THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THE DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT

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ABSTRACT

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THE DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN EGYPT

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This thesis analyzes the main ideological transformation that the Muslim Brotherhood has undergone in Egypt. The recurring theme issued throughout this thesis is 'transformation' that stands in an evolutionary interaction with the local, regional and external environment. Within the scope of this leading theme, the study examines the historical overview of the Movement and analyzes the central periods and turning points of this transformation at two basic levels: Domestic and international. The study argues that, the 1980s came as the first pivotal turning-point where the Muslim Brotherhood began to enter the political system with a greater freedom. With the beginning of the change in the 1980s, this thesis argues, the Muslim Brotherhood began to transform itself in a way that opposed the dominant discussion in the literature over Islamists - state relations: 'Cooperation brings moderation and repression brings radicalization.' (Repression - repression, cooperation - cooperation pattern). The study investigates how the Muslim Brotherhood broke this single-track rotation by standing consistently moderate during the periods of repression as well, after the 1980s. In particular after the 1990s, the study extends the domestic-oriented scope of the observation to take into consideration the influence of regional and international variations that have begun to be increasingly influential over the transformation of the Movement. The study argues that, the 2000s came up as the second and the most important landmark that

opened a new momentum with the rise of the 'democracy' discourse in the Movement's ideological change. The study provides a wide-ranging analysis over the democracy discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood after the 2000s and brings the challenges of this newfound ideological process into focus. It is argued that, the Muslim Brotherhood's ambiguous stance on 'democracy' reinforces the discussions on the validity of the Movement's moderate political actor role. In conclusion, some conclusive remarks are introduced by making an overall assessment over the Muslim Brotherhood's political participation crisis and the future of the Egyptian political liberalization experiment.

Keywords: The Muslim Brotherhood, ideology, transformation, Egypt, Islam, democracy.

ÖZ

MISIR'DAKİ MÜSLÜMAN KARDEŞLER'İN SİYASİ İDEOLOJİSİNİN DÖNÜŞÜMÜ VE DEMOKRASİ SÖYLEMİ

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Bu tez, Mısır'da Müslüman Kardeşler'in geçirdigi temel ideolojik dönüşümü analiz etmektedir. Bu tez boyunca üzerinde durulan ana tema, lokal, bölgesel ve uluslararası ortamla evrimsel bir etkileşim içinde bulunan 'dönüşüm' kavramıdır. Bu ana temanın kapsamı dahilinde, bu çalışma Müslüman Kardeşler'in tarihsel gelişimini incelemekte ve bu dönüşümün ana evrelerini ve dönüm noktalarını iki temel düzeyde analiz etmektedir: İç ve uluslararası. Bu çalışma, Müslüman Kardeşler'in polititik sisteme daha geniş bir özgürlükle katılmaya basladığı 1980'lerin, Hareket'in ideolojik degişiminin ilk dönüm noktası olarak ortaya çıktığını savunmaktadır. Bu tez, 1980'lerdeki degişimin başlangıcıyla, Müslüman Kardeşler'in İslamcılar - devlet ilişkileri üzerine literatürde var olan hakim tartışmaya ters düşecek şekilde kendisini dönüştürmeye başladığını savunmaktadır: 'İşbirliği ılımlılık getirir, baskı radikalleşme getirir.' (Radikalleşme - radikalleşme, işbirliği - işbirliği modeli). Bu çalışma, Müslüman Kardeşler'in 1980'lerden sonra, baskı dönemlerinde dahi istikrarlı bir şekilde ılımlı kalarak bu tek yönlü döngüyü nasıl kırdığını incelemektedir. Özellikle 1990'lardan sonra, bu calışma iç odaklı incelemenin kapsamını genişleterek, Hareket'in dönüşümü üzerinde artarak etkili olmaya başlayan bölgesel ve uluslararası degişimleri göz önüne almaktadır. Bu çalışma, 2000'lerin, demokrasi kavramının yükselmesiyle Hareket'in ideolojik değişimine yeni bir ivme kazandıran ikinci ve en önemli dönüm noktası olarak ortaya çıktığını savunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, 2000'lerden sonra Müslüman

Kardeşler'in demokrasi söylemi üzerine geniş bir analiz sunmakta ve bu yeni ideoloijik sürecin sorunlarını ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Müslüman Kardeşler'in demokrasi hakkındaki muğlak tutumunun, Hareket'in ılımlı politik aktör rolünün geçerliliği hakkındaki tartışmaları güçlendirdiği savunulmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Müslüman Kardeşler'in politik katılım krizi ve Mısır'ın politik liberalleşme deneyiminin geleceği üzerine kapsamlı bir değerlendirme yapılarak birtakım nihai görüşler sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müslüman Kardeşler, ideoloji, dönüşüm, İslam, Mısır, demokrasi.

This study is dedicated to my grandmother Hatice Gözükara for being the most special person in my life with her invaluable sacrifices and endeavors over me…

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims at analyzing the main ideological evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood (Al Ikhwan al Muslimun) - the largest organized opposition movement of Egypt. The thesis seeks to provide an explanatory framework for the transformation of the Movement by issuing the substantial landmarks that have been influential in shaping its ideological stance. In the light of its historical analysis, this thesis argues that the first signals of change in the Muslim Brotherhood's political program began to occur in the 1980s, when the Movement found the chance to participate in the domestic political context. However, the 2000s came up as a far more significant turning-point that earned the Movement a heightened ideological outlook with the interaction of different domestic and international developments. The discourse of 'democracy' that began to occupy an increasing space in the international political context has made inroads into the political agenda of the Movement as well. In the light of the evolving international and domestic circumstances towards political change and openness, the Muslim Brotherhood reconsidered its ideological program to place a greater emphasis over the rising trend of 'democracy' and attempted to become an increasingly moderate actor in the political context. However, this marginal change in the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse contributed to wide-ranging skepticisms and debates over the credibility of this ideological transformation. This thesis argues that most of the challenges that address the Muslim Brotherhood's transformation arise due to the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood's predisposition with democratic principles remains yet pragmatic and highly instrumental. While the Movement celebrates the achievements of democracy to synthesize it with Islamic principles in rhetoric, it can not introduce a concrete program that can highlight the methodological details of this new political framework in practice. This persistent ambiguity that is largely represented in many titles of its agenda raises skepticisms about the validity of the

Movement's ideological turn while bringing the sincerity of its new democratic jargon under discussion.

While the Muslim Brotherhood undergoes such a recent evolution that faces challenges with regard to its new political discourse, it can be briefly said that this is not peculiar to the internal dynamics of the Movement. This seems to be the general perspective under which most of the evolving Islamic movements in the Middle East do proceed. The contemporary Middle East witnesses a new stage of evolution in Islamic activism. In contrast to the common perception that the Middle East could not show any sign of progress to catch up with the democratic process around the world, Islamic movements have designated a considerable evolution to challenge the criticisms. Islamic movements have undergone a large-scale transition in terms of their ideologies, organizational methods and strategies thus becoming rising trends across the region. In the contemporary political context, Islamic movements seem more in touch with dynamics of change and evolution which constitute the central components of their liberalizing political agenda. They are more content to follow a progressive line towards openness and are willing to operate with a fostered dynamism. They show an increased responsiveness to the realities of the context they operate in and deploy a flexible political jargon that rearticulates itself depending on the changing circumstances. They develop tactic-oriented strategies and shape their maneuvers on rational choices rather than solely drawing on traditional Islamic obligations. They demand broader participation, seek increased autonomy in the political systems and aim to occupy an expanded role in the public institutions and civil society.

However, in this point, it will be worthwhile to consider the different types of Islamic movements in terms of their doctrines, methods and ideological compositions to gain a clear insight into the discussion. Because Islamic movements are not monolithic entities that can be highlighted under a unique category if an accurate analysis is to be made. Islamic movements contain a wide range of segments and diverse interpretations that embrace different methodological compositions from violent to moderate, traditional to progressive and fundamental to modern. Some groups are funded by the state and prefer to remain mainstream while some function independently and undertake religious activity; some are

funded by local donations and foreign aid. In the outer and more marginal edges exist the clandestine branches that undertake radical and violent actions.

While demarcations between different Islamic manifestations are often difficult to draw as there are disparate ideological and methodological fragments, one can distinguish these groups in three sub-categories, in broader terms. First major trend is the militant groups like al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad who reject modernity and any kind of democratic institutions that a pluralistic society rests upon. They possess a strong sense of exclusionism in recognizing the compatibility between Islam and democracy. Democracy is rejected both as a system of governance and as a legal means of attaining power. They uphold armed and violent struggle against the state while top-down change is favored as the prior strategy to overthrow the regimes who are responsible for the underdevelopment of their societies. Their methods are quite simple: overthrowing the state through forceful means, controlling power and forced implication of Islamic order.

The second trend, also indicated above, consists of the mainstream movements like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the Justice and Development Party in Morocco. They want to bring about similar changes to construct a political order in accordance with Islamic norms but soften the method of realizing their objective by recognizing the practical necessity of multi-party politics and power-sharing mechanisms. They prefer to remain politically centrist and follow the path of rapprochement with the regimes rather than confrontation. They intend to secure a legal political status through contesting elections and respecting constitutional mechanisms. Mainstream Islamists uphold gradual political change to begin from the base of the society through peaceful means and methods. They reconcile the tenets of Islam and modernity, which radical groups highly deny. The religious or missionary groups like the Salafiyya movements undertake religious missions and do not show any interest in political action as they do not find it appropriate to Islamic theology; closeness to God through preaching is enough. However, in all different manifestations of Islam, the basic ideology and the ultimate goal remain the establishment of what they consider as an Islamic state governed by Sharia (Islamic Law), withstanding the divergence over the practical methods of how to realize it.

In fact, the first essential implications of divergence between different Islamic branches began to surface in the 1980s where the Arab world witnessed a significant amount of proliferation in the Islamic movements in the countries like Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan. There were many socio economic, cultural and political reasons that underlay the rise of Islamic opposition during the 1980s. Among them are the failed economic policies of the nationalists Arab regimes that did not bring the expected socio-economic progress to the Middle East societies during the 1950s and 60s, the collapse of Arab-nationalism in the 1967 war that left an ideological vacuum among the region and the Iranian Islamic revolution (1979) that became an influential source of inspiration for various models of political Islam emerging after. In this first stage of evolution where Islamic movements began to enter the political framework, they for the first time encountered the institutional rules of the political game and began to shift from underground mission of *'dawa'* (preaching and emotionally converting) towards the trajectory of open political action. A new generation of young followers in university campuses, student unions who were more involved in political participation began to grow in size and number during the 1970s and 80s while increasing their voice within their respective movements. These new moderate groups were certainly more interested in operating through legalist frameworks and less connected with undertaking underground religious activity in which the elder generation was grown in.

By raising the slogan 'Islam is the Solution', Islamists began to contest the elections and accumulated political experience by reserving Islam a heightened political vision in their respective societies. Adapting to the changing conditions, Islamists found a chance to make an overhaul on their ideology and began to redefine their agenda in the light of the context they operated in. Islamists realized that in their search for identity, working within the system and embracing political instruments would be a more beneficial strategy than confronting it through violent means. While some radical groups continued to draw on the idea of change from above, these evolving segments began to advocate a bottom-up strategy with an increasing tendency to find new spaces for political engagement. Therefore, they began to shift

from resistance to compromise, changed idealism with pragmatism and replaced coercion with tolerance.

With the beginning of the 1990s, Islamic movements began to enter a new stage of transformation that responded to a combination of series new developments taking place both at external and regional level. With the end of the Cold War, the world has entered a transition politics due to the rise of a global wave of democratization. The previously undemocratic regimes around the world began to evolve in the direction of political change and liberalization. The political openings that began to emerge in the former communist territories of Eastern and Central Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall and other subsequent international developments have all contributed to the rise of 'democratization and political liberalization' as the new catchwords of the international rhetoric. Aside from the end of ideological rivalry and the increased openness that began to pervade the world, a new trend was simultaneously afoot around the world where interactions between the states began to be increasingly interactive in terms of social, political or economic relations: Globalization. While it was not totally attributable to the end of the Cold War, the two new processes began to go hand in hand to dominate the Post-Cold War period.[1]

The rise of the neo-liberal economic policies that began to emerge due to the expansion of economic relations have generated a convincing sense that economic liberalization would automatically lead to political liberalization in all around the world. However, the expectations did not come true for the Middle East which has regarded the process of globalization as the byproduct of the western world and viewed it with skepticism. The Middle East states neither advanced in economic progress nor embraced any democratic openings withstanding the external-led programs and the peace processes. Many socio-economic, historical and cultural explanations have been put forward as the reasons of the absence of democracy in the region like the impact of Islam, failed modernization experiment, lack of civil society and non-elected authoritarian rulers. However, though the Middle East

[1] Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 132.

could not show any clear signal of political change in responding to the international events, the region witnessed a remarkable degree of evolution in terms of Islamic movements. The Gulf Crisis that erupted at the turn of the decade led to an incredible amount of growth in Islamic activism. During the war, Islamists shifted from long-standing western allies to anti-western forces that combated against the invasion of the United States. After the end of the war, the expected liberal transition that would crystallize the pluralistic community in the Arab world did not materialize. However, Islamic movements came up as ardent protestors and most authentic alternatives of effective opposition against their ruling regimes which have faced a crisis of legitimacy and against the western powers whose presence could not be overthrown with the end of the war.

The 1990s have witnessed the rise of two significant trends in the Middle East in this respect: Proliferating Islamic movements and rise of a new liberal and democratic wave. While the latter was identified as a rising threat that filled the absence of the ideological vacuum in the new world order, the latter became the catchword that pervaded the new international system as the new ideology. Out of this reconfiguration emerged an increasing tendency to portray these two trends as unparallel that could not reach compromise at any social, cultural or political juncture. While some outer edges of Islamic activism preferred to remain distant to verify the expectations, more mainstream lines of Islamic spectrum have shown an increased interest in adapting to the global realities and celebrating the concept of democracy in contrast to the central discourse of the Post-Cold War politics.

From this engagement rose Islamic movements which began to show commitment to honor the democratic terminology. The collapse of ideologies around the world enabled moderate Islamists to realize that ‘Islamic ideology’ as the only source of reference was not effective enough to gain legitimacy in the political arena. Quest for an Islamic state introduced by a pure religious enthusiasm was not totally enough; they needed more then the classic political discourse. It was these increasing concerns out of which some pragmatic calculations began to emerge in the Islamic spectrum. The notions of ‘Liberal Islam’, ‘modern Islamic thought’, ‘pluralism’ began to make inroads into the rhetoric of Islamic domains. Islamists began to come to terms with the fact that a modern jargon would offer a more

compelling vision that could facilitate their encroachment into the political map to propagate their own causes with an extended freedom.

The 2000s opened the second and certainly the most effective stage in the Islamic movement's ideological evolution that began to materialize in the 1990s and provided an improved context for Islamists to hasten their evolution process with a greater momentum. The subsequent changes wrought by the international developments that appeared after the 2000s like 9/11 terrorist attack, invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq War altered the outlook of the international political variables to a great extent. The U.S introduced a new strategic goal for democratizing the Middle East. This was followed by comprehensive reform oriented programs like the Middle East Partnership Initiative with the fundamental attempt to build the underlying conditions that would expedite the transitions of the Middle East countries to democracy. The issue of 'democratic reform and change' became the major concern of the entire region and led to an internal pressure over the inherently authoritarian regimes to accept international democratic standards and introduce political reform.

All these far-reaching developments which unprecedently shifted the 'Middle East reform' into the focus of the international scrutiny brought a broad wave of change in Islamist's earlier liberalization trend as well. Islamists felt the necessity of responding to the changing conditions and reading the international changes in more opportunistic terms. As a result of these strategic assessments they came closer to the label of democracy as the rising trend around the world and began to be more in interaction with the language of modernity, human rights, pluralism which are commonly associated with modern western thought that Islamists have long time rejected. They decided to broaden the scope of their transformation and became increasingly operational in the political sphere to show them as a part of the increasing reform trend in their respective countries. Islamists thought that, by working within a common framework with the rest of the political system, they would find much easier chance to reach their objectives.

While moderates evolved in the direction of further compromise and liberalization to use the political context, radical Islamic groups that have proliferated at the turn

of the Post-Cold War have recontextualized their doctrine as well. Militant Islamic groups have reoriented the concept of 'jihad' to make a new contribution to Islamic terminology. The most crucial difference of this Islamic current from the traditional Islamic thought was that while the previous centrality was on the struggle against the nation-state, now the focus has shifted to the global activity that addressed a broader struggle that transcended the boundaries. Therefore, global-jihad was far more connected with the effects of globalization than the nature of the religion itself.

In fact, from this point one can draw the conclusion that radical groups also joined to the fashion of aligning with the prevailing political context they operated in. However, it can not be disregarded that they have done this certainly for different and more marginal use. In particular, the Sunni Islamic militant organization al-Qaeda which emerged in the Post-Cold War political context has begun to question the incompetency of the current Islamic movements and saw it in their inefficiency to mobilize the *'ummah'*(worldwide Islamic community) at a large measure. This new phenomenon occurred due to the perception that political Islamist movements in their countries failed to constitute a direct opposition to their incumbent regimes and to set the stage for a successful revolution. The most influential contribution to this kind of thinking came from Olivier Roy who advocated that political Islamic movements failed to fulfill their promises and "to provide an effective blueprint for an Islamic state."[2] This idea of 'transnationalism' began to gain larger ground, in particular among the Muslims living outside the Middle East. This new Islamic way of thinking which is also called also 'counter-globalism' or 'neo-fundamentalism' was directly influenced by the early Salafi doctrine - the ideological foundation to which the contemporary jihadist groups owe their intellectual origins. In contrast to the homeland Islamist movements that focused on internal enemy, global jihad movements broadened the scope of their target to address the external enemy: The west in particular the U.S. 9/11 incidents well illustrated the distinction between the near and far enemy while serving as a catalyst that pushed global jihad far more into the focus of international politics in sort of 'terrorism.'

[2] Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (London: Hurst, 2004), 1.

In fact, this point of divergence between Jihad groups and political Islamists is important in the sense that it tells much about the transformation of the worldview of Islam regarding the geographic location of the enemy. According to the global jihadists, 'state' is not the immediate target to be eradicated or to be replaced by a new form. They rather choose to operate in a deterritorialized international arena where boundaries are totally erased. "Just as political Islam addresses the need to operate as a Muslim in a world configured by states, neofundamentalism provides a way to be Muslim in an age of globalization."[3] Global jihadists aspire to establish a 'non-territorial Islamic state' that will encompass the entire Muslims - in particular that live in non-Muslim domains - thus recreating the *'ummah.'* The emphasis is placed on implementing Sharia and proving the 'universality of Islam' as a purified religion, not dealing with the ultimate form of Islamic state that is confined to frontiers, cultural particularities or national considerations which political Islamists mistaken to attach too much importance thus distorting the pure message of Islam. Global jihad argues that the margin of political activity in Islam is what brought limitations on the creation of a *'global ummah'* and therefore lost its appeal. In terms of their method, global jihad prioritizes violent, if necessary ideological struggle and replaces political activity with borderless struggle albeit 'scope of the target' is diversified within jihadist groups themselves. Moderate Islamists deny any organizational and methodological link with the radical militant agenda of modern global jihadists. Anyway, more radical Islamic currents condemn the moderates for siding with the modern western thought and becoming their ideal partners to craft a false Islamic message to the society.

While global jihad became ascendant to grown in size and gravity with its transnational networks in the last decade, it is contentious to what extent its globalized Islamic model will offer a successful trend in reviving the *ummah* consciousness. Moreover, in contrast to the expectations of jihadists, moderate Islamic current still dominates a broader political space in responding to the modern

[3] David A. Westbrook, "Strategic Consequences of Radical Islamic Neofundamentalism," *Orbis* 51, no.3 (May 18, 2007), 464, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W5V-4NS36MF7&_user=691352&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000038698&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=691352&md5=ba8146756971a1ec761c4c10f1d19cb4 (accessed June 23, 2007).

age with its mainstream political discourse. It is not possible to share the view that political Islam has regenerated itself out of its own inefficiencies to respond to the political realities of its own age. But it is far more misleading to name this transition as its 'failure' or defeat, as Roy suggests. Political Islamists still remain central to the political platform they function in and embrace a widespread resonance given their electoral performances and mobilizing potentials in their respective societies. Political Islamists have evolved but neither vanished from the political spectrum nor lost their total potency. As Mandaville argues: "Islamism has always sought to be an active, lived manifestation of Islam."[4] Islamists have rearticulated their strategies with less ideology and more pragmatism and came up with a modern discourse reconciled by Islamic teachings that neo-fundamentalists highly reject.

However, rejecting Islamists failure does not necessarily point out their unquestionable success. The increasingly moderate consensus that has begun to occupy a larger place in their doctrine yielded some serious challenges for them as well. The modernizing component of the contemporary Islamic doctrine brought some doubts and questions about the compatibility between the traditional Islamic thought and the modern character of democracy. In fact, the irony of Islamism lies in the fact that the secular and modern values that were highly rejected for being the tenets of the western trend have come to offer the only guaranteed way of achieving political survival for Islamists within changing circumstances. Therefore, Islamists which have emerged out of their crisis with modernity found themselves yet in a pragmatic necessity to espouse its concepts, but in selective terms. However, this tactical appreciation generated a sense of conviction that Islamic movements displayed an affirmation with democracy not out of real commitment but for the strategic virtue it offered to their political progress within the legal context.

According to many observers, change in Islamist's agenda has arguably occurred because they realized that democracy was the most suitable and pragmatic instrument of political expression without confronting institutional restrictions. Islamists have become increasingly contingent upon institutional rules merely to bring about the changes they desired in the long-run. In other words, Islamists have

[4] Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007), 146.

revamped their ideological program to play the rules of the game and celebrated democracy just because they would be the main beneficiaries of it.[5] For Islamists, political reform has always been and continues to be the practical instrument of attaining power. However, for many circles, it remains contentious to what extent democracy will maintain its relevancy if it no longer serves beneficial in providing the Islamists with the freedom of action and legitimate power they need for the time being.

These discussions and questions on the ultimate objective of Islamists constitute a substantial challenge in front of the progress of their political project. Islamists find themselves in need of upgrading a flexibly-reconsidered Islamic vision in a manner that will come over the long-standing prejudices over 'Islamist's intolerant political thought.' While fighting against the wide-ranging skepticisms about their newfound political jargon, moderate Islamists also face the challenge of having to operate in unstable authoritarian contexts where the policies of the ruling regimes shift between 'isolation' or 'planned integration' towards Islamists. In all the countries where moderate Islamic trend is a rising force, the regimes cope with Islamist's political participation problem with different responses depending on the changing political calculations, social conditions and historical reasons. Some movements are allowed legal political action, some are legally banned but practically tolerated to conduct semi-legal political activity and some are totally banned from all kinds of political action. However, irrespective of whatever political context they operate in, Islamists encounter the shared crisis of political legitimacy as the authoritarian style policy-making remains the dominant trend among these countries. The non-elected authoritarian regimes in the Middle East put higher priority to the survival of their own power rather than encouraging real change and therefore block the formation of alternative power centers that are likely to grow out of their own control. Islamists, with their rising potential among the society, come up as the most serious challenges for these regimes in this respect.

[5] Graham E. Fuller, "Islamists in the Arab World: The Dance Around Democracy," *Carnegie* Papers, no. 49 (August 31, 2004), 7, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp49_fuller_final.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

Finding very restricted platforms to implement their agenda, Islamic movements call for free and transparent political environments which will automatically serve to their interests by lifting the barriers over their political engagement. In the countries where they gain or attempt to gain political representation, Islamists generally make up the strongest form of opposition by embracing an incredible amount of following from different ranks of the society. Islamists do think that the consent of the society is of great significance to establish the Islamic state in the guidance of Sharia. Therefore, most of these moderate movements intend to establish legal parties in more liberal contexts in order to attain the support of the masses and consolidate their grassroots bases from institutional channels.

However, while stressing political reform in every ground and portraying themselves as the driver of liberal change in their respective countries, Islamic movements fail to introduce a clear-cut vision that clarifies how political reform and change will take place at the societal level, national and international level. They possess some renewed interpretations on important concepts like democracy that differ from the traditional interpretations of the past decades, but they can not clearly formulate the detailed account of their innovative doctrine on some key social and political issues like democracy, women rights, equality, minorities or the changes in the ruling system. This strengthens the discussions that moderate Islamists did not experience a recent innovation that could reach the core of their ideological considerations but only reoriented their methods. Whenever democracy fulfills its role, this view runs, Islamists will do away with it to advance their own particular goals. Though Islamists possess strong organizational and mobilization capacities to influence the direction of change in their countries, problem of 'sincerity' provokes criticisms and makes their commitment to democracy less countable and more questionable. It is reasonable to argue that given the central role of Islam with its contemporary as well as traditional manifestations across the region, the problem of how to deal with Islamist's political integration constitutes and will continue to constitute a dynamic crisis over the future of the democratic experiment in the Middle East countries.

In the light of these observations, this thesis will analyze the oldest and the most influential trend among various Islamic movements, the Muslim Brotherhood. The

Muslim Brotherhood is considered as one of the most outstanding Islamic political organizations in the Arab world. Since its establishment, it has attracted a lot of attention for being the propagator of Islamic activism in much of the Arab world. The Muslim Brotherhood did not only spark the grassroots movement that emerged as a challenging response towards the modernity crisis at the domestic level, but also became an ideological source of inspiration across a variety of generations and Islamic organizations in or outside Egypt. It can be argued that the fundamental discourse of current Islamic revival that characterizes the prevailing political context of the Middle East has originated from the grassroots movement of the Muslim Brotherhood. Therefore, analyzing the Muslim Brotherhood as the original case of Islamic activism presents an essential framework for gaining better insight into the general historical progress of the contemporary Islamic trend in the Middle East.

As mentioned in the beginning, this thesis aims at examining the ideological transformation of the Muslim Brotherhood and the discourse of democracy that began to appear in its political agenda in particular since the 2000s. Within this central debate of the 'evolution in the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological thinking' the study will shed light into the different stages of development and the important landmarks that the Muslim Brotherhood has experienced under different governments. While exploring the different phases of the Movement's progress, the study will provide a systematic analysis over the issue of 'transformation' at two basic levels: Domestic and international. The study will provide a conceptualized analysis by exploring how the conditions offered by internal and external environment carved out the ideological stance of the Movement within different political environments.

