

Metamorphosis or Maturation:  
Organizational Continuity in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

by

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# Contents

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## *Acknowledgements*

1. Introduction           page 2
2. Maturation of a Social Welfare Organization           page 29
3. Repression and Divide           page 46
4. Electoral Advance: Elections Do Not a Party Make           page 72
5. Youthful Dissent           page 95
6. Conclusion: Stability in Stasis           page 117
7. Postscript: Regimes Often Get the Opposition They Deserve           page 120

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You’re off to Great Places! You’re off and away!”

-*Dr. Seuss*

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

As Egypt's oldest and most prominent opposition movement, the Society of Muslim Brothers, *al-ikhwan al-muslimeen*, has long posed a challenge to successive secular regimes by offering a comprehensive vision of an Islamic state and extensive social welfare services. Since its founding in 1928, the Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*) has thrived in a parallel religious and social services sector, generally avoiding direct confrontation with ruling regimes.<sup>1</sup> More recently over the past two decades, however, the Brotherhood has dabbled with partisanship in the formal political realm. This experiment culminated in the election of the eighty-eight Brothers to the People's Assembly in 2005—the largest oppositional bloc in modern Egyptian history—and the subsequent arrests of nearly 1,000 Brothers.<sup>2</sup> The electoral advance into mainstream politics provides ample fodder for scholars to test theories and make predictions about the future of the Egyptian regime: will it fall to the Islamist opposition or remain a beacon of secularism in the Arab world?

This thesis shies away from making such broad speculations. Instead, it explores the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood has adapted as an organization in the past decade. The Brotherhood's members revere its organization, *tanzim*, as a concept intrinsically connected to the Brotherhood's vision of a utopian Islamic society and they

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<sup>1</sup> Carrie Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). 105.

<sup>2</sup> Khairat Al-Shater, "No need to be afraid of us," *The Guardian*, November 23, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/nov/23/comment.mainsection>.

herald its structure as the primary source of the Brotherhood's power.<sup>3</sup> Yet scholars have often overlooked its pivotal role.<sup>4</sup> This thesis will address the following questions: To what extent has the Brotherhood's organizational apparatus adapted since the 1970s and, in particular, over the past decade? How has the Brotherhood altered its ideology, goals and strategies and institutional structure?

These questions bear significant scholarly and policy relevance, yet are omitted from most contemporary studies of the Brotherhood. The failure to adequately explore the organizational outlay and internally embedded institutions has mitigated our ability to analyze thoroughly the Muslim Brotherhood's persistently ambiguous political agenda, prickly relations with the Mubarak regime and teleological vision for Egyptian society.

A handful of scholars of comparative politics assume that the Brotherhood's unanticipated electoral success in the 2005 elections attested to the transition from social movement to political party. However, more pragmatist approaches understand the recent events to be reactionary responses accompanying the rise of contentious politics in authoritarian regimes. In this view, the Muslim Brotherhood remains a firmly grounded social movement that wavers in and out of the political sphere following the ebb and the flow of state repression, and capitalizing on opportunities when possible.<sup>5</sup> An internal Brotherhood document from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century summarizes the Ikhwan's traditional stance, hinting at its fear of the state's coercive apparatus:

[The Ikhwan] should try 'to keep away from competing with the regime in the areas of political friction, and instead focus on the areas where the regime does

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<sup>3</sup> Hisham Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000* (London; New York: Tauris, 2004), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 17.

not exist, due to the negligence and lack of response to the needs of the population. Areas that are more in need of the Ikhwan's attention include charity work, social service and humanitarian activities in general.<sup>6</sup>

Like most recent work, this thesis regards the 2005 elections as a critical moment for the Brotherhood. But a party do not elections make. Contrary to recent scholarly and journalistic claims, a closer examination of the Brotherhood's internal structure reveals that very little organizational change has occurred. The Brotherhood remains a religious social welfare organization, not a political party. The 2005 elections marked not a transformation, but a new era in which the Muslim Brotherhood grows increasingly susceptible to ideological rifts, internal polarization and organizational dissent, all in the midst of a progressively repressive environment.

Having established this baseline, I then ask why such organizational change has failed to occur. Though no single-case study is capable of producing generalizations, a detailed analysis of causal mechanisms may inform a number of larger theories, particularly durable authoritarianism, political Islam, new social media, and organizational change that characterize much of the work conducted in the Arab world.<sup>7</sup> I examine two variables that other scholars have identified as causal factors in the Brotherhood's alleged metamorphosis into a political party: (1) the Brotherhood's recent advance on electoral politics, and (2) the persistent, public dissent by younger generations of the Brotherhood through new social media. I demonstrate that neither of these conditions has induced organizational change. Instead, I argue that the central determinants of the Brotherhood's organizational stagnancy have been twofold:

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<sup>6</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 206.

<sup>7</sup> Anne Peters and Pete Moore, "Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Change in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)* 44, no. 3 (2009): 258.

government repression and internal disagreement between competing camps within the Brotherhood itself.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I define, conceptualize, and operationalize the dependent and independent variables. Second, I identify the bodies of literature that enhance our understanding of organizational change and oppositional movements in durable authoritarian regimes. Third, I consider the case study at hand, commenting on the ways in which preexisting theories enable us to understand particular aspects organizational change in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and outline the ways in which perceived organizational change was grounded in incorrect assumptions. Fourth, I discuss the methodology and sources used to analyze the organizational stagnation of the Ikhwan.

### **Dependent and Independent Variables**

#### *Dependent Variable: Organizational Change*

Organizational change is the alteration or transformation of an organization's fundamental components, including its core ideology, dominant strategies and goals, and institutional structure. Since studying organizational change involves a single case, a longitudinal single-case study allows one to gauge adaptation. Analyzing the differences between the organization prior to treatment and post-treatment can determine whether—and the degree to which—organizational metamorphosis has taken place. Organizations, whether they are political parties, social welfare societies, or terrorist networks, are best characterized by three criteria: ideology, strategies and goals, and institutions.

Ideology is an organization's comprehensive vision. It comprises a set of abstract, overarching ideas that guide the organization's more tangible strategies and goals. Ideology may address a multitude of factors, such as political contestation, the nature of the economic system, or a particular religious agenda. The most prevalent organizational ideologies come from an official source at the top of an organization, yet in mass participation or federated organizations, there often exists room for individual interpretations of a broad ideology. These may conflict with the official views espoused and can lead to internal organizational conflict or the pursuit of incompatible goals by different members.<sup>8</sup>

Goals are the objectives that the organization intends to realize. Strategies are devised to realize the outlined goals. Both have short and long term elements. Like ideologies, goals are diverse and might include political or economic reorganization, incorporating a religion into the state, or changing foreign policy priorities. Strategies naturally correlate to organizational goals: they are the means by which an organization intends to realize the goals it sets for itself. Goals and strategies differ remarkably across settings. Fierce competition, relation to society, a hostile environment or internal strife can all contribute to their reformulation.<sup>9</sup> Even amongst similar organizations, strategic orientation may differ. In measuring goals and strategies it is imperative to distinguish between shifts in the short-term and long-term. An organization may recognize opportunities that exist for a brief window of time and adjust accordingly without undermining longer-term aims. To carefully distinguish between the reorientation of

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<sup>8</sup> W. Graham Astley and Andrew H. Van de Ven, "Central Perspectives and Debates in Organization Theory," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (June 1983): 248.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 249



short or long-term goals, we must look at the organization over a period of time to place any reformulations in proper perspective.

Institutions are an organization's skeleton and characterize its internal dynamics. Organizations are characterized by their degree of institutionalization. Some organizations are run by individuals or an elite group autonomous from binding rules or procedures; others are highly formal with mechanisms to check leadership autonomy. Amendments to preexisting institutions or procedures constitute organizational change. The level of organizational institutionalization is determined by: 1) the number of formal mechanisms of consultation, 2) the weight these formal mechanisms have in influencing decision-making, 3) the degree to which the organization is differentiated and has a clear hierarchy of separate bodies, and 4) the extent to which these separate units are involved in more formal mechanisms of consultation.<sup>10</sup> Rules and norms prescribe individual, unit and group behaviors.<sup>11</sup> Organizational institutionalization can be measured by the autonomy of leadership to make decisions without consulting the larger organization.<sup>12</sup>

Given that this thesis explores the potential transformation of a social welfare organization to a political party, briefly reviewing both helps to outline the basic distinctions between the types of organizations. Social welfare organizations (SWO) have taken many forms over the centuries. The church and non-governmental organizations have historically played fundamental roles in providing services to citizens, and one could take an entire thesis to describe the different manifestations of SWO over time. I narrow the discussion of SWO to their most basic aim: to promote the wellness and well-being of their constituents. Consequently, they are ideologically geared and

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<sup>10</sup> Anne Peters, "Thesis Meeting," February 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Marc Eisner, "CSS Senior Colloquium," September 23, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Astley and Ven, "Central Perspectives and Debates in Organization Theory." 249. See citation for James March and Johan Olsen "Ambiguity and Choice in Organization."

strategically oriented to provide services to citizens. SWO can be small to cover a specific city or province, or expansive and provide services nationwide.<sup>13</sup> The interaction between organizational leadership and constituents is neither top-down nor bottom-up. SWOs exist to provide services to their constituency, not to aggregate or express political preferences.

Describing political parties is more specific. Political parties typically seek to achieve power in government by means of responding to their constituency, that is, aggregating political preferences from the bottom-up. According to Alan Ware, political parties can be broken down into five components:

- 1) institutions that bring people together for the purpose of exercising power within the state; 2) institutions that seek legitimate means to pursuing their ends; 3) institutions that contest elections when they have the ability to do so; 4) institutions that seek to represent more than a single, narrow interest in society; and 5) a group of people with similar beliefs, attitudes and values.<sup>14</sup>

Naturally, the electoral system determines the nature of the political party system; this cannot be overlooked in discussions of political parties in semi-open authoritarian regimes. While non-ruling parties in authoritarian regimes are often just avenues to disseminate opposition, they nonetheless exhibit characteristics similar to the political parties Ware outlines. They have institutionalized voting procedures for the selection of candidates, espouse a platform the median member accepts and have ways of moderating or including preferences from general members. They are not top-down

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<sup>13</sup> "Social Welfare Organizations," *IRS*, September 15, 2009, <http://www.irs.gov/charities/nonprofits/article/0,,id=96178,00.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Alan Ware, *Political parties and party systems* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). 2-5.

organizations run by elites. Rather, political parties function by aggregating preferences from their constituency and formulating platforms that appeal to their support base to achieve their fundamental goal of contesting political power and implementing policy change.<sup>15</sup> The following chart summarizes the dichotomous dependent variable consisting of SWO and political parties, the main components analyzed in this thesis.

*Dichotomous Dependent Variable: Organizational Change*

Component	Social Welfare Organization	Political Party
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Varied; narrower than a political party because it is not required to have specific stances on certain issues. Adheres to more general, overarching vision.</li> <li>-Often has a religious doctrine as the base of its ideology, or simply a commitment to providing services to a specific constituency (ex: the poor)</li> <li>-Committed to connecting people for the purpose of providing or receiving services</li> <li>-Realized through distribution of social welfare, not political participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Varied</li> <li>-At core they seek to contest formal elections to achieve whatever goal(s) the party sets out for itself (ex: replace the status-quo, pursue environmentally-friendly policies, etc)</li> <li>-Aligns people with similar interests, values and beliefs to attain political power</li> </ul>
Goals and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The ultimate goal is the provision of services to its constituency</li> <li>-Strategies vary depending on the location and size of the constituency (city, state, nation)</li> <li>-Goals and strategies are limited by the resources available to the SWO. Must select who its gives support to in accordance with its ability to provide services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The fundamental goal is to attain political power in the formal sphere (parliament, executive).</li> <li>-Win maximum number of seats to change policies</li> <li>-Strategies center around maximizing political support and forming a minimum coalition of voters/votes to pursue their ideology or to realize their aims</li> <li>-Respond to electorate's preferences</li> </ul>
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Must develop institutions capable of raising, channeling, and distributing private funds to sustain social welfare projects</li> <li>-Subsequent institutions are developed around this centerpiece. SWO are often religiously affiliated because religious communities provide more consistent sources of income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Institutions enhance party's appeal by channeling interests of members into formal policy recommendations, platforms or campaigns to help them succeed at electoral contestation</li> <li>-Once in government, use state funds to distribute to constituency.</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 126

*Independent Variable 1: Electoral Advance*

An electoral advance can be characterized by an organization's initial entrance, or calculated increased presence, in core political life.<sup>16</sup> Typically achieved by entering formal governing institutions via electoral success, electoral advance can be identified as increased political participation in representative bodies endowed with the powers to formulate policy and govern the state. It will be measured by (1) the number of parliamentary seats contested and, (2) the number of parliamentary seats won. While one might argue that there are ways of entering political life outside of the formal realm, this variable concerns only electoral presence in national parliament and, consequently, I argue that gaining electoral seats are not necessarily precursors to organizational change.

It should be noted that an electoral advance does not necessitate—nor is it equivalent to—an organizational reorientation. Some might assume that a movement's entrance into politics is an exhibition of political party transformation. Rather, expanding into the political realm might constitute one of many organizational goals to be realized in time and in the appropriate environment. While previous legal codes may have prevented a group with political ambitions from entering the core political sphere, environmental conditions might open, allowing that group to finally realize their political goals. In this way, the group's fundamental aims have not been altered; rather, the environmental conditions that previously prevented their political contestation changed and enabled formal participation. While electoral advance does not constitute organizational change in and of itself, the ways in which that organization might transform after entering the political realm may indicate organizational change.

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<sup>16</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 13.

*Independent Variable 2: Dissent via New Social Media*

Dissent is a “difference of opinion or sentiment.”<sup>17</sup> In the context of an organization, dissent is characterized as the internal expression of a difference of opinion or disagreement with an organization’s policies, purpose, ideology or structure. Dissent generally serves as a warning sign, a preliminary indicator of organizational decline. For this reason, many organizations discourage public dissent and develop internal channels for diffusing dissident opinions. In organizations with nonexistent or poor mechanisms for incorporating dissent, a host of complications can arise from managerial inefficiency to strategic errors.<sup>18</sup>

Central to studying organizational dissent today is to account for the ways in which new ideas and technologies influence older structures. The notion that technological revolutions can influence social movements is not new: Della Porta acknowledges the immense role that technological change can play in affecting organizational and structural change,<sup>19</sup> while Tarrow notes that revolutions in the printing press and the rise of literacy contributed to an “invisible community of readers.”<sup>20</sup> Perhaps with even greater potential, the Internet today helps circulate and diffuse the idea of movements. I will gauge dissent via new social media according to the relative number of (Muslim Brother) blogs, their content and pronounced purpose for dissenting. I will use the aggregated work of other scholars to discuss the nature and content of blogs.

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<sup>17</sup> “Dissent,” in *Websters Third Edition New International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged* (Merriam-Webster), 656.

<sup>18</sup> John D. Stanley, “Dissent in Organizations,” *The Academy of Management Review* 6, no. 1 (January 1981): 13.

<sup>19</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social movements* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006). 161.

<sup>20</sup> Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in movement* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). 41.

*Independent Variable 3: Repression and Divide*

Repression is the use of force to preclude the translation of political preferences into collective action.<sup>21</sup> It is generally enacted on an organization by an external agent. Repression can have both violent and non-violent manifestations. Violent forms of repression involve the use of physical force intended to cause damage or injury to persons or property.<sup>22</sup> In this thesis non-violent forms of repression refer to what is known as non-violent political repression. It consists of repertoires of discriminatory practices ranging from imprisonment, to surveillance, to police brutality, to financial or media attacks, to legal prejudice. Repression will be measured by the degree to which it affects the organization it is inflicted upon. I will gauge repression by measuring the number of repressive acts while taking into account the nature of those offenses (whether violent or non-violent). In the case of the Brotherhood, I will compare the present state of repression with past incidents or periods of sustained marginalization.

Divide refers to the rise of a camp within an organization that espouses distinctive opinions, upholds different values or adheres to a different interpretation of the organization's ideology. Organizational division is less severe than an organizational faction—factions would presumably exit the organization—but could potentially develop into a faction should relations deteriorate. The number of ideological camps within a single organization indicates the degree of division. I will gauge the severity of divide by contrasting the ideological or preferential differences between the official organization and the dissenting camp. I will also consider the nature of relations between the two: do their disagreements play out in the public realm or does the organization

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<sup>21</sup> Anne Peters, "Thesis Meeting," April 2, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> "Violence," in *Websters Third Edition New International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged* (Merriam-Webster), 2554.

remain a united front? Do individuals from the camp slander the organization or remain relatively loyal despite their personal differences?

### **Literature Review**

There exists no extensive scholarship on the transformation of oppositional political parties in authoritarian regimes. For this reason, I drew from various disciplines that emphasized different aspects of the causal chain that explain organizational stagnancy in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Scholarship on political Islam not only describes the Brotherhood's support base, sprawling constituency and federated structure, more importantly, it demonstrates how the Ikhwan has been able to weather an authoritarian climate. However, political Islam does not comment on why an Islamist movement might advance into the formal electoral realm. New social media characterizes the catalysts of social change and the ways in which new technology challenges older structures, but it fails to explain the precise causal mechanisms that induce change. Social movement theory (SMT) outlines the general opportunities and constraints the Brotherhood confronts that shape its subsequent strategies and goals. But SMT arose from studying western movements and it cannot account for the reasons why orthodox movements thrive in other parts of the world; it predicts religious movements will falter due to their narrow appeal and abstract vision. The literature on authoritarian durability centralizes the role of the regime's coercive apparatus as a means to stabilize and perpetuate its authority. It also suggests that elections in authoritarian regimes are avenues through which to diffuse opposition, not the potential for political liberalization. However, the literature on authoritarianism fails to discuss the dynamics of opposition, or the ways in which opposition manages the opportunities and constraints created by

the regime. Lastly, organizational theory describes the ways in which a movement can change either in subtle or fundamental ways, but does not elaborate thoroughly on the impetuses for change or stagnation.

These literatures generally divide into two camps. One literature, which is more optimistic about the Brotherhood's ability to transform into a political party and engage in electoral contestation, focuses on the factors that catalyze political liberalization and democratization. This literature involves theories of political transition and incorporates notable elements from social movement theory (SMT), political Islam and new social media. A second more pessimistic literature outlines the factors inhibiting political liberalization, particularly the constancy of durable authoritarianism and repression. It better characterizes the forces counteracting political party transformation.

In this thesis, I combine what is known of Islamist opposition in strict authoritarian environments with theories of organizational change. As Huntington noted of institutions in the unstable environments of developing countries, while not the most democratic, autonomous and flexible organizations tend to fare better.<sup>23</sup> The contribution I make derives not from paralleling the trajectory of political development, but from realizing that the Brotherhood operates in a similarly unpredictable, harsh environment. In this atmosphere, the Brotherhood has weathered decades of fluctuating regime relations because its leadership remains autonomous in decision-making, thus contributing to its ability to capitalize on openings in the authoritarian climate and retreat from arenas of conflict.

Robinson and Davis argue that the dominant literature on social movement theory fails to explore the nature of fundamentalist religious movements. They seek to

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<sup>23</sup> Samuel Huntington and Harvard University. *Political order in changing societies* (New Haven , Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2006). 33.



explain how religiously orthodox movements succeed despite SMT's prediction that they would fail due to their abstract visions for society and deep aversions to collaborating with other organizations. Despite these "liabilities" according to SMT, Robinson and Davis identify four specific strategies that have enabled religious movements to succeed: 1) circumventing the state by means of constructing alternative institutions, 2) fashioning a federated structure that grants the possibility of tailoring the movements agenda and ideology to local affairs, 3) maintaining graduated membership structures thus empowering supporters to participate at whatever level they can, and 4) "prioritizing and reprioritizing agendas" following the ebb and the flow of internal and external opportunities or constraints.<sup>24</sup>

Islamist movements are typically religious or moral in nature and draw most of their support from informal networks through mosques, Islamic voluntary associations, and Islamic for-profit businesses and enterprises.<sup>25</sup> These vast, decentralized pools of support contribute to the longevity and stability of Islamist movements in the face of hostile environment, offering refuge when relations with the regime sour. Contrary to many theories of religious conservativeness, from extensive research conducted on Islamic activism in Egypt, Wickham concludes that most Islamists are not illiterate peasants but upwardly mobile college graduates.<sup>26</sup> Following Olson's inclination towards methodological individualism and public choice, participation in Islamic organizations is regarded as rational: self-interest compels individuals to join, but integration into Islamic

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<sup>24</sup> Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, "Overcoming Movement Obstacles by the Religiously Orthodox: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Shas in Israel, Comunione e Liberazione in Italy, and the Salvation Army in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 114, no. 5 (March 1, 2009): 1302-1349.1303.

<sup>25</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 1.

networks and absorption into new ideological commitments paves way for participation in Islamic politics.<sup>27</sup>

The decentralized organizational construction and aims of Islamist associations contribute to their size, popular support and longevity. First, decentralized networks enable Islamist organizations to circumvent the obstacles that many Arab states place in the way of any independent political organization by using mosques as meeting places and religion as their message.<sup>28</sup> Their political success derives from their ability to systematically mobilize constituencies built around their core ideologies.<sup>29</sup>

Second, the submerged nature of such informal networks enables Islamist movements to withstand tides of repression because the networks are hard to identify and logistically difficult to undermine. Singerman notes that one of the most threatening characteristics of Islamist movements to authoritarian regimes is their ability “to remain hidden or submerged as the movement grows and expands.”<sup>30</sup> If and when an Islamist organization chooses, or is permitted, to enter political life, it can result in sweeping victories, as demonstrated with the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and Hamas in Palestine.

Third, Islamic organizations are often empowered with social legitimacy. Al-Awadi attributes the success of Islamist movements to the fact that their legitimacy derives from society rather than the state.<sup>31</sup> The way in which Islamist movements deliver services to society paves way not only for efficient networking, but enables them

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 151.

<sup>28</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic activism : a social movement theory approach* (Bloomington Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2004), 23.

<sup>29</sup> Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, “Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Gray Zones - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=18095>.

<sup>30</sup> Wiktorowicz, *Islamic activism : a social movement theory approach*. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Hesham Al-Awadi, “Mubarak and the Islamists: Why Did the "Honeymoon" End?,” *Middle East Institute* 59, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 62.

to slowly amass public support as citizens come to depend on such organizations.<sup>32</sup> When movements advance from the social sphere to the core political arena, Islamist organizations aiming to enter politics often flaunt their social legitimacy to gain political leverage. With a history of providing tangible benefits to citizens, when Islamist groups run for office, they are more likely than their secular counterparts to win seats because they are well known and well respected.<sup>33</sup> However, when Islamists advance on politics, ruling regimes—particularly authoritarian ones—perceive a direct challenge to their authority. A corollary, moderate Islamists' ability to enter political life hinges upon whether or not the regime acknowledges the oppositional force and cedes to it political territory. In many instances, the willingness is scant.<sup>34</sup>

Just as authoritarian rulers are devising plans to remain firmly in power, so, too, is the opposition growing more creative and utilizing the Internet as a launch pad for dissent. The Arab world grows progressively more susceptible to online dissent. The Internet provides a potent medium through which to oppose the status quo and overbearing authoritarian regimes. In the Arab world, this transformation derives from the amplification of two previously stifled sectors of the population: youth and women, the groups drawn most rapidly to the Internet.<sup>35</sup> According to Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization Statistics, nearly one-third of the population falls between the ages of 15 and 28.<sup>36</sup> While Egypt currently houses a mushrooming youth population and has one of the most vibrant and socially engaged online communities in the Middle East,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 63.

