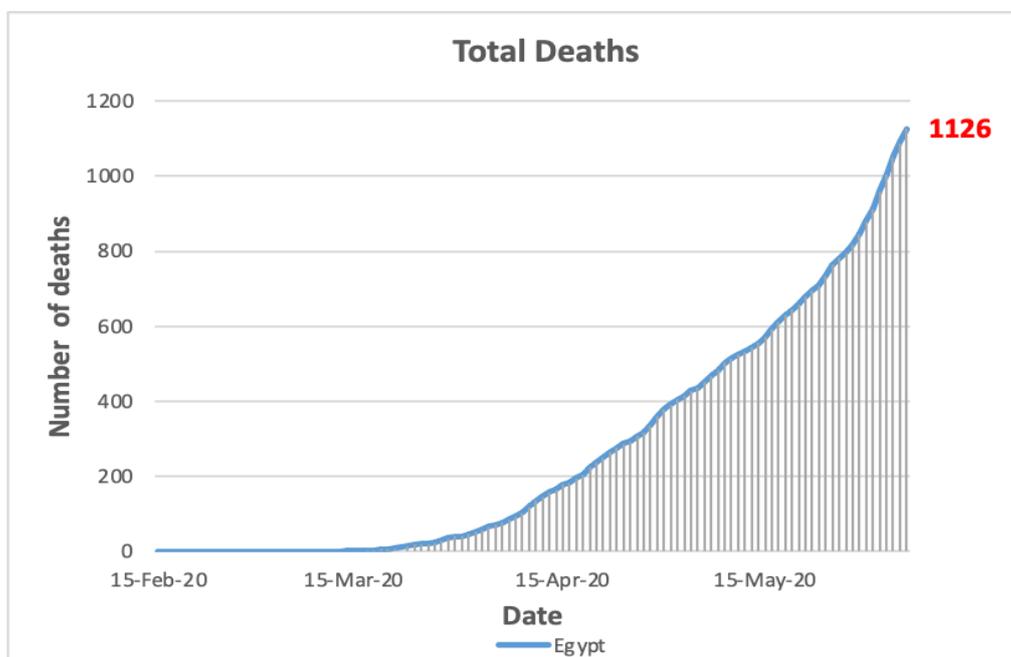


Figure (4): Total deaths

Source: Authors analyzed data retrieved from WHO, (2020f)

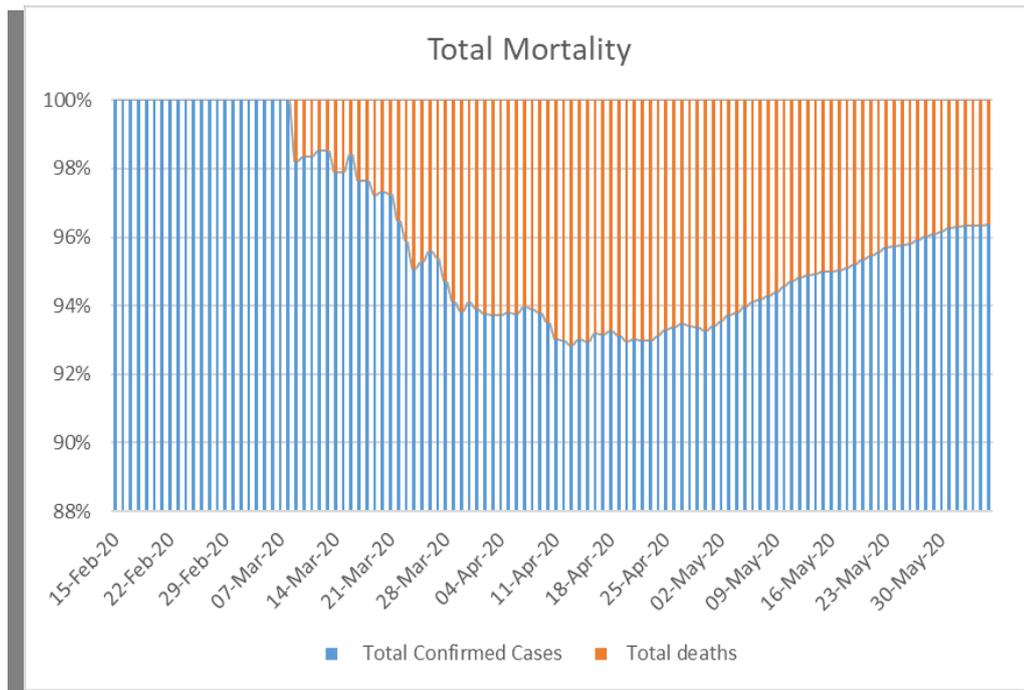


Figure (5): Total deaths to total confirmed cases

Source: Authors analyzed data retrieved from WHO, (2020f)