At the domestic level, the nature of the given political system in each central period will be investigated by assessing the systems constraints and benefits towards the major actors of the political stalemate in order to gain deeper insight into the position of the Muslim Brotherhood under these changing equations. The fundamental shifts in the mainstream policies of different governments will manifest how changes in the policies of each regime has prompted the Muslim Brotherhood to readjust itself depending on given political realities and to formulate a new ideological response that in turn affected the pattern of state policies as well.

There are many studies carried on the Muslim Brotherhood that generally emphasize that the Muslim Brotherhood displayed a level of moderation as a gesture towards the governments conciliatory policy in the periods during which it was accommodated but turned into a more radical and marginal force when the state gave up tolerating the Islamists and began to engage in a harsh repression towards them. However, the first argument advanced by this thesis is one that will come as a challenging response to the central assumption of this view.

In fact, this view is quite accurate in the sense that it properly pictures the dominant authoritarian nature of the Egyptian regimes which carefully prevent different political actors from achieving dominance in the political spectrum. The state tries not to loose its privileged political hold on power at any period - whether cooperative or confrontationist - and restricts the chances of a full-fledged democratic process to emerge, as this thesis also stresses while analyzing different governments. However, this study suggests that this dominant assumption embraces a range of inaccuracy in analyzing the real momentum of the Movement's ideological revision in the context of state - Islamists relations.

First of all this view generates the sense that the Muslim Brotherhood is the inefficient side being affected by the transformative influence of the regime-led policies. As also highlighted by Procyhsen, "While the noted focus on state-Islamist relations explores the influence of state on Islamist policies and behavior, it does not tell the whole story."[6] The relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government do not take a unilateral strand where the Islamists are merely vulnerable to a set of state-imposed polices. There is no doubt that government polices have been influential in shaping the political behavior of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the relations between the two sides should be situated within a broader context where the reactions coming from the side of the Movement have been equally influential in changing state policies. As François Burgat notes, "Islamist are both the product of and instrumental in shaping with the political environment in

[6] Crystal Procyhsen, "Promises Made? Islamist Variance and Liberalization in the Middle East," (M.a diss., McGill University, 2003).

which they grow."[7] The reactions of the Movement to the shifting government policies led some changes in the policies adopted by the government as well. In this respect, the relations between the state and the Islamists develop in form of complex 'interactions' which are characterized by complex "mutual dependencies"[8] and moved like a continuous cycle where both sides adjusted themselves in an unexpectedly changing action-reaction rotation.

Moreover, the general view fails to explain the responses of the Brotherhood in a specific understanding where 'repression brings radicalization and cooperation brings moderation.' However, - though acceptable in the establishment years of the Muslim Brotherhood - there also emerged some form of unexpected patterns within the responses of the Brotherhood in particular after the 1980s. After the 1980s, the relations between the government and the Brotherhood began to develop in an unexpected manner where the former remained highly centrists and moderate regardless of the reactions coming from the latter. This new pattern of behavior on the side of the Brotherhood did not only introduce an open contrast to the repression - radicalization, cooperation - moderation paradigm but also demonstrated that the Muslim Brotherhood was on the road of a new evolution.

In the light of this unexpected rotation that changed the main pattern of relations between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood, this thesis will secondly argue that that the first signals of the ideological revision within the Movement began in the 1980s, where the Muslim Brotherhood has decided to undertake a moderate and liberal stance due to the changes taking place in the internal context. During this period, the Muslim Brotherhood began to make overall assessments of its historical progress and drew some lessons from the previous decades. These tactical calculations began to frame its political methods and strategies. The loosening state control over its political access provided the Muslim Brotherhood with a rare opportunity for more proper and rational overhaul with regard to its

[7] François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (Canada: St. Martin Press, 2003), 183.

[8] Thomas Scheben, "Which Democracy, Which Islam? Observations from Egypt," in *World, Islam and Democracy*, ed. Yahya Sezai Tezel and Wulf Schönbohm (Ankara: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 1999), 93.

priorities. Participating in the political arena offered the Muslim Brotherhood an understanding on comparing the outcomes of the different strategies it adopted throughout the history.

Of course, this modulated speech was neither truly liberal nor totally political, rather it was a pragmatic tone whereby the Movement utilized the prerogatives presented by the system rather than acting as a full-fledged political party that embraced a totally conceptualized terminology of politics. However, the important point is that while exploiting the prerogatives of the open political system, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to reconcile its newly emerging aspirations with practical political experience for the first time. As a result, the Movement has reinvented the make-up of its ideological stance and moderated its political tone to act within the legal system rather than rejecting it. The Muslim Brotherhood remained insistent in its new political outlook regardless of whatever changes occurred in the government policy after this period.

After the 1980s, the interactions between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood did proceed but certainly not in a way that the government affected the rotation of the Movement's ideological change but rather in a way that it facilitated or obstructed the channels of the Muslim Brotherhood in implementing its strategy. When the government opened up the space available for the political access of the Movement, it found much better opportunity to further its strategy; when it was banned from the system it remained isolated and low-profile but neither did it question its ideological change nor did it turn into a marginal force as it did in the previous decades. This has indicated that in this period the Muslim Brotherhood began to formulate a perpetual stance by combining this accessible political arena with its changing perceptions. This ideological stance would be redefined and broadened depending on different developments but would not totally change or revert with the influence of government policy after this point.

At the external level, the study will contribute an examination of the 1990 and 2000 periods where the effects of international context noticeably came into limelight to provide a new dimension over the internal-oriented transformation of the Movement. Through this observation, the study will introduce the third main argument:

Although the 1980s came as the initial turning-point that began to reveal an emerging aspect in the Movement's ideological interpretation of 'Islam and politics', the notable transformation in the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood began to blossom in the 1990s and came up as a visible transformation in the 2000s. While it is common place to devote a great deal on the 2000s as a turning point with a detailed analysis over all its conflicts, dynamics and problematic cases, this thesis will broaden the scope of the current focus to take into account the dynamics of the previous decade.

The 1990s have been surely important in terms of preparing the legitimate conditions of the central developments that pushed the 2000s to the scrutiny of the international context as a far-reaching milestone. While it will be misleading to name the first Post-Cold War decade a turning point with regard to the pattern and scope of developments that provided change, this thesis will rather issue it as one of a 'transition period.' The 1990s laid the improved groundwork that enabled Islamists to make key assessments over their political and social stance while introducing them with the concept of democracy for the first time. The period has arranged a cross-road where dramatic regional and international developments intersected to shape the prospects of the Islamist's transformation in their domestic context. The study will provide a deeper look at the pivotal impact of these cross-cutting developments to offer a broader understanding on how changing regional and international balances has accounted for a reconfigured transformation in the ideology of the Movement by paving the way for more critical developments that affected them after the 2000s.

While addressing the democratic vision of the Movement after the 2000s, the study will develop a critical approach towards the fundamental challenges arising from this reshaped ideological riposte as the central puzzle of its discussion. The thesis will suggest that the most important challenge that occurred in the last stage of the Movement's ideological transformation is that the Muslim Brotherhood could not succeed to hold a determined stance in the political liberalization experiment of Egypt to internalize the democracy discourse into its innovative agenda in a way that would leave no space for ambiguity or suspicion. This is basically because the Muslim Brotherhood does not develop an in-depth understanding on democracy as a

functional system of governance. Rather, it attempts to espouse the practically necessary dimensions of democracy for its political survival but does not deal with what the logic of the concept actually implies. Because like many mainstream Islamic movements, the Muslim Brotherhood has also come to realize that democracy presents a much better and respectable form of legitimacy in contrast to resistance that merely brings failure or further isolation in the face of a strong and equally repressive state apparatus.

As a result, the support for democracy can not go beyond a symbolic appreciation where the Brotherhood regards democratization as no more than a convenient tool that will construct the necessary political space on the road to political legitimacy. That is why the Muslim Brotherhood fails to introduce a well-defined set of tangible prospects to demonstrate its decisive aspiration to initiate incremental change. Though it portrays itself within the reformist wing of the political spectrum, selective use of democracy makes its reformist calls less believable and more dangerous for many circles. Given the broad appeal and enormous support of the Movement within large portions of the society, its critical responsibility for the future of a full-fledged democracy can not be disregarded. However, its democratic program lacks a clear-cut doctrine that proves its cordial readiness to engage in the democratic political process.

While the problematic stance of the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse on democracy will be elaborated, the study will seek to answer the following sub questions that will offer complementary remarks in achieving a deeper insight into the central lines of its transformation debate.

-Which factors have contributed for the unprecedented growth of support for the Muslim Brotherhood at the political level in particular after the 2000s?

-What kind of ideological and generational discrepancies have surfaced within the Brotherhood and in what ways have they affected the ideological evolution of the Movement?

-What are the central debates and discussions on this new democratic vision envisaged by the Muslim Brotherhood?

-To what extent have the international and domestic developments prompted the Movement to reavaluate its ideological stance?

-What kind of inner structural weaknesses come into focus in assessing the conceptual framework of the democratic model professed by the Movement?

- What is the role of the factors - external to the Movement - in contributing to the intense lines of discussions in the Muslim Brotherhood's predisposition with democratic reform?

- How has the role of other political actors in the political landscape of Egypt have been redefined within these changing interactions between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood?

While making a critical survey over these key questions, the study will shed light into the cycle of discussions regarding the 'real intention' behind the Movement's democratic change that leads to critical polarizations over the problem of 'Islamist's political integration.' Some Western observers like Martin Kramer, Daniel Pipes and Bernard Lewis defend the idea that Islamists - whether liberal or extremist in their ideology - should be excluded from the system at any cost as their ideological turn depends on completely pragmatic and procedural intensions while lacking a real democratic spirit. They claim that even though some Islamists intended to share power through the elections, they have chosen this strategy for permanent use, probably until they acquire power to use more effective and dangerous options. If they have sufficient power, they may well quit their moderate program to replace it with a more radical strategy. These discussions also emphasize the ongoing ideological and organizational connections between moderate Islamists and illegal radical fractions that advocate use of violence and reject democratic change.

On the other hand, another group of analysts including Michael C. Hudson, John L. Esposito and Amr Hamzawy call for integration of liberal Islamists to the political system as the most lively opposition forces that can set the direction of incremental change in their respective countries and become the champion of political change and the overthrow of the authoritarian regimes. They support the idea that political system must integrate Islamists because accommodation is the most relevant and

least harmful way of installing a pluralistic structure where all the actors are represented on an equal footing. Against the charges directed on the sincerity of Islamist's moderate transformation, they argue that these criticisms in fact reflect the debates over the past decades and should be reexamined in the light of the new era.[9]

In the light of these arguments, the first chapter examines the establishment stages of the Muslim Brotherhood where the Movement emerged as a social and religious project that aimed at recruiting the society through educational and welfare services. The chapter outlines the central lines of its ideological and methodological make-up in the foundation years while drawing a general picture of the political context it operated in, to highlight the basic dynamics of its shift towards an anti-colonial movement characterized by a mixture of Islamic ideology and national awareness. The Nasser Period is observed with a central focus on its repressive political context and in particular on its long-lasting impacts over the ideological prospect of the Movement then after. The new phase of ideological evolution is elaborated to gain an important insight in understanding how the new trend that constituted an ideological divergence from the mainstream ideology of the Movement had materialized. The Sadat period details the political, social and economic framework under which the awakening radical ideas began to break away from the Movement and entered into the social and political system with a greater freedom and more effective voice.

Second chapter provides an enquiry into the 1980s to analyze the first solid turning point in the Movement's ideological and organizational transformation by bringing the structure of the political context into focus. While the 1980s are examined within the structural opportunities of the political context, the 1990s are introduced in a more comprehensive framework to further the scope of analysis by the contribution of regional and international dimensions. The interplay between the domestic and external variables is underlined to designate their combined impact over the ideological thinking of the Movement both in terms of organizational and methodological shifts.

[9] Amr Hamzawy, "The Key to Arab Reform: Moderate Islamists," *Policy Brief*, no. 40 (July 26, 2005), 7, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb40.hamzawy.FINAL.pdf (accessed October 23, 2006).

The third chapter addresses the 2000s - that have come as the most pivotal landmark in the history of the Movement. A brief analysis of this period is introduced as the central focus of the study. Shifting domestic and external balances are highlighted with a deeper look as they have been the fundamental reference points for the Movement's evolution in particular after the 2000s. The detailed lines of the Movement's ideological doctrine are explored while the problematic issues and challenges are set out in terms of wide-ranging critical debates.

In conclusion, collecting all the arguments together, the study makes an overall assessment over the ideological transformation of the Movement with all its costs and benefits. The thesis argues that the political integration of the Islamists occupies a central stage in the Egyptian political experiment due to the fact that the Movement emerges as the most viable and effective political alternative to the authoritarian regime. Notwithstanding the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is an untested actor for the democracy experiment of Egypt, the thesis suggests that its commitment to a comprehensive political change is necessary given the inconvenience of the political, social and economic conjuncture of the country.

Analyzing the stance of the other fundamental actors, the study completes the discussion in a multifaceted understanding to evaluate the ideological and practical challenges arising from the doctrinal problems of the Movement and from the role of other internal and external factors. This comprehensive glance helps illustrate how conflicting interests can undermine the experiment of democracy to provide puzzled dilemmas both for both the Brotherhood and the saliency of democratic reform process in Egypt. The central gravity of 'real and sincere demand' in undertaking democratic change is underlined for the long term stability of a sound democratic experience in the Egyptian political system.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The perennial history of political activism in Egypt finds its ideological roots in the pre-revolutionary era in which the exclusionary policies of Muhammed Ali marked the beginning of a long-standing dispute between the ulema and the governmental officials. These two groups mainly represented the axis of the separation between "popular and official Islam."[10] This formidable conflict emerging from the duality of the religion at the state level continued during the British occupation (1882-1922) and in the period of independence (1922-) as well. However, with the end of the First World War, the growing tensions between the two sides have begun to take a more complicated stand. Several Islamic groups started to flourish soon after the end of the war with the intention to create the legitimate bases of their struggle and to visualize their ideology from an organizational perspective.

"The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, an Egyptian schoolteacher who--in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and abolition of the caliphate--bemoaned the sickness of the *Ummah*, or larger Muslim community."[11] The Muslim Brotherhood introduced itself as an "Islamic revivalist

[10] Popular (informal) Islam represents broad-based Islamic reaction that embraces grass-root support within the public. It has emerged as a challenge against the western hegemony over the Muslim world and its secular and illegitimate collaborators governing inside. The most popular reaction against western influence emerged in 1928 by Hasan-Al Banna in Egypt and inspired variety of Islamic movements emerging then on. Official Islam corresponds to the representation of Islam in an official context by the state as an effective means of justification for the state policies. This legal conceptualisation of Islam basically emerges during times of political discontent where illegal Islamic forces broaden their reactionary channels to confront the state. State-led Islamic ideology (usually introduced by ulama) comes up as an efficient theological response in discrediting the falsified views of extremist movements thus enabling the regime to overcome the crisis of legitimacy.

[11] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "MAS's Muslim Brotherhood Problem: Does the Muslim American Society want an Islamic government in the United States?," *The Weekly Standard* (May 25, 2005), http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/005/651lbxol.asp (accessed March 21, 2006).

movement"[12] which fundamentally aimed at restoring the Islamic Caliphate to unite all the Muslims around the world.

Since its establishment, the Muslim Brotherhood has remained highly central in influencing the political context of the Middle East region. The Movement has been regarded as the mother organization that has become a subsequent showpiece for various Islamic movements which later aroused in the Middle East, like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Jama'at-el-Islami. The Muslim Brotherhood has turned into the largest and most-organized "political Islamist"[13] movement which advocated the establishment of a new social and political order under the guidance of Sharia.

It can be briefly said that the Brotherhood has passed through many different phases of development under the rule of different political governance. "For over 80 years, the movement led a life that was full of rich variation concerning generations, thought and politics."[14] In this respect, the central stages and watersheds of this process will be elaborated in order to highlight how the Movement managed to

[12] An Islamic revivalist movement attempts to bring about religious reforms and to reestablish God's sovereignty in the world with a return to the real roots and origins of Islam. It aims to overthrow the illegitimate secular regimes which show no conformity with the tenets of real Islam and to restore the envisaged divine order that will regulate all aspect of life. Islamic revivalist movements are marked by profound diversity in understanding, tactical methods, modes of action, ideological tone and historical affiliations. While the ultimate objective remains the codification of an Islamic state ruled by Sharia, the short-term methods of attaining this goal vary between different revivalist groups. While reformists or pragmatists advocate a peaceful transformation through gradual internal change (from top bottom to top) fundamentalists or traditionalists call for a violent and top-down revolution to construct political change reminiscent of the Marxist or other European revolutions models.

[13] The notion of "political Islam" (Islamism) emerged at the turn of the 20th century as a response to the challenges of modernity crisis and the intrusion of western colonialism to the Arab world. With the demise of Arab Nationalism in 1960s, political Islam came to the forefront and became an impressive ideology as a way of challenging the modern secular nation-state. Political Islam characterized two prominent states of the region: Iran and Sudan. The ideology of Islamism projects the religious revival within a political vision and emphasizes the popular association between the predicament of Islam and the failure of modernity. It advocates the establishment of a state based on an Islamic configuration that is abstracted from all sorts of western invasion. Political Islam does not reject the modernization of the society; rather it opposes westernisation and the secularisation that brings all kinds of external dependence. The ideal state is not only Islamic in foundation, all of its laws and objectives are also based on pure Islamic principles. Because Sharia (Islamic law) introduces a comprehensive system and moral thought that can offer guidance in all aspects of Muslims lives.

[14] Amr Al-Chobaki, "The Future of the Muslim Brotherhood," IkhwanWeb, June 12, 2006, 6, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/brotherfuture.doc (accessed September 2, 2007).

formulate an evolving ideological stance depending on the circumstances of each political period it operated under.

2.1 Early Development Years

2.1.1 The Establishment and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood as a Political Force in the 1930s

In 1928, six Egyptian workers employed by the British military camps in the Suez Canal Zone, visited Hassan al-Banna, a young schoolteacher who was working in the school system of the provincial city of Isma'iliyya. He was propagandizing the need for Islamic renaissance while calling the masses to renew their interests under the faith of Islamic jurisdiction. They asked him to become their leader, he accepted, founding the Society of the Muslim Brothers. The name was selected by Banna: *"We are brothers in the service of Islam; hence we are "the Muslim Brothers."*[15] "Banna believed in Islam as a complete system, which provides divine instruction on everything from daily rituals, law, and politics to matters of the spirit, and to which all other forms of thought and social organization--secularism, nationalism, socialism, liberalism--are alien."[16]

The Muslim Brotherhood launched as a charitable youth organization which purely targeted at educating and indoctrinating the society through well-organized educational, social programs and religious reforms to form a new generation of loyal believers who have adopted the true Islamic way of thinking. During these early years, the Muslim Brotherhood served as a social aid agency and a welfare organization which deliberately abstained from involving in political activity or

[15] Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8.

[16] David Remnick, "Going Nowhere," *The New Yorker*, (July 12, 2004), 4, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/07/12/040712fa_fact1?currentPage=1 (accessed November 21, 2005).

violent struggle against the regime. It concentrated much of its effort over educational and social services, private discussions, moral reform and *dawa*.[17]

Over the next decade, the Movement decided to broaden the scope of its social and reformist agenda thus infiltrating into the political zone to change from a religious movement to what looks like a quasi-political structure - the Party of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Hizb Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimoon*.) The outward reason behind the immediate policy switch to enter into the realm of politics was to accompany the 1936-1939 Palestinian uprising against the British occupation while responding to the growing influence of the Jewish-Zionist movement that sought to settle in Palestine as an extension of the mandate policy. In this point, however, considering the events shaping the political environment of the semi-liberal era will be helpful in clarifying how the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a revolutionary actor acting with nationalist incentives.

The post-independence Egypt - similar to other Arab states in the Middle East that gained independence from the imperial rule - was shaped by the "dual heritage of authoritarian reformism and autocratic imperialism."[18] The colonial institutions that represented the agents of the remaining British legacy over the country shaped the proper outlook of the nation-state to induce a degree of authoritarianism over the newly-emerging political system which was a paradoxical mixture of western-style reformist governance and centralized-power system where the preservation of ruling elite's interests was given the upper-hand. The colonial forces together with the royal ruling elite were eliminating any source of local movements that rebelled against the oppressive challenge of colonialism. The Brotherhood was one of these forces which were harshly criticizing the secular regime for excessive reliance on the British powers. According to the Brotherhood, the pro-western elites were acting with treachery to collude with the colonial powers and were in fact Western

[17] Ziad Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *Sociological Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (September 2001), 488, http://www.lehigh.edu/~zim2/p487.pdf (accessed November 24, 2006).

[18] John O. Voll, "Islam and Democracy: Is Modernization a Barrier?" in *Modernization, Democracy, and Islam*, ed. Shireen T. Hunter and Huma Malik (London: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 91.

colonizers. Moreover, these western-style institutions, law and education systems were leading a loss of touch between the westernized regime and the Egyptian public.[19]

The Movement in a short time became the prominent symbol of the nationalist reaction that combated against the quasi-colonial invasion of Egypt. It turned into an anti-colonial movement that reconciled nationalism with Islam and began to play a growing role in violent insurrections and demonstrations while holding anti-colonial campaigns for the withdrawal of the British powers. Of course, the reason why the Movement evolved into one of the most significant revolutionary movements in a few decades can not be explained by a single factor. There are many reasons that are of particular gravity in explaining the rise of the Movement within a short time. First of all, there were many important facets that set the Muslim Brotherhood apart from the other revivalist movements in the country. The Muslim Brotherhood was not a traditional sort of a political party whose basic membership profile comprised of aristocrats, landlords, urban elite or intellectuals. Anyway, Al-Banna rejected party politics and pluralism on the assumption that all the parties established during the independence period (even the religious ones) were the collaborators of the British forces and the secular regime. They therefore represented the corrupt agencies of the colonial experiment.

The Muslim Brotherhood was rather an urban-based "*mass organization*"[20] that contained common features of a religious movement and a political movement with the former proving more visible. This distinct organizational structure made the Movement more in touch with the lower and middle classes of the country that have felt alienated under the colonial influence and enabled it to secure a unique place in the political system of the country. Unfamiliar to other movements that preferred to maintain an apolitical posture in the 1920s and 1930s, the Brotherhood controversially turned into a highly adaptive nationalist struggle and obtained an

[19] David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 241.

[20] Edward Mortimer, *Faith & Power: The Politics of Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 254.

enormous amount of public support especially from the young and educated classes by galvanizing the masses to participate in its struggle for the pursuit of an Islamic order through confrontation and resistance.

Another and a more determining factor was the internally-disciplined organizational structure framed under the charismatic leadership of Al-Banna. Al-Banna was grown up in a traditional Islamic environment. His father was the graduate of Al-Azhar University who raised Banna as closely adhered to strong religious values. As a primary school student, he participated in religious associations under which he began to contemplate his ideas regarding the western penetration and its corrupt impacts over the society's moral and ethical underpinning (moral apostasy) which was also referred as "westoxication."[21] He became the secretary of Hasafiyya Charity for society that targeted at eradicating the Christian missionaries from the town.

During his university education, Al-Banna's Islamic outlook was driven by the views of several leading figures: Muhammad Abduh - one of the founders of the Sufi movement - and Sheikh Muhibb al-Din Khatib - a professor and a Syrian reformer. Deeply impressed from the teachings of the Sunni order, Banna began to embody his mainstream ideology that would later spawn many Islamic movements: To unite the Muslim Community under an Islamic faith - the creation of *ummah*. Banna argued that the fundamental risk threatening the society was the dangerous encroachment of the western values and notions to the main fabrics of society in sort of cultural domination, economic exploitation and military control. It was not simply a westernization trend but rather a concern of 'westoxication' because it poisoned the society. Banna thought that the deep ignorance of the alienated society who has deviated from the true and divine path of the religion to lean towards the secular and materialistic ideologies of the West heightened the vulnerability of Islam to the direct attack of 'westoxication.' The state and society were categorically Islamic but in reality they have moved away from the straight line of pure Islam by serving to the interests of foreign powers.

[21] Emmanuel Sivan, "Islamic Radicalism: Sunni and Shi'ite," in *Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East* , ed. Emmanuel Sivan and Menachem Friedman (New York: New York Press, 1999), 40.

According to Banna, among the society, there was a wide appreciation for western culture and life style that was the most critical factor behind the subordination of the country to the foreign rule. Western secularism was a wrong model to be adopted because it deemphasized the role of moral, ethical and religious values of its own society with its materialistic discourse. The Muslim community was living under a similar threat of western influence that corrupted the lifestyles, cultural authencity and moral values of Muslim societies as well. According to Banna, the cultural dependence was the most dangerous of all as it directly addressed the identity and distinct heritage of the citizens.[22]

The primary solution, Banna argued, was the emancipation of Islam from all the virulent influences and ideals of western civilization and its way of life, in order to maintain pure cultural authenticity. The moral a collapse of the state and the society would be solved by Islamic renewal.[23] The return to the true origins of Islam by the renaissance of the Islamic faith, according to Banna, entailed the creation of a sacred and authentic state reminiscent of the Prophet Era. This system, however, rejected shura (consultative body) and party politics as Banna believed that a truly-constructed society was not in need of a party structure. This significant difference in Al-Banna's views led to criticisms on the ideology of Al-Banna for being too authoritarian-centered.

According to Banna, the main prerequisite to return to the origins of the purified Islam lied in the moral reform of the individual: The 'reform of hearts and souls' that would put an end to the predicament and backwardness of Islam through a gradual reform process. [24] This required a bottom-up change as political transformation could not be feasible without changing the understanding of the society in the first instance. As Banna argued in his essay:

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[22] John L. Esposito, "Islamic Organizations Have Played a Pivotal Role in Promoting Fundamentalism," in *The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Phillip Margulies (New York: Greenhaven Press, 2006), 49.

[23] Yusuf Rodriguez, "A Short Biography on Hasan Al-Banna - Islamic revolutionary and teacher of Da'wah," *Latino American Dawah Organization*, January 1, 2002, http://latinodawah.org/newsletter/jan-mar2k2.html (accessed November 20, 2006).

[24] Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989), 48.