<sup>33</sup> Jillian Schwedler, "Democratization, Inclusion and the Moderation of Islamist Parties," *Palgrave* 50, no. 1, Society for International Development: 57.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Awadi, "Mubarak and the Islamists: Why Did the "Honeymoon" End?." 78.

<sup>35</sup> Albrecht Hofheinz, "The Internet and the Arab World," 2, 2005, [www.fes.de/ipg/IPG3\\_2005/07HOFHEINZ.PDF](http://www.fes.de/ipg/IPG3_2005/07HOFHEINZ.PDF). 83.

<sup>36</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World," October 10, 2009, <http://www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/the-young-brotherhood-in-search-of-a-new-path>.

the tangible effects of new social media remains truncated. Low literacy rates and a prevailing oral culture severely limit Internet use in the Arab world.<sup>37</sup> In a country of over 80 million, according to 2005 statistics, Egypt boasted only 4.4 million users.<sup>38</sup>

But scholars of new social media fall in to two polarized camps. One predicts that new social media will profoundly influence political and social mobilization. Kalathil and Boas argue that the Internet poses a surmounting threat to closed regimes because it creates a forum in which political opposition to assemble.<sup>39</sup> However, these scholars fail to delineate the specific causal mechanisms that instigate change.

The more pragmatic approach—and one supported by this case study—suggests that although the Internet provides an immense potential arena for mobilization, it has not yet realized this capacity because it has not eclipsed more traditional mediums of mass communication.<sup>40</sup> Best characterized as a dynamic of transformation that helps erode traditional familial, religious and political structures of authority, the Internet provides not a revolutionary change, but a generational one.<sup>41</sup>

Far more than technological developments, Tarrow argues that political opportunity structure, the relationship between movement and political environment, affects a movement's success. He concludes that organizations in favorable environments will fare better.<sup>42</sup> However, case studies in the Muslim world suggest otherwise: due to their unique structure, political Islamist organizations thrive even under repressive conditions. What is more, the aim of political Islamist movements need

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<sup>37</sup> Shanthi Kalathil, *Open networks, closed regimes: the impact of the Internet on authoritarian rule* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> "Ta'thir Al-Interne 'Ala Al-Shabab Fi Masr Wa'l-'Alam Al-'Arabi: Dirsasa Naqdiyya" (Information and Decision Support Center Cairo, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Kalathil, *Open networks, closed regimes: the impact of the Internet on authoritarian rule*. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Deva Woodly, "New Competencies in democratic communication? Blogs, agenda setting and political participation," *Public Choice* 134, no. 1-2 (June 9, 2007): 109.

<sup>41</sup> Hofheinz, "The Internet and the Arab World." 96.

<sup>42</sup> Tarrow, *Power in movement*, 19.

not be inherently political: some call for the end of existing political systems in favor of a utopian Islamic society uninhibited by the factionalism inherent to political pluralism.<sup>43</sup>

Nonetheless, entertaining a discussion of external environmental conditions advances one's understanding of the constraints and opportunity structures confronting movements in the Muslim world. Such conditions include decrease in state repression, a weakened state, broadened political opportunities, elite division and the presence of powerful allies.<sup>44</sup> Tarrow offers compelling insight when addressing repression, suggesting that the likelihood for repression increases when the movement demands fundamental changes or threatens elites. If the government refocuses repression successfully in times of political turmoil, it can terminate the oppositional movement. However, if the government is unable to refocus repression and it becomes inconsistent, repression can ignite more opposition.<sup>45</sup> In most cases, the latter is the more likely scenario.

Similarly, political Islam theorist Wiktorowicz argues that indiscriminant and reactive forms of repression across the political sphere may legitimize a call to arms. Repression may lead to alliances amongst repressed groups with disparate goals, thus leading to a higher potential for violence.<sup>46</sup> Despite sensationalist claims, violence is not inherent to political Islam, but derived from a particular array of conditions including a regime's penchant for repression, the organization's culture and framing, and the organization's alliances and networks, among others. Wickham makes a crucial distinction in suggesting that not all Islamist movements ought to be categorized as the

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<sup>43</sup> Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (January 2004): 206.

<sup>44</sup> Tarrow, *Power in movement*. 123. See also, Ziad Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *Blackwell Publishing* 42, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 487-510.

<sup>45</sup> Tarrow, *Power in movement*, 157.

<sup>46</sup> Wiktorowicz, *Islamic activism : a social movement theory approach*. 24.

same species. While extremism may cause a number of highly devoted cadres, Wickham argues that broader, more consistent support comes from moderation.<sup>47</sup>

Until recently, the literature on Middle Eastern authoritarianism has been overshadowed by the literature on the region's democratic deficit. Qualitative and quantitative studies seek to explain Middle East authoritarianism noting that Arab regimes tend to be abnormally undemocratic and remarkably stable.<sup>48</sup> More pertinent to understanding authoritarian durability, however, are approaches that explain the presence of authoritarianism, not the deficit of democracy. Bellin argues that the robustness of an authoritarian regime's coercive apparatus best defines Middle Eastern exceptionalism. The central pillars of an authoritarian regime rest upon the state's inverse relationship with the level of institutionalization in the coercive apparatus, the maintenance of fiscal health and international alliances, and the degree to which there exists opposition capable of mobilizing. The thoroughness and strength of Arab states' coercive apparatus to "suppress democratic initiatives" has severely crippled the potential of liberal transitions.<sup>49</sup>

On the rise in the Middle East is the multinomial phenomenon of "hybrid regimes," "authoritarianism with adjectives," or "electoral authoritarianism." All refer to the same scenario in which authoritarian regimes combine democratic and authoritarian elements. Hybrid regimes hold multi-party elections, whether a façade or legitimately competitive. Some suggest this type of authoritarian rule warrants a new regime

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<sup>47</sup> Wickham, "The Path to Moderation." 206.

<sup>48</sup> Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (January 2004): 143. See also, Marcus Noland, "Explaining Middle Eastern Authoritarianism," *Peterson Institute*, 5, 2005, <http://peterson-institute.org/publications/wp/wp05-5.pdf>. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," 152.

classification because it demonstrates political liberalization and enables us to understand how instances of political transition emerge in authoritarianism.<sup>50</sup>

Most others do not. They regard electoral authoritarianism as a resurgence of an old trend in which rulers exploit parliamentary elections as a mechanism for controlling opposition and distributing patronage, also known as competitive clientelism.<sup>51</sup> Elections can reduce the demand for change.<sup>52</sup> This concept is not new. Huntington and Nelson note that “the introduction of competitive elections gives the client one additional resource—the vote—which he can use to repay his patron for other benefits.”<sup>53</sup> Elections enable the regime to unite elites, manipulate elections, and achieve political stability.<sup>54</sup>

But even Bellin and Huntington who better characterize the political climate in the Muslim world fail to answer the central research question of this thesis. They do not explore the dynamics of opposition parties nor do they articulate how movements react to environmental or internal opportunities and constraints.

Central to conceptualizing organizational change is to distinguish between minor alterations and fundamental reorientations. Such an understanding rejects historical institutionalist approaches and rational choice theories that portray institutions as static over time.<sup>55</sup> Despite institutionalization and formalized procedures, in a world of constant flux, organizations cannot always be bastions of order and immutability.<sup>56</sup> Instead, the view of organizational change adopted here acknowledges a more nuanced

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<sup>50</sup> Jason Brownlee, “Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism” (Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law; Stanford Institute on International Studies). 1.

<sup>51</sup> Ellen Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East,” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 3 (2009): 122.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 124.

<sup>53</sup> Lisa Blaydes, “Who Votes in Authoritarian Elections and Why? Determinants of Voter Turnout in Contemporary Egypt” (Department of Political Science University of California, Los Angeles, 9, 2006), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Brownlee, “Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism,” 6.

<sup>55</sup> Eisner, “CSS Senior Colloquium.”

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

reality: that organizations must constantly maneuver fluctuating environments and shifting internal balances of power, among other variances, all the while preserving their core elements.<sup>57</sup> Most often, such navigation takes place within preexisting parameters and fails to radically undermine the organization's internal structure, dominant strategy and goals, ideology, and institutions.

Over time, incremental change can accumulate, causing an organization to drift or to adapt. Organizational drift describes the natural movement within preexisting paradigms. It fails to undermine the organizations fundamental components.<sup>58</sup> Organizational change, on the other hand, occurs when the dominant strategies and goals, prevailing ideology or existing institutions change from what they once were to what they constitute currently.

This assemblage of disparate literatures sheds light on the opportunities and constraints the Muslim Brotherhood confronts in a constantly fluctuating, fiercely authoritarian environment. While the pessimistic literature better characterizes resisters to change, the optimistic literature describes not only on catalysts of change, but explains the ways orthodox movements withstand hostile environments and amass support.

Those who declared the organizational metamorphosis of the Egyptian Brotherhood drew heavily from the optimistic literatures. In doing so, however, they overlooked the momentous forces that better characterize recent periods of "political transition" in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood has remained a social welfare organization with an autonomous leadership and relatively flexible agenda to weather a fluctuating environment and endure.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Eisner, "CSS Senior Colloquium."



### **Case Study: Organizational Continuity in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood**

The status quo in the Muslim Brotherhood is a religious social welfare organization with a strong emphasis on religious education and social outreach. The Ikhwan has not realized the features necessary to achieve political party transformation. Rather, the Ikhwan remains a strictly hierarchical organization with a federated mass base controlled by an upper echelon of elites. In demonstrating that Brotherhood is organizationally stagnant, I am going to show that it has not changed despite electoral advance and blogging, the two independent variables described below.

Though the Muslim Brotherhood has fielded candidates in parliamentary elections since 1941, the organization failed to gain a significant foothold until their electoral boom in 2005, launching them into 88 of 444 elected parliamentary seats. For many in the group the march on parliament seemed a natural extension of the Brotherhood's goal of the "need to expand quietly until the movement had become an undeniable reality."<sup>59</sup>

Ardent debate erupted within the Muslim Brotherhood over whether entrance into national government reflected a new manifestation or abandonment of the Muslim Brotherhood's central aim. In this there emerges a pervasive tension in the Brotherhood's internal ranks. Many oppose any divergence from al-Banna's initial intent of amassing majority support via their social services: "the cadres believe that the political work should be done through the Brotherhood not through the Brotherhood's transformation into a political party."<sup>60</sup>

Inadvertently, the Society's advance on the electoral realm has created a number of challenges that, under the right conditions, might beckon organizational change. The

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<sup>59</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, *The Rules of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: a field study* (Al-Shorouk Al-Dawliya Bookstore, 2008). 12.

process has pressured the Muslim Brotherhood to relinquish luxuries of opposition, clarify stances on previously hazy issues and adhere to the requests of their social and political constituency in new ways.<sup>61</sup> It has allowed for a public reexamination of the group, but it has failed to catalyze organizational change.

A survey of Brothers reveals unanimous agreement that the “Political Committee” is the weakest element of the Muslim Brotherhood due to the lack of direction, poorly defined goals and wavering movement support. It remains ambiguous as to whether the whole movement will transform or whether a political arm will emerge. An anonymous university-aged Brother noted of the shortcomings of the Brotherhood’s national electoral aims and political agenda, “we are a body without a head.”<sup>62</sup>

The second potential impetus for change is the small, but vocal, contingency of Ikhwan youth that exploits new media as a mechanism for voicing dissent about the organization. Despite their modest position within the *tanzim*, they have individually and collectively realized the powerful, public forum the Internet provides, and blogs in particular, that gives them a stage through which to voice dissent, make demands and offer perspective. In early 2007, it was estimated that there were roughly 150 Muslim Brotherhood bloggers.<sup>63</sup> These Brothers discuss sensitive content about the Ikhwan, particularly their desire to see it reform. They reject many of the more conservative positions held by elder members of the Brotherhood regarding the rights of women, the rights of Coptic Christians (a religious minority that comprises around 10% of

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<sup>61</sup> Amr Hamzawy, Marina Ottaway, and Nathan Brown, “What Islamists Need to Be Clear About: The Case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19032>.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Anani, *The Rules of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: a field study*. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Marc Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch,” *Middle East Report*, <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer245/lynch.html>.

Egyptians), and the creation of a higher council of religious scholars with legislative authority.<sup>64</sup>

While the Muslim Brotherhood has an unfailing history of dismissing dissenters, such as those of the extremist al-Gama'at al-Islamiyyah (The Islamist Group) and more recently the politically minded Wasat (Center) Party, the Brotherhood has yet to cast aside these outspoken individuals. Consequently, the presence of the young bloggers has caused the organization to respond publicly to their outcry, an unprecedented public endeavor.<sup>65</sup> While the recent rise and growing popularity of pervasive blogged dissent has threatened decades of devoted adherence to the Brotherhood's rigid organizational hierarchy, the institutional changes they demand have not taken root. Rather, we see the Brotherhood resorting to persuasion over forceful expulsion: they seek to co-opt the young Brothers and to indirectly end their public dissent.

Dispelling the validity of these two potential independent variables, I argue that repression and internal divide have contributed to organizational stagnation. A rocky history rich with regime-sanctioned repression has compelled the Muslim Brotherhood to adopt a long-term strategy to withstand tides of authoritarian crackdowns with an autonomous leadership capable of making timely decisions. The Ikhwan capitalizes on opportunities when made available, and retreats from those arenas when the regime shows signs of unease for the sake of preserving the movement in the long run.<sup>66</sup>

More recently, fierce debate within the Ikhwan has arisen over this strategy. The proponents of the debate call into question not the fundamental goal of the Brotherhood, to foster an Islamic society, but the proper way in which to pursue that

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<sup>64</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World."

<sup>65</sup> Khalil Al-anani, "Dissenting Brothers," *Islamists Today*, November 7, 2009, <http://islamists2day-c.blogspot.com/2009/11/dissenting-brothers.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 17.

telos. The reformists want to effect change through the core political institutions of the People's Assembly. The conservatives remain steadfast in their prioritization of *da'wa* ("call" to God) and service provision, viewing politics only as a platform from which to proselytize.<sup>67</sup> The ongoing debate and shifting internal balance of power between camps has contributed to organizational stagnation.

### **Methodology**

While broad generalizations cannot be drawn from a single case study, meticulous process-tracing enables one to inductively alter preexisting theories of organizational change and political party transformation in authoritarian regimes. Process tracing is a method of within-case analysis that entails the careful mapping of the process by which a researcher analyzes qualitative data on causal mechanisms. Causal mechanisms link perceived causes to their registered or observed outcomes and can consist of events, expectations, processes or actions.<sup>68</sup>

Case studies best determine whether and how a variable mattered in a given causal relationship, but they fall short of commenting on how much any variable mattered. The method of process-tracing faces two limitations. First, it presents a convincing argument only if it can delineate a clear, uninterrupted causal flow that connects the causes to the effects. This can be complicated when data is scarce or inaccessible. It can be further undermined when theories fail to predict each step of the causal pathway. Second, there exists more than one hypothesized causal flow in any set

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<sup>67</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, "The Muslim Brotherhood: an Ambiguous Future," November 2009, <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>68</sup> Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences* (Cambridge Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 2005). 76-81.

of evidence. For this reason, the researcher must determine whether other explanations complement or contradict the outlined process of causal mechanisms.<sup>69</sup>

The thesis consists of a single-case study in an uninterrupted time series that observes an outcome of organizational change in the Muslim Brotherhood. The thesis employs process-tracing to observe, analyze and dispel two purported causes of organizational change in the Muslim Brotherhood: electoral advance and dissent via new social media. I conducted extensive qualitative research to examine the extent to which the organization of the changed Muslim Brotherhood prior to “treatment” (the three potential independent variables) and post “treatment.”

I use theories on two levels. First, I will hypothesize about how the independent variables affect the dependent variable, organizational change. Second, I will use existing theories for within-case analysis to determine whether or not the predictions made in existing theories hold true in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>70</sup> If they do not, I will put forth slight modifications that adapt them to fit with the observed causal pathways.

This thesis utilizes primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of translations of the young Brothers’ blogs, formal responses from the Muslim Brotherhood’s Deputy and official spokesperson, and interviews. The secondary sources include books, reports from domestic and international think-tanks, human rights councils, and non-governmental organizations in addition to scholarly articles, books, newspaper articles and Internet sources, particularly <http://www.ikhwanweb.com> which aggregates articles written on the Brotherhood.

This thesis proceeds in the following manner. Chapter Two establishes the values of the dependent variables, organizational change, pre- and post- treatment. I use a

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 222.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 234.

dichotomous value of the dependent variable (SWO and political party) to argue that the Brotherhood remains a SWO. Chapter Three demonstrates the true causes of the Brotherhood's organizational continuity: repression and internal divide. Chapters Four and Five dispel electoral advance and dissent via new social media as causal mechanisms for political party transformation.

## Chapter 2: Maturation of a Social Welfare Organization

In the wake of the Brotherhood's parliamentary success in the 2005 elections for the People's Assembly, many scholars declared that the Brotherhood had transformed into a modern political party. In "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," Mona el-Ghobashy proclaims, "setting out to win the Egyptian hearts and minds of an austere Islamic state and society, Hasan al-Banna's Society of Muslim Brothers was instead irrevocably transformed into a flexible political party that is highly responsive to the unforgiving calculus of electoral politics."<sup>71</sup> However, such propositions failed to specify which mechanisms enabled organizational change to take place. More fundamentally, they fail to address whether the political party of the Muslim Brotherhood became firmly institutionalized into the broader organization. Had the entire organization transformed into a political party? Or had the Brotherhood become bifurcated between a political office and its traditional social welfare organization?

There is scant evidence of a lasting "metamorphosis." The majority of the Brotherhood's leadership today seeks to end formal political participation, thus calling into question the quantifiable organizational change that accompanied rising electoral success. The premature declaration of political party victory overlooked the complexities of the ideological composition of the Brotherhood and underestimated the extent to which the authoritarian regime's coercive apparatus shapes the strategies and goals of the movement.

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<sup>71</sup> Mona El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *Cambridge University Press* 37, no. 3 (2005): 390.

The confusion about “metamorphosis” is two fold. First, scholars overemphasized the electoral success and moderate platforms of a *subset* of Muslim Brothers, allotting disproportional weight to their views against an undercurrent of steadfast conservative ones that oppose large-scale electoral contestation. Second, they fail to distinguish the degree to which the Brotherhood is opportunity taker, not a maker, in the face of a domineering authoritarian regime.

Scholars mistook a rising degree of organizational transparency, the institutionalization of general procedures, and, in particular, the release of more moderate statements for political party transformation. While I do not refute that over the past three decades the Brotherhood has, in fact, grown incrementally more democratic in its construction, I contest the claim that any organizational changes were motivated by the desire to ultimately become a political party for the sake of participating in authoritarian politics. Furthermore, the alterations to the Ikhwan’s structure do not indicate political party transformation, but an embedding and deepening of the institutions that support their social welfare endeavors and religious outreach.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, it reviews the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood. Second, it gives a historical overview of the Ikhwan from the 1970s to 2005. Both are needed to understand the trajectory of Brotherhood maturation over the past three decades and the subtle ways the organization has drifted between preexisting paradigms, but not fundamentally reoriented its ideology, goals and strategies or institutions. This chapter makes the point that the Muslim Brotherhood is organizationally stagnant in terms of political party transformation, but has experienced immense growth during the 1980s and 1990s as a social welfare organization.



### Structure of the *Tanzim*

Despite the organization's general lack of transparency, a growing literature on the official mechanisms and formal membership structures within the Brotherhood becomes increasingly available. Most generally, membership is thought to be three-tiered. Before formal participation in the group there are a number of classifications that describe the expanse of Brotherhood activity in the social sphere. The tiered and federated organizational structure educates Egyptians about the goals of the organization, allowing them to participate at levels suitable to their needs.<sup>72</sup>

The "general work base" refers to the broad activities of the Brotherhood in society. The "general connection circle" refers to an individual with personal connections to another in the Muslim Brotherhood. An "individual member" is an individual that has joined the Brotherhood and pays dues. A "devoted member" describes the first formal connection an individual has with the organization as a member of a committee. A "regular member" describes an individual who has undertaken an intensive study of the core elements of the Muslim Brotherhood: a commitment to team work, religious piousness and loyalty to the organization. A regular member has the right to vote in the organization's elections, but must maintain his status for three years before running for election in any position of authority.<sup>73</sup>

The highest level of membership is referred to as a "working member." Working members have the ability to run for elected positions, provided they are at least thirty years of age. This describes someone who has been a devoted member of the Brotherhood for at least three years with no organizational violations, although it is remains nebulous as to what constitutes an "organizational violation" and whether it is

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<sup>72</sup> Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." 492.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Anani, *The Rules of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: a field study*. 25.

codified in written documents or a decision made by leaders. Working members pay monthly dues to the Brotherhood and can run for elected offices.<sup>74</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood also has detailed specifications for its federated geographic structure. The smallest unit consists of 5-7 individuals referred to as a family. The family represents the first educational unit of the Muslim Brotherhood in which weekly meetings are held to discuss current events and religious education. A sector, the smallest administrative unit, consists of 5-6 families (30-40 people) and focuses on spreading and organizing tasks within a demarcated geographic quadrant. A region consists of 3-4 sectors. It is the administrative office of a city and executes the plans recommended by the sectors. The members of the regional committee are elected in direct, confidential elections and must be reelected by 50% every four years. The administrative office consists of an assembly of many geographic regions and supervises all activities of the Muslim Brotherhood within a designated city or region. The administrative office follows the direct orders of the Guidance Bureau, the highest decision-making body of the Brotherhood that serves as its executive body.<sup>75</sup>

Like other mass movements, voting rules within the Brotherhood vary depending on an individual's level of membership. As March and Olsen suggest of decision-making in large groups, the upper echelons of the organization tend to dictate organizational policy.<sup>76</sup> While the Muslim Brotherhood is a mass movement, a centralized elite determines the outcome of major decisions. There are three sources of

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 17-18.

<sup>76</sup> J.G. March and Johan Olsen, "The Uncertainty of the Past: Organizational Learning Under Ambiguity," 1975, [http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org\\_site/org\\_theory/march\\_articles/mar\\_ambig.html](http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org_site/org_theory/march_articles/mar_ambig.html).

organizational authority responsible for most decision-making: the Shura Council, the Guidance Bureau, and the General Guide.<sup>77</sup>

The Brotherhood's legislative body, the Shura Council (*Majlis al-Shura*), consists of 100 members responsible for overseeing the organization's yearly report and budget in addition to passing compulsory statutes. Members of the Shura Council must meet stringent prerequisites: they must be a member of the executive office of their city board, be at least 30 years of age, have been connected with the organization for a minimum of five years, must have no court order against him for five years and must be qualified on merit and education.<sup>78</sup>

The Guidance Bureau (*Maktab al-Irshad*), comprised of 13-16 elected members, executes the resolutions passed in the Shura Council. The Shura council elects members of the Guidance Bureau. However, the Brotherhood fails to separate powers because members of the Guidance Bureau also sit on the Shura Council. The Guidance Bureau makes most major decisions behind closed doors. Reelection occurs every four years.<sup>79</sup> Scholarship suggests the Guidance Bureau formulates the Brotherhood's general policies, determines the direction of the movement and issues official responses.<sup>80</sup>

The General Guide (*al-murshid al'amm*) is the Brotherhood's official spokesperson and executive leader. He is elected by an absolute majority in the Shura Council from amongst candidates recommended by the Guidance Bureau.<sup>81</sup>

Thus the Muslim Brotherhood is a mass organization with branches and members in all provinces of Egypt, but it is controlled by an elite group that occupies

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<sup>77</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 377.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Anani, *The Rules of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: a field study*.17.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 377.