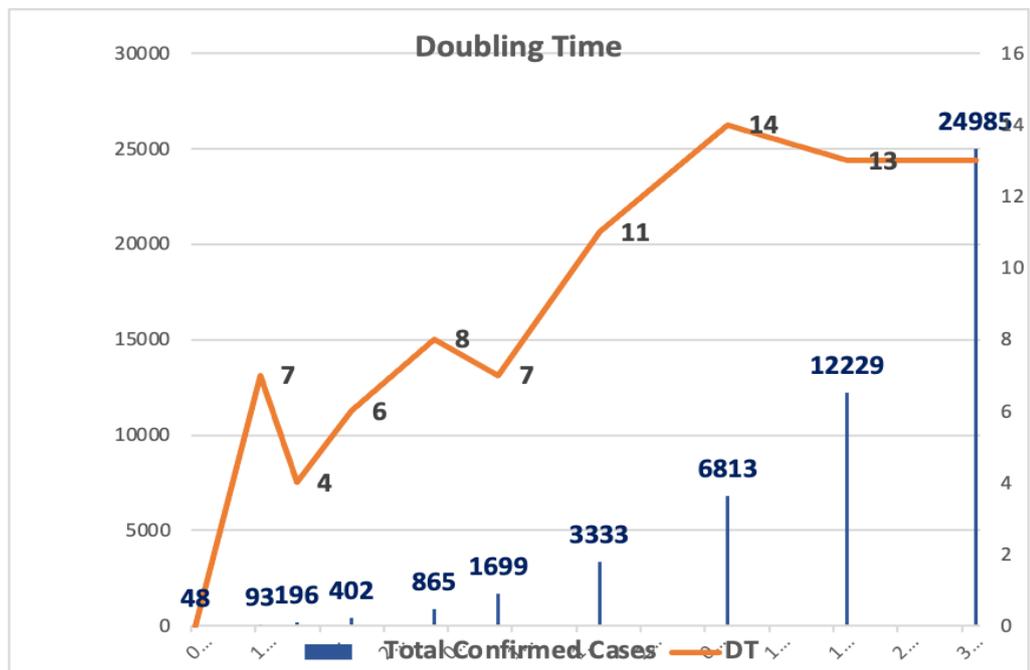


Figure (6): Doubling time

Source: Authors analyzed data retrieved from WHO, (2020f)

Finally, figure 6 illustrates the time taken for positive cases to double. In Egypt this is equal to 9.2 days in average. Using the rule of 70 whereby the Doubling Time (dt) is equal to 70 divided by the Growth Rate (r)³⁸. Growth Rate (r) in this study is 7.59%.

The authors concluded that the interventions adopted by the Egyptian state contributed constructively in this crisis by keeping the increase in the trend line of total positive cases slower yet not stationary. Strict execution of state decisions once they were taken including suspension of schools and university for two weeks, reducing the working hours for all hospitality services, enforcing a nationwide partial curfew, closure of all commercial shops from 5 pm to 6 am, stopping all public and private mass transportation from 7 pm to 6 am, as well as all the decisions mentioned earlier in this research resulted in a relatively slow increase in the number of confirmed cases as shown in figures 2 and 3 till the mid of May 2020. Throughout March and on to April, the decisions of the different state institutions followed each other and worked in a way to complete each one another. While the pandemic was not completely controlled during this time, the spread of the disease was clearly hindered.

6. Conclusion

After reviewing the decisions made by the Egyptian government and the different state institutions, it became possible to notice the positive change in governance during the COVID-19 crisis. The Egyptian state acted on the supply side by conducting a governance model that included two main stakeholders, the citizens and the state. The state in many ways succeeded in its governance parts that it was directly in charge of and had control over. In general, one could claim that Egypt witnessed a new mode of public governance in its encounter with the pandemic that resulted in an accepted level of containment compared to other nations. As the actions and decisions highlighted above show, a much more decentralized process of decision making has evolved ranging between Presidential decrees, Cabinet and Central bank decisions, and Parliamentary legislations. The known administrative overlap and rigid formal communications between different state institutions have dissolved to a great extent, and what seems to be even more important is the coordination and synchronization between these institutions. The expected social resistance represented in the patriarchal and rigid traditions rooted in religious institutions was softened by the decisions made by the Ministry of Religious Endowment and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Another noticeable positive change in governance is the full clarity and transparency of the Egyptian state from the very early onset of the COVID-19 crisis in Egypt, which was evident in the creation of the dedicated website to provide all the needed information regarding COVID-19, as well sharing public information daily on the same time. The Egyptian state managed to Prevent the fast transmission of the virus; showed Preparedness in most of the decisions and actions; demonstrated Political leadership; and complied with the WHO's Public Health standards. This was clear across the different reports and assessment praising mainly the areas of emergency response mechanisms; case finding, contact tracing

³⁸ Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. chelsea green publishing.

and management; surveillance; public health measures; laboratory testing; and case management"

7. Recommendations and Direction of Future Research

With regards to the five Ps model introduced by the research; Prevention, Preparedness, Political leadership, Public health and People, it comes to sight that all factors in the model can be measured and analyzed based on secondary data. For the case of Egypt, little information is available explaining the dynamics of dealing with Egyptian citizens and level of trust in the state's response and actions towards the pandemic. It is unclear whether the lack of adherence to rules imposed by the state is due to lack of awareness among citizens, or due to the increased trust in state interventions believing that they are being sufficient enough to contain COVID-19, or rather a complete distrust in all the actions taken by the state. While the research did capture previous publications on Egyptian's response to government interventions, it is recommended that future research focuses in depth on people's perception on state interventions and preventive measures. when it came to the peoples' part, the state depending on its supply formula of governance worked on encouraging citizens to comply and perform better during the pandemic, but these efforts were not highly effective. Probably a more effective governance approach could have been more about a collective action approach in which both the state and the people find ways to act collectively in every stakeholder's best interest. Despite a solid compliance with the WHO guidance, and a robust set of decisions and actions, yet a vital aspect of the "Risk communication and community engagement" was missing or was not effectively handled, namely the perception of the threat of the pandemic among the citizens. In other words, the governance model adopted by the Egyptian state included two pillars, but worked only through one.

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