> Our duty as Muslim Brothers is to work for the reform of selves (nufus), of hearts and souls by joining them to God the all-high; then to organize our society to be fit for the virtuous community which commands the good and forbids evil-doing, then from the community will arise the good state. [25]

Banna strongly believed that education and self-improvement was the first step in realizing the bottom-up strategy and responding to the western threat that engulfed the country. Therefore, Banna actively undertook membership-building and recruiting activities. The aim was to grow up a new generation of heightened followers who would be active in all strains of the society.[26] The reform of the individuals in accordance with Islamic ethics would be followed by a moral uprise in the entire vision of the society and in the last instance this would pave the way for a true Islamic state that would reimplement God's will on earth.

In his intention to convey the Islamic message to the wide sectors of the populace, the Movement successfully generated loyalty and sympathy from the public thus capturing an unprecedent number of new followers from the lower and middle-class: Students, workers and merchants. Within a short time, the Movement grew rapidly on a complicated network of more than 50 branches and began to influence many aspects of life. The ideology professed by Banna was highly in tune with the ideology of urban and rural masses because the Movement set itself to the task of addressing the major socio-economic endemics of the country like low standards of living, poverty and rapidly widening gap between the high and the urban-based middle class. Banna showed a preoccupation with essential issues like social justice, equity, class struggle and criticized the discriminative nature of the economic system that favored the urban elite and land-owner bourgeoisie given the direct British interference. He proposed a system of equity in which the disenchanted masses would advance and labor and management would co-exist without any kind of exploitation.

Al-Banna attempted to influence the state from outside as he rejected party politics. He demanded the state to reserve greater attention to religion and its integration into

[25] Hasan Al-Banna, "The Reform of the Self and Society," (n.d): 62-63, quoted in Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989), 48.

[26] Esposito, "Islamic Organizations Have Played a Pivotal Role,"51.

public discourse. Direct political action was disavowed but it does not totally mean that the Muslim Brotherhood did not show any interest in political activity. While a tolerance and flexibility in Al-Banna's spirituality combined with his humanitarian goals reflected a classical bottom-up strategy, the same determination was not valid for his political program, however. An authoritarian and yet an interventionist fashion was more dominant in Al-Banna's program as a method of influencing the political era. After all, the gradual Islamisation of the society was promoted but only as an intermediate stage towards the establishment of the caliphate.[27] This incipient strategy of Al-Banna that prioritized establishing the Islamic caliphate would be replaced by a more political-oriented approach thus paving the way for an openly reactive action that would be increasingly operative during the following decades.

Taken together, all these factors yielded a remarkable popularity for the Muslim Brotherhood within a short period of time. The failure of the rulers in forming a common identity that would fulfill the needs of their respective societies paved the way for a new alternative that came up with an Islamic label and motivated the public under a charismatic disciplinarian. Al-Banna succeeded to reconcile the aspirations of the society with the spirit of the Movement under a focused vision. The success of his ideological and organizational leadership in reaching out to the widest public masses generated the close relations between the *'leader and the led'* thus providing the roots of the long-lasting existence of the Movement.

2.1.2 Second World War and Aftermaths

At the wake of World War II, British forces pressed on King Farouk (the second king of the post-independent Egypt) to dissolve the parliament and to replace it with a government headed by nationalist "Wafd Party"[28] that ruled the country until 1944.

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[27] The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, *Dynamism in Islamic Activism: Reference Points for Democratization and Human Rights* (Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2007) 27.

[28] Wafd was a secular- nationalist organization that emerged during the 1920s. It formed a government in 1941 with the assistance of British forces and remained in power until 1944 when it was dissolved by King Farouk. It was one of the most significant political movements struggling with nationalist cause in particular during the post-war period. Its membership profile represented of the aristocrats and the elites of the country while standing distant towards the demands of the middle and urban class. Wafd Party was banned by Nasser after the July revolution in 1953.

The Muslim Brotherhood entered the 1941 elections as well and managed to experience its first legal political emergence. This political experience reflected the opening of a new stage in the Muslim Brotherhood's strategic pathway that began to push the focus of its objective from establishing a caliphate to establishing an Islamic government as a more effective way of restoring the Islamic purity. Soon after the elections, the Muslim Brotherhood began to grow as the major opponent of the new regime over the leadership of the nationalist struggle. On the other side, it opposed to the social, political and economic policies of King Farouk whose autocratic influence over the governance was blocking the rise of truly elected-governments that would represent the interests of the newly-emerging political and social actors.

Showing no signal of compromise with the current regime or the king, the Muslim Brotherhood began to speed-up anti-government propagandas while galvanizing the public at large. During this period, the Movement was basically being controlled by two parallel structures: the main body embracing all the members and the secret apparatus that was established in 1941 to commit acts of violence and underground activities to confront the state. During the war, the drastic measures exerted on the Brotherhood increased dramatically in order to inhibit the progress of the Movement. Al-Banna was arrested by the British forces for reserving a limited autonomy to his organization.[29]

After the end of the war, King Farouk, whose legitimacy has been shaken by the marked supremacy of the British forces in managing the state affairs, managed to take control by dissolving the Wafd government. After then on, he governed the country through "a series of totally unrepresentative minority governments in an atmosphere of growing violence and chaos."[30] However, the Muslim Brotherhood incrementally went on voicing dissatisfaction with the government while it

[29] Peter Goodgame, "The Muslim Brotherhood, The Globalists' Secret Weapon," *RedMoonRising Website*, August 11, 2002, http://www.sufimuslimcouncil.org/hr/Extremists/pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20%20The%20Globalists'%20Secret%20Weapon.pdf (accessed January 21, 2006).

[30] Mortimer, *Faith & Power,* 255.

continued to grow through thousand of branches vigorously not only inside Egypt but also through many other countries.

As a result, within the same year, the Egyptian government gave a momentous decision and called for the dissolution of the Movement citing it as the fundamental center of the escalating upheaval jeopardizing the political stability of the country since the end of the war. Most of its members and prominent leaders were executed, its headquarters were closed down and its financial sources were narrowed down. The Movement began to act as an underground group under heavy state repression. A few weeks later, Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi, who was the architect of the military decree, was assassinated by the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian forces retaliated to assassinate Al-Banna, though he rejected any linkage. The loss of the leader marked the end of a central era in the historical line of the Movement. In order to prevent internal variations, the Movement chose an outsider, the judge Hasan al-Hudaybi as the leader.[31] While not as charismatic as Al-Banna in leadership, Hasan al-Hudaybi managed to preserve the solidarity of the organization despite confronting crucial setbacks including outlawed status of the Movement, extensive crackdowns, imprisonment of many members, internal rifts over leadership problems.

After the ban of the Muslim Brotherhood, hundreds of partisans dispersed to the other branches of the Movement around Egypt, in particular to Transjordan. Many of the militants participated in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949 and allied themselves with the Arab forces in order to fight against the threat of Israel. "In addition to participating in the battle to liberate Palestine, they served to raise the consciousness of Muslims all over the Islamic World and restore to them the spirit of struggle and dignity."[32]

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[31] Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 2 (March-April 2007), 109, http://www.nixoncenter.org/publications/LeikenBrookeMB.pdf (accessed September 3, 2007).

[32] "Muslim Brotherhood Movement Homepage," N.p, (n.d), http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/ (accessed November 21, 2005).

2.2 Nasser Period (1952-1970)

The monarchy of King Farouk which suffered an important loss of credibility during the elections that took place beyond its control was dissolved on 23 July 1952. It was overthrown and replaced by a republic through a bloodless coup by a small group from the military front - the Free Officers led by Gamal Abdul-Nasser.

Just before the military coup, the army and the Islamists were the two leading powers which characterized the backbones of the Egyptian political system and embraced shared national aspirations to overthrow the British hegemonic domination from the country. Just before the coup, the military members held dialogs with the Brotherhood over the revolution and fostered cooperative relations. Therefore, the post-1952 republic released the members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had participated in the organizational process of the revolution. The Movement was bestowed upon its respected status and legitimacy by the government to function with more independence in the political platform.

After enjoying the concessions of its incipient political autonomy and some kind of closeness with the regime, the Muslim Brotherhood realized that the leaders of the revolution began to build up significant authority over the political opponents of the regime through coercion. Soon after coming to power, they banned all the political parties and established the "Liberation Rally" (LR) [33] to dominate the political context with a monopoly over policy. In fact, this radical shift in the direction of the regime policy was quite foreseeable. Though Nasser seemed to have common objectives with the Islamists regarding political independence from colonial powers, he was first and foremost an ardent secular nationalist upholding the idea of pan-arabism. "He had no desire to introduce an 'Islamic Order' in Egypt; nor was he was willing to tolerate vocal opposition to his increasingly authoritarian rule."[34] In this respect, the Brotherhood as the largest organized opposition movement in the

[33] Liberal Rally would be replaced by National Union (NU) in 1957 and the Arab Socialist Union Party (ASU)-the major ideological organ that reflected the Arab-Nationalist policy of the Nasser regime in 1962.

[34] Paul Brykczynski, "Radical Islam and the Nation: The Relationship between Religion and Nationalism in the Political Thought of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," *History of Intellectual Culture* 5, no. 1 (2005), 2, http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/website/2005/papers/pdf/pbrykczynski.pdf (accessed November 10, 2007).

country would be the first notable target to be eradicated in order to consolidate the power basis of the secular regime.

The relations began to deteriorate following the critical decision of the Brotherhood to reject incorporating its grassroots bases into the liberation rally. The abortive attempt of the Movement to assassinate Nasser in the October of 1954 aggravated the tensions and signaled the end of the Movement's short-lived recover. After the initiative to murder Nasser, the Brotherhood was once again expelled from the official political arena. Following the subsequent dissolution, most of its followers were severely imprisoned; some of its leaders were arrested as well. Thousands of others were tortured and arrested over the next decade. The Movement remained distanced from the society thus loosing touch with the developments taking place in the country like the 1956 attack on Egypt or the 1951 Suez War though it was the ardent propagator of the nationalization experiment of Egypt.[35].

However, the systematic oppression implemented over the Muslim Brotherhood did not only erode its physical strength but also provided prominent impacts over the future of the Movement's ideological stance. The drastic measures applied by the authoritarian rule began to create some space conducive to the birth of the first ideological splits within the Muslim Brotherhood. A radical and a more reactionary ideology began to originate within the Movement in the environment of fierce repression and hostility. Most of the radical Islamists who embraced the theory of getting to power through the immediate removal of the regime were undoubtedly the members of the Muslim Brotherhood who were marginalized in the prisons and the detention camps of the Nasser regime during this period. Prisons have become the basic meeting-places where the members of the groups held dialogs and began to frame their strategies. Sayyid Qutb who is regarded as the chief ideologue of radical Islamic theology also began to formulate his ideas on the militant Islam in the prison cells of Nasser.

[35] Fouad Zakariya, Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 74

"Qutb, an Egyptian government official who was offended by the racism and the openness between sexes he witnessed during a visit to the United States in the late 1940s, became an ideologue and activist, influenced by the radical teachings of Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi, founder of the Jama'at i-Islami."[36] His influential ideology which would later provide the favorable circumstances for the emergence of the militant Islam in the country, overlapped with his imprisonment years where he faced ordeals and turbulence. Facing long years of imprisonment and torture, Qutb emerged as the pre-dominant figure that became the prototype for the extremist followers who have developed out of the moderate Muslim Brotherhood to form divergent groups after the 1970s. He wrote two important books which detailed the general principles of his ideology: A commentary of the Qur'an Fi zilal al-Qur'an (In the Shade of the Qur'an) and a manifesto of political Islam called Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq (Milestones) in which he rearticulated the traditional Islamic values and discourses.

Qutb fiercely criticized the failure of the mainstream socialist policies and the decline of the pan-arabism ideology of Nasser following the humiliating consequences of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The failure behind the war was explained in religious bases: "The Jews had deserved victory by being truer to their religion than the Arabs had been to theirs."[37] Qutb basically blamed the Egyptian governments - in particular the current government - for representing the society of "*jahiliyya (pagan ignorance and rebellion against God)"*[38] that can be traced back to the periods of ignorance in the pre-Islamic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam. This meant that society was "ruled by an iniquitous prince who made himself an object of worship in God's place and who governed an empire

[36] Bruce Gourley, "Islamic Fundamentalisms: A Brief Survey Islamic Fundamentalism: Some Major Expressions," BruceGourley.com, December 29, 2005, http://www.brucegourley.com/fundamentalism/islamicfundamentalismintro3.htm (accessed December 22, 2006).

[37] Mortimer, *Faith & Power,* 286.

[38] R. Hrair Dekmejian, "Resurgent Islam and the Egyptian State," in *The Middle East and North Africa: Essays in Honor of J.C.Hurewitz*, ed. Simon Reeva Spector (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 208.

according to his own caprice" [39] rather than according to Islamic teachings. Seeking attention to this vital fact, Qutb called the Muslim society to embark a holly war- "*jihad"* (or armed rebellion)[40] towards their illegitimate pagan leaders who have betrayed to God's sovereignty to follow the wrong trajectory of their man-made law. The fundamental duty of a real Muslim was to transform the society and reestablish the God's sovereignty *(hakimmiyya)* to put an end to "the domination of man over man,"[41] asserting the unbelief (takfir) of their leaders. Moreover, this transformation would not only address the inner enemies but also the western civilization at large, whose obscene and degenerate lifestyles served to the collapse of the moral and ethical compositions that centrally make up a society. By staging an ideological revolution against the non-Islamic world, a real Muslim would work to eliminate its entire legacy from the homeland thus creating a purified Islamic community.

Consequently, Qutb's marginal reinterpretation of the traditional Islamic values which justified counter-revolutionary action against the forces of '*jahiliyya'* marked its imprint over the further escalation of the radical fundamentalism that would critically plague Egypt after the 1970s. "While Islam had seen many religious revivals urging a return to religious fundamentals throughout its history, Qutb was the first thinker who paired them to a radical, sociopolitical ideology."[42]

2.3 Sadat Period (1970–1981)

Sadat gained victory from a struggle of power after Nasser's death on 28 September 1970 and took the control of the country in 1971 to replace the military-led regime with an elected civilian system. The ascent of Sadat to presidency furnished an impetus to the proliferation of the violent Islamic activity within the country. The militant Islamic groups began to enjoy a considerable amount of independence in the

[39] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Civil Society and Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World" in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. August Richard Norton (New York: Brill Academic Publishers, 1994), 45-46.

[40] Dekmejian, "Resurgent Islam and the Egyptian State" 208.

[41] Ibid., 208.

[42] Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism In Egyptian Politics*, 2d ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 14.

political zone to advocate violent struggle freely at home and abroad under their effective slogan: "struggle in the path of Allah."[43]

The primary factor that contributed to the political insurgence of Islam in the country was undoubtedly the liberal policies of the Sadat era which directly influenced the religion and society interactions. The fundamental aim of Sadat was to consolidate his legitimacy by using religion.[44] Sadat co-opted the Islamists to gain their confidence by portraying himself as a true believer who was in common lines with their religious objectives. He began to use Islamic discourse increasingly in his speeches in order to emphasize his highly-committed Islamic vision. The 1971 constitution declared Islam as the state religion and Sharia was made the source of legislation. With this outward Islamist president appearance, What Sadat intended to do was to receive the support of the Islamists to counterweight his prior opponents: Leftists, Nasserists and socialists who were the part of a broader threat that was regarded as the enemy in the bipolar international system: Soviet Union. In particular, the need to confront the leftists became more prominent than ever when Sadat began to break off relations with the Soviet Union and extracted Soviet officials from the army thus aggravating the tensions between the regime and the leftist whom he has always been suspicious of.

In the light of this new strategy, Sadat released most of the Muslim Brotherhood members from the prisons, called many exiled members of the Movement to return to Egypt and lowered the barriers of the social, political and economic context available for their reaccess. This was followed by a reorganization of Egypt's political party structure.[45] In 1976, the law on the formation of political parties was

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[43] Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy," *Middle East Report*, no. 183 (July-August 1993), 4, http://www.jstor.org/cgibin/jstor/printpage/08992851/di011528/01p00545/0.pdf?backcontext=table-ofcontents&dowhat=Acrobat&config=jstor&userID=907a7b16@metu.edu.tr/01c0a8486b0050e827b&0.pdf (accessed March 3, 2007).

[44] Louis J. Cantori, "Religion and Politics in Egypt," in *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, ed. Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi, (London: Macmillan Education, 1988), 82.

[45] Abdel Azim Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups," in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance*, ed. Marty E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 165.

revised and the Arab Socialist Union established under Nasser republic was divided into three 'platforms': Center, left and right. These factions of the single-party would later take the name of 'party.' In the 1976 elections, Sadat allowed the formation of official parties by putting an end to the single parliamentary system. This has indicated a shift from the autocratic one-party rule to a limited wave of liberalization where the expression of views and opinions began to achieve a level of freedom in the political context though placed under major limits. Under these favorable conditions and openings in the political system, the Muslim Brotherhood began to renew its eroded influence and began to exploit the considerations of the Sadat era. The group was supported organizationally and financially by the state. The liberal economic policies pursued by the regime aimed at integrating the Muslim Brotherhood to the economic system through various activities like the establishment of the Islamic companies, enterprises and institutions thus making the Movement the highest beneficiary of this new economic platform.[46]

However, it is important to note that while supporting the Islamists with an implicit acknowledgement to combat against the threat of communism, Sadat remained prudent about their political status. The regime closed down all the legal channels to prevent their reentry into the political system and their operation as an independent party by not lifting the restriction on the formation of Islamic parties. Sadat solely allowed them to act as a religious, social charity and favored some of their members to give official positions in the ruling Center Party out of conviction that an Islamic-oriented political party would not be more desirable than a communist one. "In 1975, he allowed the publication of two Muslim Brotherhood journals: *al-Da'wa* and *al-I'tisam,* in which the newly released members found a chance to circulate their ideas."[47] The Movement began to criticize the political left in *al-Dawa* while supporting the foreign policies of the regime like close relations with the Arab world, the break with the Soviet Union.

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[46] Davut Ateş, "Economic Liberalization and Changes in Fundamentalism: The Case of Egypt," *Middle East Policy*12, no. 4 (winter 2005), 138, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=4&hid=6&sid=9e1b67bf-6be8-4d40-b163-9b227a75be50%40sessionmgr8 (accessed March 12, 2008).

[47] Özlem Tür Kavli, "Islamic Movements in the Middle East: Egypt as a Case Study," *Perceptions*, (December 2001-February 2002), 27.

However, Sadat's policy of oppressing the leftist threat backfired to jeopardize the legitimacy of its own regime.[48] The devoted young Muslims which were guided by the teachings of the Qutbist ideology began to mature within the Brotherhood and fell away from the traditional line of the Movement. The increasing fragmentation between the fault-line traditional Islamists and the new militant Islamists culminated in the emergence of numerous Islamic groups like 'The Society of Muslims' (Takfir wal-Hijra), 'Society of Struggle' (Jama'at al-Jihad) and 'Al-Jama'a al Islamıyya' (the Islamic group). In fact, these radical groups shared many ideological features with the mainstream body of the Muslim Brotherhood from which they thrived. Moderate or radical, they all espoused the reality of '*jahiliyya'* and the increasing threat it began to pose on the Muslim World while sharing the ultimate goal of implementing Sharia. However, they clashed over the methods of bringing about these goals - rather in the form of a defensive or offensive struggle.

The radical Islamists advocated a revolutionary armed struggle to seize the control of power through a forceful overthrow and to eliminate the crumbling social and political order, not to transform it gradually - as the moderate Islamists stipulated. The violence prescriptions that the militant groups sought to favor was notably the most important departure point from the grassroots movement that promoted gradual and peaceful transformation without violent upheaval. The insurgents also portrayed their struggle in polarizing terms: Islam versus jahiliya, God's sovereignty versus the sovereignty of people and the party of God (hizb allah) versus the party of Satan (hizb al-shaytaun).[49]

The idea of 'radical Islam' soon became a popular phenomenon and opportunistically pervaded the country in the ideological vacuum left by Sadat's de-Nasserisation policy. The make-up of these radical groups consisted of the believers with an inclination towards underground activity. The groups drew most of their followers from the university campuses, the discontent masses, in particular the urban based young individuals from the lower and middle class while touching the

[48] Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt," 171.

[49] Mohammed M. Hafez, Why *Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 174.

outer edges of the society: The poor, the unemployed and the illiterate. They found a considerable amount of audience from the society thus supplanting the mainstream Brotherhood which remained less resistant and more neutral in constituting an opposition to the regime under the appropriate conditions it has been granted. The Muslim Brotherhood lost its dynamic impetus due to the repression it experienced under Nasser.[50] As one former Al-Jama'at member outlined: "The Muslim Brotherhood had just come out of Nasser's prisons, they were worn out and just wanted to make peace with the government - al-Jihad and al-Jama'at were young groups that had different ideas –they were more appealing to the youth."[51]

In fact, this pacifist - and to a great extent peaceful - trend of the Brotherhood that did not satisfy the fraternal groups emerged due to the fact that a new ideological current based on pragmatism was slowly characterizing the Movement's proper political thought as a response to the changing strategy of the Sadat period. The tolerant strategies of Sadat where a more favorable political and economic context has been opened to the entry of the Muslim Brotherhood enabled it to make an overhaul on its ideological stance by assessing the costs and benefits of each political behavior it has displayed under different political governments. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood has been left with an important lesson: The more it clashed with the state authorities, the more it suffered from ordeals and political isolation thus remaining distant from the system and society. This newly-emerging rational would be more visible during the 1980s by turning from strategy to practice thus pushing the ideological stance of the Movement towards greater pragmatism and tactical moderation.

On the side of the regime, the tolerant policies towards the Islamists were no more advantageous, however. While tolerating the moderate Islamist lines with the immediate need to overcome the threat of the Nasser's ailing socialist legacy, it has mistaken to underestimate the rising influence of its fundamentalist manifestations

[50] Nemat Guenena, "Islamic Activism in Egypt," Civil Society (June 1995), 6-7.

[51] Gamal Sultan, interview by author, Cairo, February 16, 2001, quoted in Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 142.

which began to get out of control to press for more autonomy and opened up the way for unlimited violence in the country. The Islamic opposition groups together with the leftist and socialist parties (Tagammu, Labor Party) began to announce growing dissatisfaction with the socio-economic and political strategies pursued by the Sadat government: The controversial economic results of the open-door policy (infitah) and the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israel which led to the exclusion of Egypt from the Arab world. What is more, the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood which promoted Sadat during the first half of the 1970s also began to criticize the government for excessive reliance on the United States and for the peace treaty with Israel. The Islamists realized that the supposedly Islamic-state vision of Sadat that convicted them about the growing possibility of their envisaged Islamic project began to vanish in the face of Sadat's heightened pro-western policies.[52] However, this shift in the policy of the regime would be met by a strong and equally violent backlash from the Islamists within the sense of disappointment. Sadat began to turn more authoritarian over the opposition groups. He called for elections in 1979 and put restrictions on the formation of parties that opposed to the peace treaty - in particular against the leftist Tagammu. Only the socialist Labour Party was allowed to win seats in the assembly in return for its support for the peace process.[53]

The regime became more alerted about the growing danger embodied by the opposition groups, in particular the radical Islamists, in fueling the ideologically polarized political atmosphere of the country. "Realizing that the groups posed an increasing threat, Sadat unleashed a series of responses that signaled the end of the regime's positive involvement with the groups."[54] He tightened the security measures by taking the control of ahli mosques and on September 1981 he ordered mass arrests on the religious groups and the secular intelligentsia. Thousands of Islamists - both radical and mainstream - were arrested; many writers, journalists,

[52] Zakariya, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary,* 93.

[53] Ann M. Lesch, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Egypt," in *Democracy,War& Peace in the Middle East*, ed. David Granham & Mark Tessler (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 233.

[54] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Egypt, Islam and Democracy* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1996), 72.

politicians, leftists were forced to exile on the ground that they destroyed the national unity. The militant Islamists retailed to assassinate Sadat on 6 October 1981, during a military review celebrating the 1973 Suez crossing. "The assassination of Sadat had merely been the opening salvo in what promised to be an enduring conflict."[55]

The Sadat period started as a respectively tolerant period that contained affirmative signals for political liberalization like the change in the political party-system and cooperation with the moderate Islamists. But it turned into an extremely authoritarian regime when the opposition groups began to get out of control. "In practice, Sadat was not willing to subject his foreign policy to public scrutiny and was quick to set aside political liberalization when it risked curtailing autonomy of action."[56] In fact, this pattern of rational was not peculiar to Sadat's regime. It illustrated a clear reality inherent in the nature of all the authoritarian regimes that exercised before or after Sadat though they had distinct features: Setting higher priority to the survival of their respective regimes at the expense of genuine democratic change.

[55] Monte Palmer, *The Politics of the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Canada: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), 57.

[56] Lesch, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," 234.

CHAPTER 3

THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

The 1980s have initiated the first signals of internal metamorphosis in the Brotherhood's thinking. The general pattern of the governance in the new period was characterized by some mixed motivations that synthesized reconciliation with confrontation depending the on the changing political calculations. In the first decade of its government, Mubarak advanced the liberalization process in the country and opened up legal political avenues of participation to the opposition forces, in particular the liberal Islamists, by opening the way for their political engagement. However, in the second decade, the policies of the regime shifted from cooperation to repression given the increasing need to restrict the rising radical Islamic activity that paralyzed the country. Meanwhile, the impacts of the international developments began to enter into the domestic stage to provide more marginal effects over the internal context, in terms of the rotation of the government policy and the scope of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological change.

In this respect, the first 20 years of the Mubarak period can be investigated in two main periods: 1981-90 period that was driven by a degree of liberalization towards the opposition groups and 1990-2000 period that witnessed a critical crisis between government and the Islamists while taking a more complicated turn with the imprint of changing international balances.

3.1 Mubarak Period (1981-?)

3.1.1 1981-1990

Mindful of the lessons drawn from the former leaders - Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat - the balancing policy of Mubarak began with hastening the pace of the

liberalization process to hold dialog with the opposition forces which he would have otherwise rejected.[57] Leftists, seculars - in particular the liberal Islamists - were co-opted under a common ground in order to ensure a degree of reconciliation between these groups. Secondly, after rising to power, Mubarak ordered the expected mass arrests on the extremist groups suspected of participating in the assassination of Sadat. On the other hand, he released 31 Brotherhood detainees from the prisons who were charged and imprisoned during the mass crackdowns of Sadat. The difference of policy approach between the two events displayed Mubarak's early distinguishment between the radical and the moderate groups. By opening a legal institutional groundwork for the liberal Islamists to flourish, Mubarak inclined to isolate the truly radical branches from the centrist movement thus distorting their image in the society and facilitating the way to their marginalization on the whole.