<sup>80</sup> "Muslim Brotherhood: Structure and Spread," *Ikhwanweb*, June 2006, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=817>.

<sup>81</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 377.

these three pillars of authority. In this way, despite a massive membership base with variant preferences, formal statements, policies and engagements emanate from a highly centralized elite cadre. Although the Brotherhood has mechanisms for mass participation, these procedures are not intended to aggregate political preferences. Rather they exist to build communities around religious outreach and the provision of services. Even if at odds, the preferences of the mass membership base cannot trump the elite cadres ability to set the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda or affect its goals, strategies or institutional developments.

### **Historical Overview**

The Muslim Brotherhood's federated organizational apparatus persists largely untouched to this day. Paramount to understanding the expansive, complex nature of this organization is to contextualize the environment in which it ascended to influence. A brief historical overview demonstrates that the Brotherhood has, in fact, matured over time, but that this activity has not hastened in the past decade, nor has it left us with a modern political party. Munson draws the line of argument that the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and organization are inherently interconnected and internally embedded. He states, "ideas and organizational structure are intertwined: the latter provides a basis for an introduction to and education about the former in a way that is consonant with everyday experiences and needs of Egyptian people." Naturally then, a change in ideology should result in a change in organizational structure, and vice versa.<sup>82</sup> To this day, the Brotherhood's overarching goal of achieving an Islamic society remains

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<sup>82</sup> Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." 23.

steadfast. According to Munson, this would indicate that minimal organizational change has occurred.

The Society of Muslim Brothers was founded in 1928 by Imam Hassan al-Banna, then barely twenty, while Egypt was still under British colonial control. Contrary to what dominant literature on social movement theory and political opportunity structure predict, the period of most rapid expansion occurred within an environment hostile to the group's existence.<sup>83</sup> The Ikhwan began as a movement for Islamic reconnection amongst disenchanted youth. While al-Banna was alive, the organization's structure was transparent, decentralized and institutionalized, codified in the movement's constitution.<sup>84</sup> During the earliest years, it remained an outspokenly apolitical, religiously oriented organization.<sup>85</sup>

However, in 1941 Imam al-Banna ran for a seat in parliament with an idealistic campaign that demanded social reform and the immediate withdrawal of the British from Egyptian soil. Though not elected to parliament, relations with the British military soured: they issued al-Banna orders to leave and detained Ikhwan members to display the severity of the situation. Preoccupied in Europe at the onset of World War II, repression subsided. It was inflamed shortly thereafter in a nebulous mix of murders and assassinations that left both the Imam al-Banna and the Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi dead.<sup>86</sup> The Brotherhood retreated from the regime's watchful eye.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 62.

<sup>85</sup> Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." 4.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 5.

Thriving in mosques and relying associational networks, the Ikhwan amassed support largely unbeknownst to the regime.<sup>87</sup> As Robinsons and Davis' work predicts, the Brotherhood's unique organizational structure provided a twofold benefit: the vast capacity for mobilization and the decentralized mechanisms to withstand repression.<sup>88</sup> However, al-Banna was a charismatic leader who commanded the respect of his followers. Since his assassination and the exit of the British, the organization's ability to provide services has changed considerably.

When Gamal Abdel Nasser initially planned his military coup to overthrow King Farouk in 1952, he sought the help of the Muslim Brotherhood to utilize its vast submerged networks should his plan fail and he need to flee Egypt. Two years later, after a successful transfer of power, he launched a massive campaign against the Ikhwan: he arrested Muslim its leaders, destroyed its administrative apparatus, and forced the remaining members underground.<sup>89</sup> Nasser recognized the very real threat a massive religious opposition posed to his vision of a secular state.

Repression decimated the expansive organization built under al-Banna, and the Brotherhood was reduced to small, secretive cells. To undercut the potential of organizational revival, Nasser undercut the Brotherhood's bases of support by recruiting students and filling holes left by the Brotherhood's outreach.<sup>90</sup> During this period of leadership incarceration and organizational paralysis, extremism arose amongst members of the Brotherhood, most notably that of Sayyid Qutb.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>89</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>91</sup> It must be noted that while Qutb was a member of the Brotherhood, his more radical ideological stances have been rejected, or accepted with modification, from the 1970s on. General Guide Hassan al-Houdaiby wrote a general, moderate response to Qutb's "Milestones" entitled "Preachers, Not Judges" which serves to replace Qutb's work.

From the 1970s to 1990s the Brotherhood's activity reflects a period of organizational reconstruction. In response to the opening of the political environment, internal innovation and external demand from a burgeoning constituency, the Ikhwan began again virtually from scratch—save for its ideology—to reconstruct the *tanẓīm*. First on the agenda was the public renunciation of violence and the permanent elimination of the “Secret Apparatus”<sup>92</sup> that existed under al-Banna. Second, the Brotherhood sought legal recognition to guard against future repressive attacks.<sup>93</sup> Third, the Ikhwan attempted to rebuild bases of support and deepen its involvement in civil society. The last aim ushered the creation of new organizational departments and procedures to better accommodate the Brotherhood's welfare engagements.

As leaders emerged from prison in the early 1970s under Sadat's general amnesty, the organization was “weak and fragmented.”<sup>94</sup> Brotherhood leaders immediately embarked on a process of reconstruction: they created over a dozen departments that focused on an array of topics from social services, to students, to *da'wa*, to education.<sup>95</sup> The growth at this time was remarkable: for much of the 1970s the Brotherhood's support base grew at around 12% per year.<sup>96</sup> But while the membership base broadened, the Ikhwan refrained from aggressively recruiting supporters for fear of regime backlash.

During this time, Sadat tolerated the Ikhwan because of their extensive and effective social welfare projects for the lower middle class during a time of destabilizing

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<sup>92</sup> The “Secret Apparatus” was a secret wing of the Brotherhood that engaged in violent resistance while al-Banna was in charge of the Ikhwan.

<sup>93</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 38, 49.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 62.

<sup>96</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 181.

economic liberalization.<sup>97</sup> In most cases, the Ikhwan's services filled voids the regime could, or chose, not to fill. Sadat permitted the Brotherhood to publish a weekly newspaper entitled "*Da'wa*" and maintain its office on Ramses Street. Despite leniency in social arena, Sadat remained wary of the Brotherhood engaging in formal political affairs on its own volition for fear that Islamist competition might pose a threat to his secular state. Sadat implemented the Political Parties Law in 1976 outlawing parties based on "class, religion or religious affiliation," in attempts to diffuse Nasserist and Brotherhood opposition.<sup>98</sup> The ratification of this law has profound implications on the Brotherhood even today.

After Sadat's assassination in 1981, Vice-President Mubarak rose to the office of the President and has remained there since. Mubarak embarked on a period of de facto toleration with the Brotherhood, but continued Sadat's policy of barring them from legal status.<sup>99</sup> Even so, the 1980s marked unprecedented possibilities for opposition forces. Mubarak permitted the Ikhwan to compete in the peripheral arenas for student government on university campuses and campaign for elected positions in professional syndicates.<sup>100</sup> With the prospect of prosperity in mind under Mubarak's tolerance, amongst the Brotherhood "there was a growing conviction...that the movement needed to coexist publicly and peacefully alongside the state and within institutions."<sup>101</sup>

In the formal political realm, Mubarak used parliamentary elections in the 1980s to accredit his democratic commitments. Prior to the 1984 elections he declared that his form of democracy would soon "become obvious, contrary to the conditions of the time

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 65.

<sup>98</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 44.

<sup>99</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 377.

<sup>100</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 178.

<sup>101</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 61.



of Nasser and Sadat.”<sup>102</sup> Realizing the social and political openings, and following the lead of other oppositional actors, the Brotherhood formed coalitions with the New Wafd and Labor Parties to run as junior partners in the 1984 and 1987 elections in efforts to attain legal status through parliamentary participation. On both occasions Brothers were elected to parliament. Upon election, the Ikhwan developed a political section.<sup>103</sup> Today this section functions in a similar capacity and includes the Parliamentary Committee, comprised of Brothers in parliament. It also operates as a think-tank conducting research on political developments and prescribing policy recommendations for the Ikhwan.<sup>104</sup>

But the Brotherhood’s parliamentary success could not be attributed to its political platform. The Ikhwan’s success in winning seats in national parliament derived from its ability to provide patronage to its constituencies in professional associations and student unions—and to do so not through the state, which they had access to as elected officials, but through purely private networks. Although electoral success was one of many Brotherhood’s achievements during the 1980s, the bulk of its activity reflected longer-term organizational goals, foremost its commitment to religious outreach through social welfare provision.

By the early 1990s, however, Mubarak caught wind of the Brotherhood’s massive constituency, and feeling threatened by its advances, relations soured.<sup>105</sup> Egyptian authorities realized how aloof they had been of the Brothers activity in the syndicates. Amani Qandil notes in a retrospective report on the Brothers in professional associations: “the regime still did not have a clue about what was going on in the

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 77.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 62.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 63.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 140.

syndicates, but was troubled and puzzled by the ability of the Islamists to secure a majority of their elections.”<sup>106</sup>

In spurts, and sometimes even in jest, Mubarak confirmed his unease with the Brotherhood. First, he chastised Mary Anne Weaver, an American reporter, for the US government’s interaction with the Ikhwan in 1994: “your government is in contact with these *terrorists* from the Muslim Brotherhood. This has all been done very secretly, without our knowledge at first...I can assure you, these groups will *never* take over this country.”<sup>107</sup> Second, on a visit to the United Arab Emirates President Mubarak noted sarcastically to Sheikh Zayd al-Nihyan “Can you believe that the Ikhwan won the elections in the lawyers’ syndicate? I think if they competed against me in a presidential election, they would win that as well!”<sup>108</sup>

From 1990 to 1994 Mubarak implemented measures to close off openings in Egyptian society. In 1993 Mubarak sought to undercut the Brother’s support in professional associations with Law 100/1993. Mubarak declared that by implementing new voting rules that required 50% of the association to vote for syndicate delegates, he was preventing “dictatorship of the minority,” in specific reference to the Brotherhood’s syndicate success.<sup>109</sup> Egyptian officials launched comprehensive measures to restrict the Brotherhood’s activity in mosques, Islamic banks and schools, all traditional bases of Ikhwan support.

External factors also precipitated Mubarak’s growing unease of Islamists, most notably an assassination attempt on his life in Addis Ababa in June 1995. This incident marked a shift in the regime’s policy towards Islamists: whereas Egyptian authorities had

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 153.

<sup>107</sup> El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 382.

<sup>108</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 147.

<sup>109</sup> El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 382. See also: Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 153.

long distinguished between fundamentalists and moderates, Mubarak began to lump Islamists into the same umbrella to better position himself to repress any potential threat regardless of ideological orientation.<sup>110</sup>

Confrontation peaked during the 1995 electoral campaigns for the People's Assembly. Upon publicizing their candidacy, Egyptian officials rounded up eighty-two middle-aged Brotherhood activists during their Shura Council meeting.<sup>111</sup> Those detained included electoral proponents Muhammad al-Sayyid Habib, Abd al-Moneim Abu al-Futouh, Essam al-Erian, Ibrahim al-Zafarani and Muhammad Khayrat al-Shater. The charges the Brothers were alleged to have violated were "plotting to overthrow the regime" and belonging to an illegal organization. The cases were heard in military tribunals, previously reserved only for violent extremists, and 54 Brothers were sentenced to 3-5 years hard labor.<sup>112</sup>

Large-scale hostilities and direct confrontation between the regime and the Brotherhood subsided for the remainder of the decade as the Ikhwan retreated from much of political and social life. While the Ikhwan fielded 3<sup>rd</sup> tier candidates in the 2000 elections and won 17 seats, they receded from arenas the regime had designated as "off-limits" and lost their foothold in syndicates and student unions.<sup>113</sup> With the ascendance of tolerant Mahdi Akef to the position of General Guide in 2004, electoral advance again resumed. Two months after inauguration, the Brotherhood issued a Reform Initiative reiterating its commitment to national electoral participation.

However, Egyptian political life erupted in 2005 when a cohort 150 strong from the Muslim Brotherhood ran as "independents" for the parliamentary elections in the

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<sup>110</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers."384.

<sup>111</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 173.

<sup>112</sup> Joel Campagna, "From accommodation to confrontation: the Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak years," *Journal of International Affairs* 50, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 278.

<sup>113</sup> Shadi Hamid, Telephone, March 17, 2010.

People's Assembly.<sup>114</sup> With unanticipated success, the Muslim Brothers gained a strong foothold in Parliament during the first round of the elections, winning 88 of the 444 seats open for contestation. This success alarmed Mubarak, threatening his political bases of support and parliamentary bloc, the National Democratic Party. During the second and third rounds of the elections, the government intervened and clamped down arresting members running for parliament and blockading the polls.<sup>115</sup> The 2005 parliamentary elections mark a new era of repression of the Society of Muslim Brothers.

### **Organizational Continuity: The Prioritization of a Social Welfare Agenda**

Over the past decades, the Muslim Brotherhood has experienced immense growth as a social welfare organization. It has become embedded in peripheral institutions and deepened its patronage base through channeling and redistributing private funds. These successes flow from pursuit of the Brotherhood's narrow ideology with a strong religious reference to ultimately craft a Muslim society where individuals understand and act in accordance with Islam. The Brotherhood is committed to connecting people for the purposes of providing services, and inches towards realizing a comprehensive Islamic society through the distribution of social welfare, not political participation.

Commitment to this broad aim is reflected in the Brotherhood's activity. The Brotherhood's goals are acutely focused on effecting an Islamic society, but its strategies are broadly implemented to achieve this end. They range from the provision of patronage, to Islamic outreach, to electoral advance to secure a legal umbrella within

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<sup>114</sup> Abu Dhabi Media Company, "Brothers gonna work it out?," <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20090403/REVIEW/973469571/1008>.

<sup>115</sup> Marc Lynch, "The Brotherhood's Dilemma," *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, no. 25, Middle East Brief (January 2008): 3.

which to operate; all are employed to the end of constructing a comprehensive Islamic society. The Brotherhood's foremost strategy, to capitalize on holes left by the authoritarian regime and avoid interacting with it directly, best characterizes its activity. Over the past four decades, the strategies the Brotherhood has implemented corroborates its prioritization of social welfare distribution over political endeavors, and reaffirms the Ikhwan's commitment to building an Islamic society from the bottom up, not by means of the ballot box.

The 1970s marked a timid reentrance into Egyptian society. While hesitant at first, towards the end of the decade it actively recruited dynamic members from university campuses and began seriously entertaining the ideas of expanding into society under the radar of the regime. During this time, the Brotherhood also began to reconstruct organizational institutions. It envisioned the creation of decentralized departments to meet its constituencies every need whether charitable, educational, or for the purposes of entertainment; its aims were not to develop ideologically appealing platforms that would attract the median voter and catapult them into the formal political realm. Rather, the Brotherhood remained reluctant to participate politically. In 1976, Ikhwan leaders turned down Sadat's offer to place members on Egypt's Shura Council, its upper parliamentary house. While the Brotherhood permitted members to campaign for election, it insisted they did so as independents unaffiliated with the organization. Throughout the 1970s the Brotherhood demonstrated its wariness to participate in the formal realm and instead preoccupied itself with reconstructing its organizational framework to handle comprehensive social welfare engagements, its primary aim.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the Ikhwan adapted its goals and strategies to match new openings in Egyptian civil society and politics. The majority of

the Brotherhood's activity aimed to broaden its constituency by means of patronage through professional syndicates by building the *tanzim* from the grass roots level. It expanded into peripheral zones and deepened its service provision. Naturally, organizational change accompanied this rapid, widespread expansion. The Brotherhood developed even more departments to accommodate the diverse needs of its members whether educational, athletic or charitable.

This horizontal growth prompted the formalization of the Brotherhood's hierarchical structure of authority. With membership rates hovering around 12% for nearly a decade, the Ikhwan had to respond quickly to supporting its constituency. This was done through centralization of power in three pillars of organizational authority and the decentralization of tasks to specialized departments. The Brotherhood matured into a mass organization controlled by a handful of elites. Official statements, policies and decisions emanate from the upper echelons—the Guidance Bureau and office of General Guide—and are implemented throughout the movement's departments and federated offices. Members rely upon the organization to distribute services and over three decades Ikhwan leaders subsequently developed institutions capable of raising, channeling and distributing patronage. Towards these ends, the Brotherhood's leadership remains largely autonomous from the larger organization and can make decisions without having to aggregate membership preference or adhere to its requests.

The institutionalization and embedding of the departments concerned with social welfare provision contrasts starkly with Political Department stasis. Accompanying the Brotherhood's strategic decision to contest national elections in 1984, the Brotherhood created a Political Department, the only institution within the Brotherhood that overtly addresses electoral contestation. The Department is one of many organizational sub-

divisions in the Brotherhood and, as such, is incapable of shaping the movement as a whole. Rather, it reports to the Guidance Bureau and General Guide. When these offices announce that the movement will boycott elections, the Political Department follows orders.

Even despite the Brotherhood's release of a Reform Initiative in 2004 that reiterated support for electoral contestation and its remarkable electoral advance in 2005, the Political Department persists largely unchanged: it remains a sub-division of the organization, ordered much like a think-tank, that includes members currently in parliament. The stagnancy of the political arm even after the Brotherhood made significant electoral headway in recent years suggests wavering movement support for overtly political initiatives.

Perhaps most telling of all, respect within the Brotherhood derives not from political activity but from managing the Ikhwan's massive membership and overseeing its religious outreach departments. These core functions overshadow the role of electoral gain, even amongst the movement's leaders. Those concerned with providing social services and expanding religious education outsource the political positions to leaders with less experience in these areas.<sup>116</sup> And, while the political elements are inherently more public than the central functions of the movement, electoral success—great or small—fails to challenge the social welfare pillars of the Brotherhood's organization.

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<sup>116</sup> Hamid, interview.

### Chapter 3: Repression and Divide

A clique of reformists, many of whom have worked within the Brotherhood's Political Department and in syndicates, is the most vocal advocate for the transitioning the Brotherhood from a social welfare organization to a political party. Reformists are diplomatic, English-speaking moderate Brothers with a vision to create a political party associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. They see immense potential in utilizing the Brotherhood's preexisting social networks to mobilize the movement's constituency and push for political reform in Egypt. Herein lies the dilemma: while this outspoken cadre attracts considerable media attention, particularly from foreign reporters and their outreach to Western nations, the majority of Brothers today resist such incentives, particularly the conservative members that dominate the Brotherhood's leadership. As a sub-division of the Brotherhood that is organized much like a think-tank, the Political Department is not institutionally empowered to negotiate amongst these different camps, nor to issue general policies for the organization. The disparate preferences within the Brotherhood itself are the root cause of the organization's ambiguous position on what it actually is and/or wants to become—social welfare organization or political party.

The confusion is understandable both for scholars and the Ikhwan. Imam Hassan al-Banna left his followers with an ambiguous mission. He once described the Muslim Brotherhood as a “Salafi quest, a Sunni method, a Sufi reality, a political agency,



a sports community, a cultural and scientific society, and an economic firm.”<sup>117</sup> Today, this ambiguity manifests itself in two camps of the Muslim Brotherhood—the reformists and the conservatives—neither of which threatens to leave, but both of which have remarkably different interpretations of the ultimate aim of the organization, and the subsequent goals and strategies that accompany each.

The core point of departure for these two camps lies not in fundamentally divergent overarching goal for the movement, which Lia Brynjar outlines as: “to raise a generation of Muslims who would understand Islam correctly and act according to its teachings,” but hinges on alternative paths to that very legacy.<sup>118</sup> The reformists believe that with changing time and circumstance, the Brotherhood should advance on the formal political realm, cooperate with other actors in Egyptian civil society and jostle for political reform against President Mubarak and the National Democratic Party.<sup>119</sup> Hamzawy suggests that the Brotherhood operates under two minds that wrestle over whether national loyalty to Egypt takes precedence over committed resistance to the authoritarian regime: the reformists advocate cooperating with other oppositional groups within preexisting political frameworks and demonstrating a united front on national issues, while the conservatives seek to expand the Brotherhood’s social service capacities and preserve the organization’s unity.<sup>120</sup>

This mounting internal tension comes at a time when Egypt’s security apparatus is at full strength. Firm reliance on security in Egypt has roots extending back to Nasser’s presidency. Today there is approximately one policeman for every thirty-seven

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<sup>117</sup> Al-Anani, “The Muslim Brotherhood: an Ambiguous Future.”

<sup>118</sup> Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: the rise of an Islamic mass movement, 1928-1942*, 1st ed. (Reading England: Ithaca Press, 2006). 102.

<sup>119</sup> Alaa Bayoumi, “Muslim Brotherhood’s testing time,” *AlJazeera Net*, October 24, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2009/10/200910239273927792.html>.

<sup>120</sup> Amr Hamzawy, “Caught in Two Minds - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” April 2009, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=23032>.

citizens—this is greater than the proportion recently recommended by the United States for Iraq.<sup>121</sup> After the 2005 parliamentary successes, Mubarak cracked down on the Brotherhood in attempts to intimidate them from political life.<sup>122</sup> Under organizational stress induced by repression, the conservative branch of the Brotherhood has gained momentum over the past two decades. Repression has strained the movement and compelled it to refocus internally on organizational cohesiveness to preserve longevity rather than wage long-term success for short-term political gambles; it has, therefore, reduced internal support for the reformists and their political aspirations.

The voices of the reformists have also been drowned out by jail time. Mubarak specifically targets moderate leaders, summoning them to military courts, often on the charge of “belonging to a constitutionally prohibited organization.”<sup>123</sup> This has crippled the reformists’ voice in the upper echelons of the organization and bolstered the upswing of conservative ideology. Outside of the Muslim Brotherhood, those released from prison undergo a period of politically inactive lag-time: Egyptian laws stipulate that any individual convicted of a crime must refrain from running for political office for a set period of time.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. First, it reviews a growing literature on emerging parties, highlighting existing insights into social movements, repression, and elite conflict. Second, it characterizes the ideological departures of the two camps. Third, it provides an overview of Mubarak’s recent crackdown. Finally, the chapter explains how repression has caused the Brotherhood to adopt a more conservative approach to

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<sup>121</sup> Jason Brownlee, “Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions,” November 12, 2009.

<sup>122</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “Interview,” June 7, 2009.

<sup>123</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

political involvement both by generally straining the organization and, more specifically, by targeting reformists and removing them from the organizational folds.

### **Literature Review**

Theories of the moderation of emerging political parties are common. Huntington cites the “participation-moderation trade off” in reference to third wave of democratization and Przeworski explains the deradicalization of European socialist parties through suffrage expansion.<sup>124</sup> The basic idea hinges on the notion that previous radical organizations will be compelled to appeal to a broader electorate and will moderate their platforms to do so. Such theories are based on the notion of the median voter.

In specific reference to the Muslim world, Schwedler modifies the argument around the notion of democratic bargain: because the primary aim of political parties is to amass votes, they will naturally move towards moderation.<sup>125</sup> Structural openings, such as new laws or reformulation of the political environment, enable previously excluded groups to capitalize on new pathways for participation provided they adhere to the established rules of the political game. The motions of participating in elections, working with ideological rivals, and increasing tolerance of pluralist norms have arisen from their inclusion in a formal political environment. All of these accounts require that the political parties adopt stringent conditions to participate: “to abandon violence and any commitment to revolution, to accept existing basic social, economic, and political

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<sup>124</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 211.

<sup>125</sup> Schwedler, “Democratization, Inclusion and the Moderation of Islamist Parties,” 59. Schwedler says of moderation: “moderation entails a change along a continuum from radical to moderate, whereby a move away from more exclusionary practices...equates to an increase in moderation.”

institutions and to work through elections and parliamentary procedures in order to achieve power.”<sup>126</sup>

However, the inclusion-moderation hypothesis downplays the degree to which opposition movements in robust authoritarian regimes fall victim to exogenous forces. What if the regime falls short of upholding its end of the democratic bargain? What if it interferes with elections, or refuses to recognize democratically elected representatives? What if the regime uses force against opposition? A willingness to include moderates in the political process is not necessarily altruistic. In fact, authoritarian regimes may find moderates equally, if not more, threatening than militant opposition movements. Thus, regimes pursue policies of “zero-tolerance” in attempts to undercut the opposition’s ability to mobilize.<sup>127</sup>

From the perspective of opposition, the use of repression complicates the formulation and implementation of its strategies and goals. This can cause tension between groups within the movement. In studying Latin American democratization, Mainwaring argues that opposition movements play two games simultaneously: the regime game and the electoral game. The object of the regime game can take two forms. Either it can constitute steady participation in the political realm with the aim of democratizing the political climate or it can seek to delegitimize the authority of the regime. The aim of the electoral game is to amass votes. Most opposition parties engage in both games simultaneously, but prioritization of the regime or electoral game can fan internal disagreement.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>127</sup> See Wickham “Mobilizing Islam” or Hamzawy “Dynamics of Regime and Opposition.”

<sup>128</sup> El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 376.

Understanding the incentives towards moderation—to seek the median voter and to gain electoral power—explains the rise of the reformists within the Ikhwan. Mubarak’s use of repression against moderate opposition not only frames the disincentives the Muslim Brotherhood confronts in political party transformation, but explains the continuity of the conservative trend deeply embedded in the organization and firmly committed to social welfare provision over risky political engagements. The two games Mainwairing outlines characterize the internal ideological wrestling and the shifting balance of power that has contributed to organizational stagnation.

However, the moderation -hypothesis fails to explain why the Brotherhood grew more moderate during the times of Mubarak’s worst repressive crackdowns. Furthermore, the moderation -hypothesis cannot explain why, after an opposition force has agreed to the democratic bargain, the regime might choose not to uphold its end of the deal. This case study posits that moderate opposition with a vision of reform poses the greatest threat to an authoritarian regime and must therefore be suppressed. Given the Muslim Brotherhood’s moderation over the past two decades—its renunciation of violence and its willingness to operate within the bounds outlined by the Egyptian constitution and legal codes—Mubarak’s repression of the Brotherhood can only be explained as an attempt to undercut his most potent opposition.<sup>129</sup>

### **“Conflicting Minds”: The Reformists and the Conservatives**

While a mainstay, however, repression alone cannot characterize the relationship between Egypt’s ruling regime and the Muslim Brotherhood. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in times of relative quiet, the Brotherhood has capitalized on openings

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<sup>129</sup> Shadi Hamid, “Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan” (St. Anthony's College Oxford University). 214.

in the authoritarian regime and grown as an organization by broadening its constituency and expanding social welfare programs.<sup>130</sup> During the 1970s the Brothers dominated student governments and in the 1980's they usurped control of the syndicates. In these ways way, fluctuating relations with the regime have long affected the Brotherhood's reasonable courses of action, restricting many spheres but leaving unconquered territory in others.<sup>131</sup>

Recent scholarship characterizes the Muslim Brothers into four generations, largely attributing each generation's preferences as a product of its external environment.<sup>132</sup> The first generation consists of Brothers typically between the ages of 70 and 90. They hold the majority of positions of leadership and authority within the Society. While some lived during the time of al-Banna, all withstood the severe repression under Nasser and the Free Officers during the 1950s and 1960s. Much of this generation, former General Guide Akef included, survived incarceration and torture. This period looms large in their minds even today. Consequently, they approach the regime with caution, fearing its remarkable ability to subvert the movement.<sup>133</sup> They weathered the radical principles of the executed Brother Sayyid Qutb and reoriented themselves to adopt the moderate response, *Preachers Not Judges*, by first generation member and former General Guide Hassan al-Houdaiby during the 1970s.<sup>134</sup> Even so, the first generation maintains conservative political, cultural and religious views. They

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<sup>130</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 49.

<sup>131</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 17.

<sup>132</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Interview." See also, Khalil Al-Anani, "Islamists Today: Brotherhood Youth: A time bomb," *Islamists Today*, November 20, 2007, <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/2007/11/brotherhood-youth-time-bomb.html>.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, "Four Decades After Sayyid Qutb's Execution," *Egypt Daily News*, August 28, 2008, <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=16062>.

prioritize organizational unity and solidarity over political advance; they favor proselytization to politicization. Most are reluctant to engage formally in politics.<sup>135</sup>

The second generation emerged under President Sadat's controlled opening of the Egyptian social sphere during the 1970's. These Brothers refined their capacities to mobilize constituencies in student governments on university campuses and, later, as elected leaders and service providers in professional syndicates. Resulting from their social activism, this group "became masters of organization, mobilization and public engagement."<sup>136</sup> The second generation includes some of the Brotherhood's most outspoken members such as the head of the Political Department, Essam al-Erian, and leader of the Muslim Brother Parliamentarians, Saad el Katatny.<sup>137</sup> For the most part, the second generation seeks to align with other oppositional actors and push for democratic political reform.<sup>138</sup>

The third generation consists of members between the ages of 40 and 50. They joined the Muslim Brotherhood during a period of fierce repression in the 1990s. Like the first generation, the third generation is conservative religiously and culturally. The third generation dominates the organization's bureaucracy: members hold mid-level administrative positions and coordinate many of the organizations federated branches. However, it has virtually no representation in the Guidance Bureau.<sup>139</sup>

The fourth generation, the newest additions to the Brotherhood, emerged recently during the political opening in 2005. Their most outspoken representatives are

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Lynch, "Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch."

<sup>137</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent" (Arab Insight, 2007), <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>138</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Interview," June 7, 2009. See also, Marc Lynch, "Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2007, <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer245/lynch.html>.

<sup>139</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Interview," June 7, 2009. See also, Al-Anani, "Islamists Today: Brotherhood Youth: A time bomb."

located in the urban centers of Cairo, Alexandria and Mansoura. The fourth generation is intellectually and religiously open-minded. As will be elaborated on Chapter 5, this generation criticizes the Brotherhood for its archaic construction, favoring instead democratic organizational reform that would allow their voices and preferences to better be heard internally.<sup>140</sup>

While these generational classifications offer a broad depiction of the Brotherhood's composition, they fail to characterize the core internal struggle that occurs at the upper echelons of the movement. The balance of power falls between two influential camps: the conservatives and the reformists.<sup>141</sup> Their relations and relative strength determine the direction of the larger movement because positions of authority in the Guidance Bureau and Shura Council are reserved for senior, dedicated members, most of whom fall into the first or second generations. Thus, understanding how the two primary trends coexist, interact and sometimes conflict better accounts for the Brotherhood's internal dynamics and regime relations today.

Given these two camps, we are left with disparities of opinions between the Brotherhood's conservatives, many of whom participate in the highest-decision making body influencing the movements direction, and the more vocal, popular reformists with less organizational weight.<sup>142</sup> The trajectory of the purported political party metamorphosis traces the rise and growth of the reformist trend: their activism on university campuses in the 1970s, their sweeping electoral success in professional syndicates in the 1980s and their preliminary attempts to issue moderate stances on traditionally contentious issues in the early 1990s.

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<sup>140</sup> Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent." See also, Lynch, "Politics of Youth."

<sup>141</sup> Tarek Kahlaoui, "End of Brotherly Love?," *Middle East Online*, December 22, 2009, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/ENGLISH/opinion/?id=36322>.

<sup>142</sup> Hamzawy, "Caught in Two Minds - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace."



However, by focusing acutely on the reformists, many overlooked the strong conservative undercurrent. The reformists are largely accredited with garnering social support during the 1970s and 1980s in syndicates and universities. In time, their accomplishments helped them rise internally through the Brotherhood's hierarchy. As the Brotherhood gained supporters and social legitimacy, Mubarak grew increasingly wary. The era of Mubarak's tolerance came abruptly to an end by the early 1990s with the implementation of laws to limit Brotherhood activity, culminating in the 1995 arrests.<sup>143</sup> When electoral advances elicited harsh responses from the regime, as with the 1995 elections and more recently in 2005, support for reformist initiatives dwindles. The aftermath of the current crackdown has culminated in the recent election of conservatives to the Guidance Bureau and the position of General Guide, and displacement of strong reformist voices in the upper tiers.

Conservatives revere the sanctity of religious discourse and stray from amending it in any fundamental fashion. They heed not al-Banna's willingness to accommodate changing times, but use his actions as their guidelines: in 1943 al-Banna told Egyptian authorities that he would withdraw his candidacy from the Parliamentary elections in exchange for religious reforms.<sup>144</sup> Conservatives take a similar stance regarding the tradeoff between politics and religion: religious reform at the expense of political gains is desirable. They believe that engaging in formal political life detracts from the movements mission to serve as an all-encompassing religious society.<sup>145</sup> Conservatives also remain

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<sup>143</sup> Al-Awadi, "Mubarak and the Islamists: Why Did the "Honeymoon" End?," 71.

<sup>144</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 41.

<sup>145</sup> Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, "Brotherhood Faces Leadership Challenges," *Arab Reform Bulletin Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 2009, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=24118>.

ambiguous regarding the principles of political pluralism. Some believe it contradicts the view of a cohesive Muslim society and lead to its “weakness and division.”<sup>146</sup>

The conservative wing adheres to stricter principles regarding the implementation of sharia. They posit that people have the right to govern themselves so long as their actions do not contradict Islamic laws or principles. Humans are unable to pass laws that nullify what is forbidden in Islam, or permit behavior that is forbidden, most notably alcohol and adultery.<sup>147</sup> Some laws would apply to Egyptian society at large, even Coptic Christians and Ba’hais. Conservatives have not yet issued clear stances on women and minorities that grant either equal status as citizens. While they tacitly tack onto the reformists’ stances on these issues, many offhanded comments insinuate less progressive approaches.<sup>148</sup>

Conservatives have long been the majority across all levels of the Brotherhood’s hierarchy from the federated administrative posts to the Shura Council and the Guidance Bureau. They are risk averse and fear the ability of the state’s coercive apparatus to jeopardize the long-term success of the movement.<sup>149</sup> They see two potential paths for coexisting with the regime: the Brotherhood can either “resort to violence and risk the public credibility that distinguished it from extremists”, or it can “exercise self-restraint and pursue a tranquil path until the ‘violent storm’ had passed.”<sup>150</sup> In order to achieve the second path—the only one to which all members of the Brotherhood are unequivocally committed—they orient their efforts internally and seek to “cultivate a

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<sup>146</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 83.

<sup>147</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, “Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,” *Huson Institute: Center on Islam, Democracy and th Future of the Muslim World* 3 (February 16, 2006): 4, <http://www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/democracy-elections-and-the-egyptian-muslim-brotherhood>.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “Interview.” See also, Al-Anani, “Islamists Today: Brotherhood Youth: A time bomb.”

<sup>150</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 177.

strong, disciplined movement.”<sup>151</sup> Conservatives emphasize the role of spiritual education and social projects to aid in the creation of an Islamic society.<sup>152</sup> In this way, the conservatives hope to abstain from direct confrontation with the regime and expand quietly at a steady pace.

Most conservatives view the bid for political party legalization as futile in Mubarak’s authoritarian climate.<sup>153</sup> Others still remain deeply suspicious of other actors in Egyptian civil society, particularly Nasserists, Marxists and Arab Nationalists.<sup>154</sup> From a practical standpoint, conservatives maintain that forming a political party would, as al-Anani articulates, “come at the expense of the Brotherhood’s missionary functions and that this would result in the erosion of its vast grassroots supporters.”<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, pursuing political party legalization in Egypt would jeopardize the transnational Muslim Brotherhood movement because it would limit the scope of their activity to one nation and they would need to forego the quixotic ideal of a worldwide Islamic society.<sup>156</sup> Though a fraction of conservatives entertain the idea of a political party, even they have a remarkably different concept of what constitutes a political party. They regard the formal political realm as a platform from which to proselytize the Ikhwan’s mission, rather than one in which to collaborate with other actors to push for political reform.<sup>157</sup>

While the Brotherhood reformists acknowledge that al-Banna was hesitant to participate in politics, they posit that he opposed only the negative influences of political

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<sup>151</sup> Husam Tammam, “Egypt’s New Brotherhood Leadership: Implications and Limits of Change,” 2010/2/17, *Arab Reform Bulletin Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=30995>.

<sup>152</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, “Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.” 5.

<sup>153</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, “Islamists Today: Survival is not enough,” *Islamists Today*, January 30, 2010, <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/.s>

<sup>154</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, “Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.” 3.

<sup>155</sup> Al-Anani, “Islamists Today: Survival is not enough.”

<sup>156</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*, 39.

<sup>157</sup> Khalil Al-anani, “Brotherhood Party; Future Scenarios,” *Islamists Today*, September 25, 2007, <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/2007/09/brotherhood-party-future-scenarios.html>.

parties, not their existence.<sup>158</sup> Ideologically, the reformists advocate that Islamist discourse is grounded in human judgment (*ijtihad*) that must help to rejuvenate the core teachings of Islam, keeping them consistent with modern times. In this way, written texts must be interpreted as flexible, rather than static.<sup>159</sup>

Reformists revere Islamic constitutionalists that emphasize a commitment to political and ideological pluralism, popular sovereignty, the will of the majority and citizen equality.<sup>160</sup> Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a first-generation member of the Ikhwan, twice was offered the position of General Guide, but refused on both occasions. Al-Qaradawi justifies the Brotherhood's political advance as follows:

I am aware that martyred Imam Hasan al-Banna deplored partisan life and the establishment of parties in Islam due to what he witnessed in his time of parties that divided the umma in confronting the enemy. They were parties that revolved around individuals instead of clear goals and platforms. It is all right if our interpretation differs from that of our Imam, may God have compassion on him, for he did not disallow those who came after him from having their own interpretations, especially if circumstances change and positions and ideas evolve. Perhaps if he lived today he would see what we see. Fatwas change with changing times, places and conditions, especially in ever-changing political affairs. Those who know Hasan al-Banna know that he was not rigid but developed his ideas and policies according to the evidence available to him.<sup>161</sup>

As a corollary, the Brotherhood's reformists seek to adapt concepts of Islamic governance to the present climate in Egypt. They regard the caliphate as "a purely

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<sup>158</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 383.

<sup>159</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, "Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." 3.

<sup>160</sup> Wickham, "The Path to Moderation." wick 208

<sup>161</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 384.

political, non-religious entity...akin to other types of political unity such as the European Union.”<sup>162</sup> This interpretation contradicts the Brothers’ traditional understanding of their movement as a legitimate source of Sunni religious authority able to replace the Caliphate.<sup>163</sup>

The reformists believe the Ikhwan has much to gain from political reform and wants to press for change in that direction. They seek to engage with other political and intellectual forces.<sup>164</sup> They aim to enter Parliament, form alliances with other political actors and push for political reform, even if it comes at the expense of repression or organizational change.

Charismatic and pragmatic leader, Khairat al-Shater, straddles the divide between ideologies and commands the respect of conservatives and reformists alike. Shortly after the 2005 parliamentary success, al-Shater published a formal statement in the UK’s *Guardian* entitled “No need to be afraid of us.” In this, al-Shater stated the Muslim Brotherhood’s political goals: “we believe that the domination of political life by a single political party or group, whether the ruling party, the Muslim Brotherhood, or any other, is not desirable: the result of such a monopoly is the alienation of the majority of people.”<sup>165</sup>

Reformists also demonstrate receptivity to relations with the West in attempts to clarify the Brotherhood’s stances and open dialogue. Al-Shater writes: “our aim in seeking to win a limited number of seats in parliament is to create an effective parliamentary block that, in conjunction with others, can energize an inclusive debate about the priorities of reform and development.” The goals outlined are purely political

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<sup>162</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, “Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.” 3.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>164</sup> Tammam, “Egypt’s New Brotherhood Leadership: Implications and Limits of Change.”

<sup>165</sup> Al-Shater, “No need to be afraid of us.”

and operate under preexisting representative institutions of authoritarian politics. Al-Shater reiterates support for political pluralism: “not a single political, religious, social or cultural group should be excluded from Egypt’s political life.”<sup>166</sup>

Hamzawy suggests that the reformists demonstrate “responsible political behavior” in which the needs of the state and the goals of the movement are in balance: the success of a plural state that reflects the will of the people takes priority over the movement’s aims.<sup>167</sup> Despite the progressivity of such views, and Western scholars proclivity to overemphasize them, their acceptance in the Muslim Brotherhood must be called into question given the recent prevalence of contradictory statements and ideological hiccups that run counter to the views these reformists eschew.

Tracing the reformists’ internment by Egyptian officials demonstrates that they are the core proponents of the Brotherhood’s more progressive stances geared at appealing to wider bases of support. To better understand the Muslim Brotherhood’s inconsistent behavior we must trace the underlying balance of power in the organization and align it with Mubarak’s repression of the movement.

The inadvertent alliance between Brotherhood conservatives and Mubarak shapes the ideological composition of the movement. We find the temporary exit of the most outspoken reformist Brothers paves way for conservatives to take the reins. Thus, by virtue of their positions within the Brotherhood as leaders of the Political Department and elected officials in syndicates, the reformists are given microphones, but are not the ultimate determinants of official Brotherhood stances which emanate from

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Hamzawy, “Caught in Two Minds - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.”

the Guidance Bureau or General Guide. Until 2000, few committed reformists sat on the Guidance Bureau, the foremost body where Brotherhood policy is crafted.<sup>168</sup>

Blessed by former General Guide Houdaiby, reformists spearheaded the 1994 statements confirming women's right to vote and run for office (save for the highest office of the president), respecting Coptic Christians as equal citizens and embracing the values of political pluralism. I might argue that the conservatives tolerated these stances in order to appease an increasingly skeptical Mubarak growing more wary of the movement at large at the time, even its social welfare activity.

However, while most reformist leaders were in prison in 1997, then General Guide Mustafa Mashur issued statements that blatantly contradicted these values. He declared that "Coptic citizens should be barred from the top posts in the army to ensure complete loyalty in confronting hostile Christian states, and a special tax would be collected from them in exchange for protection from the state."<sup>169</sup>

Upon release from prison, the reformists hastily worked to dispel such antiquated views and clarify Mashur's "misspeak." They endeavored to project the Brotherhood's actual stance.<sup>170</sup> They affirmed that democracy "is part of a human heritage", that the Society would recognize a Coptic president should he rise to power by means of free elections, and that a woman's "*hijab* is merely a question of identity and belonging, just as saris are for Indians."<sup>171</sup>

Some scholars explain the period from 1996 to 2000 as one of "worrying ideological reversals," however these explanations of falls chronologically short of accounting for the much anticipated release of the Muslim Brotherhood's platform draft

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<sup>168</sup> Hamid, interview.

<sup>169</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 386.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 386.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 389.

released in 2007. Contrary to the reformists' acclaimed ideology, this document hailed conservative approaches that called into question the Brotherhood's committed acceptance of a modern political democracy. It focused not on political liberties as previous statements—presumably written by reformers—had, but more on an Islamist agenda.<sup>172</sup> In ways, it echoed Mashur's opinions from 1997. The most contentious stipulations of the platform revolved around two issues: "the creation of a body of senior religious scholars and the exclusion of all but Muslim males for the most senior positions in the Egyptian state."<sup>173</sup> The body of religious scholars was endowed with the power to oversee the legislation process and ensure that all laws conformed to sharia.<sup>174</sup>

Facing outrage from Egyptian intellectuals and authorities, the Brotherhood claimed that the preliminary document, which had only been distributed to fifty non-Brotherhood Egyptian academics and elites, had been tampered with and obscured. While the Brotherhood quickly recollected the platform draft with promise to develop a new one, conservatives refused to rescind commitment to the more contentious stipulations. Rather, they sought to defend the creation of a Higher Ulama Council clarifying that it would be "advisory rather than authoritative."<sup>175</sup> Despite reformist Habib's assurance that a more appropriate draft was forthcoming, it has not yet been released. Lynch concludes of the platform release, "the contents of the draft platform exploded into a major controversy which undermined years of the Brothers' patient efforts to persuade Egyptians of its democratic credentials."<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Marc Lynch, "The Brotherhood's Dilemma." 6.

<sup>173</sup> Nathan Brown and Amr Hamzawy, "The Draft Party Platform of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Foray Into Political Integration or Retreat Into Old Positions? - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," *Carnegie Foundation for International Peace*, January 2008, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19835>. 2

<sup>174</sup> Marc Lynch, "The Brotherhood's Dilemma." 6.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* 5.



The release of the platform not only elicited critical remarks in Egyptian society, but ignited conflict in within the Brotherhood. Dissent surfaced and internal divisions flared. Perhaps most significant in this controversial instance is the timing of the release: the platform was released when prominent reformists including Essam al-Erian, Khairyat al-Shater and Mohammad Bishr were serving prison sentences. Upon notification of the platform release, these moderates publicly rejected its controversial elements from their cells.<sup>177</sup>

Repression influences the composition of the Guidance Bureau and the Shura Council externally. Due to organizational regulations internally, when a member of the Brotherhood is arrested or dies, his/her elected position passes on to another. Behind bars for indeterminate periods of time, arrested reformists lose representation in the Shura Council and Guidance Bureau. Mubarak targets reformist Brothers not only because they pose a legitimate threat to his power, but to undercut their influence in the Ikhwan.

In 1995 and more recently between 2005 and 2010, reformists lost the ideological stronghold they had exerted in the Brotherhood. While many reformists were imprisoned from 1995 to 2000, General Guide Mashur issued controversial statements regarding Copts. A cryptically similar scenario occurred again in 2007 with the release of a conservative party platform when reformists served sentences. Rather than indicating organizational ideological reversals, these periods represent times when conservatives filled organizational positions typically occupied by the more publicly appealing reformists.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid. 6.