This tacit contract that would later waver between collaboration and dissolution seemed essentially fruitful for both of the sides at the beginning. Each side assumed that the bargain would enhance its own autonomy regardless of the stance of the other and of the political developments taking place in the country.[58] By diminishing the borders of tight government control over the moderate Islamists, Mubarak reduced the risk of polarization in order to hold back from any unlikely confrontation with them - and the other opposition forces as well. He intended to reinforce the basis of his political support until he acquired enough power to ensure his unquestioned monopoly over the system. On the other hand, the Brotherhood as the mainstream current was taking the advantage of this de-facto recognition as it created a window of opportunity for the group to penetrate into the institutional channels with a renewed influence. "By gaining entry into this fashion, the Muslim Brotherhood had become part of the ruling political system rather than part of the "Islamic alternative" - the path taken by the takfir organizations."[59]

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[57] Procyhsen, "Promises Made?" 113.

[58] Gehad Auda, "The 'Normalization' of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the 1970s to the Early 1990s," in *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, ed. Marty E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 391.

[59] Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence", 174.

During 1980s, this favorable climate was the general perspective under which most of Islamic movements that began to gain political participation were evolving. Islamists which were previously excluded from the opportunities to influence their respective political environments because of isolation and long years of suffering began to enjoy the favorable opportunities of effective political participation. Moreover, most of them began to reach a degree of political maturity in their ideological discourse and political stance. "After years of repression and oppression, the leaders of many of these mainstream movements have learned an important lesson, namely that jail is not a very effective or efficient place from which to conduct a crusade on behalf of Islam."[60] Islamists began to be increasingly aware that confrontation with the regimes via challenging means were responded with more brutal measures and culminated in accelerated levels of isolation from the political system. In contrast, working within the system through institutionally-recognized channels would provide a more beneficial conduit for them to challenge the regimes without confronting restrictive measures and to bring about the changes they sought for many years.

With these tactical calculations and newly-emerging assessments in mind, the Brotherhood also began to demonstrate a move away from its illiberal jargon thus showing a more conciliatory outlook akin to the other liberal and secular groupings in the country. What set this mainstream ideology apart from the previous decades is that in the 1980s political participation - though not a new phenomenon in the agenda of the Movement conceptually (1941 elections) - has been practically functional for the first time in its history. The Movement found a chance to contest the elections and to express its political incentives from legal channels. By this way, it became able to check the feasibility of its new ideas regarding 'participation rather than resistance' by comparing the costs and benefits of these two strategies in practice. The Muslim Brotherhood ensured a degree of openness and transparency that gave it a legal - and to an extent political- outlook in contrast to the initial stages

[60] Rudolf T. Zarzar, "The Rise of Neo-Fundamentalism in Egypt," in *Religious Fundamentalism in Developing Countries*, ed. Santosh C. Saha and Thomas K. Carr (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 141.

where it acted like a clandestine group whose reactionist and extremely violent strategy overrode its desire for political engagement or legal political activity.

Because of the judicial restrictions that barred the non-party movements from contesting the elections, the Muslim Brotherhood formed tactical alliances with the authorized political parties to run candidates in the elections. In fact, the change in the electoral law from a single-member system to a party list proportional-representation system at the wake of the elections fostered the hopes of many opposition groups and unlicensed groups that they would have a solid opportunity to run candidates as independents. However, the high electoral threshold of %8 undermined most of the advantages of the amendment thus making the formation of coalitions inevitable. Therefore, on February 1984, the Muslim Brotherhood aligned itself with the secular Wafd Party after a prolonged study over the political and organizational capacities of the opposition groups in the country. Wafd was also a new actor in the political life whose political rights have been returned by the government in 1984. However, the alliance did not depend on ideological considerations; it was only a strategic agreement that was devoid of a functional framework.[61] Through the coalition, Wafd provided a legal base for the Brotherhood to act as an indirect participant in the electoral process, while the party itself expanded its electoral bases to enjoy the rampant grassroots support of the Movement among the society. The electoral alliance between the Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood gained 15.1 percent of the national vote by winning 58 seats out of 448.[62]

The government which allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to contest the elections under the cover of another party delegitimized the parliament soon after the elections to stunt any more alignments between the opposition groups. This volatile policy shift indicated that Mubarak did not essentially lower the restrictions on the

[61] Hala Mustafa, "The Islamist Movements under Mubarak," in T*he Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*, ed. Laura Guazzone (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1995), 168.

[62] Laura Guazzone, "Islamism and Islamists in the Contemporary Arab World," in T*he Islamist Dilemma The Political Role of Islamist Movements in the Contemporary Arab World*, ed. by Laura Guazzone, (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1995), 31.

opposition groups; their impact was carefully limited though they were granted some specific opportunities. Despite the respectively liberal policies adopted by the Mubarak regime, in fact, the change in the nature of the system was minimal compared to the earlier features of the Sadat and Nasser period. The system was still based on a centralized and authoritarian style one-party system where the disparity of influence between the regime and the opposition groups was preventing a truly competitive multi-party system to surface thus affecting the liberalization experiment in a negative manner.

"The 1984 elections, however, established the Ikhwan as a leading political contestant, striking electoral alliances in both Parliament and the professional unions and joining the opposition in extra parliamentary coalitions for reform."[63] The Muslim Brotherhood enhanced its power and began to press for more political gains within this sense of relaxation. In the 1987 elections, it broke up its alliance with the Wafd refusing to play the small partner role any more and searched for a weaker partner to amplify its influence and become a potent force within the alliance.[64] By raising the impressive slogan "Islam is the solution,"[65] the Muslim Brotherhood searched for more religiously-affiliated partners and forged a tripartite coalition with the Islamic-oriented, leftist Labor Party that emerged after the July revolution and the Liberal Party. The new coalition managed to win 60 parliamentary seats, while the Brotherhood secured 35 of them.[66] The Movement has had accomplished to

[63] Mona El-Ghobasy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (August 2005), 378, http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FMES%2FMES37_03%2FS0020743805052128a.pdf&code=14d4f3d3f1f9af4a13924f0d065b8fde (accessed March 22, 2007).

[64] Ibid., 378.

[65] The slogan "Islam is the Solution began to gain ground in the Middle East following the collapse of Arab nationalism that left an important ideological vacuum in the post-colonial stalemate of the region. The slogan was raised by the Islamic revivalist movements and had a pervasive influence over the region during 1980s. The oil boom of 1970s compounded with the Iranian revolution that has turned the idea of "Political Islam" into a feasible objective has all contributed to the gradual rise of the ideology through the region. It turned into the most impressive mean of expressing dissent by gaining the support of the marginalised masses that have grown frustrated in the environment of socio-economic discontent. Political Islam embraced a wide stage of support in many countries by discrediting the Arab regimes whose legitimacy has been shaken with the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

[66] Omayma Abdel-Latif, "Against the Odds," *Al-Ahram Weekly,* no. 506 *(*November 2-8, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/506/eg6.htm (accessed March 10, 2007).

heighten its electoral bases gradually by enjoying its largest representation in the parliament.

The driving force behind the political performance of the Movement was largely attributed to the success of the Brotherhood in taking over the professional syndicates, numerous student associations and major interest groups. In fact, these groups were opened to participation in the 1984 elections; they were being tightly monitored by the government policy for 30 years. The successful engagement between the Brotherhood and the professional unions surfaced in the 1984 elections and increased dramatically to prepare a relative success for the Movement within three years. "In contrast to an indifferent state, the Islamists were able to give hope to the lost generation of professionals by taking account both their temporal and spiritual needs."[67] Given the restrictions to form a political party in the parliament, the Islamists penetrated into the governing body of the unions and associations which surely reserved a more suitable context to assure independence in political exercise and to intensify political campaigns in.[68] In addition to the syndicates, the Muslim Brotherhood gained a sweeping hegemony over the university campuses by infiltrating into every stage of education and drawing the resentful masses to its own ranks. It addressed in particular the educated middle class and the unemployed university graduates who suffered from economic uncertainty, unemployment and alienation.

Understanding the growing momentum of the Muslim Brotherhood in the political framework is not only a matter of looking at the internal paradigms of the Movement that accounted for the victory coming in a short time. The Brotherhood definitely made a far-reaching headway to establish foothold over the controlling majority of the syndicates and to attain greater electoral achievements by rallying their large-scale support. However, the virtual absence of state oppression that condoned them to get away with it can not be underestimated. The government apparently expected that the Brotherhood would undermine the more radical factions

[67] Geneive Abdo, *No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72.

[68] Hala Mustafa, "The Islamist Movements under Mubarak," 171.

who used violence to realize their objectives.[69] Therefore, the conducive environment that enabled the Brotherhood to hold substantial leverage over the associational life was more or less prepared by the government as an extension of its systematic struggle policy towards the militant Islamic groups.

However, the expansion of the Islamists did not only take place at the political level. Due to the strategic policies of the government that expanded the circle of political participation, the Muslim Brotherhood also became capable of enhancing its appeal in the social sectors of the society. The Movement commanded the confidence of the disaffected public by sharing their fundamental socio-economic concerns. Not only rising as a major political source with direct access to central political sources and networks, the Muslim Brotherhood also served as an essential social service provider by delivering meaningful social aids like health insurance, welfare production, charity programs, educational work.

The retreat of the government from principal sectors of economy as an extension of the Open Door Policy (infitah) did not bring the expected socio-economic prosperity to the society. The failure of the neo-liberal policies and the lack of a clear-cut vision to prepare transition to market economy have bred further socio-economic problems like corruption, unemployment and low level incomes. Given the deteriorating economic conditions where the state could not deliver an effective response to the growing needs of the public, the system gave birth to a "hidden economy,"[70] where the illegal networks came to be more dominant than the state bureaucracy in providing the society with their basic needs. In this respect, the Muslim Brotherhood has arisen as the most outstanding alternative in responding to the socio-economic heals of the society by using the state's neglect on fundamental socio-economic services.

Its institutionalized support bases embraced many sectors of the populace with different ideological affiliations. Despite the fact that each segment of the society

[69] Khaled Dawoud, "Closing the Circle," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 503 (October 5-11, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/708/re1.htm (accessed March 10, 2007).

[70] Ateş, "Economic Liberalization and Changes," 140.

entailed different levels of treatment for mobilization, the Muslim Brotherhood simultaneously conflated their peculiar expectations under the focus of a united objective. The Movement consciously addressed the most marginalized areas of the impoverished continents as a social service provider while resonating among the educated middle class in particular within the unions and syndicates(doctors, engineers and to a lesser extent, lawyers) like an influential voice of political reform and change. "Following the dramatic growth in the 1980s, the Brotherhood's web of private humanitarian services has become one of the most formidable grassroots organizations in the Islamic world."[71]

In brief, the increasing political and social involvement of the Movement at different junctures of the society unfolded a new stage in its evolution during the 1980s. Doubtlessly, the participation of the Movement in the political context that broadened its influence over many different ranks did not mean that the Muslim Brotherhood totally absorbed the meaning of the modern political discourse by only gaining entry into elections for two times. By entering to the political arena, the Movement intended to benefit from the evolving conjuncture while pressuring for increased concessions. This was rather a kind of political pragmatism, not a conceptual revision that turned its abundantly conservative character into a modern and pluralistic structure. "However, it can never be doubted that politics with the meanings of peace and practice occupied a large space in the mind of the Muslim Brotherhood."[72]

The Muslim Brotherhood which had already begun to make some assessments over the costs and benefits of its political position in its past experiences, found a chance to reconcile its newly pragmatic ideas with the advantages offered by the favorable political system. The open strategies of the regime engaged the Muslim Brotherhood with the official rules of the legally-organized political game for the first time where the Movement began to use the opportunity to learn and gain experience from the

[71] John Walsh, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Understanding Centrist Islam," Havard International Review 24, no. 4 (January 2003), http://hir.harvard.edu/articles/1048/ (accessed August 27, 2007).

[72] Al-Chobaki, "*The Future of the Muslim Brotherhood*," 20.

parliamentary life. This beneficial ground offered the Muslim Brotherhood a chance to crystallize its awakening ideas on moderation and political participation. In this respect, the 1980s actually marked the beginning of a new phase of evolution that would provide more clear and profound changes in the ideology of the Movement in the following decades.

However, while there were affirmative developments in the side of the Muslim Brotherhood characterized by a shift in its ideological and organizational set-up, on the side of the government, there was an apparent loss of tolerance against the Islamists. The 1987 elections where they gained good results alarmed the Mubarak government that the Movement was getting out of control. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood began to stand more critical of the regime policies on a series of issues while functioning in the political arena with more freedom to call for the application of Sharia. Given the growing influence of the liberal factions within the political and social life, the fundamentalists began to rid out of control in the second half of the 1980s as well. As a result, the containment policies of the regime began to change in favor of marginalization. The Islamic threat began to be counteracted by the extensive security crackdowns of the government. The excessive government control hoped that a large-scale repression would provide a more effective and lasting solution towards the Islamic threat.[73]

However, this reverted strategy that would increasingly come into stage during the 1990s as a way of confronting the Islamist challenge did not solve the crisis, as the government assumed. In contrary, repression reinforced the tensions by provoking the aggressive retaliations of the Islamic militants while opening the way for a bloody confrontation that drew the country into a battle ground after this period.

3.1.2 1990-2000

The political climate during the 1990s was driven by a combination of internal and external developments that influenced the country. At the domestic level, critical developments pushed the country into a warfare: The rise of the assertive Islamic

[73] Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 152.

challenge, escalating armed clash between the security forces and the radical Islamists, the extensive clampdowns implemented on the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood. At the external level, there occurred a series of international incidents that altered the outlook of the international context and brought some consequences for the region, Egypt and the Islamists. In the beginning of the 1990s, the preliminary strategy of the government was to safeguard the domestic stability of the country against the augmenting threat of the radical Islamists. Promising a "comprehensive strategy for confrontation"[74] against the militant Islamists, the state escalated the scale of repressive measures over them. The state on the one side and the radical groups Al-Gama'a and Jihad on the other side launched a heavy-handed violence.[75] However, this strategy provided adverse effects to inflame the sharp splits and to confront repercussions in the growing cycle of 'violence' and 'counter violence.' The more brutal measures Mubarak exerted on the Islamic voice, the more violent and aggressive it turned out to be.

However, the rise of the Islamic activism in Egypt was not only attributable to the domestic concerns. The international and regional developments that erupted at the turn of the new decade were equally influential in affecting the political stalemate of Egypt, hence the conduct of the Islamic spectrum. The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq culminated in direct United States interference in the Middle East. While the Arab nations began to fear of an increasing U.S military presence as a sign of an upcoming western hegemony in the region, Egypt, as the second largest aid recipient of the U.S, began to advocate the external military intervention to stop Iraq from advancing any further. Portraying his revenue loss from Kuwait and Iraq as a reason of his attitude, Egyptian regime began to support direct U.S involvement. While attracting a high level of displeasure among the Arab nations, Mubarak's decision led to sharp polarizations within the country as well. The opposition groups began to protest the regime as they shared similar concerns with the Arab regimes. However,

[74]Ahmad Jalal Izz-al-Din, "Comprehensive Strategy Against 'Terrorism' Advocated," (January 20, 1995) in FBIS-NES-95-037.

[75] Omayma Abdel Latif, "The Call of the Poll," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 503 (October 12-18, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/503/el1.htm (accessed March 10, 2007).

the government began to expand its control to restrict the avenues of political expression for the opposition movements and undercut their political convenience.

On the eve of the 1990 elections, government promulgated the 1987 electoral laws unconstitutional thus formally dismissing the 1987 parliament to downplay the electoral weight of the Muslim Brotherhood and changed the electoral law to the majority run-off system that allowed only the individual entrance to the elections, not the parties.[76] Moreover, the judiciary was not allowed to supervise the elections and electronic media was not allowed. The restrictive electoral changes compounded with the states pro-western policy prompted the Muslim Brotherhood to initiate a boycott to protest the parliamentary elections along with all the other opposition groups. The opposition groups thought that a strong boycott on the eve of the elections would defame the democratic image of Mubarak in the midst of his slogans to liberate Kuwait while leading a loss of confidence in the side of the U.S against the regime.[77] They harshly criticized the government for being a part of the U.S-led coalition and for rejecting to negotiate with the opposition groups. However, the boycott did not induce a prominent change and the opposition lost its existing parliamentary presence as well. Mubarak emerged with a renewed influence form the war and eliminated other groups while reinforcing his unquestioned status.

The significance of the Gulf War for Egypt stemmed from it being a crucial development that influenced the internal political footing of Egypt while transforming the political context of the Middle East in a way that would influence the long-standing balances in the aftermaths of the crisis. International and regional interests began to overlap to provide significant consequences for the domestic course of events within the countries and for regional considerations. At the regional level, the growing tensions between the Arab states in the aftermath of the war and the increasing U.S hegemony in the region disrupted the balances and reconfigured the security concerns of the Middle East. While the crisis provided the U.S with ample pretext to involve in the region as a well-entrenched force, this involvement

[76] Adel Safty, "The New Storm and Democracy in the Middle East," *Perceptions Journal of International Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 2 (June-August 2002), 152.

[77] Lesch, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," 238-239.

heralded more critical developments that would take place over the following decade.

However, more challenging was its considerations for Egypt at the domestic level. The Gulf Crisis once more illustrated the defectiveness of the opposition groups to function in the face of unlimited state power with the exception of the Brotherhood that continued its accommodationist strategy to register in the proper electoral process in its quest for increased political space. In fact, the turning point of the Gulf-Crisis for Islamists was the interference of the U.S in the war. While Islamists were highly anti-Saddam, with the foreign intervention they began to act as anti-western forces. Direct western intervention in the region revived Islamist's anti-imperialist intentions. However, aside from the regional context, international developments were also prominent. The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the U.S's strategic need for Islamists were influential in Islamist's direct reversion to become anti-western forces. These circumstances have left the room for the possibility of Islamists to broaden their rhetoric with a heightened religious consciousness versus fragmented Arab nations who could not reach a consensus to overcome a regional crisis.

Due to the combination of these external and internal factors, the Islamic activism - both moderate and radical - began to appear more visible in Egypt. In particular, the radical fronts began to rise more assertive to broaden the scope of their violence and addressed a wide range of targets. The first category was the foreign tourists. After June 1992, the Islamists initiated a stringent of violent attacks against the tourists to strike at economy by destroying an important source of income and to guard the country from the corrupting influence of tourist's immorality. The second category was the government officials like the members of the security organs, military judges and the police officers at large. The attempts to assassinate the prominent government figures were undertaken to unroll the incapability of the security forces to combat with the Islamic extremism. The third target was the prominent public figures, the politicians and in particular the liberal intellectuals. Numerous assassinations were organized during by Jama'a or Jihad towards leading figures like interior minister Abd-al Halim Musa, the veteran Prime Minister Atif Sidqi and the renowned writer Naguib Mahfouz. The fourth target was the secular social life

centers like the cinemas, theatres, in particular the bastardized and degenerate platforms that mirrored the corrupt life styles of the sinful seculars who lived in debauchery like bars, night clubs.

The state retaliated to tighten the grip on militants by augmenting severe political, social and economic counter-measures to undercut all types and shapes of terrorism. The security agencies enlarged the scale of operations to strike the hideouts of the Islamists by ordering subversive attacks on specific villages in Upper Egypt like Imbaba, Asyut, Dayrot and Sanoba. In order to legitimize the punishments, the state enforced some legislative amendments over the laws regulating penalty code, military tribunals and the law on arms. "Not only did such amendments expand application of death penalty, but equally important they expanded the nature of terrorism so as to incorporate 'spreading panic' and obstructing the work of authorities."[78]

The government attempted to urge the loyal opposition groups to declare their stand against terrorism by forming a strategic front. It is noteworthy to say that during this period, the state violence was selective; it did not address the formal opposition groups - only the Islamic forces outside the formal spectrum. On March 1993, a declaration was signed for condemning terrorism by several participants in the leadership of the National Democratic Party.

Confrontation with radicalism did not only take place at the domestic level. The phenomenon of 'militant insurgence' has also been the central issue of Egypt's foreign relations as Mubarak shifted the focus of the struggle to the international arena. The government decided to break its diplomatic relations with the countries that played a continuous role in undertaking the finance of terrorism and the recruitment of terrorists outside Egypt like Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

Important socio-economic measures were adopted by the government out of conviction that socio-economic predicament of the country was a significant

[78] U.S Department of State, "1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt," quoted in Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 155.

contributing factor that bred the Islamic terrorism. The illiteracy rates, the growing unemployment and the widening socio-economic gap were targeted as the major problems that had to be immediately rectified for economic prosperity. The government also resorted to establishing tacit alliances with respected religious figures in order to placate the rising threat of the Islamic resurgence. Therefore, it decided to lift its heavy control over Al-Azhar. "The government found that manipulating Al-Azhar and silencing its opposition to state policy undermined Al-Azhar's influence within Egyptian society and therefore its ability to discredit opponents of the government."[79]

In the face of these unmitigated harassment policies, the Islamists responded with greater bloodshed to intensify their violent commitments. As it is clearly illustrated by a statement of the Islamic Group in Asyut: "We will respond to detention by assassination and to torture by explosion"[80] The bombing events in the Egyptian embassy of Pakistan, acts of arson and sabotage against the churches and the life centers of Copts, the assassination of the secular writer Faraj Fudah, the 1997 Luxor massacre served as the ultimate examples of this increasingly aggressive strategy.

Given the critical political conjuncture marked by the outbreak between the government and the radical Islamists, the stance of the Brotherhood toward the violent commitments of the radical groups was prudent and rationally conducted. The Muslim Brotherhood became highly observant to distance itself from terrorism and condemned the use of violence under the cover of religion to argue that there could be no compatibility between terrorism and the correct understanding of Islam. As the Muslim Brotherhood leader propounded in an interview:

> We are eager to demonstrate our moderation to public opinion. We will not violate the laws and legislation. We are detached from violence and terrorism because the method

[79] Tamir Moustafa, "Conflict and Cooperation between the State and Religious Institutions in Contemporary Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 1 (February 2000), 3, http://www.jstor.org/cgibin/jstor/printpage/00207438/ap010128/01a00020/0.pdf?backcontext=results&dowhat=Acrobat&config=&userID=907a7b16@metu.edu.tr/01c0a84869a9071190b42c8ce&0.pdf, (accessed March 2, 2007).

[80] "'Extremist' Statement Vows Continued Violence," Al-Ahali, (July 15, 1992): 1 in FBIS - NES-92-139.

> of violence does not belong in Islam any way, which is why we have not adopted and will not adopt it.[81]

In order to disprove the false accusations that continued to view the extremist offshoots as the secret organizations and the splinter factions of the Brotherhood, the Movement tried to make it clear that it totally broke ranks with the clandestine fundamentalist branches. The Brotherhood insistently disavowed any concrete link or contact between the accommodationist line of the Movement and the militant activism. As the general guide Muhammed Abu-al-Nasr discussed in an exclusive statement: "How can there be any relation when our approach completely differs from theirs? They do not approve our principles, our policies and even consider us an obstacle in their way and a threat because we are moderate and do not use violence."[82]

Aside from the assertive criticisms and charges that fundamentally targeted the Islamic terrorism, the Movement's harsh condemnation with regard to the extraordinary state measures did not go unnoticed. While discrediting the terrorist activities of the fundamentalists on moral grounds, the Brotherhood also accused the government of sparking the political disorder by confronting violence with violence instead of searching for peaceful settlements to bring Egypt out of crisis. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, increasing wave of government terrorism that resulted in mass arrests, crackdowns and tortures did not lag behind the rising terror posed by the extremists. What is more, the Movement called on the regime to reconsider its position and went further to criticize the restrictive policies of the government towards them. The Brotherhood portrayed the absence of its political participation as the fundamental reason of the ascending extremism that plagued the country.[83] As one member discussed in an interview: "Nevertheless, we hold the government responsible for not tackling this phenomenon in the right

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[81] Mustafa Mashour, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood Leader Interviewed," interview by Abduh Zaynah, Cairo, (n.d), *Al-Sharq Al-Wasat*, London, (July 16, 1996): 2 in FBIS-NES-96-140.

[82] "Leader Denies Ties to "Militants," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, December 1992, 2 in FBIS-NES-92-245.

[83] Denis J. Sullivan and Sana Abed Kotob, *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society Vs. The State* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 66.

way…Freedoms must be released, the existing crises must be solved, and dialogue must be held. The government however has rejected all this."[84]

Due to the increasing critiques of the Brotherhood that turned into a condemnatory reaction against the government terrorism, the state decided to backtrack on its policy of compromise with the mainstream Islamic lines. The government decided that its policy of accommodation with the Brotherhood in calculation of undercutting the more militant groups was not beneficial any more.[85] In contrast to the calculations of the Muslim Brotherhood that made sure of the government's need of its potential as the most efficient force for confronting the fundamentalist groups, the regime decided that it was in need of a new and respectively reliable strategic partner. Therefore, the state based its new pattern of strategy on the precise that the radical segments had to be eradicated by the role of official Islam rather then through the promotion of more mainstream but equally unacceptable Islamic groups that ran the risk of broadening their influence at the expense of the state.[86]

1995 marked the most solid turning-point on the revision of the regime's strategy against the Movement as the government ordered the most dramatic crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood unseen since the 1950s. It intensified the mass arrests noticeably on the most intellectual and sophisticated ranks of the Movement. The youngest and the most dynamic cadres of the Movement equipped with good political training and organizational skills were rounded up and detained by the security services on the ground that the outlawed Movement was violating the constitution by holding secret contacts with the military segments in order to launch acts of violence for the withdrawal of the regime. As Mubarak expounded while highlighting the outstanding questions about the incident in an interview in the wake of the mass detainment:

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[84] Mustafa Mashour, "Muslim Brotherhood Leader Interviewed," interview by Muhammed Salah, *Al-Hayah*, London, (May 7, 1995): 7 in FBIS-NES-96-140.

[85] Khaled Dawoud, "Playing Hard Ball with the Brotherhood," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 488 (June 25-July 5, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/488/eg6.htm (accessed March 8, 2007).

[86] Auda, "The 'Normalization' of the Islamic Movement," 395.

> If the Brotherhood is forming cells, it is a violation of the law. It has nothing to do with the elections. It is to do with their attempt to consolidate a certain illegal situation…If a person participates in the elections, he is welcomed. But a dissolved group cannot participate in the elections.[87]

More than 100 Brotherhood members were sentenced to prison. This was followed by a clampdown over the engineers, doctors and lawyers syndicates - three major groups that the Movement monitored.[88] Moreover, the state control began to grow in other influence areas of the Movement. In the university campuses, the intervention of the security apparatus became more apparent than ever.[89] Furthermore, the government launched extensive media campaigns to misrepresent the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the associations by charging the Movement with allegations like mismanagement, corruption, special treatment for the Brotherhood members and the control of the associations in sending the military groups abroad to receive military training.