Today, current Deputy to the Supreme Guide Khairat al-Shatir, re-arrested in 2007 and sentenced to military tribunal, serves six years in prison. Many moderate Brothers recently detained were first arrested in the 1995 crackdown. Most served five years of hard labor and were released in 2000, only to be detained five years later. Such members include head of the Political Department Essam al-Erian, electoral strategist Ibrahim al-Za'farani, former secretary of the Syndicate of Arab Doctors Dr. Abd al-Monem Abu al-Futuh, editor and chief of Ikhwan Web Khaled Salem, and financial tycoon and electrical engineer Khairyat al-Shater.<sup>178</sup>

Younger reformists cannot rise through the ranks overnight. Due to stringent organizational regulations on the participating in the Shura Council and Guidance Bureau, many are too young to meaningfully influence the direction of the movement. Rather, when second generation reformists are in jail, we can speculate that conservative third generation members subsume their open positions.

### **Mubarak's Repression Shapes Internal Divisions**

Since reemerging under Sadat in 1974, repression has been the foremost factor guiding the strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>179</sup> Hamzawy notes, “the regime’s most troubling authoritarian practices have been developed specifically for use against the Brotherhood and its supporters.”<sup>180</sup> With no legal means to defend its members or guard its assets, the Brotherhood has long had little choice but to weather the changing tides of

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<sup>178</sup> Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, “Crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood,” <http://conflictsforum.org/2008/crackdown-on-the-muslim-brotherhood/>. See also El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 386.

<sup>179</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. See also, Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*.

<sup>180</sup> Advantage Ham Nathan Brown and Amr Hamzawy, “Qantara.de - Take Advantage of the Brotherhood's Gains,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 9, 2005, [http://en.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-476/\\_nr-495/i.html](http://en.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-476/_nr-495/i.html).

repression.<sup>181</sup> A corollary, the Brotherhood withdraws from potentially inflammable situations that might elicit extreme regime responses. Wickham suggests that the Ikhwan follows the ebb and the flow of repression, capitalizing on openings in the authoritarian climate when presented, and retreating when they are closed off.<sup>182</sup>

Mubarak's current offensive is twofold. First, Egyptian authorities have launched a comprehensive attack on the Brotherhood that undermines the reformist's political appeal, both inside and outside the organization. It aims to generally destabilize the Muslim Brotherhood by arresting its activists, endangering their financial resources, tarnishing their reputation and further illegalizing their status. Second, the recent crackdown on moderates has influenced the Brotherhood's ideological composition by physically removing reformists from the public realm. Authorities target reformist Brothers, removing them from the organizational folds and silencing their moderating influences. The result has been a more conservative Brotherhood that refrains from electoral competition and exchanges political participation for the ability to provide religious and social services.

After the initial round of voting in the 2005, in which the Brotherhood won 68% of the seats it contested, Mubarak issued orders for the arrest of 900 Brothers, some of whom were to appear on future ballots.<sup>183</sup> This hampered their contestation in the second and third rounds of the elections.<sup>184</sup> But arrests did not cease after the polls closed. Between 2006 and 2007, in the worst crackdown since the Nasser regime, the Egyptian government detained just shy of 1,000 Brothers. Those arrested faced charges

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<sup>181</sup> Shadi Hamid, "A Radical Turn for the Muslim Brotherhood? - Up Front Blog - Brookings Institution," *Brookings: up front blog*, January 26, 2010,

[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0126\\_muslim\\_brotherhood\\_egypt\\_hamid.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0126_muslim_brotherhood_egypt_hamid.aspx).

<sup>182</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 17.

<sup>183</sup> Al-Shater, "No need to be afraid of us."

<sup>184</sup> Sharon Otterman, "Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Parliamentary Elections - Council on Foreign Relations," *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 1, 2005, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9319/>.

of terrorism, money laundering, or, most commonly, belonging to constitutionally banned organization. Arrests or expulsion have begun to occur more frequently on university campuses and within syndicates, particularly in urban centers.<sup>185</sup>

Egyptian authorities have also jeopardized the vanguard of the conservative Brothers and their supporters by disrupting financial networks that sustain social welfare projects—citing terrorism as justification. In 2001, the Treasury indicted Bank al-Taqwa, a bank run by members of the Muslim Brotherhood, for “financing terrorism.” Though Mubarak took no immediate action at the time, after a controversial display by the Brotherhood youth in 2006 that received negative state press and called into question the return of the Brotherhood’s “secret apparatus,” Mubarak took action. Egyptian officials arrested prominent Muslim Brotherhood members closely related to the bank, including Yousseff al- Nada and Ali Ghaleb Himmat, the cofounders; Khairat al Shater, the electrical engineer managing the Brotherhood’s finances; and Hassan Malek, a local Egyptian businessman who traded textiles and clothing. The Egyptian government claimed that those indicted used millions of dollars of donations and investment profits to finance political campaigns and fund social welfare programs.<sup>186</sup> The court charged each with “financing a banned group” and found them guilty of such, issuing sentences ranging between seven to ten years.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, the Egyptian courts ordered that the assets of al-Shater and Malek be impounded because they financed an illegal organization.<sup>188</sup>

The media campaign amplifies disunity within the Ikhwan and endangers its reputation as a cohesive, unified front against the ruling regime. Following the 2005

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<sup>185</sup> See Ikwaweb.com “Youth” Section

<sup>186</sup> “Egypt’s Government Battles with the Muslim Brotherhood,” *The Economist*, April 2008.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> “Middle East Report 249: The Brothers and the Wars by Joshua Stacher,”  
<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer250/stacher.html.s>

elections, Egyptian authorities issued a public statement declaring that the Muslim Brotherhood “posed a threat to Egypt’s national security.”<sup>189</sup> In 2007, the release of the rough draft of the Brotherhood’s official platform equipped the regime with ample ammunition to publicly censure the Brotherhood. The platform contained controversial contents, particularly given Egypt’s secular rule of law, that demonstrated a sharp contrast to what the Brotherhood had previously declared. This platform articulated that “the sharia [was] to be the primary source of legislation”, that neither women nor Coptic Christians could become the head of state, and that a Higher Ulama Council with legislative powers was to be instated. Despite numerous statements from reformist members of the Muslim Brotherhood who publicly took issue with the document’s contents, the NDP hailed the document as evidence of “the true face of the Muslim Brotherhood.”<sup>190</sup> Recently in the Egyptian newspapers, TV briefs, and radio shows, the state media “paints the Brotherhood as an unclear patriotic hireling of Iran, which sponsors Hamas and Hezbollah.”<sup>191</sup> Such statements have amplified the public’s awareness of organizational disunity and endangered the movements’ reputation. They have also called into question the weight of the reformist stances.

Egyptian authorities have created a legal environment even more hostile to the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in any political realm. A 2007 law further illegalized the status of the Brotherhood changing its status for the first time since 1954: it went from being “legally banned” to “constitutionally prohibited.”<sup>192</sup>

Such thorough attacks on the Brotherhood have alarmed its leaders, and heightened the debate of the political role of the Ikhwan. These fierce and enduring

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<sup>189</sup> Marc Lynch, “The Brotherhood’s Dilemma.” 4.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>191</sup> Tromifov. “Egypt’s Government Battles with the Muslim Brotherhood.”

<sup>192</sup> Joshua Stacher, “Brothers in Arms? Engaging the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt” (Institute for Public Policy Research London, April 2008).

external confrontations have hinted at looming encounters and perturbed its members, compelling Brotherhood leaders to tiptoe electoral advance. Recent events reveal the prioritization of internal cohesion over uncertain political gains. The Ikhwan boycotted the 2008 municipal elections.<sup>193</sup> While brief statements suggest that the Brotherhood intends to field candidates in future elections, the Society has yet to announce whether it will commit to running for the People's Assembly elections November 2010. Statements insinuate that the number of candidates running will be considerably smaller. The Brotherhood has also faltered in its commitments to other oppositional actors; for this many regard it with suspicion.

### **Corroborating the Conservative Swing**

While one can make a strong case, like Shadi Hamid, that “organizational commitments trump the beliefs of individual leaders,” evidence suggests that a collection of high-powered Brothers can, in fact, swing decisions in their favor.<sup>194</sup> In 2004, and much to conservatives' dismay, Akef embraced the political aspirations of the reformists. Immediately after taking the office of the Supreme Guide, Akef issued a Reformist Initiative and reiterated the movement's intention to function legally as a political party. The Initiative confirmed the Brotherhood's support for democratic principles and electoral participation.<sup>195</sup> While Akef's intent was “to heal rift between old and new generations and reestablish a coherent, revamped ideological line for the group's

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<sup>193</sup> “Brotherhood to boycott Egypt polls,” *Al Jazeera English Middle East*, April 7, 2008, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/04/2008614233241541770.html>.

<sup>194</sup> Shadi Hamid, “A Radical Turn for the Muslim Brotherhood?,” *Up Front Blog Brookings Institution*, January 26, 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0126\\_muslim\\_brotherhood\\_egypt\\_hamid.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0126_muslim_brotherhood_egypt_hamid.aspx).

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

adherents and political members,” as Ghobasy notes, in avidly pursuing electoral aspirations that precipitated a fierce crackdown, he fanned the flame of internal dispute.<sup>196</sup>

In January 2010, for the first time in the Brotherhood’s history, a Supreme Guide resigned from his post. The Brotherhood publicly declared the passing of this power a testament to the organization’s internal democracy, however Akef’s resignation followed a conspicuous period of tension in the Guidance Bureau. After Mohammad Hilal passed away in October 2009, Akef sought to elevate reformist Essam al-Erian to the Bureau in accordance with internal regulations. However, conservatives in the Guidance Bureau rejected his request for promotion advocating instead to postpone the ascendance of a member until the January Guidance Bureau elections. Furious with the conservatives’ resistance, Akef allegedly stormed out of the movement’s headquarters and relegated most of his powers to his Deputy Guide Habib. Shortly thereafter, Akef announced his decision to complete his term leaving the position open for the election of a new General Guide.<sup>197</sup>

The January elections to the Guidance Bureau removed two prominent reformists from the Bureau, al-Futouh and Habib. Although al-Erian gained a seat for the first time, a vibrant discussion entertained the idea that his ascendance was allegedly the fruit of secret pact he made with the conservative majority.<sup>198</sup> Perhaps more significant, a conservative General Guide with ties to Sayyid Qutb ascended the ranks. In his acceptance speech, General Guide Mohammad Badie, reiterated the movement’s core commitment to religious social outreach, but refrained from making bold political statements as Akef had previously. Hamid remarks that the recent elections indicate a

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<sup>196</sup> El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 390.

<sup>197</sup> <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/>. See also Nadia Abou El-Magd, “Akef may stay to lead Muslim Brotherhood,” November 17, 2009, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=21711.akef>

<sup>198</sup> Tammam, “Egypt’s New Brotherhood Leadership: Implications and Limits of Change.”

conservative swing: “the emerging consensus is that the election of Badie, a veterinary professor and purported hardliner, signals Islamist “radicalization” and ideological regression on the part of an organization that had been hailed, until quite recently, as an increasingly moderate force.”<sup>199</sup>

Even prior to Badie’s election, the Muslim Brotherhood gave strong evidence of its goal to return to *da’wa*. For the first time in decades, it announced that it would take nominations for the position of General Guide from other countries.<sup>200</sup> In this way, the Brotherhood—or the Guidance Bureau that selects candidates for the position of General Guide—demonstrated its interest in reestablishing its image as a transnational movement, not a nation specific political party.

It appears, at least for the time being, Mubarak’s targeted repression and the Brotherhood’s conservative majority have successfully tipped the Ikhwan’s balance of power, corroborating not political party transformation, but a renewed commitment to the *da’wa* and proselytizing. Although the Brotherhood has not formally declared retreat from the political realm, political aspirations are expected to become a secondary or tertiary focus maintained primarily as a public outlet. In the face of regime repression, conservatives fear that an organization in transition might turn to extremism or internal factions, thus jeopardizing the longevity of the Brotherhood’s mission. Though the Muslim Brotherhood has not admitted absolute electoral withdrawal, they advocate retreat to preserve long-term vitality.

Beyond ideological opposition, from a strategic standpoint the organization has the potential to lose much from transforming to a political party. The Brotherhood has

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<sup>199</sup> Hamid, “A Radical Turn for the Muslim Brotherhood?”

<sup>200</sup> “Muslim Brotherhood Nominations,” *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, September 27, 2009, <http://almasry-alyoum.com/printerfriendly.aspx?articleID=204379>.



been able to withstand repression for nearly a century because of its decentralized networks and autonomous leadership. Political party transformation has the potential to profoundly change these potent attributes. Formal engagement with the state—even contesting its power too openly—has negative reverberating effects on the Ikhwan. Furthermore, there exists no external or internal incentive structures to entice the Brotherhood to embark on fundamental ideological, strategic or institutional reorientations for uncertain political pay-offs. The surest strategy for the Ikhwan is to evade the government and continue expanding where possible—the Brotherhood is an opportunity taker, not an opportunity maker. This tactical choice to avoid regime repression, coupled with a conservative preference to nurture a comprehensive Islamic state from the bottom up, has led to the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational stagnation as a social welfare society.

## Chapter 4: Electoral Advance—Elections do not a Party Make

The 1980s under Mubarak marked an opening in the Egyptian political sphere. Following Sadat's assassination in a move unparalleled, President Mubarak engaged opposition leaders to address the prospects for political reform. Noha el-Mikawy remarks, "between 1981 and 1983, everyone was building bridges of goodwill."<sup>201</sup> Beyond altruism, however, Mubarak's lenience was a strategic attempt to consolidate his rule.<sup>202</sup> According to Wickham, Mubarak's permitted the rise of a parallel Islamic society because it contributed to social stability and his credibility as a tolerant leader. In this environment, the Ikhwan took advantage of political openings and expanded rapidly, tapping into vast networks of apathetic citizens, pursuing new bases of support, and institutionalizing its ability to support burgeoning social welfare services.<sup>203</sup>

Though often overlooked, the 1980s also reflected the Islamicization of Egyptian society and politics. Hamid states of this transformation, "pluralization and democratization helped produce a political environment oriented around not just the Islamization of society ...but the Islamization of the country's legal system. The *sharia-ization* of Egyptian politics cut across ideological boundaries."<sup>204</sup> In nationwide elections from 1983-1987, Mohammad al-Tawil documents a preferential swing towards political elites that favored sharia legislation initiated by the president, judges, religious authorities

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<sup>201</sup> Noha el-Mikawy, *Building Consensus in Egypt's Transition Process* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), p. 42. From: Hamid's "Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan" 232.

<sup>202</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 103.

<sup>203</sup> Hamid, *Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan*. 221.

<sup>204</sup> Hamid, *Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan*. 232.

and the houses of parliament.”<sup>205</sup> Across Egypt, cultural and religious conservatism was on the rise. Even the NDP’s party congress of 1986 advocated for the implementation of 21 recommendations that would aid in the “purification of existing laws in contradiction with provisions of the sharia.”<sup>206</sup>

It was in this socio-political climate favorable to Islamic principles that the Ikhwan capitalized on regime openings, seriously entertaining the idea of forming a political party and contesting national elections in coalitional alliances in order to gain legal status and guard against future repression. However, national elections do not a party make. Amongst opposition groups in authoritarian regimes, electoral participation does not necessarily aim to remove the firmly rooted ruling regime, but to exploit the public nature of the political stage, to critique regime practices, to access state resources and to provide patronage for its constituency.<sup>207</sup>

Rather than reflect political party transformation through electoral participation in national parliament, the 1980s is better characterized as a time during which the Brotherhood endeavored to achieve two longer-term goals: (1) legal recognition, and (2) a broadened support base by means of providing social welfare services. The Ikhwan pursued the former of these goals through a strategic entrance into the political realm, and pursued the latter through increased participation in student unions and professional syndicates. Although mobilizing support in universities and syndicates is associated with electoral gain in national parliament, of central importance is to distinguish between civil society and government elections.<sup>208</sup> Advancing into student unions and professional

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<sup>205</sup> Taweel, *al-Ikhwan fi al-Parlaman*, p. 82. From: “Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan” 232.

<sup>206</sup> Springborg, *Mubarak’s Egypt*, p. 159. From: “Democrats without Democracy: the Unlikely Moderation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan” 232.

<sup>207</sup> Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East.” 122.

<sup>208</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*.

associations reflected the Brotherhood's traditional strategy of expanding into realms that did not directly contradict or contest the regime. Electoral advance on national parliament was undertaken cautiously because it inherently involved confrontation with the regime. Even in an unprecedented era of political opening, conservatives remained inclined to cautiously test the waters before diving in.

From the 1980s onwards, electoral advance has failed to precipitate political party transformation. While providing for its burgeoning constituency required extensive additions to the movement's infrastructure and the specialization of tasks outsourced to different departments, participating in electoral politics failed to catalyze similar organizational change. Electoral advance began only as a strategy to achieve legal status, not as a basis for sustained political partisanship. Attributable to this fact and coupled with wavering movement support for political engagements, we see stagnancy in the political department of the Brotherhood. While Ghobashy was right that, "ideological debate and organizational turmoil were the fruit of the Ikhwan's electoral engagement" nothing conclusive has come of it yet.<sup>209</sup> We see not organizational change, but the durability of the Brotherhood's status quo as a social welfare society.

This chapter proceeds by reviewing the literature pertinent to understanding the behavior of opposition parties in durable authoritarian regimes. It then characterizes the debate surrounding the Ikhwan's decision to pursue political party status and describes the Brothers' adroitness in professional syndicate and student unions. Finally, the chapter demonstrates how electoral advance has not profoundly changed the Brotherhood's ideology, goals and strategies or institutions, but merely constitutes a strategy in itself to achieve ulterior objectives.

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<sup>209</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers."

## Literature Review

Political scientists who approach national elections in authoritarian states from Western viewpoints consider electoral contestation (1) an attempt to remove the status quo; and (2) the action of a largely consolidated party organization. However, such an approach ignores a literature on elections in durable authoritarian regimes that involves a comprehensive discussion of domestic supporters and patron-client relations, or competitive clientelism.<sup>210</sup> This literature posits that elections are not potential pathways for democratization, but opportunities for the allocation of patronage. Elections further reinforce pro-regime parliaments by delivering services to loyal constituencies.<sup>211</sup> Parliamentarians, more commonly known as “service deputies” across the Arab world in reference to their provision of patronage, use their positions in legislative assemblies as leverage against higher officials should their constituency’s demands not be met.<sup>212</sup>

Ellen Lust-Okar suggests that parliamentary elections in authoritarian regimes are neither crucial moments that determine influential decision makers, nor are they instances that can significantly change the governing bloc; in most cases, parliament can be dissolved if unfavorable to a ruler. Lower parliamentary houses rarely formulate laws, legislate or influence policy in any meaningful way. Parliament exists for representatives to access state resource or a public platform. It also gives immunity against authoritarian regimes.<sup>213</sup> In this climate, parties seek ends other than participation.

With a foothold in social welfare distribution, Islamic movements are often the most organized opposition in authoritarian regimes. Upon entering elections they are

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<sup>210</sup> Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East.” 122.

<sup>211</sup> Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an age of democratization* (Cambridge [England] ;;New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 9.

<sup>212</sup> Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East.” 123.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* 122.

positioned for success. A crucial distinction, Lust-Okar argues that this ability derives not from Islamists' actual policy platform, but their demonstrated commitment to the provision of social services.<sup>214</sup>

As an Islamic social welfare organization that commands loyalty from constituents, the Muslim Brotherhood is similarly poised to enter and win elections. However, electoral participation demonstrates not political party transformation through parliamentary contestation, but the mobilization of supporters from peripheral institutions such as professional syndicates or student unions, where the Brotherhood already commanded significant support. The Ikhwan simply mobilized this constituency to vote on behalf of the movement not for its platform, but its ability to provide patronage. Even if the Brotherhood wanted to become a modern political party to challenge the government and shape policy, the proper incentive structure to transform does not exist due to the nature of parliament in authoritarian regimes. Knowing this of Egyptian politics, the Brotherhood participates in parliament not to overthrow the regime, but to benefit from participation in other ways: to gain immunity from the regime and to reach out to the public. Commonly overlooked, the Ikhwan first chose to contest national elections as part of a larger project to achieve legal status.

### **The Quest for Legal Status**

Brotherhood leaders first chose to enter Egypt's political realm in the 1980s not to effect some change in power or calculatedly achieve an Islamic utopia by means of the ballot box, but to attain legal status as a buffer against repression. When Nasser cracked down on the Ikhwan, rounded up its leaders and forced the remaining members

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid. 127.

underground in 1954, he also withdrew the movement's legal support. Although Sadat endeavored to engage the Ikhwan more formally into Egyptian civil society, offering them seats in the Shura Council and respectable government positions, he took care not to grant concessions in the realm of legal status—fearing it might lock the regime into legal recognition and render future repression illegitimate. Mubarak adopted similarly stringent strategies even in the early years of his presidency denying the Ikhwan legal recognition to delegitimize any leverage as Egypt's most powerful opposition.<sup>215</sup>

But Brotherhood leaders coveted legal status, recognizing that the claim of illegality was the regime's favorite poison to indict the Ikhwan. An internal Brotherhood document from the 1990's corroborates the regime's preference for maintaining power over the Brotherhood in this way:

It is easy to deny the 'legality of the movement,' to incriminate the activities that it performs, even if they have been performed in conformity with the law, or to impose emergency laws and continuously codify pieces of legislation as an approach to facing the movement.<sup>216</sup>

Having survived years of incarceration and weathered storms of repression, in 1981 then General Guide Tilmesani recognized the importance of securing legal status within which to operate publicly and to mitigate the potential of repression.<sup>217</sup> He noted of the choice to vie for political party status, "when we were released from the 1981 detention we were in a state of near-recession. We set to looking for a lawful means to

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<sup>215</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 5, 39.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. 216.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. 39.

carry out our activities without troubling security or challenging the laws.”<sup>218</sup> The Ikhwan began by taking the government to court over Nasser’s repeal of the movement’s legal status. Between 1977 and 1990, the case was denied on more than 40 occasions.<sup>219</sup> Refused this avenue, the Brotherhood entertained alternatives.

The attempt to achieve political party status, *hiḏḏ*, was second in priority to the Ikhwan’s desire to be recognized as a social movement, a *haraka*. Not wanting to limit its activities to the narrow sphere of politics, Al-Awadi states “the Brothers saw themselves as an independent power, which deserved to be recognized as a *haraka* and if that was not possible then as a *hiḏḏ*.”<sup>220</sup> Even then the Brotherhood identified as a *haraka* and believed itself to transcend the narrow role of a political party confined to the realm of national electoral politics.

However, Egyptian officials conceded only to status as a religious charity. This would have empowered the Ministry of Social Justice to oversee and regulate the Ikhwan’s activities.<sup>221</sup> To register as a religious party was equivalent to relinquishing the Society’s financial autonomy and exposing the inner structure of the *tanzim* that enabled it to amass vast support. The Brothers modified their strategy and entertained the idea of forming a political party.<sup>222</sup>

The benefit of achieving political party status was that the mechanisms to do so were codified in law and, in the Brothers’ view, probably achievable. Should the Egyptian public elect twenty Brotherhood candidates to the People’s Assembly, it would be eligible to apply for political party status in accordance with the Egyptian Constitution.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> El-Ghobashy, “Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” 378.

<sup>219</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 38.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>221</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 104

<sup>222</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 83.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.* 82.



Given the Brotherhood's rising success in syndicates and on university campuses, such a prerequisite seemed surmountable. While structural limitations diminished the absolute benefits of political party status, achieving it would nonetheless entitle the Brotherhood to "campaign for support before parliamentary elections...by holding open-air rallies or distributing campaign literature," in addition to hosting activities for several hundred supporters and expressing their policy positions in print.<sup>224</sup>

Despite a unanimous awareness of the need to gain legal status amongst leading Ikhwan members, the debate around pursuing political party status flared and Brothers divided along ideological lines.<sup>225</sup> According to one study conducted by a veteran Ikhwan lawyer about the Brotherhood's attempts to apply for political status, the movement plead with Egyptian officials and argued that the Ikhwan constituted a party based upon religion because "the movement is mainly concerned with the political dimension of Islam."<sup>226</sup>

However his approach aggravated more conservative members of the Ikhwan and most within the Brotherhood eschewed divergent views. Akef expressed reluctance at the time: "I told Tilmesani that my understanding of the Brotherhood was that it was a comprehensive organization [and]...therefore would not accept or agree to its abolition or replacement by a political party regulated by the Parties' Law."<sup>227</sup> Most Brothers remained similarly wary, maintaining a fear that the pursuit of political party status would jeopardize the Brotherhood's social welfare aims and fundamentally reorient its goal of achieving a comprehensive Islamic state.

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<sup>224</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 72.

<sup>225</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 83.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 39.

Even after Tilmesani grudgingly accepted that the Brotherhood would vie for political party status through parliamentary participation he took care to make distinctions. He emphasized publicly, and within the Brotherhood, that the Ikhwan would not be defined by its attempt to form a political party, the latter merely constituted a necessary means to gain legal recognition. He states, “The Ikhwan is an international organization, and their concerns encompass the entire world and continents. This is different from political parties, which have domestic concerns the [ruling] Democratic Party [for instance] does not have branches in England or America, while the Ikhwan has branches all over the world.”<sup>228</sup> Although Brotherhood leaders consented to political party pursuit, it was characterized foremost by a sentiment of necessity to protect the movements social welfare agenda and outreach activities, not participate permanently as political opposition.

At this time, the young activists from universities many of whom later became the reformists, occupied lower positions in the Brotherhood’s hierarchy and had virtually no weight in the Brotherhood’s decision-making bodies. As such, they were preoccupied mainly with garnering social support for the movement through their roles in student unions and professional syndicates, and their initial preferences regarding the pursuit of legal status are largely undocumented. But their eager behavior in the 1987 elections and early 1990s suggest, like conservatives, they would have pursued legal status; however, their rationale would most likely have differed. They might have sought electoral participation not for the sole purpose of fending off repression, but to open the possibility of advancing on Egypt’s core political realm and achieve an Islamic society by means of the ballot box. In time, the implications of the quest for legal status—and

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid. 83.

potential confusion about the rationale behind it—would further divide reformists and conservatives.

### **Deepening of Social Welfare: The Development of Parallel Islamic Sectors**

Capitalizing on openings in Egypt, the Ikhwan fanned out into civil society in three primary avenues: university campuses, professional associations and the formal political realm.<sup>229</sup> Although garnering support in student unions and professional syndicates and orchestrating electoral strategies were the fruits of the reformists' labor, Brotherhood leaders were first drawn to their astonishing ability to organize at the grass roots level by mobilizing students on campuses.

The young reformists attracted Ikhwan leaders' attention in the late 1970s through their campus activities. At this time their main agenda advocated the return to traditional Islamic dress, the beard and the *galabiyya*.<sup>230</sup> As the Brotherhood leaders reemerged from prisons, they sought to incorporate these vibrant, young Islamists. Hamzawy and Brown note that, "the effect [of incorporating these activists] was not simply to rejuvenate the movement, but also to infuse it with a variety of new organizational ideas and a greater inclination toward political activism, first through student associations and, then...through professional associations."<sup>231</sup> These reformists proved the engine behind the Brotherhood's growing constituency and masterminds behind later electoral alliances. During the 1980s, the young Brotherhood activists were responsible for the remarkable grass-roots mobilization in the periphery on university

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<sup>229</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 36.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. 91.

<sup>231</sup> Amr Hamzawy and Nathan Brown, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, [http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=40318&zoom\\_highlight=the+egyptian+muslim+brotherhood](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=40318&zoom_highlight=the+egyptian+muslim+brotherhood). 6-7.

campuses and in professional associations. Their activity enabled mushrooming support that was heralded by elder conservatives and garnered them respect internally.<sup>232</sup>

At the time of incorporation, the stances of these activists were thought to align with the conservatives, Brotherhood leaders had little reason to believe that their ideas would transform over the course of the coming decades. However, through student union and syndicate participation, these reformists sharpened their skills, moderated their stances and eventually challenged the pillars of the Ikhwan.<sup>233</sup>

Beginning in 1984 and continuing through the late 1990s, student Brothers dominated student union elections from the metropolitan centers of Cairo and Alexandria to the provinces of Upper Egypt. Ikhwan members performed well in student unions because of their ability to assess the effectiveness of their work and their dexterity in providing extensive services. Under the guidance of the Ikhwan, young Brothers distributed questionnaires to better discern students' preferences and needs. The Ikhwan then demonstrated responsiveness to these needs by delivering meaningful services, such as the Family Medical Project that treated students free of charge at university facilities. Student Brothers also sold textbooks and medical supplies at a discounted price.<sup>234</sup> Facing high unemployment rates upon graduation, many student activists continued their work with the Ikhwan in professional syndicates. Al-Awadi suggests "the presence of Muslim Brothers in professional syndicates was a 'normal' phenomenon rather than a planned one" because most graduated Brothers sought employment in their designated professional field.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 221.

<sup>233</sup> Wickham, "The Path to Moderation," 207.

<sup>234</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 122,3.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* 95.

Between 1984 and 1986 the Brotherhood ran under the “Islamic Trend” in the Doctors’, Engineers’, Scientists’, Dentists’, Pharmacists’, Agronomists’, Lawyers’ and Commercial Employees’ Associations. As on university campuses, the Brotherhood’s popularity derived from its ability to effectively and efficiently deliver services to its constituency. In 1986 the Brotherhood developed a system for subsidized healthcare in the Medical Syndicate. By 1988 the Brotherhood offered treatment and consultation for 17,600 doctors and 43,960 dependents in the Medical Syndicate. The following year, the Brotherhood expanded the program to the Engineers’ Syndicate providing for 72,000 citizens.<sup>236</sup>

The provision of patronage had profound affects on the Ikhwan’ electoral success in syndicates. As Lust-Okar predicts, voters rewarded the representatives most capable of aggregating needs and providing services with a vote. This strategy proved potent. While in 1984 the Ikhwan won 7 of 25 seats on the Executive Board of the Doctors’ Association; by 1990 it occupied 20 of 25 seats. It chose not to contest all open seats in order to diversify the representation of other preferences.<sup>237</sup>

For Brotherhood leaders, the rise of the parallel Islamic sector in universities and syndicates represented the revitalization of the Brotherhood and reassertion of its identity as a comprehensive Islamic organization that incorporated all aspects of life. For the eager reformists, however, student union and syndicate activity instilled loftier goals and ambitious plans to penetrate the formal political realm through electoral advance—this was in stark contrast with the leaders’ intent to pursue national elections for the purposes of achieving legal status.

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid. 97.

<sup>237</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 186.

## Electoral Advance

With strong peripheral support in the midst of a political opening, the Brotherhood was positioned to enter national politics in 1984, still with the intention of gaining legal status.<sup>238</sup> Wickham notes that during the 1980s and mid-1990s the Brothers were “uniquely situated to channel support mobilized on the periphery into electoral contests at or near the center of national politics.”<sup>239</sup> Throughout the 1980’s, the Brotherhood openly campaigned in national elections under the banner “Islam is the Solution,” an issue that would later become a serious point of contention between reformists and conservatives while campaigning for national election.<sup>240</sup>

For the first time in 1984, the Brotherhood entered elections serving as a junior partner with the declared secular Wafd Party. However, Brotherhood leaders clarified that forming an alliance with the Wafd did not come at the expense of ideological concessions. This statement was intended to preclude the possibility that organizational change or ideological reorientation might arise from electoral participation. Reformists adopted alternate approaches. Then young Abdel al-Futouh hinted at the possibility of internal changes, “some Ikhwan are embarrassed about saying that al-Banna had negative views of *hizb* rather than admitting that we have developed and reconsidered our ideas towards parties.”<sup>241</sup> His statement hints at a disparity between younger activists and older leaders on the reasons for entering national elections.

In the 1984 elections, the Ikhwan won eight parliamentary seats. But hospitality between the Wafd and Muslim Brotherhood proved fleeting, and the alliance dissolved shortly thereafter. As the 1987 elections approached, the Brotherhood aligned itself with

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<sup>238</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*.

<sup>239</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*.w 178.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>241</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 82.

the Labor Party and won 36 seats.<sup>242</sup> At this juncture, conservatives hoped they could finally apply for legal status but never did so due to Mubarak's rising suspicion of Brotherhood activity. The parliamentary bloc, this time consisting of younger reformist Brothers including al-Erian, took issue with the government's commitment to Islam, human rights violations and social issues such as media freedom, healthcare or public education on the assembly floor.<sup>243</sup>

Although Brotherhood MPs contested these issues in parliament, voters' election of Brotherhood candidates derived not from the Ikhwan's platform but their patronage in peripheral arenas.<sup>244</sup> Thus, having a preexisting precluded political party transformation because the MPs did not need to campaign, but rely on the mobilization of dense associational networks already loyal to the Brotherhood. Though campaigning in 1986 for the upcoming parliamentary elections, Badr Ghazi, President of the Faculty Club at Cairo University, noted that the Brotherhood avoided political rhetoric and demonstrated firm commitment to delivering social services to their constituencies: "...we did not speak about politics. Instead we focused on the real concerns of people." In Teachers' Unions, Brothers negotiated for higher salaries, subsidized accommodation and health treatment, according to the aggregated demands of young teachers.<sup>245</sup> While the Brothers activity in syndicates was not initially intended to contribute to the core electoral contestation, it was ultimately mobilized towards that end.<sup>246</sup>

The openings closed in the late 1980s. Following constitutional amendments that undercut the opposition in the People's Assembly in 1987, the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau revealed that the Ikhwan would boycott the 1990 elections. Upon this

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<sup>242</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Interview."

<sup>243</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 115.

<sup>244</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 92.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.* 124.

<sup>246</sup> Campagna, "From accommodation to confrontation: the Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak years."

announcement, reformists spoke out. Al-Erian openly critiqued the Bureau's decision to boycott believing that Mubarak's changing opinion arose from the Brotherhood's absence from the core political realm. Reformists argued that by boycotting the elections, the Ikhwan's actions "constituted a further explanation of the regime's anger and a reason for it to revoke its tolerant policies" because they blatantly defied the regime.<sup>247</sup> As tensions rose within the Brotherhood, so too did they with the regime.

Once Mubarak perceived the Ikhwan's activity as a credible threat growing more politicized in the early 1990s, he began to systematically seal off openings in Egyptian society. In 1992, Egyptian authorities announced a comprehensive project to integrate all private mosques into the Ministry for Religious Endowments, long a stronghold for the Ikhwan's social and religious activities.<sup>248</sup> By the mid-1990's of the previous 45,000 private mosques, 25,000 had been incorporated.<sup>249</sup> In 1993 Mubarak changed election laws in the syndicates to undermine the Brothers' success. In 1994 Egyptian authorities replaced over 2,000 teachers "suspected of Islamist affiliations" from elementary and upper schools.<sup>250</sup> While in response to the politicization of peripheral institutions after pushed from parliament, the regime's crackdown both undercut conservative initiatives to provide services and fanned the politicization of reformists. After the Mubarak regimes' 1995 crackdown that put reformists behind bars, the Brotherhood retreated from society and withdrew its participation on many fronts.<sup>251</sup>

In sum, the 1980s through 1990s marked a period of comprehensive expansion for the Ikhwan across multiple arenas. While the Brotherhood made core electoral advances during this time, electoral advance was a strategy to achieve legal status. The

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<sup>247</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 144.

<sup>248</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*. 106.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.* 107.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>251</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," 385.



movement's efforts were more holistic. Leaders focused on penetrating society at large in venues unassociated with the state that would not elicit a repressive response in universities and syndicates.<sup>252</sup> Success in these arenas prompted the Brotherhood to expand its institutions geared at social and religious outreach and provided impetus for organization maturation in order to accommodate the needs of a broader constituency. An internal Brotherhood document from the 1990s corroborates that its aim was to permeate societal institutions:

Over the past decade, the Brothers were able to forge a strong presence in society's institutions and in the political arena, to an extent that alarmed the regime and made it unable to cope with the movement's increasing growth and continuing spread as a result of its adopted policies. These were aimed at gradually securing a foothold in the institutions of society (i.e., in one syndicate after the other and in one institution after the other).<sup>253</sup>

### **Failure to Adapt**

While the Brotherhood fielded second tier candidates in the 2000 elections, thought to be the rapid handiwork of el-Erian upon his release from prison, it took care to balance formal electoral participation and caution.<sup>254</sup> It won only 17 seats, this time as independents unaligned with other parties. The Ikhwan used its position in parliament to address issues of cultural and Islamic identity, not openly confront the regimes on contentious issues. The most aggressive electoral advance took place during the

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<sup>252</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam : religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, 179.

<sup>253</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy : the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 198.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* 387.

September People's Assembly Elections, the Ikhwan slated 161 candidates, 88 of whom filled the 444 seats open for contestation.<sup>255</sup>

Regardless of the Muslim Brotherhood's electoral advances and subsequent parliamentary activity over the past 25 years, the Ikhwan's political aspirations have not changed the core structures of the *tanzim*. Rather it seems that electoral advance was itself a strategy to be used in the appropriate setting, and discarded when cumbersome or dangerous for the movement. Kotob states: "participation in the existing electoral system is thus a major tool used by the Brethren to advance their *da'wa* by sidestepping the many legislative restrictions that otherwise prevent promulgation of their message."<sup>256</sup>

In stark contrast with the Brotherhood's ability to mature organizationally as a social welfare movement over the past three decades, the Political Department remains stagnant. While it includes the parliamentary MPs, considerably greater in number today than ever before, it is structured the same as it was prior to the 2005 elections. It still operates as a think-tank and is controlled by many reformists.<sup>257</sup> It is one of *many* departments in the Brotherhood, but the only overtly concerned with electoral engagement. It is commonly critiqued as the weakest Ikhwan department due to fluctuating movement support for its initiatives, a lack of direction and ill-define goals.<sup>258</sup> It is a department within the larger organization that reports to the Guidance Bureau; it does not have the capability to issue statements for the movement at large. In short, the Political Department is a member of the crew, but not the commander of the ship.

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<sup>255</sup> Marc Lynch, "The Brotherhood's Dilemma."

<sup>256</sup> Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 3 (August 1995): 331.

<sup>257</sup> Al-Awadi, *In pursuit of legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. 88.

<sup>258</sup> Al-Anani, *The Rules of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: a field study*. 15.

Even reformists disagree over how the political department ought to manifest itself. El-Erian argues that the movement would bifurcate, “one organizational would be a civil political party open to all Egyptian citizens, Muslims, and Christians.” It would “consist of the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood” but not be a Muslim Brotherhood party in compliance with Egyptian law that forbids political parties founded on religion.<sup>259</sup> However, al-Futouh once advocated that the entire organization reorder itself to operate as a political party.<sup>260</sup> Today, conservatives seem bent on diffusing the discussion of political party potentiality entirely.

Hamzawy and Brown outline three significant changes at the organizational level that would accompany political party transformation: (1) the creation of an arm of the Brotherhood with a different sense of time (Brotherhood elders emphasize that the movement thinks in terms of years, not days), (2) the rise of a new leadership that upholds distinctive priorities, and (3) the collaboration and cooperation with other political actors.<sup>261</sup> These would require the Brotherhood to reconsider its abstract ideology, reorient its strategies and goals geared at Islamic outreach, and alter its institutions fit to providing for their constituencies but not aggregating preferences from the bottom. The following paragraphs discuss more general implications of political party transformation according to these criteria.

First, Ikhwan leaders have long maintained that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood thinks in terms of years, rather than days, weeks or months.<sup>262</sup> In this way,

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<sup>259</sup> Sharon Otterman, “Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s Parliamentary Elections,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 1, 2005, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9319/>.

<sup>260</sup> Dr. Israel Elad Altman, “Current Trends in the Ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,” 5.

<sup>261</sup> “The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” [http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=40318&zooom\\_highlight=the+egyptian+muslim+brotherhood](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=40318&zooom_highlight=the+egyptian+muslim+brotherhood). 8.

<sup>262</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “Interview.”

movement leaders are better able to interpret successes or failures as they incrementally advance towards their telos of an Islamic state. As Hamzawy and Brown note, the creation of a political arm would upset the timeframe within which the Brotherhood operates. It would force the political apparatus to aggregate and channel interests from the bottom, synthesize preferences, and produce formal policy recommendations or platforms. Even if the entire movement wanted to transition to a political party, it would be remarkably difficult to advance in such a direction given the repressive and unpredictable nature of the authoritarian environment. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the conservative majority wants to remain a religious social welfare organization. The proper incentive to change under these dual forces is lacking.

Second, the formation of a political party would call into question the basic pillars of the Brotherhood's leadership and give organizational muscle to a competing source of authority within the movement. The most revered positions in the Brotherhood are those that deal with mass membership and religious education. These leaders tend to be less concerned with formal political life and relegate responsibilities to reformists who excel at these public positions.<sup>263</sup> But, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Brotherhood has internally marginalized reformist leaders and removed them from influential positions of decision-making—a testament to the organization's unwillingness to empower an alternate source of power within the movement. In a significant way, the durability of the Brotherhood is attributable to the autonomy of its leadership capable of making important decisions in a timely fashion. Creating a separate political arm would slow the pace at which the movement makes decisions and responds

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<sup>263</sup> Hamid, interview.

to a fluctuating environment, and this could fundamentally undermine the Ikhwan's ability to withstand even the fiercest authoritarian climates.

Third, despite reformists' best efforts, the Brotherhood has demonstrated an inability, or an unwillingness, to cooperate consistently with other oppositional forces. Reformists have spearheaded Conferences on Freedoms in Civil Society and hosted Ramadan *Iftars* inviting hundreds of Egyptian intellectuals and community leaders.<sup>264</sup> But these efforts fall short of forming solid political alliances. Shortly after the 1984 People's Assembly Elections, the Wafd Alliance disintegrated over unresolved ideological disputes. More recently, the Brotherhood has not taken to the streets with other opposition forces during the April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 strikes but did so on its own to show solidarity with Gaza in January 2009.<sup>265</sup>

To which chapter three alluded, the Brotherhood's more conservative stances tend to alienate other political actors. The Brotherhood has issued inconsistent stances on contentious issues such as women's rights, Coptic Christians, the role sharia and the state of Israel that demonstrate fluctuations between reformist and conservative preferences. These alternating positions estrange other actors, fostering uncertainty around how the Brotherhood would wield substantial political authority were it to gain a majority of seats. Collaborating with other political actors would require that the Brotherhood relinquish its luxury of opposition and issue definitive stances on issues prior to cooperation with other opposition forces. While politically minded reformists are more than willing, their more conservative counterparts concerned with religious social outreach see no utility in doing so.

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<sup>264</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 389.

<sup>265</sup> Hossam El-Hamalawy, "Middle East Report 242: Comrades and Brothers by Hossam El-Hamalawy," *Middle East Report*, <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer242/hamalawy.html>.

Beyond the logistical and ideological difficulties of overcoming the three hurdles Hamzawy and Brown outline, there exist more tangible reasons to indicate that electoral advance is merely a strategy employed by the Brotherhood, not a mechanism to precipitate organizational change. They include the following: the Ikhwan never contests enough seats to counteract NDP policy-making, it rarely proposes legislation and chooses to operate from a luxury of opposition, and it has not institutionalized channels to diffuse preferences from the bottom upwards.<sup>266</sup>

The Brotherhood utilizes an electoral strategy not to gain the maximum number of seats, but to avoid threatening the ruling NDP party, Mubarak's primary support base. It has never contested more than one-third of the seats in parliament so as to circumvent forming a coalition capable of blocking NDP legislation. What is more, the Brotherhood never fields candidates to campaign against the NDP's most prominent parliamentarians. In 2005 it did not field a candidate to contest the first ever multi-candidate presidential election. It boycotted national elections in 1990 and 2008.<sup>267</sup> Many expect it to do so in the upcoming November 2010 elections as well.<sup>268</sup>

On the parliamentary floor the Brotherhood prefers to operate from the luxury of opposition with the confidence that it does not have to rule. The Brotherhood rarely proposes legislation and restricts its activity to critiquing the government on unjust laws, human rights violations or election fraud. Hamzawy and Brown note of the Brotherhood's participation in authoritarian politics, "Brotherhood deputies can certainly annoy the government, pepper its ministers with questions, and bring issues to the public

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<sup>266</sup> Hamzawy and Brown, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace."

<sup>267</sup> "Al Jazeera English - Middle East - Brotherhood to boycott Egypt polls," <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/04/2008614233241541770.html>.

<sup>268</sup> Dennis Sullivan, "Will the Muslim Brotherhood Run in 2010? - Carnegie Middle East Center," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 5, 2009, <http://www.carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=23057&lang=en>.

sphere for discussion, but they do not have the votes necessary to write in laws.”<sup>269</sup> In this way, those who proclaimed metamorphosis of the Brotherhood failed to analyze thoroughly the activity of Brothers in national parliament: not to push for agendas for their constituency but to critique the regime—hardly comparable to the activities of modern political parties responsible to an electorate. Al-Shater even admits of the Brother’s electoral strategy “our aim in seeking to win a limited number of seats in parliament is to create an effective parliamentary block that...can energize an inclusive debate about the priorities of reform and development.”<sup>270</sup> In this way, the Brothers’ activity in parliament serves not to shape policy but push for reform and utilize the public nature of the parliamentary floor to disseminate its message, no more.

Lastly, as will be elaborated upon fully in the following chapter, the Brotherhood has not only failed to institutionalize channels to aggregate preferences at the bottom of the organization, it sees no utility in doing so. Central to becoming a political party that could respond immediately to its constituencies’ needs would be the creation of infrastructural capacities to develop and maintain these channels. As it stands, the Brotherhood’s leaders remain isolated and autonomous from the larger organization, and, as demonstrated by recent shifts in the Guidance Bureau, from the reformists who ardently advocate electoral advance.

In sum, the Muslim Brotherhood expanded at unpredictable rates as a social welfare organization during the 1980s and early 1990s to nurture an Islamic society from the grassroots level. It did so by means of expanding its provision of social welfare through syndicates and universities, advances in line with the movement’s teleological

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<sup>269</sup> Hamzawy and Brown, “The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.” 16.

<sup>270</sup> Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt : the rise of an Islamic mass movement, 1928-1942*. 23.

ideology. These endeavors provided impetus for organizational change that entrenched and expanded institutions capable of distributing services to its constituency and disseminating its Islamic ideology. While the Ikhwan strategically contested the formal electoral realm to achieve legal status beginning in 1984, and has continued electoral participation with wavering support through the 2005 elections. Such advances are not associated with political party transformation because electoral advance was only ever a strategy, not a strategic reorientation. Thus the Muslim Brotherhood maintains its status quo as a social welfare organization.