On June 1995, a failed assassination to kill Mubarak during his visit to Ethiopia deepened the controversy between the government and the Islamists. The government overreacted to initiate a large-scale use of force and gave a harsh response to crush all its Islamic dissidents. It announced the end of its 'divide and rule strategy' which presupposed an operative distinguishment between the moderate Brotherhood which was no longer in a position to be at variance with the state and the fundamentalists which engaged in anti-government violence to overthrow the established order.

However, the Muslim Brotherhood sought to withstand in spite of forceful government measures and contested the 1995 elections as well. The Movement managed to run 150 independent candidates, though elections were highly unsatisfactory with regard to the opposition representation. As a result, only one of

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[87] Husni Mubarek, "Mubarek on Regional Issues, Muslim Brotherhood," interview by Jihad al-Khazin, Cairo, 11 February 1995, *Al-Hayah*, (February 14, 1995): 5 in FBIS-NES-95-030.

[88] Amira Howeidy, "The Brothers' Last Sigh?," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no.502 (October 5-11, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/502/el1.htm (accessed March 21, 2007).

[89] Hesham Al-Awadi, "Mubarek and the Islamists: Why Did the 'Honeymoon End?," *Middle East Journal* 59, no. 1 (winter 2005), 74.

the Muslim Brotherhood members entered to the parliament out of 159 and he was expelled in 1996 for being a member of an illegal organization.[90] In order to better clarify its position, the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement named 'Statement on Democracy' that aimed to demonstrate that the strict government control did not undermine the Movement's high determination.

In fact, this compromising stance of the Brotherhood that did not give up its willingness to cooperate in the midst of a rising radical challenge in the Islamic spectrum stemmed from it evolving in the direction of being an increasingly rational and pragmatic political actor. However, after the 1990s, understanding the dynamics of this new momentum does not only require looking at the factors associated with the internal variables as their scope of influence began to decline in the face of more dynamic and central international developments. The end of the Cold War, as mentioned above, did not only bring regional or international consequences but also affected Islamists to make them revisit their strategy and the way they interacted with the political context towards a more flexible fashion. In the 1970s and 80s, Islam as a sole source of political representation was adequate to attain support from the society while dragging the large-scale masses to the ranks of the revolutionary movements. The influential slogan 'Islam is the solution' was as an impressive ideology that offered an effective way of expressing concern with the regimes.

However, the conditions evolved over time and with the "de-ideologization of the international relations,"[91] the international system entered a phase of transition where the central issues were reconsidered in the light of dramatic developments that began to open new avenues for political pluralism to flourish. The visible threat of communism that set the basic rules of the international struggle came to an end and generated 'a vacuum of threat' that compelled international actors to search for new enemies. 'Islam' has emerged as a prominent alternative that pursued the potential to challenge the western world according to many circles.

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[90] Hafez, Why *Muslims Rebel,* 53.

[91] Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. by Carol Volk (Harvard University Press, 1994), 41.

As mentioned before, while Islam was portrayed as the fundamental alternative to the western hegemony, there has been a sharp increase in the academic debates and discussion that pointed out its inevitable conflict with an equally important concept that has been the other rising phenomenon of the changing world: Liberalization. Much of the attention has been concentrated on considering Islamists as the main enemy of the western world with their uncompromising and anti-western agenda. While radical Islamic groups vindicated the allegations to an extent, moderate Islamic trend with its distinct cooperative stance in the political arena did not match the criticisms. Because while the rules of the system were evolving, moderate Islamists were undergoing a parallel transition in their political discourse that was influenced by the new rhetoric of the changing world.

Islamists decided that they had to move beyond rigid ideology while adhering to the institutional rules of the democratic transition trend that began to gain momentum in their respective societies. They realized that an obstinate commitment to pure Islamic values and an ideologically-committed slogan was no longer the right referential source for Islamists to survive in a political context extricated from general dogmas and ideologies. They realized that they needed a civil and cultural political language that could offer more than their ideological slogan itself. Because the details presented under the general motto 'Islam is the Solution' was usually overshadowed by the fascinating title that captivated the society and obviated the necessity for a practically functional content that could present real solutions to the problems by covering what the masses really want.[92] Islamists discovered that they could still address the same issues through the ultimate guidance of Islam, but this did not necessarily mean referring to its very ideological roots.[93]

In short, the 1990s generated an immense impact over the thinking of Islamists. The loss of an ideological aspect in the interpretation of Islam reflected the opening act of a transitive stage in which Islamists began to mature in their understanding of the world and religion. During this period, Islamists grasped the need of an in-depth -

[92] Al-Chobaki, "The Future of the Muslim Brotherhood," 29.

[93] Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (New York: Tauris Publishers, 2000), 281.

and to a greater extent flexible - political understanding that would picture their determination to work within the institutional rules of the system. "Democracy and human rights, which Islamists used to eye suspiciously as Western ideas inapplicable to Arab societies, found their way into the rhetoric of mainstream Islamist organizations and, most importantly, in their political strategies."[94]

In the light of these critical evolutions, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to abide to the rules of the international context as well and began to embrace the concept of democracy more often - albeit not applied in its full form. The statement it issued on 'democracy' provided a detailed program over the Movement's basic stance with regard to some major issues like women, Coptic Christians. However, this accelerated momentum of change in the Muslim Brotherhood's thinking provided the Movement with some critical domestic polarizations as well.

In fact, taken in broad terms, the internal disagreements that began to come up with a greater voice after the 1990s owed their origins to the 1980s, the first stage of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological change where it began to become responsive to the institutional political life. The increasingly political dimension of the Movement gave birth to a younger generation of followers who began to carve out their ideas under this new wave of moderation. The younger cadres became active in the university campuses in the 1970s, participated in the elections in the 1980s and became highly attune to the rules of the legal parliamentary life. On the other hand, the older sheiks represented the stagnant axis of the Movement who has been the carrier of the primary message that has been influential in shaping the ideological framework of the Movement in the first stages of establishment where it was totally clandestine. "As a generation that grew up during the height of the ban on Islamist political participation, and with a climate of relatively authoritarian decision-making within Islamic movements themselves, these younger Islamists grew impatient at their elders' scepticism about open political participation and began to pursue new

[94] Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina S. Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones," *Carnegie Papers,* no. 67 (March 8, 2006), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp_67_grayzones_final.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

strategies."[95] However, these critical distinctions led to a growing divergence between the two generations with regard to vision and mentality on a variety of issues.

The first signals of the internal dissentions became visible in 1995 when the younger ranks began to award greater significance to the women issue in their official statements. They have displayed a sharp breakaway from the intransigent views of the old-cadres who sustained a rigid stance on the status of women in the society. The younger members moved beyond the narrow interpretations and reconsidered the role of women from a more flexible and tolerant perspective. They rearticulated Islamic teachings to advance the role of women in the political environment and to overcome the criticisms that Islam disintegrates women in all walks of life. They argued that the role of women in the political terrain was significant in terms of achieving an encompassing victory without discrimination between sexes. As a Muslim Brotherhood apologist argued, "Limiting the Muslim woman's right to participate in elections weakens the winning chances of the Islamist candidates."[96]

The growing ideological frictions between the young and old cadres began to overshadow the organized and well-disciplined outlook of the Movement thus diminishing the credibility of the organizational action. This was accompanied by the leadership problems that arose following the death of the fourth general guide General Guide Muhammad Hamed Abu al-Nasr in 1996. Soon after the death of the leader, Mustafa Mashour was elected by a small minority led by the Guidance Bureau without waiting for general consent. Mashour's ascent to power created a new climate of conflict as he was known for his rigid and extremist views. Mashour was an 81-year-old member of the paramilitary front. He was representing the older generation of the Movement along with Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the group's 79-year-old spokesman and Sayf al-Islam, the son of Hasan al-Banna, who have been

[95] Mandaville, *Global Political Islam*, 103.

[96] Al-Wa'i, *al-Fikr al-siyasi al-mu'asir*, 253, quoted in Mona El-Ghobasy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (August 2005): 382, http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FMES%2FMES37_03%2FS0020743805052128a.pdf&code=14d4f3d3f1f9af4a13924f0d065b8fde (accessed March 22, 2007).

persistently dominant in the Movement since the 1940s. This has brought an inevitable polarization within the Movement, between the Guidance Council, controlled by the old guard, and the Political Bureau, controlled by the younger group.[97]

The discrepancies within the Movement reached the climax in 1996, when the younger fronts declared their separation to form a new party called Center Party (Hizb al-Wasat). In the beginning the initiative was depicted as a sub-project plotted by the younger segments and entirely accompanied by the Movement. However, it was soon realized that it was a distinct breakthrough of the younger members who began to voice greater disfavor with the undemocratic and top-down structure of the Movement guarded by the old conservative fringes who were impervious to internal criticism. "As the voluble Wasat member Essam Sultan asserted, there was pervasive 'organizational unemployment' within the Muslim Brothers, and plenty of young cadres found themselves with no say in the running of the organization."[98] "For the first time in the Brotherhood's history, the top leadership, as well as the highly centralized and authoritarian organisational structure it presided over, came under heavy fire from within the groups own ranks."[99] However, the new party initiative ended up in frustration as its application for a legal party license was turned down due to the government prohibitions over party license. What is more, it was also delegitimized from within, as the old-guard elites prevented the members of the Muslim Brotherhood from underpinning the founders of the Wasat Party.

Taken in general terms, the political climate of the 1990s was absolutely torn by the relentless Islamic insurgence. Certainly, the most essential implication of this

[97] "The Muslim Brotherhood Resurgent?," *The Estimate* 13, no.23 (November 2000), http://www.theestimate.com/public/111700.html (accessed November 15, 2006).

[98] Essam Sultan, interview by Mahmoud Sadeq, al-*Ikhwan al-Muslimun: al-azma wa-l-tashattut (The Muslim Brothers: Crisis and Division)*, (Cairo, Akhbar al-Yawm, 2002), 181-192, quoted in Mona El-Ghobasy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (August 2005):386, http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FMES%2FMES37_03%2FS0020743805052128a.pdf&code=14d4f3d3f1f9af4a13924f0d065b8fde (accessed March 22, 2007).

[99] Howeidy, Part 1: Internal Crises in "The Brothers' Last Sigh?"

development was the scope of its influence.[100] The upsurge of the Islamic extremism that turned into a prevalent domestic challenge through the 1990s forcefully shook the internal stability of the country and revealed extremely subversive effects. There is no doubt that the dramatic rise of the religious extremism during the 1990s can not be completely ascribed to the reactive state measures as there were external factors as well. But the oppressive state policy that resorted to increasingly radical methods bore an undeniable responsibility for the unprecedented growth of the fundamentalism within this period. The state's policy of constant coercion backfired to bring further Islamic violence and instability for the country. As Abdo argues, "Egypt's militants may have lost the war, but the state certainly not emerged victorious."[101] By expunging the Islamists from all the political channels and depriving them of a coherent public base, the government paid a considerable price, unquestionably higher than it would encounter if it had opened the legal channels of political participation.[102]

Another unfortunate outcome of the aggression between the state and the Islamic militancy was undoubtedly its negative contribution over the political liberalization experiment of the country. The prevention of different avenues for political expression turned the political stalemate of the 1990s to an overtly stagnant framework where the political freedoms and the elections were severely curtailed. Moreover, due to rise of the Islamic challenge, the government overthrew all the distinctions to launch an uncompromising war against the moderate wing of the Islamic movements as well which it preferred to co-opt in the initial stages. This autocratic shift basically stemmed due to the fact that as all its predecessors, the authoritarian Mubarak regime in fact did not show any sincere willingness to loosen its monopolized control over the political system. The regime failed to contain the Islamic forces successfully in the periods of political opening because it did its

[100] Abd Al-Salam, "Living with Limited Terrorism," *Al-Ahram Al-Duvali*, (Janurary 20, 1995):6 in FBIS-NES-95-037.

[101] Abdo, *No God But God,* 196.

[102] Bassma Kodmani, "The Dangers of Political Exclusion: Egypt's Islamist Problem," no. 63 (October 13, 2005), 14, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP63.Kodmani.FINAL.pdf (accessed March 13, 2006).

minimum to integrate them in practically participatory and functional grounds. As a result, it backtracked on its policies soon after and repressed them. The regime, rather than showing any substantial progress to make the system more democratic and participatory, did prioritize undercutting the momentum of the Islamists by freezing many important areas conducive to democratic change. While the dissolution of ideologies around the world and the rise of a new democratic trend were expected to surround the region to provide far more impacts, Egypt served as a showcase which illustrated the failed experiment of Middle Eastern states with democratic change.

However, in particular after the second half of the 1990s, there began to appear a series of changes that began to mollify the political stalemate of Egypt albeit it was interrupted by the negative impact of the growing turmoil. Egypt began to respond to the changes occurring beyond it boundaries in a more open fashion. In particular, due to the growing U.S interference in the region, Egypt began to find itself in necessity of taking somewhat liberal steps given its close military and economic dependence on the external assistance. In fact, Egypt's economic relation with the western world was not a new event. As the most populous country in the Arab world and the old-standing cultural center of the region, Egypt has always constituted an ideal partner for the foreign actors. The U.S, whose relations with the country dated back to the 1974 Open Door Policy, maintained its strategic partnership with the country to provide it with high-level military, technical and economic assistance during the Cold War years as well.

However, after the end of the War, the picture changed to an extent. The new tendency of the Western world was to provide a reasonable connection between assistance and reform as a way of expediting the spread of its new liberalization ideology to the world. Therefore, while donating Egypt with economic aid, it simultaneously shifted the country towards further democratic change by setting some certain criterion. For example, the U.S - Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth and Development that came after the 1990s crystallized a new phase of bilateral relations with an intensified trade cooperation between the two sides while

promoting economic liberalization in Egypt.[103] Therefore, Egypt in return felt the necessity of giving a particular response though it did not welcome these new developments on the whole.

The European Union was another promoter of the new economic policy characterized by conditional assistance. The E.U which preferred to remain low-profile to frame its policies under the partnership of the U.S during the 1970s and 80s came up as an integral political actor in the Middle East with a particular strategy reoriented in the light of the new geopolitical shifts of the Post-Cold War era.[104] While concentrating much of its focus on trade and economic relations, the E.U realized the urgency of restoring the stability among its neighborhood as a response to the evolving conjuncture of changing security challenges. The Barcelona Process (or the Mediterranean Partnership) that aimed to bridge dialog between Europe and the Mediterranean Arab Nations at the bilateral and regional level came up as a part of this broader strategy. The process was significant in sense that it helped to increase the profile of democracy around the region as the partnership was initiated with the aim to promote democratization, security and economic growth in the countries of the southern and eastern Europe. Notwithstanding its limited impact with regard to the success of political reform pledges, Barcelona was an important landmark that came up as one of the most comprehensive democracy promotion programs for the region. Being provided with a considerable amount of the European Union aid, Egypt, as one of the key participants of the partnership, was influenced from the process to ease the way it interacted with the domestic political context.

After the Barcelona process, the first signs of the political appease in the country came in form of a decline over the scope of violent confrontations between the state and the Islamists. While the state began to shrink the scale of its repressive policies

[103] Bessma Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment," *Middle East Review of International Relations* 7, no. 3 (September 2003), 93, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/momani.pdf (accessed October 16, 2006).

[104] Emad Gad, "Egyptian-European Relations: Form Conflict to Cooperation," in Analyzing Middle East Foreign Polices and the Relationship with Europe, ed. Gerd Nonneman, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 73.

and loosened its firm control, the militant edges of the Islamic spectrum began to calm down out of conviction that their ultimate goals were actually unattainable in the face of a dominant authoritarian rule. On 5 July 1998, al-Gama'a gave a strategic decision to call for the end of violent activity against the state and laid down its arms thus showing a readiness to open up amicable dialog with the government. On 22 October of the same year, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, the group's spiritual leader, gave his blessings to the cease-fire declaration.[105] This momentous decision was supported by Al-Jihad member as well.

Besides the affirmative developments in the militant Islam - state interactions, there began to occur some visible changes with regard to the state policy in terms of electoral politics. On September 1999, a referendum was held for presidency. President Mubarak won a fourth six-year-term to gain 94 percent of the votes.[106] After obtaining his new term, Mubarak promised on major political amendments that would foster the spread of liberal reform in the country. This was important in the sense that Mubarak began to talk about holding 'free elections' which were regarded as the first major step on the way to democracy.

3.1.2.1 2000 Elections

The 2000 elections came in such an evolving political atmosphere that was expected to bring the country closer to reform and change. Before the parliamentary elections that started in autumn, the Supreme Constitutional Court gave an important decision and issued a ruling to revise the electoral law to vest increased autonomy to the judiciary on the ground that the existing law fell short of providing the judges with full supervisory authority over the elections. However, despite some hopeful revisions towards openness, the lack of necessary judicial oversight in the polling stations and the balloting process interrupted the elections with undemocratic irregularities and gerrymandering.

[105] Omayma, Part 1: The Transformation in "The Call of the Poll."

[106] "Egypt-Chronology," *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 1 (2000), 107.

The immediate mass crackdowns ordered on the Muslim Brotherhood at the wake of the elections were another anti-democratic regulation that tarnished the credibility of the elections. In the run up of the elections, 550 Muslim Brotherhood members including 20 activists had been apprehended on the ground that they tried to enliven the group's activities secretly and penetrated into the syndicates to gain their leverage.[107] It was, of course, no coincidence that the detentions came only three months before the elections. In parallel to the expectations of the government, the Muslim Brotherhood suffered from the implications of the military tribunal and only fielded 75 candidates, approximately half of the candidates it nominated in the 1995 elections.[108] For the first time in its history, the Movement enabled a woman to contest the elections.[109]

The Movement took elections too seriously because participation in the elections - albeit unsatisfactory in numbers - would be an important beacon illustrating its heightened enthusiasm which did not break down in the face of repression or mass detentions. As Ma'moun El-Hodeibi, the deputy of the Brotherhood's Supreme Guide El-Hodeibi issued: "Why should we withdraw? To leave the stage for the government? Isn't this what they want?"[110]

As a result, the Movement contested the elections to win 17 seats out of 454.[111] The opposition parties did not perform better and could also win 17 seats all together (nearly %3.7 of the total votes).[112] For the ruling NDP, the rise of the independent candidates in the 2000 elections was the signal of an increasing challenge to its legitimacy. 216 self-declared independent candidates most of whom were the

[107] Amira Howeidy, "Campaigning Carefully,"*Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 494 (August10 –16, 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/494/eg2.htm (accessed March 8, 2007).

[108] Ibid.

[109] Meir Hatina, "Country -by-Country Survey: Egypt," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, vol.14 (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 2000), 186.

[110] Howeidy, "Campaigning Carefully."

[111] Hatina, 'Egypt," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*," 191.

[112] Ibid., 191.

former NDP members have rejoined the party after the end of the elections to cover up the party's embarrassingly poor showing with only 172 seats (nearly %38 of the total votes) and gave the party an official majority of 87.7%.[113]

The 2000 elections - though not totally transparent - came as the first important electoral development on the way to democratic change in the country. The participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the respectively open environment of the 2000 elections illustrated the political potential and the readiness of the Movement to be the part of the legal political system. Withstanding the government's systematic repression that blurred the distinction between the radical and the centrist fronts during the 1990s, the Movement seemed more inclined to work within the political system and did not backtrack on its conciliatory mainstream political behavior at any undesirable condition. The 1990s, with the contribution of different internal and external developments, served as the stage that prepared the conditions for a broader transition in this decisive - and somewhat democratic - stance of the Brotherhood over the next decade.

[113] Khalil Al-Anani, "Egypt: Parliamentary Elections in the Shadow of 2000," Arab Reform Bulletin 3, no. 8 (October 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17580&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl (accessed March 8, 2007).

CHAPTER 4

THE EVENTUAL PHASE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

The 2000s came up as the third and the most significant period of the Mubarak governance. The importance of this period arises from the fact that the changes within the internal system were encouraged by an increasing external pressure for reform and political opening within the country. The blossom of reform initiatives in the country was by no means domestic in orientation as the effects of substantial external developments has given momentum to the rise of 'democracy' phenomenon not only in Egypt but in all over the world. 9/11 terrorist attacks and the increasingly changing dynamics of the institutional rules of the international politics brought the concept of democracy sharply to the focus of the global arena thus making it the major theme of the 'new world order.' The Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Iraq War following after have been influential developments which unfolded genuine impacts at the domestic level to force political reform and opening over the authoritarian rule.

On the other hand, the rising interactions of the domestic and international developments provided the Muslim Brotherhood with a considerable amount of political convenience to initiate a far more effective political transformation ever seen.

4.1 2000-Onwards

With the beginning of the 2000s, the Muslim Brotherhood has entered the most remarkable stage of its ideological transformation by reinterpreting its moderate doctrine with the contribution of more significant international developments. In fact, the Post-Cold War period has witnessed a rise in scope and influence of many moderate Islamic movements that have been reinventing their ideological spectrum and shifting towards broader pragmatism as the most relevant way of

contesting their regimes. Certainly one of these groups was the Muslim Brotherhood who upgraded its political terminology with more rationality and less ideology in this period. The changing political variables at the international and regional level went hand in hand and prompted the Movement to make an overhaul on how to cope with the changing realities of the new era. In spite of the increasing political unrest during the 1990s where the radical Islamic violence was at peak, the Movement managed to maintain its moderate and peaceful stance by condemning violence and participating in the elections as a legal actor responsive to democratic change. The international developments did not only exert influence over the pragmatic thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood but also broadened the Movement's vision by inserting a new concept into its modulated political jargon that would be extensively embraced after the 2000s: Democratic change.

In this respect, the 1990s have created the legitimate foundation of many important developments that set the stage for a more comprehensive transformation after the 2000s. In this period, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself in need of aligning with the changing conditions with an increased interest and undertook an extended revision that began to place a greater emphasis on gradual change, political pluralism and democracy. Understanding the catalysts of the growing centralism in the Muslim Brotherhood's political behavior requires a deeper look into the domestic, regional and international developments that intersected to affect Egypt after the 2000s:

At the international level, 9/11 terrorist attacks has been a substantial development that has reframed the international political stalemate while bringing a remarkable influence over the major rules of the political game and the political actors. In fact, 9/11 can not be identified as an immediate and unexpected event; it must be seen within the context of a larger measure that owes its origins to the unsettled Post-Cold War tensions and the growth of Islamic activism within the decade. The end of the Gulf Crisis that set the spectacular U.S hegemony in the region enabled the United States to frame its policies for transforming the backlash states of the region into modern-secular states, in particular Iraq. 9/11 terrorist attacks, however, has created the legitimate ground of this policy that would be followed by the invasion of Iraq and other western-oriented projects employed over the region.

2001 attacks served as a catalyst that gave a strong push to the evolving liberalization propensities that had already begun to gain ground around the world. As Hawthorne states during September 11 incidents, the issue of 'failure of democracy in the Arab world' came into the focus of wide-ranging debates in the western world.[114] The U.S has immediately set itself to the task of democratizing the Middle East as the only viable solution to strike at the roots of radical Islam that nourished violence and anti-western views in the region. It has declared a war against terrorism and has waged prominent aid programs in the Middle East countries under the banner of democracy-promotion to provide the relevant political zone conducive to evolve in the direction of reform and change.

There is no doubt that under these circumstances, the Muslim Brotherhood has also found itself in the necessity of making an overhaul to keep pace with the changing trends of the renewed political conjuncture. In this respect, it was by no means coincidental that the Muslim Brotherhood's broadened discourse of democracy came at a time where the calls of political reform were high on the agenda of the U.S and Europe. In order to broaden its liberal language and to present it in more effective terms, the Movement realized the gain of using the liberal atmosphere of the international context and the fashionable 'democracy' phenomenon it introduced to the world. The Muslim Brotherhood thought that embracing democratic change would generate the impression that it was acting in the same ideological camp with all the other reform-demanding actors. Similar political jargons would bridge the noticeable differences of the Movement with the rest of the internal political system (NDP, opposition groups) while its opportunistic commitment would ensure a satisfactory level of rapprochement with the reform-demanding western actors. In other words, democracy promotion "was the only way to come to terms with the modern world and the best means of confronting foreign imperialism."[115] Therefore, the leading objective of the 'Middle East Partnership Initiative' that was introduced with the aim of supporting the spread of reform and

[114] Amy Hawthorne, "Political Reform in the Arab World: A New Ferment?," *Carnegie Paper,* no. 52 (October 18, 2004), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_52%20Hawthorne.pdf (March 8, 2007).

[115] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 69.

democracy throughout the region directly overlapped with the democratic doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood and ironically brought the two camps into a common rhetoric on reform.

Another substantial development that took place in the international context - the Iraq War that was launched by the U.S on March 2003 has had reflections as well. While the U.S believed that the war would be the engine of 'political reform and democracy' that would spread as a model in other Middle East states, for the region, the war came as a clear signal of increasing military existence of the U.S in the Middle East and led to a sharp growth in the anti-American sentiments both from the regimes and the publics. In Egypt, the invasion has been responded with anti-war rallies countrywide to maintain national unity in the face of foreign domination. The most important reason of these demonstrations for the Brotherhood was to strengthen cooperative ties with the state by pretending to combat against a common threat. However, the regime was a close U.S ally that has verbally condemned the war to pacify the increasing reactions from the public but provided assistance to the invasion secretly.[116] Therefore, the strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood backfired to end up in mass detentions of the Movement's members by security forces.

At the domestic level, there have been remarkable changes driven by the influence of external developments and these new developments provided the Islamist with the necessary space for introducing their evolution with a more effective voice. The changing rules of the 'new world order' rendered Egypt's leap towards a new stage of political change almost impossible. The U.S's decision to end amicable dialog with the authoritarian regimes and the invasion of Iraq left the Middle East regimes with the lesson that political reform was of great significance not to share the same fate of Saddam Hussein.[117] Therefore, Egypt - like all the other authoritarian Middle East states - found itself in the necessity of undergoing political openness and liberalization through constitutional change and reform. In fact, as mentioned

[116] Hawthorne, "Political Reform in the Arab World," 7.