## Chapter 5: Youthful Dissent

*“They were this new breed of Islamist that reads blogs, watches al-Jazeera, sings sha’bi (popular) songs, talks about intense love stories and chants ‘down with Mubarak.’”*

–Ala Abd al-Fattah, liberal blogger recounts his interaction with Brotherhood bloggers

Since inception, Brotherhood youth have played an acute role within the organization adding dynamism to the current ranks and revitalizing the Ikhwan’s role in Egyptian life. In the late 1920’s, Hasan al-Banna ventured to Cairo with a vision of an Islamic renaissance and a commitment to religious education that burgeoned into the world’s largest transnational Islamist movement.<sup>271</sup> During Sadat’s infitada of the 1970s, Brotherhood youth assumed control of the student unions and in the 1980s recent university graduates advanced into the professional syndicates, both via popular election in civil society institutions. Following al-Banna’s lead and in the footsteps of previous generations, outspoken Brotherhood youth continue to influence the larger movement, driving internal debates, challenging the status-quo, and deepening the Ikhwan’s involvement in Egyptian society. Armed with handheld electronics and found frequenting cyber cafes, youth today try to evade the Brotherhood’s traditional order and rigid hierarchy online.<sup>272</sup>

Stymied by notions of traditional order and at odds with enigmatic organizational procedures, today’s youngest generation rejects the dominant culture of “obedience and conformity,” critiques the organization’s inability to absorb dissent and channel meaningful discourse, and questions the Brotherhood’s nebulous methods of internal

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<sup>271</sup> Al-Shater, “No need to be afraid of us.”

<sup>272</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

promotion.<sup>273</sup> Much like older reformists, these young Brothers envision a democratic Egypt that upholds individual liberties; they aim to affect this transformation by means of reforming foremost community of which they are a part: the Muslim Brotherhood. Blogger Abdul Rahman Monsour articulates, “I think most Egyptians want democracy and more freedoms. I want democracy and freedom in my country, so why not start with the organization I can affect most?”<sup>274</sup> Much to the distress of conservative Brotherhood leaders, blogging content appears in an unregulated, public forum and strikes at the heart of the Brotherhood’s core ideology.<sup>275</sup>

For these wired Brothers, the Internet has eclipsed the traditional gathering place of the mosque.<sup>276</sup> For the most part, this “electronic generation”, generally between the ages of 20 to 30, is concentrated in the urban metropolises of Cairo and Alexandria. Like the older Ikhwan reformists, they constitute a proportionally small—but extremely vocal—contingency. One youth estimates that blogging youth comprise around 15% of the youngest generation, but reliable statistics remain forthcoming.<sup>277</sup>

Like most organizations in the Arab world, youth command little sway in established institutions.<sup>278</sup> Encouraged only to obey and conform to the status quo, structural constraints have given rise to chronic problems for Ikhwan youth. The Brotherhood’s Shura Council and Guidance Bureau, for which the criteria to enter are based primarily on seniority and devotion to the organization, make most crucial

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> “Young Egyptian Bloggers Seek a More Democratic Muslim Brotherhood,” <http://www.wrmea.com/component/content/article/321-2009-november/6354-young-egyptian-bloggers-seek-a-more-democratic-muslim-brotherhood.html>.

<sup>275</sup> Jeffrey Fleishman, “Egypt’s opposition faces internal dissent,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/oct/03/world/fg-brotherhood3>.

<sup>276</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.”

<sup>277</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

<sup>278</sup> Hamid, interview.

decisions.<sup>279</sup> Young members fail to penetrate such levels “playing instead the role of small cogs in the organization” as al-Anani observes.<sup>280</sup> While due-paying members who regularly attend generally Ikhwan meetings and open-forums, organizational construction inhibits their active participation in influential decision making spheres. Furthermore, all younger members of the Brotherhood are under the “guardianship” of an older member. Youth need the approval of his/her guardian in order to be promoted to positions of authority and rise through the ranks.<sup>281</sup> With scant opportunity to influence the organization, rise amongst its ranks or appeal to its leaders, youth turned to criticism in attempts to reform Egypt’s most prominent opposition force.

Though blogging Brothers respect their elders for their experience and wisdom, they disagree over the direction of the movement. This fans a classical principal-agent problem: mounting tension between those who give the orders and those who implement the plans regarding strategies, goals and the role of the Brotherhood. Recently, this discord has estranged younger members and exacerbated ideological differences across the organization. Met with resistance and marginalized by members of the old guard who fail to acknowledge their dissident opinions writing them off as whimsical antics, many youth suffer from “isolation and inability to immerse themselves in the group.”<sup>282</sup>

The dissident, blogging Brothers enter the scene at a time crucial to the future of the Muslim Brotherhood as the organization teeters in and out of the formal political

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<sup>279</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.”

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Joseph Mayton, “Young Egyptian Bloggers Seek a More Democratic Muslim Brotherhood,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, November 2009, <http://www.wrmea.com/component/content/article/321-2009-november/6354-young-egyptian-bloggers-seek-a-more-democratic-muslim-brotherhood.html>.

<sup>282</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.”

realm and quells internal ideological spats.<sup>283</sup> However, despite the hype surrounding the dynamic potential of new social media, blogging has not caused the reorientation or permanent change of any formal strategic, institutional, or ideological elements of the Brotherhood's structure. More specifically, the effects of blogging have not restructured the inner-workings of the organization's mechanisms for advancement or decision-making processes. In this way, the bloggers' influence remains largely potential, not kinetic.

This chapter proceeds first by reviewing the dominant literature on new social media, particularly the ways in which blogging creates opportunities to deconstruct norms and undermine the status quo. Second, it discusses the rise of the Brotherhood bloggers and categorizes them according to the views they espouse. Third, it explores the varied responses of the old guard and discusses the bloggers' relationship with the organization at large. Finally, it concludes by analyzing the extent to which this has failed to affect organizational change, but highlights the differences from past approaches.

### **Internet and the Youth: New Openings for a New Generation**

Though statistically smaller, Internet users in the Arab world are unique in two respects. First, they are particularly interested in political development and social reform through larger public participation in political life. Second, they ardently address taboo subjects including political affiliation and religious devotion.<sup>284</sup> These discussions unfold most commonly through blogs, types of individually maintained websites that provide commentary and create space for others to respond. Woodly defines blogs as "immediate, horizontally linked dialogical space, which has the effect of expanding the

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<sup>283</sup> al-Houdaiby, "Brotherhood Faces Leadership Challenges."

<sup>284</sup> Hofheinz, "The Internet and the Arab World." 91.

scope of public space and providing a structure that is closer to the conversation than any traditional news media.”<sup>285</sup>

More than the average Internet user, Hofheinz argues that bloggers experience a form of online socialization by means of engaging in public debate. Blogs have the capability to demonstrate to users that one’s personal views may not be clear or self-evident to others, and that in order to communicate effectively, one must explicate his/her positions via rationalization, justification, and argumentation. Naturally then, blogs demonstrate not only a diversity of opinions, but that one may not always be successful in convincing others of a particular view.<sup>286</sup> Collectively, bloggers tend to exhibit “increased self-confidence and belief in one’s own potential, becoming active, making one’s voice heard, intensifying and enlarging one’s social networks around common interests, having fun, overcoming negativity, creating something useful.” However, this can foster a greater perception of influence than might actually exist.<sup>287</sup>

The Internet debuted as a volatile political force in Egypt under the auspices of a secular coalition prior to the 2005 Parliamentary and presidential elections. At that time, the Kifaya (Enough) movement drew extensive support across Egypt’s political spectrum. It opposes President Mubarak’s presidency and the possibility that his son, Gamal, will assume the office of the president in an act of quasi-hereditary succession. At the height of the movement’s activism in 2004 and 2005, thousands of Egyptian activists sharpened their skills recounting online electoral corruption as informal citizen journalists, while others engaged in lengthy political debates, taking to the streets on

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<sup>285</sup> Woodyly, “New Competencies in democratic communication? Blogs, agenda setting and political participation.” 110

<sup>286</sup> Hofheinz, “The Internet and the Arab World.” 94.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. 95.

several occasions.<sup>288</sup> While the Kifaya movement has since tapered, the digital mobilization strategies persist in other opposition movements.

In the Arab world at large, Islamist groups have been more successful in their Internet designs than their liberal and secular counterparts.<sup>289</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood first whet its appetite online at the hands of experimental young Brothers. In 2000 a handful of Ikhwan university students created a website called “Egypt Facts” that consisted of decentralized formal and informal reporting on the Brotherhood. Long confounded by stringent press restrictions, Ikhwan leaders quickly realized the Internet potential when foreign reporters confessed that they read current Brotherhood events via the website. Egypt Facts became the pilot project for what later matured into official Arabic and English websites in 2003 and 2005 respectively. The Muslim Brotherhood has since creatively exploited the Internet beginning with the 2005 parliamentary elections to air radio broadcasts, promote candidate platforms and air a two-hour video describing the movement’s origins and vision.<sup>290</sup> However, just as Mubarak has been unable to completely impede opposition’s use of the Internet, the Brotherhood has fallen short of regulating all online content from within the organization.

### **Brotherhood Blogs**

According to Khalil al-Anani, the Brotherhood blogging phenomenon underwent a maturation process consisting of three progressions. The first phase of Brotherhood blogging began as a two-fold exploration upon two young Brother’s release

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<sup>288</sup> Michelle Browsers, “The Egyptian Movement for Change: Intellectual antecedents and generational conflicts,” *Springer Netherlands* 1, no. 1 (March 31, 2007): 73.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* 85

<sup>290</sup> Pete Ajemian, “The Islamist Opposition Online in Egypt and Jordan,” *Arab Media & Society*, no. 4 (Winter 2008), <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=577>. 3, 4.

from prison in fall 2006.<sup>291</sup> Spearheaded by journalist Abdel Moneim Mahmoud and student-leader Magdy Saad, Brotherhood blogging began with the intention of critiquing Mubarak's authoritarian practices and diversifying the Egyptian blogosphere, then dominated by leftists and secularists.<sup>292</sup> Mahmoud's "I am Brotherhood" and Saad's "Whatever, it Doesn't Matter" rose in direct response to their arrests along with 19 other Brotherhood leaders. The blogs elaborated on the wave of arrests that incarcerated Ikhwan members for belonging to an illegal organization following a controversial incident later dubbed the "students' case."<sup>293</sup>

The second phase of blogging, non-violent resistance, arose after another sweeping incident of arrests. In 2006, unbeknownst to the Ikhwan officials, young Brothers protested rigged elections by dressing up as ninjas and staging a quasi-martial arts demonstration. Mubarak responded by arresting hundreds of students from Al-Azhar and trying forty Muslim Brotherhood leaders unassociated with the student's act of civil resistance in military tribunals.<sup>294</sup> In the wake of this event in February 2007, a blog orchestrated by relatives of those arrested, Ensaa (Forget), emerged. Ensaa became an unofficial news channel, aggregating individual family's blogs about their detained relatives, in addition to offering news reports, articles and detailed accounts of human rights violations. It served as a clearinghouse for the al-Azhar cases because Egyptian authorities barred reporters from entering the courtroom. The Muslim Brotherhood endorsed the blog, deeming Ensaa a medium through which to humanize the detained

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<sup>291</sup> Fleishman, "Egypt's opposition faces internal dissent - Los Angeles Times."

<sup>292</sup> Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent."

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Lynch, "Politics of Youth."

Ikhwan members. The website proved remarkably popular: within the first month, the site had 60,000 visitors.<sup>295</sup>

While individual Brotherhood blogs emerged initially as a means to counterbalance the secular left, introduce an Islamist perspective into the online community and protest Mubarak's repression, the blogs quickly evolved into a means of vocalizing dissent and circumventing the rigid, organizational structures that inhibited youth from affecting the Muslim Brotherhood. The third phase of blogging, dubbed "self-criticism" by al-Anani, describes how young Brothers address thorny issues like the Brotherhood's political and intellectual discourse or organizational construction.<sup>296</sup> Websites entitled "Brotherhood Youth" (Ikhwan Youth), "I'm with them" (Ana Ma3a Hom), and "Whatever it's not important" (Yalla Mish Mohem) entered the scene shortly thereafter.<sup>297</sup> By 2007, there were an estimated 150 Brotherhood bloggers, including Samiya al-Erian, daughter of reformist Essam al-Erian, and Ibrahim al Houdaiby, grandson and great-grandson to two prior General Guides, among others.<sup>298</sup> It was at this juncture that the Ikhwan realized the Internet was a double-edged sword.

By nature blogs are individual projects, and Brotherhood bloggers fail to constitute a self-proclaimed faction within the movement largely because their reasons for blogging differ. Some blog in the hopes that their opinions will help advance them through the ranks; others seek to engage in debates over controversial concepts the Brotherhood typically eschews.<sup>299</sup> However, Brotherhood blogging reduces to three primary purposes: 1) social humanitarian blogs, like that of Ensaa, to protest arrests and

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<sup>295</sup> Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent."

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> These blogs belong to the following individuals respectively: Abdel-Rahman Rashwan, Mustafa el-Naggar, Magdi Saad.

<sup>298</sup> "Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch," <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer245/lynch.html>

<sup>299</sup> Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent."



military tribunals, 2) more recent aggregator blogs that compile and monitor commentary from independent media sources on the Brotherhood, and 3) “rebel blogs” that seek to reform the Brotherhood from within by invoking touchy debates.<sup>300</sup> While all have caused commotion in the Egyptian blogosphere and elicited repressive responses from the state security apparatus, the latter of the three drove internal debates that attacked the ideological core of the movement for a window of time.<sup>301</sup>

Political involvement, ideological moderation and organizational transparency are the focuses of the rebel blogs. They call on the Brotherhood to enshrine values of democracy and transparency in a quest for ideological moderation. To do this, they believe the Ikhwan must develop new political and religious rhetoric and abandon its current teleological aim, which only hinders the Brotherhood’s political integration, so as to make itself accessible to all Egyptians.<sup>302</sup> Abdul Rahman Monsour elaborates specifically on the internal reforms the blogging youth wish to see: “we are calling for many things in our blogs...we want things to be more democratic within the Brotherhood. There needs to be new means to move up in the group, and we need openness and moderation.”<sup>303</sup> Internally, they think the Brotherhood must abandon secrecy and hammer out difficult ideological debates to avoid further estrangement from other oppositional groups and sidestep internal factioning.

Rebel bloggers hope to create solidarity amongst Egypt’s opposition regardless of political or religious affiliation.<sup>304</sup> They seek to humanize the Brotherhood, linking an identity to individuals and dispelling the stereotype that members of the Brotherhood are

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Hamid, interview.

<sup>302</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.”

<sup>303</sup> Mayton, “Young Egyptian Bloggers Seek a More Democratic Muslim Brotherhood.”

<sup>304</sup> Al-Anani, “Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent.”

indoctrinated mechanistic individuals. Mahmoud Hamza notes that his blog is, “my message to myself, and to the young Muslim Brothers and to society. I want to show that the Brothers are humans and have the same dreams [as anyone else]. We have fun. We drink [tea]. We sit in cafes. We go to movies. We demonstrate...and we blog for freedom.”<sup>305</sup> Saad echoes a similar stance writing that, “blogging represents a good opportunity for the normal audience to get to know a Brotherhood member, and to see the difference between the individual and the organization.” He continues, “it also provides a space for freedom of expression in a more open way without having to follow certain rules.”<sup>306</sup> As members of a closed society and rigid organization, these youth equate blogging with individual liberties and the freedom of expression and speech.

Throughout 2006 and 2007 bloggers scrutinized the Brotherhood at every intersection, calling on the movement to establish clear goals and a consistent commitment to political change. Bloggers have unabashedly taken issue with every major event that has confronted the Brotherhood since they first entered the blogosphere. In 2005 Mubarak began screening Muslim Brotherhood affiliated candidates campaigning for student unions. A series of demonstrations ensued, culminating in the 2006 al-Azhar incident.<sup>307</sup>

While the leaders faced charges in military tribunals for furnishing the students with combat training and weapons, university administrations expelled students from dormitories and suspended them from exams.<sup>308</sup> The Ikhwan did nothing to defend students or prevent their expulsion. As a signal of what was to come should the Ikhwan

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<sup>305</sup> Lynch, “Politics of Youth.”

<sup>306</sup> Al-Anani, “Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent.”

<sup>307</sup> “Egypt: Reading between the “Red Lines”,” *Human Rights Watch*, June 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/egypt0605/>.

<sup>308</sup> “Human Rights Watch: Egypt “Muslim Brotherhood Detainees Face Military Tribunals”,” *Ikhwan Muslim Brotherhood*, February 2007, <http://ikhwanegy.com/2007/02/28/human-rights-watch-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-detainees-face-military-tribunals/>.

cause more commotion, Mubarak froze Brotherhood assets, foreclosed Brotherhood businesses and arrested members.<sup>309</sup>

At this time Saad chastised the Brotherhood's leadership not only for failing to defend its youth but blamed the incident on the old guard for neglecting students' marginalization after student union elections. Saad states: "where were you elders when students asked for protection after the security forces attacked students at Ain Shams? Where were you when security forces beat and kicked the al-Azhar students on campus grounds? Where were you when the student elections were cancelled?" Saad proclaimed that these brave students that had the courage to demonstrate on the ground were the "true men and women" of the Brotherhood, implying the cowardice of the leaders orchestrating the movement behind close doors.<sup>310</sup>

Prior to the May 2007 National Shura Council Elections, bloggers developed two-fold critiques. Dissatisfied with the candidates selected to run, bloggers reasserted the fallibility of the Brotherhood's internal promotion process that favored members with higher levels of education than those with strong political or electoral platforms.<sup>311</sup> Dentist blogger Mustafa al-Naggar elaborated on this concern, taking issue with the fact that, "sheikhs from the mosques were chosen and pushed to enter elections and do political work without them having any prior experience in politics or work in general."<sup>312</sup> Brotherhood bloggers also entertained the idea of changing the Brotherhood's strictly religious slogan "Islam is the Solution." They pragmatically argued that if the Constitution prevented political parties based on religion, why not change the

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<sup>309</sup> Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, "Conflicts Forum » Do not undermine moderate Islamists: The case of Muslim Brotherhood leader, Khayrat El-Shater," *Conflicts Forum: listening to political Islam, recognizing resistance*, September 13, 2007, <http://conflictsforum.org/2007/do-not-undermine-moderate-islamists-the-case-of-muslim-brotherhood-leader-khayrat-el-shater/>.

<sup>310</sup> Lynch, "Politics of Youth."

<sup>311</sup> Al-Anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent."

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

slogan? Saad recommended a new slogan “Egypt for all Egyptians” to which Houdaiby gave his support because the Brotherhood already commanded the loyalty of a massive constituency.<sup>313</sup>

The most inflammatory instance of Brotherhood blogging followed the release of a preliminary platform in September 2007, in which two contentious articles of the platform called for the creation of a higher ulama council to oversee state legislation and banned women and Copts from occupying the position of president. The outcry from Egyptian society and within the Brotherhood over was deafening. An impassioned Abdel Moneim Mahmoud questioned the logic behind the platform, revisiting the core ideological difference between the reformers and the old guard. In a post entitled “the party of the community or the community of the party” Blogger Saad inquired, “is this the platform of a political party or a religious organization?”<sup>314</sup> Saad speculated that conservative members of the Brotherhood altered the platform draft. He concluded by calling for a revision of the embarrassing document that demonstrated a regression of toleration from earlier platforms of the 1990s: “the angry reaction of some intellectual and leaders should be an indication that something was wrong with some items of the program. I wish that the programme be amended.”<sup>315</sup>

However, a testament to the ideological diversity even within generations, not all bloggers concurred. Aya Khalid hailed the platform in its preliminary form because it demonstrated a new flexibility of the leadership to listen to criticism: “the idea of presenting the draft programme of the Brotherhood party before presenting the final

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<sup>313</sup> Mayton, “Young Egyptian Bloggers Seek a More Democratic Muslim Brotherhood.”

<sup>314</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

<sup>315</sup> “Ikhwan Political Platform in the Eyes of Young Brothers,” *Ikhwanwe*, November 11, 2007, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=14455>.

version of the programme manifests great flexibility. The programme is amendable according to the preliminary reaction.”<sup>316</sup>

Always eager to engage in public debate, less dramatic events and official Brotherhood statements frequently reignite the central debate over the role and future of the Brotherhood. During the April 6<sup>th</sup> strikes in 2008 the Muslim Brotherhood declared it would not participate. The decision enraged youth who sought to demonstrate solidarity with their liberal counterparts and to assert the Brotherhood’s role as a proactive political force.<sup>317</sup> An anonymous middle-ranking Brother characterized the mounting tension between the cadre and the old guard citing that the Muslim Brothers were “leaving the street empty for leftists. When Kifaya came onto the scene, some Brotherhood youth wanted to follow suit.”<sup>318</sup> Shortly after, then General Guide Akef issued a conservative statement on women, Ibrahim Houdaiby chided Akef for his old-fashioned views towards women in an American Jewish newspaper.<sup>319</sup>

While not initially so, most bloggers are eager to clarify the difference between personal opinions and official stances. Ibrahim Houdaiby outlines that “there is a difference between my personal blog and my belonging to the group as an organization. It is possible to publish something in the blog that is incompatible with what the group likes, or to criticize it [the Brotherhood].”<sup>320</sup> Others disagree. An anonymous blogger goes so far as to criticize the airing of internal schisms and points of contention stating, “if you have suggestions, take them straight to the people in question...you don’t

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Many liberal bloggers remain skeptical of the Brotherhood’s (and even younger bloggers) commitment to political reform and pluralism.

<sup>318</sup> El-Hamalawy, “Middle East Report 242: Comrades and Brothers by Hossam El-Hamalawy.”

<sup>319</sup> Shadi Hamid, “Looking for Moderate Islamists,” *Ikhwanweb*, November 7, 2007, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?ID=14552&LevelID=1&SectionID=0>.

<sup>320</sup> “Brotherhood Blogs: Windows to Revelation, Criticism and Organizational Rise,” *Ikhwanweb*, September 9, 2008, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?ID=17948&SectionID=0>.

accomplish anything by writing about our problems on the pages of the Internet.”<sup>321</sup> Despite this minority, however, most bloggers are in agreement, as Saad states, that “criticism is a healthy phenomenon for the group, since it expresses a kind of intellectual back-and-forth within the Brotherhood’s ranks.”<sup>322</sup>

Though the bloggers often diverge from mainstream Brotherhood stances, for the most part they remain invested in the organization and its future. Blogger Zahraa Bassam acknowledges the reconciliation process that bloggers must go through in remaining loyal to the movement but also honest with him or herself: “as a Muslim Brotherhood member I have an ideology as well as a message before being a blogger, which makes Brotherhood bloggers different from other bloggers...We are Brothers, our outlook is based on Muslim Brotherhood principles, but on the other hand the Islamic idea is a general one, and every blogger deals with it from a personal point of view.”<sup>323</sup>

### **Responses from the Old Guard**

The Muslim Brotherhood has historically drawn a firm line of “neglect and containment” with former dissidents and internal critics.<sup>324</sup> The organization would freeze memberships or expel members; it ordered growing factions, such as extremist al-Jihad, to exit the Brotherhood when it became apparent that its strategies to achieve an Islamic state differed. The most recent and publicized incident of expulsion occurred in 1996 with the creation of the Wasat Party. Frustrated with the Muslim Brotherhood’s

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<sup>321</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

<sup>322</sup> Al-Anani, “Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent.”

<sup>323</sup> Marc Lynch, “Brotherhood of the blog | Comment is free | guardian.co.uk,” March 5, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/mar/05/brotherhoodoftheblog>.

<sup>324</sup> Khalil al-Anani, “The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.”

chronic organizational unemployment for younger members, secrecy shrouding decision-making procedures and ideological rigidity, Wasat members decided to form a political party.<sup>325</sup> Conspicuously, the Wasat Party platform espoused ideas virtually identical to those held by the young blogging Brothers today: political pluralism in all realms of political and social life, popular sovereignty as the source of state power, ideological flexibility and equal rights for all citizens.<sup>326</sup>

Hype surrounds the blogging Brothers today because it harkens back to the Wasat expulsion for two reasons: it uncovers the movement's deep fear of schism and it demonstrates ideological parallels between the bloggers and Wasat founders. Particularly interesting is that Wasat members and young bloggers critique the same short-comings of the Brotherhood. According to Wasat founder Essam Sultan, the Ikhwan faces "organizational unemployment" for innovative younger members who seek to influence the larger movement and partake in meaningful strategic discussions.<sup>327</sup> Blogs today echo this sentiment.

Despite ideological parallels, however, the Brotherhood responds differently to blogging Brothers today. What about the bloggers, or the changing environment, compels the Brotherhood to avoid expelling these Brothers? What utility does the Ikhwan see in remaining a united force despite ideological differences? Although blogs reveal an ideological divergence from the Brotherhood's mainstream, they have not fundamentally altered the organization's agenda, structure, strategies, or goals. They have, however, opened preliminary channels of dialogue, though the continuation of such outlets remains uncertain.

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<sup>325</sup> Wickham, "The Path to Moderation."

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. 208.

<sup>327</sup> El-Ghobashy, "Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." 386.

At first, the Ikhwan leaders took little notice of bloggers attributable to both lag time and the failure to interpret the extent of the youth's discontent.<sup>328</sup> The old guard disregarded demands made by dissidents because the youth occupied lesser, cadre positions in the organization. The sheer size of the movement, the failure to have institutionalized mechanisms for dissent, and the dominant culture of obedience, stifled rumbles until they became glaringly public. As old guard wrote off the youth because they occupied elementary roles, these young Brothers grew increasingly aware of and hostile towards the structural discrepancies that prevented them from shaping organizational decisions. Lacking established channels through which engage the old guard, the young Brothers resorted to other mediums. As blogging gained popularity amongst disgruntled youth and initiated a series of degrading media attacks, older members began to tune in.

Reactions from elders in the Brotherhood varied. Candid young bloggers have earned the respect of some more moderate leaders including al-Futouh, al-Erian, Za'farani and Akef. Tolerant members openly supported the young Brothers, recognizing their voice as a catalyst for internal dialogue. In an interview, blogger Abdul-Rahman Monsour noted that, "some of the leaders, including [General Guide] Akef, support us and are open to discussing our views...but others are still not willing to speak to us, and they urge us to stop making our 'dissident' ideas public for all to see. They say it is a private matter."<sup>329</sup> Essam al-Erian, who has two blogging daughters, adopts a similar stance to Monsour: "they [bloggers] have the right to get out there and say what

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<sup>328</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World."

<sup>329</sup> Joseph Mayton, "BM News: Brotherhood to start campaign if bloggers not released," *Ikhwanweb*, July 24, 2009, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=20874.may>



they want.”<sup>330</sup> Reformist Ibrahim Za’farani, a member of the Brotherhood’s Shura Council, supports the young bloggers and even maintains a blog of his own. Abu al-Futouh aligns the older reformists’ stance with the blogging Brothers, although this alliance is not formal. He even sees these youth as hope for the future of the movement: “I don’t deny that the organization needs internal reform...nor that we need change and elections within the Guidance Bureau and Shura Council, the organization would be better off if we [leaders] were exchanged for representatives of the youth.”<sup>331</sup>

While conservative individual leaders and members chastised the blogging Brothers for airing internal disputes, they never silenced or threatened the youth with expulsion. Blogger Saad clarifies on his public blog that, “there is no intellectual repression of any type towards me from within the organization because of my presenting my views.”<sup>332</sup> Prior to this statement, however, several eruptions took place in 2007 that characterized rising rifts in the internal ranks.

After Abdel Moneim Mahmoud responded passionately to the 2007 platform, mid-ranking Brotherhood leader Ali Abd al-Fattah called Mahmoud a blasphemer for transgressing the Brotherhood in an article posted on the Ikhwan’s website entitled “Islam is our Referent”.<sup>333</sup> Mahmoud responded by defending his right to independent interpretation. The debate escalated until General Guide Akef intervened personally to mediate between camps. Reformists published a rebuttal to al-Fattah’s indictments on the Ikhwan’s website.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch,” <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer245/lynch.html>.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Abdel Moneim Mahmoud, *Ana-Ikhwan*, October 29, 2007, [http://ana-ikhwan.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post\\_29.html](http://ana-ikhwan.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post_29.html).

<sup>334</sup> Evann Smith, “Exit, Voice, and Internet: Reformist Dissent in the Egyptian Society of Muslim Brothers,” 2009. 28.

While the Ikhwan never ordered the bloggers to cease speaking, official stances were less outwardly supportive and more objectively based. An article issued by General Guide Akef posted on the Ikhwan's website stated that "with the spread of web blogs among Muslim Brotherhood young men, there emerge free areas in which they can express themselves spontaneously and in simple words avoiding the phraseology of the group's cadres and leaders."<sup>335</sup>

In late October 2007, Dr. Mohammad Mursi, leading member of the Brotherhood's political division, called a series of meetings with the young blogging Brothers. These meetings aimed to foster dialogue and discuss opinions in a controlled environment.<sup>336</sup> Even more, however, these meetings were a tacit attempt to make the young Brother's understand the ramifications of their blogs: while they have a right to speak their mind, they must simultaneously be aware of the larger consequences this may come to bear on an already strained organization in a precarious position with the repressive Egyptian regime.<sup>337</sup>

Though initiated by the Ikhwan, reconciliation came from both sides. After formal discussions took place, blogging Brother's demonstrated a shift in their blogging strategy. Ahmed Abd al-Atti recognizes that the public nature of the Internet has the power to help advance and to jeopardize the Brotherhood, particularly in the face of a fiercely repressive climate. He states:

Just as every initiative has its positives, they also have negative aspects such as:  
inappropriate abuses in some dialogue and comments, especially the

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<sup>335</sup> Lynch, "Brotherhood of the blog | Comment is free | guardian.co.uk."

<sup>336</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path » Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World."

<sup>337</sup> Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, "Brotherhood Blogs Windows to Revelation, Criticism and Organizational Rise," *Ikhwanweb*, October 28, 2008, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?ID=17948&SectionID=0>.

defamation of people and organizations; imprecision in the selection of words and expressions, including those that carry multiple meanings and sometimes leave the reader confused or exhausted in his efforts to discuss unintended matters and pursue clarification; sometimes searching or thrilling or provocative headlines without concerns for content.<sup>338</sup>

Abd al-Rahman Rashman echoes Atti's concerns for the negative implications of blogging, citing Egyptian authorities' penchant to exaggerate blogging content and predict a looming dissolution of the larger movement.<sup>339</sup>

In some instances, the Muslim Brotherhood has attempted to integrate and assimilate certain bloggers: Ibrahim al-Houdaiby is deeply involved in the organization and often served as past General Guide Akef's personal English translator; Abdul Rahman Monsour works for the English language website; Abdel Moneim Mahmoud served as a period of time as a reporter for the official Arabic and English websites.<sup>340</sup> Young Brothers have demonstrated their technically savvy skill set and often assist in changing the IkhwanWeb URLs and IP addresses which are frequently blocked by Egyptian authorities.<sup>341</sup>

More recently, the organization has begun to advocate on bloggers behalf. In July 2009, Khaled Hamza told Bikya Masr that if three arrested bloggers (Abdel Rahman Ayyash, Magdy Saad, and Ahmed Abu Khalil) were not released immediately, the Brotherhood would launch an official campaign the following day. Kamza told reporters, "if Ayyash is not released today [Friday], then tomorrow, we will begin a campaign

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<sup>338</sup> Abd Al-Atti, October 2007, [http://abdelatti.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post\\_11.html](http://abdelatti.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post_11.html). (Translation)

<sup>339</sup> Abd al-Rahman Rashwan, *Brotherhood Youth*, September 2007, [http://ikhwanyouth.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post\\_23.html](http://ikhwanyouth.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post_23.html). (Translation)

<sup>340</sup> Mayton, "BM News: Brotherhood to start campaign if bloggers not released."

<sup>341</sup> "Global Voices Advocacy » Abdel-Monem Mahmoud: the Egyptian totalitarian regime is the problem."

against the government as he will be considered a prisoner of consciousness.”<sup>342</sup> Issandr, a prominent secular blogger, noted on his blog that “these guys are among the most influential young Islamist bloggers in Egypt, generally voices for dialogue with other currents and reform inside the Muslim Brotherhood.” It seems, at least for now, the organization recognizes utility in keeping the Brotherhood united despite past divergences.

The gesture was reciprocated shortly thereafter by the bloggers who have also moved towards making amends. While Abdel Rahman Rashwan still supports openness and dialogue, he recognizes that the Muslim Brotherhood is currently “absorbing blows from all around, it should not also have to take them from within.”<sup>343</sup> Houdaiby echoed a similar sentiment noting that organizations in positions as precarious as the Brotherhood’s have every right to protect themselves, but that ability to safeguard can be undermined.<sup>344</sup> Other bloggers arrived at similar conclusions irrespective, they insist, of organizational pressure to publicize their support.

In October 2009 Brotherhood bloggers gathered to reiterate their solidarity with the larger organization and clarify their demands, despite maintaining differing beliefs. They demonstrated solidarity with the group stating: “[we are] sons of this group and proud of it and its civilized approach. We have the honor to belong to such a group and we are the most concerned with its progress and strength.” They continued to iterate that they: “respect mechanisms of Shura (Guidance Bureau).” Bloggers chastised those who attacked the Supreme Guide stating that: “it is not acceptable that some people question the Guide’s respect to shura and democracy as he was the finest in this respect

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<sup>342</sup> Mayton, “BM News: Brotherhood to start campaign if bloggers not released.”

<sup>343</sup> Lynch, “Middle East Report 245: Young Brothers in Cyberspace by Marc Lynch.”

<sup>344</sup> “Brotherhood Blogs: Windows to Revelation, Criticism and Organizational Rise.”

when he insisted on changing the old regulations and the internal organization of elections and entrenched this principle. He asked not to be given the responsibility of leading the group, to leave the opportunity to others.” Lastly, they clarified their demands of the Brotherhood stating them succinctly and clearly. They called for two primary conditions: “we call on the leadership to review its internal regulations and to modify it in a practical manner commensurate with the nature and requirements of the stage we are going through” and “we stress the need to improve the media performance of the group.”<sup>345</sup> Though the Brotherhood and bloggers inch towards reconciliation, they retain differences because the bloggers fundamental demands have not been met.

While there has been a decrease in the severity of punishment for dissenters in the Brotherhood, the motives for this toleration remain nebulous. While no formal organizational change has occurred despite parallel critiques issued over a decade ago by the Wasat, there have been initiatives by both parties today to find common ground between dissent and organizational cohesion. Perhaps Essam al-Erian best characterizes the subtle changes towards internal democracy that are taking place within the organization and how those clash with the young Brother’s aims: “We are not authoritarian and are democratic. In the end, if they stay with the group then they will have to accept what the majority wants.”<sup>346</sup> But for bloggers with an inflated sense of worth, it is too soon to tell if they are willing to accept this democratic bargain.

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<sup>345</sup> Bikya Masr Staff, “MB Youth Speak out with Public Statement,” *Ikhwanweb*, October 10, 2009, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=21414>.

<sup>346</sup> Mayton, “Young Egyptian Bloggers Seek a More Democratic Muslim Brotherhood.”

### **Organizational Stasis**

Although young Brother's blogging has called into question the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology, strategies and goals, and core institutions, it has failed to catalyze meaningful change in any of these arenas. Like the Wasat before it and in line with older reformists, young blogging Brother's hope to see the movement take on a more political role in Egyptian society and challenge the corrupt practices of Mubarak's authoritarian regime.

The change they hope to effect internally would require that the Brotherhood transition to resemble a political party: make transparent its decision-making procedures, aggregate preferences from the bottom, force its leadership to relinquish autonomy and refine its ideology to appeal to a broader support base. These are fundamental ideological and strategic changes to which conservatives leaders will not acquiesce because they would undermine Ikhwan's traditional role as a social welfare organization that seeks to build a comprehensive Islamic society from the grass-roots.

Notable of the relations between bloggers and the Muslim Brotherhood relations are indications of new strategies to incorporate disgruntled youth. Rather than expel these young Brothers from the organization, leaders seek to incorporate them into the folds by holding meetings, mediating discussions with impassioned conservatives and offering a handful positions working for the website. Despite these potential manifestations of a strategy change in managing dissidents, the Brotherhood has failed to address the young bloggers' substantial demands to institutionalize channels of dissent in the organization or make transparent decision-making processes. While the Muslim Brotherhood has allayed the youth's concerns in the short term, time will reveal the extent to which its efforts sufficed.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion—Stability in Stasis

In this thesis I have not refuted the irrevocable reality that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is a political force capable of immense mobilization. I did, however, challenge the hypothesis that the Brotherhood's entrance into the formal political realm eclipsed its other goals firmly rooted in the provision of social welfare and the promotion of religious social outreach. The consensus resurfacing within the ranks suggests that the Ikhwan teeters toward abandoning its political aspirations to return to its more traditional engagements in attempts to evade Mubarak's repressive glare. Young Brother Ibrahim al-Houdaiby, a proponent of social welfare reintegration, summarizes the dominant sentiment today in the Brotherhood: "when we act like a political party, we lose focus on Islam and the Islamic message."<sup>347</sup>

The central point of this thesis was to disprove two purported causal mechanisms, formal electoral advance and dissent via new social media, and nest them in a larger historical trajectory that better accounts for the causes of organizational stagnation, namely fierce repression and internal divide. Chapter Two outlined preliminary evidence to establish that the Brotherhood remains a social welfare organization deeply committed to religious outreach and supporting its vast constituency with the provision of services. Chapter Three described the true causes of the Ikhwan's organizational continuity. It characterized the disproportionately powerful and public camps within the Brotherhood, paralleling their presence in movement's positions of

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<sup>347</sup> Sullivan, "Will the Muslim Brotherhood Run in 2010? - Carnegie Middle East Center."

authority with Mubarak's repressive outbreaks. Chapters Four and Five asserted that despite preliminary prognoses, neither electoral advance nor blogging dissent deeply altered the Brotherhood's core ideology, dominant goals and strategies, or institutional framework.

Though disparate in their origins, preexisting theories guided much of this thesis. They demonstrated the nature of opposition of in durable authoritarian regimes and presented potential catalysts of organizational reform. This case study confirmed that the more optimistic literature, that of new social media, political Islam and social movement theory which address impetus for change, cannot explain organizational continuity in the Brotherhood. Rather, the Brotherhood's durability as a social welfare organization is a function both of its environment and internal construction. In the face of a hostile and unpredictable environment, maintaining an autonomous leadership able to adapt short-term goals and strategies to changing circumstances while commanding the loyalty of citizens through a demonstrated commitment to Islamic social outreach has allowed the Brotherhood to remain a deeply embedded in Egyptian civil society.

This thesis posits that the Brotherhood drifts within preexisting paradigms—in accordance with fluctuating internal dynamics and external repression—but has failed to fundamentally adapt its institutions, ideology, or strategies and goals in the face of electoral advance or public dissent. Although the Brotherhood has matured immensely as a distributor of social welfare services over the past forty years from founding clinics to subsidizing higher education, recent events suggest that the Ikhwan will abandon politics, and the massive risks with which it is associated, to reconnect with its primary purpose to disseminate the Islamic message and provide for Egyptians.



Ultimately, the retreat from contentious realms merely demonstrates a new manifestation of the Brotherhood's foremost strategy since the 1970s: to capitalize on openings in the authoritarian regime when made available, and to retreat when the regime obstructs those outlets. Thus, the current hesitation to participate in the political realm insinuates not a fundamental reorientation of Brotherhood strategy, aims, or ideology, but corroborates the persistence of a longer agenda to expand silently, avoiding direct confrontation with the regime, to someday realize its teleological vision of an Islamic utopia.

## Postscript: Regimes often get the opposition they deserve

“Examination of political opposition reveals a great deal not only about the society in which it develops but about the nature of the political authority it confronts.”<sup>348</sup>

-*Lisa Anderson*

Without getting into lengthy policy implications or complex historical comparisons—this thesis is already long enough—I will conclude with three brief points. Much of this thesis has been bleak, elaborating on the monumental forces that obstruct political reform and demonstrating what appears to be a cat and mouse game between the regime and opposition. But what one takes from it need not be this. Rather, there are three uncorrelated positive points that, if aligned at any point, could have profound effects on the Egyptian political landscape.

First, the Muslim Brotherhood has withstood a general bloodletting of all political and social opposition that began under President Nasser. The once prolific secular and liberal opposition from the 1950s and 1960s has been decimated; Egypt’s beacon of secular strength—the Wafd Party—swallows electoral one defeat after another; and recently prominent politician Ayman Nour faced four years imprisonment for even contesting the 2005 presidential elections against Mubarak. With its head above water in the midst of authoritarian storms, the Muslim Brotherhood has endured. Its core structure and decentralized networks have remained an impenetrable fortress capable of providing for its constituency in times of plenty and times of less. But internal quakes between camps have more recently rattled the Ikhwan. Reformists disagree vehemently with mainstream Brotherhood opinion regarding the direction of the

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<sup>348</sup> Lisa Anderson, “Article Image - Periodicals Archive Online,” *Journal of International Affairs* 40, no. 2 (1987): 219, [http://pao.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu:7790/articles/displayItem.do?QueryType=articles&QueryIndex=journal&ResultsID=127363D0B231DC192D&ItemNumber=3&BackTo=journalid&BackToParam=QueryType=journals|ItemID=1130|issue=40:2%20\(1987:Winter/Spring\)&journalID=1130](http://pao.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu:7790/articles/displayItem.do?QueryType=articles&QueryIndex=journal&ResultsID=127363D0B231DC192D&ItemNumber=3&BackTo=journalid&BackToParam=QueryType=journals|ItemID=1130|issue=40:2%20(1987:Winter/Spring)&journalID=1130).

movement, the goals it should set and the strategies necessary to do achieve an Islamic society. Nonetheless—and not to be overlooked—the two groups remain as one, united, under the banner “Islam is the Solution.” Whether reformists stand firmly with the Brotherhood because they witnessed the failure of their Wasat counterparts to form a political party in 1996 or they fear losing a massive constituency should they separate from the movement cannot be known. But given disparity along the ideological continuum between conservative and reformists, it should be noted that they remain cohesive against a regime that seeks to obliterate them. And, given the Brotherhood’s institutional procedures for advancement, most notable for favoring older, devoted members, reformists approach the front line of leadership soon, even despite recent rumbles at the top or repressive advances from Mubarak.

Second, the willingness of the older and younger (blogging) reformists to leap from the luxury of opposition and engage in difficult, thorny discussion not only reflects a rising trend across the Arab world to question the status quo and challenge norms, but demonstrates a political savvy that has been absent from Egyptian opposition for decades. Although this has caused tension within the ranks of the Brotherhood, it demonstrates remarkable progress towards the end of forming alliances across ideological affiliations and contributing to formulation of new societal norms acceptable to all Egyptian citizens, not those distinguishable along the lines of gender or religion.

Another central component edging the discussion of Islamist political participation forward is the mounting legitimacy of Islamic constitutionalism amongst reform-minded Islamists. While still an emerging ideology, Rutherford suggests that Islamic constitutionalists, “support the rule of law, constraints on state power, and the protection of many civil and political rights. They also advocate public participation in

politics.”<sup>349</sup> Should it be further developed, disseminated and adopted as a credible ideology, Islamic constitutionalism could prove an appealing doctrinal basis for political reform and moderate Islamist political participation across the Arab world. I imagine that in time the voices of reformist Brothers will carry much sway from both cultural and religious frames of reference, if not in the Brotherhood than in Egyptian society at large.

Third, the western governments are growing gradually less uncomfortable with Islamists ascending to power. While the Bush Administration would not interact with members of the “banned organization” even from a distance, particularly after the Brotherhood’s 2005 electoral success, the Obama Administration has adopted a different approach. When Obama visited Cairo in June 2009 to address the Arab world, much to Mubarak’s dismay he invited members of the Brotherhood to attend the speech at Cairo University, presumably due to their parliamentary presence. Though neither party hopes for more intimate relations at this point, an acknowledgement of the Brotherhood’s existence was more than the previous Administration had done.

Omitted from this thesis was any discussion of the intimate relations between Egypt and the United States. From 1979 to 2006, the United States gave Egypt roughly \$2 billion per in the form of economic and military aid. This sum was used to keep the population at bay, continue patronage to Mubarak’s supporters and maintain the security apparatus. Recently this sum has been whittled down to roughly half a billion, only in the form of economic aid. This has strained Mubarak’s regime, putting it in a compromised financial position.<sup>350</sup> Naturally, there are social implications to this increased economic

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<sup>349</sup> Bruce Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak : liberalism, Islam, and democracy in the Arab world* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 122.

<sup>350</sup> Ahmad Al-Sayed El-Naggar, “U.S. Aid to Egypt: The Current Situation and Future Prospects - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=23282>.

burden. And at a time of economic turmoil, the last thing Mubarak hopes to see is any legitimating of his most potent opposition.

Despite these three positive points, there is slim assurance that they will align in the near future, if ever: maybe the most durable authoritarian regimes never crack, perhaps reformist voices will always be stifled by stronger conservative views, and it is highly possible the West will never fully accept Islamists in parliament. Regardless of what is to come of the Egyptian political realm, the regime has certainly gotten the opposition it deserves: one that is dynamic and one that cannot be unwound. Beyond force, incarceration and the denial of legal status, the regime can neither will nor repress away the Brotherhood in the political, social or moral realms. It can target the Brotherhood's moderate big-dogs for now, but more will rise through the ranks, and are doing so currently. The regime can attempt to keep its population at bay with minimal subsidies, but it cannot avoid excruciating economic reforms that further jeopardize its pillars of legitimacy. Beyond the regime's ability to wield coercion and suppress, it has few remaining tricks up its sleeve or pennies in its pocket to win back the hearts and minds of Egyptians.

Though both the Brotherhood and regime are battered from the battle, the regime is at a standstill with the Brotherhood, a force it cannot seem to depress. One observer outlines a lose-lose situation for Mubarak: "impose democratic reform and allow the Brotherhood more power or maintain the status quo and lose legitimacy, thereby granting more power to the Brotherhood."<sup>351</sup> It seems regimes often *do* get the opposition they deserve.

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<sup>351</sup> Michael Dougherty, "Are you sure you want a democracy? Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood does," *The American Conservative* (December 3, 2007): 20-22. Abed-Kotob, Sana. "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 3 (August



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