[117] Ibid., 7.

before, given the geo-strategic centrality of the country, during the 1990s Egypt has come under the direct spotlight of these reform-oriented programs that began to pave its direction from repression to that of so-called liberalization. However, after the 2000s, the U.S began to intensify its pressure for more coherent democratic progress in the region while pressuring the Mubarak regime with a stronger emphasis to set its direction towards the trajectory of political reform and pluralism.

Given this increasingly liberalized atmosphere of the domestic political context, the Islamists found a more conducive atmosphere to use for political encroachment. In particular, the young and intellectual Muslim Brotherhood cadres, who have upgraded a new ideological posture within the Movement during the 1990s and most of whom that have been detained in the 1995 mass arrests, have got out of prisons in the beginning of the 2000s. They possessed a heightened ideological outlook that aimed to deliver an effective political message. Through this revamped political stance that embraced democratic terminology of human rights, equality and modernity with a greater emphasis than ever, the Muslim Brotherhood grew as a visible and dynamic actor in the political context.[118]

4.1.1 2005 Elections

4.1.1.1 Assessing the Elections in the Light of the Internal and External Context

As mentioned above, the Brotherhood found a much better chance to introduce its new political jargon effectively by making good use of a respectively favorable political context that occurred due to the increasing international pressure for domestic reform. The 2005 elections that came within this context was significant in the sense that it was the first substantial test case for the performance of the Muslim Brotherhood's political discourse in the electoral platform. The fact that the 2005 elections were the most transparent elections held in the Egyptian political history was the fundamental point of divergence that made the 2005 elections notably different from the previous elections.

[118] El-Ghobasy, "The Metamorphosis," 389.

When compared to the 2000 elections, some prominent amendments attracted attention in 2005. New electoral regulations were enforced to set the stage for relatively fair elections. A new electoral committee was installed through the participation of civilian observers, human right groups and NGOs to assist the judges who did not suffice in number to monitor all the electoral districts. The most important development, however, was the historical decision of President Mubarak to change the article 76 and to allow for the first direct presidential elections in Egypt. "The proposal was approved by the People's Assembly and then confirmed in a nationwide referendum on May 25, 2005."[119] Many circles assessed the amendment as a major improvement in the direction of political reform and change. Of course, this significant policy switch needs to be seen within the context of the prominent developments that took place during the period up to elections.

As mentioned above, the intense pressure for reform from the international context, in particular the U.S has had a paramount impact over the unexpected decision of Mubarak to amend the constitution and to call for the first multi-candidate elections in a more competitive and open environment. "During this period the Bush administration, directed by Congress, increased its spending on democracy assistance activities in Egypt from approximately $5 million annually to nearly $50 million."[120]

The changes in the internal political platform have had significant implications over this outstanding revision as well. "While a fractured opposition operated behind the scenes for years, this election inspired the secularists, leftists and, most of all, Islamists to take the unprecedented step of coordinating their various campaigns against Mubarak's expected victory."[121] There is no doubt that the rigorous

[119] Jeremy M. Sharp, "Egypt: 2005 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections," Congressional Research Service, (September 21, 2005), 2, http://vienna.usembassy.gov/en/download/pdf/egypt_elec.pdf (accessed November 10, 2007).

[120] Michele Dunne, "Time to Pursue Democracy in Egypt," *Policy Outlook*, no. 30 (January 4, 2007), 7, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Dunne_Egypt_FINAL2.pdf (accessed March 22, 2007).

[121] Geneive Abdo, "Is the U.S Ready for Egyptian Democracy?," *Washington Post*, (September 18, 2005), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/09/17/AR2005091700106_pf.html (accessed 14 July 2007).

awakening at the wake of the elections was not a spontaneous dynamism that erupted all of a sudden. After the unprecedented decline of the NDP in the 2000 elections, many circles in the society began to lend credence to the view that the NDP which has firmly controlled the political system for long years was loosing it dominant influence over the system. This perception began to call the legitimacy of the NDP into question and the sense that change was possible began to stretch among the opposition platform.[122] These pro-reform views which have started as reactionary inclinations began to resonate in the society and have evolved into vocal protest movements within a short time. Such movements appeared to spring forth suddenly in late 2004 and 2005 but actually had their roots in demonstrations organized from 2001 to 2004 to protest regional issues (e.g. the Israel - Palestine conflict and Iraq) that went on to criticize Egyptian policy and the government.[123]

One of the most remarkable groups among them was the Kifaya Movement (also known as The Egyptian Movement for Change) which has emerged in 2004 as an informal anti-government platform compromising of human right groups and civil society associations. The movement managed to get the support of several thousand of supporters from different ranks of the society. Raising the banner of 'enough' towards all the social and political sufferings pervading the country, Kifaya began to hold public protests and organized pro-democracy demonstrations to voice dissatisfaction with the regime. "Significant numbers of Egyptians, who in the last decades hardly protested domestic politics in public, were attracted by Kifaya's slogans and activities and took to the streets of major cities."[124]

The new social establishments began to spread in number while thriving more assertive in the social and political milieu to contest the ruling regime. They paved

[122] Amr Hamzawy and Nathan J. Brown, "Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Feature?," *Policy Outlook* , no. 24 (December 20, 2005), 3, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17807&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl,zme (accessed March 8, 2007).

[123] Michele Dunne, "Evaluating Egyptian Reform," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 66 (January 24, 2006), 6, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP66.Dunne.FINAL.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

[124] Amr Hamzawy, "Opposition in Egypt: Performance in the Presidential Election and Prospects for the Parliamentary Elections," *Policy Outlook*, no. 22 (October 20, 2005), 3, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/PO22.hamzawy.FINAL.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

the way for bolder steps by inspiring energy and dynamism to the stagnant opposition groups and encouraged them to activate their potential through cooperative ties for defying the existing status quo from within. The opposition groups left their long-standing dissentions aside, which have deterred them from organizing under a consensus for a long period of time and established 'The National Front for Change.' The new organization was expected to inject vigor into the poorly organized opposition groups thus forging synergy under a well-coordinated strategy. The front decided to confront the regime in the elections and prepared a united candidate lists. The cooperation was espoused on the ground that no opposition group would compete against each other. The front basically compromised of an 11-party coalition. "It included the Wafd, Tagammu, Nasserist Arab Democratic Party (Nasserites), Labour Party, Wassat and Karama parties (that awaited license), the Egyptian Movement for Change (Kifaya), the Popular Campaign for Change (Freedom Now), and The National Coalition for Democratic Transformation, the National Alliance for Reform and Change and the Muslim Brotherhood."[125]

Though the Muslim Brotherhood was included in the list in formality, it declared that it would not join the organization in practical terms. There is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood's practical absence was the most noticeable vacancy within this cooperative establishment. In fact, there were many reasons behind this uncompromising stance towards the Movement. Some of the opposition factions, in particular the liberals and the leftists still depicted the democratic program of the Brotherhood with skepticism while others raised considerable concerns about the well-organized structure of the Movement that could overshadow the rest of the front. The Brotherhood viewed other opposition parties with equal distrust.[126] The Movement did not show an apparent interest in supporting the front as well, given the current inability of the opposition camp to compete for power.

[125] Amira Howeidy, "United they stand?," *Al-Ahram Weekly,* no. 764 (October 13- 19, 2005), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/764/eg5.htm (accessed December 21, 2007).

[126] Amr Hamzawy and Nathan J. Brown, "Can Egypt's Troubled Elections," 3.

The reform voices also began to escalate within the judiciary which represented another axis of the reformist wing calling for change. On May 2005, the Egyptian Judges Club, which has been a social organization struggling for complete judicial independence, announced a resolution declaring the decision of the judiciary not to supervise the 2005 elections unless it was provided with two central concessions: The first was a draft law prepared by the Judges Club guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary, while the second was amending the political participation law to ensure full judicial supervision over the electoral process.[127] In the light of the 2000 elections (the first election to be supervised by the judges) where their impact remained negligible in the face of the firm state control, the judges complained about the irregularities marring the elections. The timing of the judge's boycott threat could not be more problematic for the regime as it erupted amidst internal and external upturn lobbying for further reform in the country.

Against this rising internal and external calls for reform, President Mubarak decided to open up the country to multi-candidate presidential elections while prioritizing electoral reform as the regime's policy to restore credibility.[128] Mubarak sought to introduce several constitutional and political reform pledges to give impetus to his presidential campaign. The regime set itself to the task of changing the emergency law, putting constitutional limits to the power of execution and assigning an increased role for the judiciary and the legislature.[129] It passed an amended 'Political Parties Law' to ease the criticisms that addressed the licensing process of parties like Wasat, Karama which have long been applying for recognition. With a few insignificant revisions in the membership profile of the Political Parties Committee, the pervasive state control over the body remained unchanged.

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[127] Dina Shehata, "Egypt: Judges Club Challenges the Regime," *Arab Reform Bulletin* 3, no. 5 (June 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17049 (accessed March 8, 2007).

[128] Nathan J. Brown and Hesham Nasr, "Egypt's Judges Step Forward: The Judicial Election Boycott and Egyptian Reform," Policy Outlook, (May 25, 2005), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/PO17.borwn.FINAL.pdf (accessed march 8, 2007).

[129] Amr Hamzawy, "The West Should Push Mubarak on Reform," *The Daily Star*, (September 13, 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17445&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl,zme (accessed March 8, 2007)

In fact, these shallow reform initiatives unrolled a significant crisis over the liberalization experiment of the country: The NDP did not actually make a far-reaching headway to keep its reform promises and to institute qualitative democratic measures that primarily aimed at the liberalization of the country. Doubtlessly, the decision to hold multiparty elections was a positive step but it does not alone constitute the basic parameter of a representative democracy as liberalization should also find some other conducive spaces to evolve outside the poll stations. What is more as Ottoway argues, "Plenty of countries have learned the art of holding multiparty elections without allowing a real challenge to the incumbent government."[130]

In fact, the regime followed a tactical policy to create the impression of a strong democracy champion who moved towards reform during the period of elections where the external actors kept a close watch on the country and backtracked on most of its pledges soon after the elections. These strategies demonstrated that the resistant authoritarian regime was in fact unwilling to open up the country to democratic competition in order not to concede its unquestioned prominence. In an interview published in the semi-governmental daily newspaper Al Ahram on January 30, 2005, President Mubarak described the call for constitutional change as 'futile' and criticized those who advocate it as jeopardizing national interests.[131]

In short, the regime has skillfully covered the art of adopting limited-scope reform measures and portraying them as substantial democratic openings in order to cover its political quiescence and to prevent further pressure from internal and external actors for more comprehensive change. It was this fundamental strategy through which the NDP responded to the internal and external reform pressures before the elections.

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[130] Marina Ottaway, "Evaluating Middle East Reform: How Do We Know When It Is Significant?," Carnegie Paper, no. 56 (February 28, 2005), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP56.Ottaway.FINAL.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

[131] Amr Hamzawy, "The Continued Costs of Political Stagnation in Egypt," *Policy Outlook*, (February 11, 2005), 3, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Hamzawy_Final.pdf (accessed March 8, 2007).

4.1.1.2 The Results of the Elections and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Political Arena

With a voter participation lower than 20%, the outcomes of the 2005 presidential elections held on 7 September 2005 did not induce a marginal change that could alter the core of the authoritarian structure. However, the fact that it influenced the outlook of the political picture to a reasonable extent can not be ignored. Similar to the 2000 elections, the NDP secured a fifth six-year term with securing a majority of 86.6%.[132] "Ayman Nour, head of the 'al-Ghad' (Tomorrow) Party won 7.3%, Nu'man Guma'a, the Wafd Party candidate, got 2.8%, and the other seven contenders together gained less than 1.5% of the votes."[133]

The parliamentary elections that took place between November 9 and December 7 brought expected results as well. The NDP secured 311 seats (% 73 of the votes) to gain an overall majority.[134] "Of the 432 candidates fielded by the NDP only 145 secured election, with 287 falling by the wayside."[135] However, it ultimately captured 311 seats only after aligning with the 166 winning independents and blanketed its declining power to gain an overall majority. In the opposition spectrum, there was not any concrete achievement as the opposition groups all remained largely ineffective in mobilizing the constituencies.[136] The National Front for Change and Reform could not be effective in most of the electoral districts and won only twelve seats.[137] While disillusionment with regard to the electoral

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[132] Ephraim Kam, "Presidential Elections in Egypt: The Glass Half Full," *Telaviv Notes*, no. 3 (September 13, 2005), 1, http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/tanotes/TAUnotes147.doc (accessed May 23, 2006).

[133] Kam, "Presidential Elections in Egypt," 1.

[134] Hani Shukrallah, "Egypt: Stormy Elections Close a Turbulent Year," *Arab Reform Bulletin* 3, no. 10 (December 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17786&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl,zme (accessed January 24, 2006).

[135] Gamal Essam El-Din, "Procedure and Polarisation," Al-Ahram Weekly, no. 773 (December 15-21, 2005) http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/773/eg1.htm (accessed November 13, 2007).

[136] Essam El-Din, "Procedure and Polarisation."

[137] Hamzawy and Brown, "Can Egypt's Troubled Elections," 4.

achievements within the limits of an authoritarian context, the representation of the opposition bloc increased nearly by %20 compared to the 2000 elections. Furthermore, these cooperation initiatives - in particular the Kifaya movement, first anti-Mubarak movement held ever - was valuable in the sense that it crystallized an awakening dynamism among the internal momentum that broke an old-standing taboo by criticizing the government in an open manner and announcing an increased intention to set the direction of change. "To many observers, Kifaya enabled the idea of demonstrating, speaking up and saying 'no', even to the president."[138]

However, the most bewildering result of the 2005 parliamentary elections was the unexpected electoral performance of the Brotherhood. The Movement responded to this convenient context by running 150 candidates and won 88 seats in the People Assembly, %20 of the general votes.[139] Given the fact that the tenuous opposition wing could not show a marked performance in the elections, the results of the elections brought a new actor to the fore in the political milieu: The Muslim Brotherhood. The results were not surprising for the National Democratic Party that has managed to preserve its predominance over the system. However, the second axis of the political game was quite unforeseeable for many political and intellectual ranks before the elections. There is no doubt that many factors accounted for the sweeping victory of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The first possible explanation is that the Movement clearly benefited from a typical future inherent in the fundamentally authoritarian nature of the Egyptian political system: The lack of active and well-functioning opposition groups that can act as democratic agencies to pave the way for a real democratic change. Throughout the history, the opposition movements have suffered from various weaknesses due to the continuous oppression of the authoritarian rule. Though not monitored by the government completely, the opposition actors are given strong limits in their

[138] Shaden Shehab, "That's Enough," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 775 (December 29, 2005 - January 4, 2006), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/775/sc122.htm (accessed November 10, 2007).

[139] Amira Howeidy, "We Take Nobody's Permission," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 773 (December 15 -21, 2005) http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/773/eg5.htmn (accessed November 24, 2007).

political action[140] "Even though they can field candidates and publish newspapers, they can not gain the kind of grassroots following that would enable them to have a solid presence in the political arena."[141]

However, attributing more of their underdevelopment to the undemocratic foundation of the authoritarian rule misses the mark. As Thomas Scheben argues, "If those parties are better characterized as political clubs than parties with a real basis amongst the population, this cannot only be blamed on the restrictive policies of the regime."[142] Likewise, the internal problems of the opposition elements share some of the blame for their old-standing obedience. The opposition movements in Egypt have never been organized enough to gain functional power and claim independence from the authoritarian rule. They usually seem divided in outlook and lack the sufficient organizational depth to take an autonomous stand and to come up with a clear speech to impact the policy changes in the country.

As a result, this disorganized structure of the opposition spectrum has enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to stand out in the political context without confronting a strong rival that could challenge its leadership position. The Movement easily gained the upper hand and occupied the overall part of the punitive votes that protested the ruling regime. However, the success of the Brotherhood can not be totally ascribed to the protest votes acquired in the context of an ideological vacuum. Given the prevailing conditions of the political stalemate, the Muslim Brotherhood came up as the most efficient political alternative with its well-organized structure as well. The efficient organizational method professed by the Movement had two major touchstones.

First of all, the Movement introduced an effective political speech based on a strong Islamic awareness. The Muslim Brotherhood addressed the Islamic piousness of the citizens by using Islamic symbols. "In a society where the moral fabric is under strain because of increases in corruption, crime and drug abuse, Islam is perceived

[140] Hamzawy, "The Continued Costs", 3.

[141] Lesch, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," 229.

[142] Scheben, "Which Democracy, Which Islam?," 78.

by many as offering an ethical code of behavior and a means countering this social malaise."[143] Therefore, it is not difficult to uncover why a pro-Islamic political program that offers an alternative political and social system easily finds a plausible amount of sympathizers from the society.

The second pillar that lied under the electoral accomplishment of the Brotherhood at the political level is the pre-dominant posture it managed to secure in the social network system of the country. Much of the Movement's success emerged from its organized social wing which has generated the considerable part of this grassroots support. In contemporary Egypt, the Movement maintains a vast network system of wide-ranging social facility programs which especially cover education, health, medical care, emergency and job-training services for the society. Most of the funds are derived from donors, Islamic banks and enterprises, investment companies, charitable foundations, associations and syndicates. The grassroots services the Movement provides are usually cheaper and higher in quality with respect to the limited public services of the government.

Another successful aspect of this social-service providing liability is the religious label under which the services are delivered. In the eyes of the public, while the NDP is kept synonymous with corrupt and untransparent bureaucracy, the Muslim Brotherhood members are considered as incorruptible and fully-devoted God believers who fight against corruption and many other fundamental problems of the society in the name of Islam. What is more, the Muslim Brotherhood does not conceive its socio-economic program as an additional favor or an extra reward offered to the Egyptian society. Rather, the Movement alleges that the social services are the primary requirements of Islamic prohibitions. As one of the leading members of the Movement postulates it: "It's not aid, we run social assistance programs because the Islamic way of life requires it."[144]

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[143] Maha Azzam, "Egypt: The Islamists and the State Under Mubarak," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Westview Press: Colorado, 1996), 120.

[144] Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "Egypt: Social Programmes Bolster Appeal of Muslim Brotherhood," February 22, 2006, http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=26150 (accessed December 13, 2006).

Turning to the main debate, the Muslim Brotherhood's strategy of targeting at current economic problems of the society enabled the Movement to gain credibility with respect to the other opposition groups in the 2005 elections. The Muslim Brotherhood has prioritized 'good and effective social organization' to attain the support of society out of conviction that an average Egyptian peasant or urban was not very much concerned about democratic or political change. "A series of polls conducted in summer 2004 by Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies show that almost 60 percent of Egyptians viewed democratic norms and procedures as less important than combating poverty, campaigning against corruption, and improving the public education system."[145]

In short, the social wing marked an essential aspect of the Muslim Brotherhood's heightened reputation. Because this strategy enabled the Movement to undermine the challenges of its outlawed status and acted as a redemptive that the Movement could easily consult in times of repression to regain its eroded political strength. As Burgat notes: "On the edge of an inaccessible political arena, social action continues to be an important field of activity for the Islamists."[146]

The third explanatory point is undoubtedly the favorable conjuncture created by the endeavors of the international actors. The intense international scrutiny on the 2005 elections, more then ever, diminished the autonomy of the NDP in mastering the elections and compelled the party to open up the electoral process to the internal controlling mechanism like the judges, media, civic association groups, NGOs, local monitoring organizations which have been sternly promoted and funded by external actors. "For the first time, Egypt's civil society had easy access to the international arena, and the international press could finally hear something other than the official line."[147] As an extension of its tactical strategy, the regime tried to do its minimum to fulfill the reform pressures like preventing the interference of

[145] Hamzawy, "The Continued Costs," 5.

[146] Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam*, 174.

[147] Camilla Hall, "Mubarak's Real Opposition: Election Monitoring Uncovered," *Middle East Report* (December 10, 2006), http://emeronline.blogspot.com/search?q=election+monitoring (accessed November 5, 2007).

monitoring mechanisms in some Brotherhood strongholds, restricting the role of NGOs in the control bodies, arrestment of opposition activists, conducting massive fraud. Although not entirely transparent, the electoral environment that was more or less extricated from firm government control provided the Muslim Brotherhood with a potential opportunity to attain more satisfactory results under a relatively independent election oversight.

Due to the combination of all these factors, the Muslim Brotherhood reached the cusp of its political progress and demonstrated that the Movement is equipped with incredible mobilization ability that can easily turn its high-level public acceptance into electoral achievements when it is allowed to participate in elections. The Supreme Guide of the Movement Mohammed Mahdi Akef declared just after the elections: "People are outraged by the performance of this government and its ruling party. Both have fed people nothing but bitterness. These great people have no confidence in this government. They have shown that they are against tyranny and with us." [148] As a result, the Brotherhood emerged as the second political actor and the sole opposition bloc of the parliament.[149]

4.1.2 The Vision and the Objectives of the New Ideological Program & The Democracy Debate

As mentioned above, after the 1990s, a combination of internal and external factors shifted the Muslim Brotherhood towards the trajectory of modernity under which it began to espouse the validity of many universally accepted concepts like 'modernity', 'equality, 'pluralism' that it heavily rejected for being western-oriented concepts that did not find an ideal response in the Arab world. When this ideological model introduced by the Brotherhood is assessed in terms of its details, it can be argued that the Movement primarily aspires to establish an Islamic state on a democratic foundation that recognizes the coexistence of the chief principles of

[148] Rory McCarthy, "Polls Apart," *Guardian Unlimited*, November 28, 2005, http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,1652763,00.html (accessed November 2, 2007).

[149] Ayellet Yehiav, "Post-Elections Assessment: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's Parliament," *Strategic Assessment* 8, no. 4 (February 2006), http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v8n4p5Yehiav.html (accessed July 21, 2006).

right to rule, transfer of power, democratic sovereignty and political pluralism with Islamic prohibitions. As the Movement stated in its political program introduced for the 2005 elections: "We, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, assert our adherence to the state system as a republican, parliamentary, and constitutional system, under the umbrella of the principles of Islam."[150] The Movement puts a repeated emphasis on the compatibility of democracy and Islam to propagate the idea that democratic notions can absolutely behave in consistency with Islamic principles. Islam respects equality, individual freedom and liberty in contrast to the orientalist view which stresses the essential disagreement between the pluralistic nature of democracy and the authoritarian vision of Islam. Essam al-Aryan, for example, regards the charges that the Brotherhood is against democracy as a lie propounding that: "The Brothers consider constitutional rule to be closest to Islamic rule…We are the first to call for and apply democracy. We are devoted to it until death."[151]

The Muslim Brotherhood promotes an incremental democratic reform through political consensus and shows an increased interest in joining the policy-decision process as a legally-recognized actor. The Movement displays a compromising gesture to open up channels of amicable dialog with the government in order to lift the barricades in front of its political participation. It stresses the underlying need for the establishment of new political parties and generates proper formulas to expand the circle of participation like calling for completely transparent elections. According to the Brotherhood, the fact that the Movement forged alliances with different parties in the past indicated that they really wish to implement a functioning multi-party system. The Movement argues that the lack of a transparent political environment which opens the channels of integration for potential actors

[150] "The Muslim Brotherhood's Program," IkhwanWeb, May 09, 2006, http://muslimbrotherhood.co.uk/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=PressR&Press=Show&Lang=E&ID=4447 (accessed October 1, 2007).

[151] Jihad al-Kurdi, "The Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy: Conference Transformed to Confrontation," *Liwa al-Islam,* (October 1990): 15, quoted in 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): 325, http://www.jstor.org/cgi-bin/jstor/printpage/00207438/ap010118/01a00040/0.pdf?backcontext=results&dowhat=Acrobat&config=&userID=907a7b16@metu.edu.tr/01c0a83474103ea1190b14fba0&0.pdf (accessed March 22, 2007).

invalidates the chances of a democratic transition. As the Brotherhood's spokesman Mamoun Hodeibi has asked rhetorically, "Are there really any parties in Egypt, religious or nonreligious? To have parties means to alternate power. Parties compete in elections, real elections, people vote for something and they change something. Can that happen here?"[152]

The Muslim Brotherhood favors the idea of "just governance" embodied in an institutionalized state that seeks to assure equality, liberty, justice, freedom of thought and respect for democracy. As Essam el-Aryan argues, "You have already seen some countries - Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran - describe themselves as Islamic regimes. There's a diversity of models, even among the Sunni and the Shia. Egypt can present a model that is more just and tolerant."[153] For the installation of a fair and accountable government, the Movement promotes the Islamisation of the society before the state through a bottom-up change as any other way would automatically lead to an imposition from above. "If the state were Islamized before society, then the state would be compelled to resort to autocracy to impose its will on an unwilling and unprepared population thus dooming the process of socio-political transformation."[154] Therefore, at the onset of Islamic transformation, the society should be first prepared to espouse the vision of the Islamic state as an integrated and total way of life in the social sphere, after than Islam can come up as a political cause that governs the state in accordance with Sharia.

The Muslim Brotherhood propounds that the idea of 'oppression is preferable to anarchy' is no longer acceptable since this view has erroneously built the legitimate

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[152] Anthony Shadid, *Legacy of the Prophet: Despots, Democrats, and the New Politics of Islam* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 257-58, quoted in Vickie Langohr, "Of Islamists and Ballot Boxes: Rethinking the Relationship Between Islamisms and Electoral Politics," *International Journal Middle East Studies* 33, no.4 (November 2001):597, http://www.jstor.org/cgi-bin/jstor/printpage/00207438/sp060001/06x0008h/0.pdf?backcontext=results&dowhat=Acrobat&config=&userID=907a7b16@metu.edu.tr/01c0a83474103ea1190b14fba0&0.pdf (accessed October 23, 2007).

[153] Remnick, "Going Nowhere."

[154] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnema, 2 ed. (London: Zed Books, 2006), 106.

conditions of the settled authoritarian regimes not only in Egypt but throughout the Middle East during the history. [155] The Islamists say that if a ruler is perceived as unjust or unaccountable in the eyes of the public, then he should be toppled through democratic mechanisms. As the Movement clearly underlined in its parliamentary elections program: "So, the nation has the right to appoint the ruler, control him, and depose him if its benefit requires that, for he is a civil governor and it is a civil state."[156]

As it can be observed from the detailed doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Movement in fact did not very much abandon the philosophy professed by Al-Banna who introduced the concept of 'gradual change for the Islamisation of society' via reform. However, the Movement reinterpreted the basic concepts of this ideology in the light of modern western thought and changed the resistant methodology of the earlier periods to introduce a more flexible and tactically-oriented strategy. From this point, however, arise some questions and objections: Are these newly-introduced discourses that attempt to bring Islamic principles closer to the modern age prove credible enough to make certain that Islamist's democratic convergence has a real foundation? It is at this more fundamental level that a vast cycle of discussions and debates come into limelight.

4.1.3 The Deficiencies of the Muslim Brotherhood's Democratic Doctrine and the Challenging Responses

"The embrace of pluralist politics does not mean that moderate Islamists are giving up their religious legacy and becoming wholeheartedly the new liberals of the Arab world."[157] The democratic discourse of the Brotherhood has provoked critical suspicions, in particular after its electoral accomplishment, from many different circles like the regime, the opposition groups. In fact, the concerns over the Movement's moderate political discourse are not totally groundless as the pro-

[155] Fuller, "Islamists in the Arab World," 7.

[156] "The Muslim Brotherhood's Program," IkhwanWeb.

[157] Hamzawy, "The Key to Arab Reform," 2.

democratic turn of the Movement uncovered a far-reaching reality: Within the evolving political conditions, Islamists discovered the strategic virtue of democracy as a wiser and presumably more advantageous springboard of bypassing the legal restriction of the authoritarian regime and freely expressing their Islamic objectives. In other words, the Brotherhood realized the expediency of 'democracy' and 'political engagement' as more favorable assets that were certainly to its advantage in the prevailing political context for advancing the long-term cause of establishing the desired Islamic state.

According to the Muslim Brotherhood, the moderate political behavior that has constituted the central component of its ideological program would automatically create the perception that it possessed harmless and sincere objectives. Hence, the Movement would convince the domestic and international circles that its reformist rhetoric keen on innovation and democratic commitment was not temporary or baseless. While the internal and external actors would not be able to find convenient excuse to reject its accommodationist rhetoric, the Muslim Brotherhood would discard the fetters over its progress and enter into the political system to gain the necessary room for political maneuvering.

As mentioned above, the Movement, in fact, did not totally give up the rational of the Islamic message unleashed in the establishment periods but realized the inessentiality of using the revolutionary methods to attain this goal. Therefore, it replaced its radical strategies with legally-recognized methods. These strategic calculations and the tactical logic to use democracy with pragmatic priorities, however, generated a nascent political program. It came as a result of a rapid ideological revision instead of a slow and gradual transformation that would provide the Movement with natural phases of development to grasp and internalize the meaning and function of 'democracy' as a system of governance. As a result, this rhetorically democratic but practically pragmatic and unfounded ideological turn remained in surface in many central aspects while deepening the concerns that the basic philosophy behind the Muslim Brotherhood's predisposition with democracy was entirely pragmatic.

Most of the discussions concentrate on the point that the reason behind this newly emerging respect for democracy has occurred because the Movement assumes to be the major beneficiary of this system. As Fuller argues, "Islamists support values such as democracy and human rights precisely because they are the primary victims of the absence of those values."[158] For example, the Islamic writer Al-Sha'ab complains about the violation of the human rights because he has been arrested with the same reason. [159] The same determination can be made for the reason behind the support of a multi-party system. In fact, Islamists do not regard democratic principles as values, but rather as the necessary procedures of guaranteeing power. However, the concerns stress the possibility that once their preoccupation with these concepts is done, they will do away with them to bring their hidden intentions to the fore. As Daniel Pipes argues, "How they get there varies, how it's actually implemented can significantly differ, but in the end it will be totalitarian."[160] An important example of thinking comes from Bernard Lewis where he argues: "For Islamists, democracy, expressing the will of the people is the road to power, but it is a one-way road, on which there is no return, no rejection of the sovereignty of God, as exercised through His chosen representatives."[161]

These criticisms are also shared by the external actors who have pretended to support political reform in the country in particular after the 2000s. This constitutes another challenge for the Brotherhood. For long years, the U.S has condoned the authoritarian regimes to exploit its worries with regard to a radical Islamic upsurge. The regimes have always drawn worst-case scenarios to convince the external actors that the consolidation of their respective governance was the safest way to preserve the domestic stability against the rising threat of anti-democratic ideologies. This strategy did not only provide ample pretext to solidify the

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[158] Graham E. Fuller, "Is Islamism a Threat?," interview by Patrick Clawson, *Middle East Quarterly* VI, no. 4 (December 1999), http://www.meforum.org/article/447 (accessed July 13, 2006).

[159] Scheben, "Which Democracy, Which Islam?," 87.

[160] Daniel Pipes, "Is Islamism a Threat?," interview by Patrick Clawson, *Middle East Quarterly* VI, no. 4 (December 1999), http://www.meforum.org/article/447 (accessed July 13, 2006).

[161] Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 111- 112.

authoritarian regimes but also outmaneuvered the Islamic groups by giving the impression that their political containment was not a democratic gain but a prominent security threat.

However, the rise of the moderate Islamists revitalized the political picture since it came as a riposte to the government's tactical calculations that moved properly for long years. It can be suggested that in rhetoric, they began to pursue shared aspirations for the establishment of a pluralistic system.[162] The U.S and other external actors have also realized this fact. They have well grasped that the liberal, non-violent Islamists pursue a far-reaching potential to contest the despotic rule of the authoritarian establishment by articulating an alternative democratic program to the existing status quo. However, the skepticisms about the possibility of reform repercussion thwart the chances of healthy dialog between the two sides. In this respect, external actors which have shown willingness to initiate democratization now seem embedded in a dilemma that makes a proper decision more difficult than ever. Doubtlessly, the problem is that democratization ironically provides the possibility of bringing undemocratic forces to power that carry the risk of overthrowing democracy themselves. [163]

As the results of the first democratic elections have clearly indicated, when given an opportunity, the voters are inclined to choose Islamic groups. This reality makes the external actors confused in assessing the potential costs and benefits of each policy option as none of them seem totally beneficial for the time being. The likelihood of undemocratic elements rising to power through elections discourages the western powers from pressing aggressively on further reform and embarking a full-fledged democracy promotion process. "If Europe and the United States are too patient, on the other hand, Egyptian advocates of reform might well go down in defeat while

[162] Amr Hamzawy, "The West and Moderate Islam," *bitterlemons-international.org* 3, no 20 (June 2, 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17036 (accessed March 8, 2007).

[163] Marina Ottaway "and others," "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East," *Policy Brief*, no. 20 (October 7, 2002), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1086 (accessed March 8, 2007).

the country settles in for many more years of autocratic rule and stagnation."[164] The method of selective promotion to address the mainstream lines of the Islamic spectrum that signal a willingness to cooperate is also regarded problematic by the western actors. Because in particular the U.S contends that the distinction between the liberal Islamic trend and the underground paramilitary activism still remains blurred even though the moderate Islamists assert a full separation among them.

In brief, the lack of harmony between the Muslim Brotherhood's theoretical model and practical commitments contributes to a wide-scale of discussions in both internal and external circles regarding the sincerity and duration of the Movement's liberally spirited moderation. These prevailing doubts inspire such questions that tend to judge the ultimate destination point of the Islamist's march towards democracy: "Is democracy hailed as a strategic instrument that will facilitate the rise of behind-the-scene purposes of Islamists and also open the way back to the true origins of Islam?", "Can religiously-affiliated Islamic movements totally abandon their inherently Islamic roots to turn into thoroughgoing political actors and ardent democracy promoters or do their radical remnants preclude an actual transformation?" "Have they commenced a real transformation in their Islamic way of thinking or is it absolutely a cosmetic change?," "How would this Islamic identity affect the media, economy, politics, education, social welfare, women's issues, and culture?"[165] What if they believe that democracy no longer overlaps with their strategic interests and decide to jettison it on the whole to construct a policy of "one-man, one-vote, one-time?"[166]

There is no doubt that the questions that can be easily answered for a different political movement are yet too complicated when they address the Brotherhood. Therefore, understanding the reasons behind these legitimate fears should begin with illustrating the deficiencies existing in the political doctrine of the Movement.

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[164] Dunne, "Evaluating Egyptian Reform," 15.

[165] Magdi Khalil, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Political Power: Would Democracy Survive?," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 1 (March 2006): 46, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue1/Khalil.pdf (accessed October 23, 2006).

[166] Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam,* 112.

In principle, the Muslim Brotherhood has taken an important step by displaying an apparent readiness to bring the country closer to genuine reform and to become the engine of this concrete evolution in a consistent manner after the 1980s. However, it could not introduce a clear methodological vision that would conceptualize how the Movement intends to transform the political and economic structure of the country over a period. Though the Movement provides a rhetorical support for a pluralistic system, it can not back up its words with brave steps that will clarify the real extent and quality of its ideological transformation. As Amr Al-Chobaki argues: "The MB has no clear program for political work and tends to blend the sacred and the political, mix the religious and the social, and use both the mosque and the parliament."[167] As observed in the details of its political program, the Movement verbally explains its quest for a 'non-western style Islamic democracy' by embracing the notions of 'freedom', 'liberty' and 'equality' on all occasions but can not clearly indoctrinate the technical methods of establishing this desired structure in actual practice.

Therefore, for many circles, it still remains as an open question how the Movement attempts to synthesize western practices and notions with Islamic tenets to install an Islamic state which is at the same time participatory and accountable. For example, Daniel Pipe points out to the cultural differences to argue that "their task is hard, perhaps impossible, for the two civilizations are contradictory in many fundamental ways."[168] On contrary, the Movement usually professes that the underlying touchstones of a democratic system like separation of power, peaceful coexistence among various groups, multi-party political system and human rights do not clash with the basic principles of Sharia.[169] In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood shares common discourses with most of the political parties and some of these aspects

[167] Amr Al-Chobaki, "Future Scenarios for the Muslim Brotherhood; Following its Appointment of A New Leader," *Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies*, no. 6 (January 22, 2004), http://www.ahram.org.eg/acpss/eng/ahram/2004/7/5/EGYP11.HTM (accessed October 3, 2007).

[168] Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2002), 115.

[169] Deia'a Rashwan, "Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt," IkhwanWeb, June 13, 2007, http://www.ikhwanweb.info/Article.asp?ID=798&LevelID=3&SectionID=116 (accessed November 4, 2007).

seem to be respected in its political perspective like freedom and human rights. However, the Movement can not clarify how these different notions will act in a smooth conformity so that they will not confront any kind of disharmony in practice.

In fact, the problem basically arises from the propensity of the Movement in identifying democracy as a set of institutional principles like pluralism and elections that merely has a ruling reference over the nation as long as it does not contradict with Sharia. However, in contrast to the narrow appreciation of democracy, the Brotherhood draws a more complex picture for Islam where it is considered as a comprehensive and encompassing divine text that regulates all aspects of social and moral life to bring the society closer to the ordinance of the God. As Essam al-Aryan puts it:

> Democracy is a way of managing political affairs. It doesn't deal with the culture of society or its moral judgements *(ahkamu)*. We are for a different form of democracy. We believe in democratic institutions like a written constitution, political parties, the separation of powers, and popular sovereignty. The main difference [with the democratic systems of the West] is the frame of reference *(marja'iyya)*. The West advocates liberalism with no limits. We have our own values, and the Shari'a sets the upper ceiling which one cannot exceed. This is the culture of most of the people. [170]

As the statement illustrates, the Movement merely regards democracy as a political vehicle to capture power and believes that upholding democracy with its beneficial and positive aspects does not necessarily mean to welcome its distinct practices that contradict with Sharia. Therefore, while the Movement celebrates the useful mechanisms of democracy that show compatibility with Islam and harmonizes them in its declarations, it does not see any harm in running over its undesirable notions that contradict with Islam. This illustrates that the Movement integrates the democratic practices not as values or traditions that should be totally internalized as the pillars of a comprehensive and cultural lifestyle but rather as procedures that should be instrumentally adopted to gain more conducive political space.

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[170] Esam al-Aryan, "Interview with Esam al-Aryan," interview by Par Carrie Wickham, Cairo, March 16, 2004, in Par Carrie Wickham "Carrie Wickham The Problem with Coercive Democratization: The Islamist Response to the U.S. Democracy Reform Initiative," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 1, no. 1 (December 13, 2005), http://www.nawaat.org/portail/article.php3?id_article=650 (accessed October2, 2007).

As a result, this tactical support for democracy stops short of introducing a visible and continuous model that merges Islam and democracy in practical ways to bring about a real engagement between the two. Furthermore, this pragmatic rational can lead to critical inconsistencies in rhetoric as well. For example, while most of the statements swirl around the establishment of an Islamic democracy, sometimes the Movement can deliver some confusing speeches that promote further suspicion. In an interview with the magazine Al-Sharq Alawsaat, the Brotherhood's former leader and guide Mamoun al-Hudeibi explained that the Muslim Brotherhood's purpose is to establish Islamic unity and an Islamic caliphate similar to that which prevailed in the seventh century.[171]

As mentioned above, while the Movement advocates the establishment of an appropriate political footing that enables the registration of different political parties without intervention from the administrative authorities, Mohammaed Mahdi Akef can deliver such a memorable declaration that portends the shakiness of the Movement's preferences: "For now we accept the principle of party plurality, but when we will have an Islamic rule we will either accept or reject this principle"[172]

Of course, it is not very uncommon to find an Islamic movement in difficulty while coming to terms with some principles and notions which have been previously rejected for their referential origin and "man-centered view of the world."[173] For a Movement which has emerged as a reaction to modernization, a real transformation of mentality entails a long ideological revision where it will reach a better understanding on the basic essence that the concepts imply rather than merely dealing with the interests they serve for its political virtue. Doubtlessly, such principles can not be internalized by Islamists in a manner that they are identified

[171] Mamoun al-Hudeibi, "Interview with Mamoun al-Hudeibi," *Al -Sharq Alawsaat*, (August 9, 2002), quoted in Magdi Khalil, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Political Power: Would Democracy Survive?," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 1 (March 2006): 47, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue1/Khalil.pdf (accessed October 23, 2006).

[172] Magdi Khalil, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Copts," *ThreatsWatch.Org*, (April 20, 2006), http://commentary.threatswatch.org/2006/04/the-muslim-brotherhood-and-the/ (accessed October 23, 2007).

[173] Bassam Tibi, *Conflict and War in the Middle East: From Interstate War to New Security*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998), 230.

by the westerners since "their frame of reference are different."[174] However, within time, the Muslim Brotherhood can grasp the main logic of these notions thus delivering a more convincing and equally effective speech on democracy. But it becomes unrealistic to expect such a comprehensive and sincere revision under the current conditions where the Movement has made a strategic convergence with primarily tactical concerns. In this respect, "the tactical modernism"[175] offered by the Movement is by no means unusual given the pace of change that took place.

Withstanding this fact, for the time being, the Muslim Brotherhood continues to confront the challenge of dealing with the accusations that it does stress the need of reform with solely instrumental pretensions and will turn against the gains of the democratic order once it becomes confident of its power. As Kramer puts it: "The more power they themselves possess, the more faithfully they revert to their core agenda, dominated by elements most in the west would regard as 'extreme'."[176]

Among these critiques the most contentious issues debated for leaving important spaces of ambivalence in the Movement's democratic rhetoric will be discussed as follows:

4.1.3.1 Sharia

Sharia represents one of the critical issues where ambiguity is well presented in the Movement's changing agenda. "To start easing suspicions, the Brotherhood will have to clarify its stance on the Islamic Sharia."[177] "While there is some evidence

[174] El-Erian, Essam and Joshua Muravchik, "A Live Debate: The Rise of Islamists - A Challenge to America?" (A Debate IslamOnline's Muslim Affairs Department), IslamOnline.Net, April 19, 2006, http://www.islamonline.net/livedialogue/english/Browse.asp?hGuestID=cjS72t (accessed October 8, 2007).

[175] Daniel Brumberg, "Rhetoric and Strategy: Islamic Movements and Democracy in the Middle East," in *The Islamism Debate*, ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: University Press, 1997), 18.

[176] Martin Kramer, "The Mismeasure of Political Islam," in *The Islamism Debate*, ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: University Press, 1997), 168.

[177] Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina S. Ottaway, "What Islamists Need to Be Clear About: The Case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *Policy Outlook*, no 35 (February 20, 2007), 5, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19032&prog=zgp&proj=zme (accessed March 8, 2007).

that the Muslim Brotherhood has revised its views concerning pluralism and democracy, the organization's main goal remains to establish an Islamic state based on a particular interpretation of shari'a."[178] Sharia as the divine law of Islam has always been the unquestioned guideline of the Islamic world that offers the only true way for development, reform and progress. The basic role of Sharia in the Islamic world, in its simplest sense, rests upon the following understanding: "If God has revealed clear principles of what is to be encouraged and what is to be proscribed, then human desire and man-made law have no place in tampering with these prescriptions and prohibitions."[179] However, this intransigent interpretation of Sharia that promotes "religious over temporal supremacy"[180] resurrects the orientalist discussions that Islam is basically guided by a dominant tradition impervious to change and that it can not act in conformity with democracy which embraces man-made laws on the contrary.

However, due to their evolving political agenda, moderate Islamists decided to give up totally embracing a religion-based terminology and upgraded their traditional discourse to adopt a more moderate and flexible thinking on Sharia. In the new vision of an Islamic state introduced by Islamists, implication of Sharia still remains as the definite principle and the legitimate source of authority. The difference is that the reference values of Sharia are reappropriated with the requirements of the modern age thus creating a measure of flexibility for the human will to shape the proper outlook of the state. "The state, even the Islamic state, must still be constructed in conformity with human understanding of how Islam translates into practice and institutions - a process always open to debate and new interpretation over time."[181] As a leading Brotherhood member narrated in an interview: "All the society accepts sharia law and accepts it to be applied in a modern manner that

[178] Steven Cook, "The Promise of Pacts," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1 (2006), 70, quoted in Barbara Kerr, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood - a normal conservative party?," IkhwanWeb, 2, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/Kerr-EgyptianMB.pdf (accessed September 4, 2007).

[179] Fuller, "Islamists in the Arab World," 4.

[180] Milton Viorst, *In the Shadow of the Prophet: The Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (New York: Westview Press, 2001), 169.

[181] Fuller, "Islamists in the Arab World," 4.

respects all ways of life. The matter needs more discussion, but this is very important for us."[182] As he highlights himself, the issue requires further clarification since this instrumental switch in the vocabulary of Islamists does not touch upon the practical details of this transformation, for example, where Islamic law will be positioned eventually - in the core or the periphery of the state politics.

There are still lively debates regarding the role that will be assigned to Sharia if the Muslim Brotherhood comes to power. "In particular, how will the overall framework of sharia as a pre-ordained set of rules allow the development of the democracy to which the group aspires?"[183] The Muslim Brotherhood's attitude over this extremely vital point remains in deep ambiguity, however. In March 2004 platform, the Movement issued a proposal to concretize the ideal Islamic state vision: "Our mission is to implement a comprehensive reform in order to uphold God's law in secular as well as religious matters...Our only hope, if we wish to achieve any type of progress, is to adhere to our religion, as we used to, and to apply the Shari'a (Islamic law)."[184] The statement went on to argue that media, education and economy should all be constructed with full reference to Islamic law.

As the statement demonstrates, the Muslim Brotherhood does not bear a clear tone to move beyond its limited explanations on Sharia and elucidate if the law will act as the only source of legislation that outstrips the constitution or will undertake a consultant role to the man-made principles whose authority it denied in the past. It is still a source of wonder how the Movement will react if the legislation passes a law in the parliamentary process which violates the principles of Sharia. Will the

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[182] Sharon Otterman, "Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Parliamentary Elections," *Council on Foreign relations*, December 1, 2005, http://www.cfr.org/publication/9319/ (accessed June 12, 2006).

[183] 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), 325, http://www.jstor.org/cgibin/jstor/printpage/00207438/ap010118/01a00040/0.pdf?backcontext=results&dowhat=Acrobat&config=&userID=907a7b16@metu.edu.tr/01c0a83474103ea1190b14fba0&0.pdf (accessed March 22, 2007).

[184] "The Muslim Brotherhood Initiative for Reform", declared in Syndicate of Journalists, March 2004, quoted in Magdi Khalil, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Political Power: Would Democracy Survive?," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 1 (March 2006): 46, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue1/Khalil.pdf (accessed October 23, 2006).

Muslim Brotherhood follow the guidance of Sharia or will it renounce its religious preferences and show allegiance to the democratic considerations? When asked on the issue, Muhammad Habib, the deputy supreme guide tells: "The People's Assembly has the absolute right in that situation…The Parliament could go to religious scholars and hear their opinion but it is not obliged to listen to these opinions."[185] However, Essam Al-Erian gives just the opposite response: "The parliament cannot agree on laws that contradict Islamic regulations. The constitutional court should revise any law that contradict Shari'ah."[186] The dualing contradictions in the answers of the Muslim Brotherhood reveal that it still remains as a significant matter of concern what level of harmony can be achieved between sacred and secular law in the Movement's new doctrine.

4.1.3.2 Organizational Problems

4.1.3.2.1 Structure of Governance

Having been compelled to operate in a politically restricted climate under continuous state repression throughout its history, the Muslim Brotherhood has had to flourish underground through illegal networks. The covert activity that has formed the basic structure of the Movement from its very founding has created an implicit image about the Movement's internal fabric that is not transparent enough to understand from outside. A covert organizational structure paves the way for further concerns and The Movement does not take any concrete steps to clarify the inner structure of the Movement.[187]

Basically, the Muslim Brotherhood is organized in a hierarchal composition reminiscent of a state structure where the leader of the Movement - Mohammed Mahdi Akef (refers to the president) - is located at the top. He is called al-murshid

[185] James Traub, "Islamic Democrat?," *The New York Times,* (April 29, 2007), 3, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/magazine/29Brotherhood.t.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1 (accessed September 23, 2007).

[186] Erian and Muravchik, "Live Debate: The Rise of Islamists."

[187] Brown, Hamzawy and Ottaway, "What Islamists Need," 6.

al-‘amm (general guide). He was elected in 2004 as the New Supreme Guide to succeed the chairman Ma’moun Al-Hudhaibi. Muhammed Mahdi Akef comes from the old generation Brotherhood though assisted by young generation cadres who want to coordinate a more energetic and assertive political strategy especially in contesting the elections. He joined the ranks of the Brotherhood in 1948, soon after the death of Hasan-Al Banna and he was imprisoned in the 1950s, during the mass arrests of Nasser. He comes from the traditional line of prioritizing *dawa*.

However, the Brotherhood faces persistent organizational problems in abandoning its ossified patriarchal structure that evokes a system of obedience rather than a democratic system of rule. This undermines the credibility of the Movement in the eyes of the public to create the perception that the Brotherhood is governed by an anti-democratic structure that shows no inclination in coexistence with internal variance and lacks liberal-democratic mechanisms. An enforced top-down governance mentality overriding ideological discrepancy and internal transformation provides critical questions regarding the reliability of the Movement’s democratic disposition towards change.

4.1.3.2.2 Internal Disputes and Dual Identity

Equally important, this anti-democratic outlook dominating the organizational network of the Movement provides an internal climate of conflict at different generational levels. As mentioned earlier, through the end of the 1990s, an increasingly polarized atmosphere has occurred within the organization between the older activists who came from the hard line tradition of concealed operation and the younger cadres who were less familiar with secrecy in the open and modern environment they have grown up. The old-guard members first became active in the organization during the 1930s; therefore, they are called the elder generation. They were educated with a strict Islamic discipline and sternly propagated the traditional goal of the application of Sharia and the exaltation of *dawa*. But the younger and middle aged generation who began to appear in the 1970s, became influential in university campuses, participated in the politics and adopted a more flexible internal discourse to advocate the implementation of Islam as a political program, not a scriptural text.

The sharp ideological breaks between the older and younger generations reached the point of a break away undertaken by a group of younger Brotherhood activists and culminated in an unsuccessful party initiative. However, the organizational separation did not put an end to the generational tensions within the unharmonious ranks of the Movement. The other second generation members like Abd al-Mun'im and Abu al-Futuh who have chosen to stay in the main body have continued to call for renovation. They pressed on the older ranks that influenced the decision-making mechanisms to revisit the internal structure of the Movement in a wide range of issues like control sources of power, methods of action, patterns of internal democracy and the Movement's relations with the state, society. "In March 2004 Akef openly embraced many of the younger generation's ideas in a new political program that expressed clearer support for principles of democratic government than the Brotherhood had done in the past."[188]

Withstanding such positive steps, prominent cleavages that occurred within the Movement gave birth to a crystallized outlook: A political party and a religious Movement. In fact, "the continuity of this overlap between what is religious and what is political in the Muslim Brotherhood's speech may partially emit from the fact that the Movement is illegal."[189] However, the problem is that aside from the legal restrictions, the Movement itself stands in an unsure footing to decide which perspective it should primarily adopt: Political or religious. Diverse views enter a phase of friction to decide on the eventual title of the Movement: A religious establishment that continues to propagate missionary activity and *dawa* or an official party that seeks legal recognition to enter the mainstream politics.

Older generations uphold the continuity of the religious perspective and the traditional message delivered by their founder Hasan-al-Banna. Some of them offer a middle way to be divided through two distinct bodies in appearance so that the Movement can act partially religious and partially political. Through the establishment of an independent political organization under a legal title, the

[188] Dunne, "Evaluating Egyptian Reform," 6.

[189] Al-Chobaki, "The Future of the Muslim Brotherhood," 48.

Movement can gain official representation at the institutional level thus participating in the political life with a legal license. On the other hand, with the establishment of a religious body that becomes devoted to carrying on ethical and religious liabilities, the Movement can perpetuate its existence in the social and ethical plane through religious preaching, education and social service programs. The continuity of the interaction between religion and politics can serve to a twin-objective: While the Movement solves the crisis of political legitimacy under an official body that acts as the moderate face of the Movement, it can avoid the alienation of the religiously conservative support bases through the continuity of the religious body that keeps on mobilizing support through missionary work.

However, another camp within the Movement - in particular the younger generation - offers a full convergence from a religious Movement to a thorough official party not to mar the outward image of the Movement with any more confusion and blurriness. They basically claim that the Movement should forgo the dangerous method of maintaining two clashing agenda under a unique structure and become a totally political establishment that derives its legitimacy from the society, not from any sacred or divine source. "Although this movement constitutes the overwhelming majority of the group's members, the group has not yet internally decided whether forming a party shall mean the end of the group and its dissolution inside the party, or it shall continue side by side with this party?"[190]

As a result, the lack of a clear distinction between these two critical aspects gives birth to a 'religious-oriented political ideology' that proves extremely confusing thus intensifying the views that the Movement's political registration is intimately linked with its religious perspective. The statements of Mahdi Akef where he openly argues that the total vision of the Movement is much larger concern than a political party seems to vindicate the charges: "We are a comprehensive institution and politics represents one dimension of our message…If we find out that this dimension requires the formation of a party, we will declare a party."[191]

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[190] Rashwan, "Transformation to a Political Party in "Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt."

[191] Noha El-Hennawy, "Around the Bloc," Egypt Today, January, 2006, http://www.egypttoday.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=6252 (accessed September 06, 2007).

In contrast to the declarations of Mohammed Mahdi Akef, the members of the Guidance Bureau insist that they are totally political rather than being an extension of the religious body with the exception of only a few sheikh fellows assisting them. Second-term MP Akram al-Sha'ar, from Port Said, contends, "Our priorities and strategies are from the same model as the group's. But the Brothers sent us as MPs, not toys…. We do not do everything they tell us, and we do not tell them everything we do."[192] Withstanding all these calming statements, both the Muslim Brotherhood and its coordinated MPs are aware that the Movement's inherently religious burdensome still provides a critical level of obscurity for the Movement's new political posture and surely requires more than the statements to be totally eradicated.

"Of course, it is not unusual for such a huge entity as the Brotherhood to include divergent points of view, but the current dilemma is in how to manage these differences in a way that does not undermine the group's strength."[193] Given the fact that forming a political party is not possible for the Brotherhood under the current restrictions of the political system, the schism within the Movement can be mollified to a reasonable extent. As Al-Chobaki argues, the Muslim Brotherhood might be expected to maintain its integrity as long as the existing political conditions do not change.[194] However, one can argue that if the country moves towards a more democratic political scene in the upcoming years and the current political dynamics evolve to provide a potential opportunity for the Brotherhood to reconfigure its position, the frictions between the hardliners and the reformers may escalate to surface thus generating a far more critical challenge for the future of the Movement in the political system.

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[192] Samer Shehata and Joshua Stacher, "The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament," *Middle East Report* 240, (fall 2006), http://www.merip.org/mer/mer240/shehata_stacher.html (accessed September 5, 2007).

[193] Khalil Al-Anani, "The Brotherhood at a Crossroads,"*Islamists Today*, November 6, 2007, http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/2007/11/brotherhood-at-crossroads.html (accessed November 8, 2007).

[194] Al-Chobaki, "Future Scenarios for the Muslim Brotherhood."

4.1.3.3 Women

'Women' issue serves yet as another significant theme of the heated discussions. The significance of the women lies in their centrality to determine the extent and scope of a nation's modern and tolerant character. The more principles of modern and intellectual thought a nation matures in advancing, the more privileges it reserves to the women in terms of their political, social or cultural status within the society. Therefore, the Movement's viewpoint on 'women' gains an additional significance in assessing the credibility of its progressive stance.

The Muslim Brotherhood asserts that Islamic injunctions assign an equal role for women with the men in the political and public domain. However, a deeper look at its speeches and declarations reveal that while the Movement ostensibly opts for complete equality between men and women in all walks of life, it simultaneously tries to give an indirect message that the women are not eligible enough to take place in the social or political arena akin to men. For example, while defining the role of women in its parliamentary program, after mentioning about the importance of women in Islam, it goes on like that: "The main rule is the equality between man and woman, however, the Almighty kept some differences for woman which led to the variation that achieves integration."[195]

A member of the Guidance Bureau Abdul Monem Abul Futouh discusses while emphasizing the role of women:

> The holy Quran mentions that women in public life have equal rights of participation in guiding society and in the policies of the state. They have the right to hold any position. As political institutions develop and governance improves, it will be wholly legitimate for a woman to assume the presidency, just as a man would do.[196]

While Futouh argues that the women can be assigned to the role of presidency, another declaration on of the Movement regarding the role of the women claims as

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[195] "The Muslim Brotherhood's Program,"IkhwanWeb.

[196] Abdul Monem Abul Futouh, "The Muslim Brotherhood Comments on 'Gray Zones'," *Carnegie Paper*, (July 13, 2006), 4, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=18525&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl,zme, (accessed March 5, 2007).

such: "The only public office which it is agreed upon that a woman cannot occupy is the presidency or head of state."[197] Such unharmonious declarations signal an apparent disagreement over the role of woman in the political life.

In the social and civil sphere, the rights and the role of the women are also defined in a similar dogmatic understanding of Islamic jurisprudence. However, handling every issue over the rights and status of women with reference to restricted Islamic principles does not pacify the skepticisms.[198] The fact that most of the civil affairs associated with women like divorce, heritage, hijab, are regulated in accordance with Islamic injunctions provides a less privileged status for women. This leads to a general estimation that the Movement has not experienced a real ideological evolution to adopt a correct vision on the meaning of modern and tolerant principles. Moreover, rather than trying to disprove the charges by displaying a more convincing commitment to embrace these notions, the Brotherhood does not hesitate to reject these values in an open manner to argue they can not find an ideal match in an Islamic framework. As the Movement directly states in one of the Brotherhood publications delivered in 2006:

> We completely reject the way that western society has almost completely stripped women of their morality and chastity. These ideals are built upon a philosophy which is in contradiction to the Shari'ah and its morals and values. It is important in our Islamic Society, that the Islamic principles, morals and values are upheld with the fullest conviction, honour and austerity, in obedience to Allah, exalted be He. [199]

As a result, this sensitive blank creates a fertile ground for suspicions in the Movement's democratic discourse. It settles the anxieties that the Movement's stance over the women issue is only confined to the narrow obsessions of Islam which translates less freedom to women and can not move beyond to embrace the democratic norms and practices which reserve a higher level of tolerance to the women than Islamists do.

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[197] "The Role of Muslim Women in an Islamic Society,"IkhwanWeb, (January 30, 2006), 8, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=PressR&Press=Show&Lang=E&ID=378 (accessed September 06, 2007).

[198] Brown, Hamzawy and Ottaway, "What Islamists Need," 7.

[199] "The Role of Muslim Women in an Islamic Society," 8.

4.1.3.4 Minority Rights

In countries like Egypt which includes a non-Muslim minority, an Islamist state can confront some challenges.[200] Because for a truly democratic system to be established, the rights of citizens require full constitutional respect regardless of their religious orientations. In this respect, the attitude of a religiously-affiliated movement towards non-Muslims attracts far more attention as this determines the real extent and degree of its tolerant and liberal commitment. However, in Egypt, even though the Islamists display an outward support for the notion of 'universal citizenship' to honor the right of peaceful coexistence on the basis of equality and citizenship, the concept proves troublesome for their religious doctrine.

"In the liberal democratic tradition, democracy implies 'universal citizenship' that is, equality of rights of all citizens regardless of gender, religion, or race."[201] All the citizens have the right to manifest or practice the creeds of their own religion under the protection of the given constitution. The problem is that a democratic constitution in its essence stipulates that all individual rights are expressed in civil and institutional basis. However, Sharia seeks to define individual rights with reference to religious principles where the basic aim is to sacrifice the right of the individual for the sake of the common good where necessary. This seems quite contradictory to the spirit of a civil foundation, however.

Of course, the Muslim Brotherhood has moved away from this conservative understanding and adopted a less rigid discourse to declare its respect for freedom of thought, freedom of religion and human rights as an extension of its new liberal speech, but there are still prominent vacancies in both the Movement's thinking and practice. For example, the Islamic state model introduced by the Movement comes up with a newfound expression of 'a civil state with an Islamic framework.' However, the reconciliation of 'civil' and 'religious' provides a kind of disagreement in the content of rhetoric since it proves problematic to visualize a democratic context where civil rights are considered in religious framework.

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[200] Khalil, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," 48.

[201] Brown, Hamzawy and Ottaway, "What Islamists Need," 6.

Moreover, the controversial statements that the Muslim Brotherhood proclaim with regard to the obscure status of the Coptic Christians in the society and politics demonstrate that it is still unclear whether the Muslim Brotherhood will become receptive to the rights of the minorities, freedom of worship and all above the civility of the political system or not. Some leading figures in their declarations argue that Islamic tenets confirm 'justice and tolerance for all' as a basic principle and the Copts are entitled to be treated in an equal footing with the rest of the society. As a member of the Guidance Bureau, Abdul Monem Abul Futouh argued: "It is important to stress that Muslims cannot practice their beliefs except by protecting the non-Muslims among them and preserving their right to difference in religion."[202] However, such moderate and encompassing statements also provide some kind of ambiguity though they rhetorically sound positive. For example, Mohammed Mahdi Akef claims that all of the parties - irrespective of the opinion they hold - will have the right to announce their own doctrine, ideology and regulations as long as they do not contradict with the constitution. He argues:

> I would set no regulations for the formation of new parties. Every Egyptian would have the right to form a political party, even if it is a party for the Druze or for people who worship the sun. Whoever finds that this party contradicts the constitution can take that party to court. The courts will decide whether or not this party contradicts the constitution and the basic norms of the society.[203]

The statement seems neutral. Adjusting the principles of the constitution is set up as the basic prelude to establishing a political party and it seemingly shows no contradiction with a standard democratic requirement. But the statement does not carry any sign about which kind of licensing standards the constitution will include. There can be no certainty that the constitution will not bring any restrictions on the formation of parties. According to this statement, the sun worshippers can make sure of their free political existence till the constitution brings a ban on the parties

[202] Futouh, "The Muslim Brotherhood Comments,"4.

[203] El-Hennawy, "Around the Bloc."

that worship the sun.[204] The same determination can be made for the Coptic Christians as well.

On the other hand, some groups conduct an apparent discrimination policy against the Copts. As the First Deputy to the Supreme Guide Muhammad Habib declared in 2005: In an interview with the newspaper Azzaman, Mohammed Habib said:

> The Muslim Brotherhood rejects any constitution based on secular and civil laws, and as a consequence the Copts can not take on the form of a political entity in this country. When the movement will come to power, it will replace the current constitution with an Islamic one, according to which a non-Muslim will not be allowed to hold a senior post, whether in the state or the army, because this right should be exclusively granted to Muslims. If the Egyptians decide to elect a Copt for the presidential post, we will issue a protest against such an action, on the basis that this choice should be ours.[205]

Mohammed Mahdi Akef responded to the civil society advocates' request for a constitutional amendment over a civil framework with such a response: "This is a futile and foolish request, and we will say no more about it, except to call on the people to protect their own faith."[206] Such exclusive statements that intend to impose double standards on the Coptic Christians raise the concerns that the Movement does not hold a neutral stand against all the religious communities regardless of their beliefs.

The problem of religious and ethnic diversity, therefore, constitutes a far-reaching ambiguity that is still not highlighted by the Muslim Brotherhood in its political doctrine. For the time being, the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood excludes non-Muslims from its own ranks is excused on the ground that it continues to uphold the status of a religious organization. However, it becomes questionable to what extent the Movement will provide an inclusive message to welcome all the citizens without discrimination if it turns into a thorough pluralistic political organization.

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[204] Barbara Kerr, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood - a normal conservative party?," IkhwanWeb, 6, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/Kerr-EgyptianMB.pdf (accessed September 4, 2007).

[205] Asharq Al-Awsat, (27 Nov 2005), quoted in Magdi Khalil, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Copts," *ThreatsWatch.Org*, (April 20, 2006), http://commentary.threatswatch.org/2006/04/the-muslim-brotherhood-and-the/ (accessed October 23, 2007).

[206] Khalil, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Copts."

4.1.3.5 Violence

In fact, most of the confusions and skepticisms center on the contentious issue of 'violence.' Since the 1970s, when the Muslim Brotherhood decided to shift towards the moderate wing of the Islamic spectrum to soften its position as a liberal mainstream Islamic movement, it officially renounced violence as a part of its renewed political ideology. The Movement became too mindful to abstain from terrorist activities not to destroy its moderate democratic standing. In its public oratory and official statements, the Muslim Brotherhood repudiated any organizational or philosophical liaison with the armed offshoots to proof that they have totally diverted in understanding.

However, in particular during the 1990s, where religiously-affiliated violence was at peak, the Muslim Brotherhood has been subjected to numerous charges on the ground that "there is direct or indirect cooperation between various organizations, or at least among their leadership which in turn is closely associates with the Brotherhood, or a wing of the Brotherhood."[207] The accusations directed by the government were not totally fabricated as the Movement conducted reported links with the leaders of the terrorist factions in or outside Egypt during those years. "There is important evidence that, they supported terrorist elements and used professional associations to send terrorist cadres to abroad to receive military training and then return to the country to perpetrate crime."[208] To disclaim the accusations, the Muslim Brotherhood alleged that the evidences were invented by the government to distort the Movement's image in the society. The Brotherhood went on condemning the usage of violence at every turn and stressed the incompatibility between its ideologically tolerant Islamic understanding and its incorrect applications that turned into radical reactionary ideologies. However, the Muslim Brotherhood could not avoid getting share form the state despotism to be quelled in a repressive manner as well.

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[207] Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity* (Washington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 31.

[208] Ahmad Musa, "Muslim Brotherhood's Role in 'Terrorism' Seen," *Al-Ahram,* (September 17, 1995):13 in FBIS-NES-95-184.

The accusations concentrating on the connections of the Muslim Brotherhood with violent activity basically stem due to the fact that the behind-the-scene networks of Islamic groups are usually blurred and highly complicated to make clear calculations about. It is not very easy to draw distinct lines between Islamic movements that come from different strategic orientations though they rhetorically deny any organizational or operational contact. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood is known to be the parent organization of at least 70 branches that operate in different countries under the name of 'Brotherhood' some of whom provide technical, economic and logistic assistance to the terrorist groups operating around the world. Of course, the Muslim Brotherhood claims not to have any ongoing coordination or interrelation with the other branches, just a verbal support. However, it is not very clear to estimate the back-door extension of the visible picture as clandestine connections are inextricably complex and interlocked to identify from outside.

Another point is that while the Movement officially renounces violence within the country, it provides evident support for Hamas's armed struggle against Israel's occupation of the West Bank.[209] "Brotherhood MPs call for cutting off ties to Israel, reducing ties to the US and sending weapons and soldiers to the West Bank and Gaza."[210] What is more, though the Muslim Brotherhood exonerates itself from terrorist activity and disapproves 'all forms of violence', there is no specific pattern of declaration in which the Muslim Brotherhood condemns any type of violent activity taking place outside Egypt such as the globalized violence that is threatening the whole world. In contrast, the Movement sometimes issues supporting speeches for the global terror besieging the world. An example of this kind of thinking comes from Rajab Hilal Hamida, a Brotherhood member in Egypt's parliament, who said: "From my point of view, bin Ladin, al-Zawahiri and al-Zarqawi are not terrorists in the sense accepted by some. I support all their

[209] Daniel Williams, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood May Be Model for Islam's Political Adaptation," *Washington Post*, (February 3, 2006), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/02/AR2006020202368.html (accessed 31 October 2007).

[210] Barbara Kerr, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," 8.

activities, since they are a thorn in the side of the Americans and the Zionists...."[211] "In addition, some of the world's most dangerous terrorists were once Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members, including Osama bin Laden's top deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri."[212]

The Muslim Brotherhood's members are periodically apprehended on the ground that the Movement has a secret military apparatus that covertly acts for the underground activities of the Movement. The most recent wave of the mass arrests started on February 2008 and continued increasingly in form of periodical crackdowns and mass arrests. "Ahmed Hasanein insists that the Brotherhood has never ordered an act of terrorism, even during the organization's truly underground days in the peak of the Nasser revolution."[213] However, the Movement has proven connections with at least half a dozen of the assassinations that have taken place in the country.

The examples unrolling the critical interface between what the Muslim Brotherhood declares and what it commits over the issue of violence in the domestic and international ground can be multiplied. However, the fact that the Brotherhood can not dissipate the ongoing charges by getting clear of its violent-based history generates the most essential reason of the direct resistance to the Movement's political engagement at both domestic and international level. Therefore, 'violence' continues to be considered as one of the weakest aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood, where the Movement feels much more vulnerable to the disturbing charges and heavy criticisms that have totally irked it.

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[211] *Ruz al-Yusuf*, (January 28-February 3, 2006), quoted in Barry Rubin, "Comparing Three Muslim Brotherhoods: Syria, Jordan, Egypt," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 2 (June 2007), http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2007/issue2/Rubin.pdf (accessed June 21, 2007).

[212] Mary Crane, "Does the Muslim Brotherhood Have Ties to Terrorism?," *Council on Foreign Relations,* April 5, 2005, http://www.cfr.org/publication/9248/ (accessed July 12, 2006).

[213] Walsh, Part 4: Lessons for the West in "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood."

4.1.3.6 International Context

4.1.3.6.1 International Agreements

The reasons behind the skepticisms are not solely contingent upon the indecisive position of the Movement over domestic matters. The commitments of the Muslim Brotherhood at the international level are conceived as equally doubtful. Among many circles, it is questioned to what extent the Movement will abide to the international obligations if it manages to size power in Egypt, regarding the international agrements, conventions and diplomatic treaties that have been previously signed by the regime. Undoubtedly, the status of the Camp David Accords that promulgate the recognition of Israel by Egypt comes under more suspicion. The Brotherhood tries to allay the concerns by issuing confidential declarations to convince the international actors that it will fulfill the international requirements if it becomes the governing force in the country. Mohammad Mahdi Akef has stated that the Movement would respect all the treaties signed by the Egyptian government, including the peace treaty signed with Israel. But in the same period, another leading official of the organization spoke of the need to prepare for jihad with the 'enemy in the east' - Israel.[214] When Akef was asked his opinion on the declaration, he argued that every member had the right to announce his opinion freely in the public. Akef added that "the Brotherhood does not and will never recognize Israel … Israel does not exist in the Brotherhood's dictionary."[215] The statement left a question mark on how the Movement will intend to recognize the treaty without recognizing the state itself.

In addition to the Camp David Accords, there are many international conventions signed by Egypt like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Social, Economic and the Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Radical Discrimination

[214] Brown, Hamzawy and Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process,"11.

[215] Yasmine Saleh, "Erian says Al-Hayat Misquoted him, Confirms Brotherhood Position on Israel," *Daily News Egypt*, October 19, 2007, http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=9852 (accessed November 4, 2007).

(ICEAFRD). The espousal of the permanence of these conventions might not yield tremendous results in practice as it will not to go beyond a formality. However, it will automatically imply the recognition of the Movement in the international context as a legal actor with a respected-standing.

4.1.3.6.2 Economy

Another prominent issue that can echo at the international level is 'economy.' The fact that the impacts of the domestic policy choices do easily transcend the boundaries in a more globalized environment demonstrates the reason why the Muslim Brotherhood's economic standpoint will be so determinative at the international level. As western world has remarkable trade connections and investments in Egypt, the destiny of the economic system in the hand of the Islamists casts considerable doubts. In particular, the issue of the 'banking system' remains highly blurred and attracts a lot of discussion. The fact that the profit and the interest system of the banking sector contradict with some principles of the Islamic economic model provides a source of anxiety for the outside powers. The unpredictable future of the banking system alerts the westerners that the Islamic Banks - that has always remained vague for them - will be vested an enhanced role and that their interest will be extremely at stake.

In fact, the outside powers can not be criticized for developing groundless concerns given the fact that the Movement takes an ambiguous stand over the issue and usually prefers to leave the questions unanswered.[216] **"**While the Muslim Brotherhood's statements and declarations inspire concern, what they have left unsaid is as much a source of concern as what they actually said."[217]

The general framework of the Movement's economic program seems quite ambivalent as well. "One of the main weakness of the Islamists is their inability to

[216] Frederik Richter, "The Economic Policy of Egypt's MB, Fighting Corruption as an Economic Panacea?," IkhwanWeb, June 03, 2006, http://muslimbrotherhood.co.uk/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=PressR&Press=Show&Lang=E&ID=4563 (accessed July 21, 2006).

[217] Khalil, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Copts."

place the economy at the top of their agenda and provide a clear economic program of reform and development."[218] As Frederik Richter argues:

> The Muslim Brothers consider the free market economy and the fight against corruption to be the remedy that will cure all of Egypt's economic ills. However they have not introduced a concrete program highlighting how they intend to put this theory into practice.[219]

Against the fundamental economic problems that plague the country like corruption, growing illiteracy and high-level unemployment, the Muslim Brotherhood can not provide a clear-cut formula that intends to express the detailed account of its economic model. The Movement locates 'the struggle with corruption' at the center of its doctrine to argue that corruption is the fundamental reason of the entire socio-economic predicament befalling the country. However, a shallow strategy that is settled on considering the elimination of corruption as an antidote to all the socio-economic endemics lacks logical depth to a considerable extent.

Furthermore, the economic program of the Movement seems to have difficulty in showing full commitment to the basic notions of the market economy like 'privatization', 'foreign investment.' Outstanding inconsistencies stand out in the Brotherhood's declarations. For example, while the Movement pretends to support a liberal open market economy, it criticizes the government for remaining disregardful on market-oriented inequalities imposed over the society. What is more, it resists to the privatization programs of the government and holds a socialist and to an extent nationalist discourse to criticize the selling of the state commodities to the foreigners. In this respect, the Movement's stance over the problem of 'foreign investment' appears equally confusing. It is an excessively disputed point in which manner the Brotherhood will cope with an economic system that has already opened doors to foreign influence and achieved a high-level of cooperation through free-trade agreements. Some members of the Movement claim that they are not biased towards western investors entering the country for trade or investment. In

[218] Azzam, "Egypt: The Islamists and the State Under Mubarak," 118.

[219] Richter, Part II: No Sign of an Economic Programme in "The Economic Policy of Egypt's MB."

discussing economic policy, the Brotherhood spokesman Essam al-Erian told US journalist Caryle Murphy that "I don't understand why a capitalist country like the United States is so opposed to us. We're the best economic friends they could have out here."[220]

What is more, in the parliamentary assembly, the Muslim Brotherhood directly criticizes the government for not developing sound economic policies that will prepare the underlying conditions to attract direct foreign investment. However, while explaining the primary objectives of the Movement, a newly elected Muslim Brotherhood MP handles the Movement's stance over the issue with the following words:

> We want to reform the country from top to bottom by working within the existing institutions - be they Parliament, laws, civil society or the constitution. We are updating what's already there…to empower the people, not by trying to bring in foreign investment...[221]

As the statements demonstrates, the Muslim Brotherhood appears stuck between the requirements of a free market economy that entails an increased level of economic interaction with the external world and a deeply-rooted western antagonism that continues to influence both its ideology and practice.

Another significant challenge arising from the economic agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood is that the Movement tries to conceptualize its market economy model within a moral framework by implicating ethical notions and precepts to its program like justice, human dignity, value of work and working ethics. As the Movement states in its election program: "The Muslim Brotherhood thinks that achieving economic abundance and living a good life is a religious duty and a human necessity."[222] Harmonizing its free-economy program with Islamic prohibitions, the Movement provides an autonomous social network system that

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[220] Caryle Murphy, *Passion for Islam: Shaping the Modern Middle East: The Egyptian Experience* (New York: Scribner, 2007), 129, quoted in Barbara Kerr, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood - a normal conservative party?," IkhwanWeb, 8, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/Kerr-EgyptianMB.pdf (accessed November 4, 2007).

[221] Shehata and Stacher, Part III: Not in Lockstep in "The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament."

[222] "The Muslim Brotherhood's Program," IkhwanWeb.

aims to remedy the socio-economic inequalities of the society like income distribution, unemployment and poverty. However, it simultaneously leaves ground for wide-ranging wonders, in particular about the real extent and capacity of the Islamist's financial system that can easily provide better facilities than the state.

Another problematic concern is that, as discussed before, a-well organized social-welfare system that commands huge popular support through coherent socio-economic strategies has always been the driving force behind the Movement's political achievements. The Muslim Brotherhood believes that it does follow a rationally-conducted strategy in 'reaching to the widest public in conduit of social welfare services.' However, the method of solely relying on the effective socio-economic wing as a cure-all for healing the political defects runs the risks of overlooking the political wing itself. A less efficient political program that stops short of offering the desired reform prospects for the country confirms doubts about the real depth of the Movement's political advancement. "Anyway, reform or change can not be carried out only through sympathy, so to what extent has the Islamic movement studied its popularity at present?"[223] An unfortunate reason of ambiguity is that the Movement can not give a definite answer to this critical question.

A strong socio-economic network is surely essential in capturing the support of the masses, but it dangerously creates a kind of populist tendency that gets more accustomed to achieving political gains via generating concession-based ties with the society. This also runs the risk of reinforcing the faction of hardliners within the Movement who propagate solely concentrating on *dawa* and social activity for the success of the Movement rather than running as a political organization. "If the movement is getting stronger the way it is, they may well argue, why change its methods, let alone objectives?"[224] However, the problem is that this traditional mentality does not only undermine the essentiality of reform and political change

[223] Rashwan, Popularity of the Islamic Movements in "Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt."

[224] Israel Elad-Altman, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood After the 2005 Elections," Current Trends in Islamist Ideology 4, (November 01, 2006), 13, http://www.herzliyaconference.org/_Uploads/2466ALTMANEgyptian.pdf (accessed November 10, 2007).

but also generates an extensively 'pragmatic-oriented' support for the Movement that assures no guaranty of continuity if the services are limited or cut down one day. Therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood has to come up with an equally strengthened political perspective that can win the real confidence and loyalty of the society by introducing effective ideological considerations and well-argued political formulas, rather than by solely buying their welfare-oriented support via some populist calculations.

As a result, towards the lingering suspicions that the Movement does not pursue the goal of democratization out of real commitment, the Muslim Brotherhood is expected to concretize a coherent political discourse that fills these worrisome spaces with convincing initiatives thus verifying its moderate rhetoric and real motive to trigger a meaningful democracy debate. "Generally, the more detailed and consistent the public statements of Brothers, the more conducive their positions are to a liberal democracy, but the more vague and inconsistent the statements, the greater the tendency for some illiberal positions to be espoused."[225]

[225] "Examining the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood at NORTHCOM," *Minaret of Freedom Institute's Blog*, September 4, 2007, http://blog.minaret.org/?p=413 (accessed November 4, 2007).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

"Setting out to win Egyptian hearts and minds for 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."[226] This thesis analyzed the central dynamics of this ideological transformation by issuing the far-reaching landmarks that have been influential in shaping the ideological outlook of the Movement. By outlining the central aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological evolution, this thesis brought into focus the central argument that inspired this study: The Movement's ideological progress was closely intertwined with the internal and international external context it operated in. In the light of this argument, the main observations basically concentrated on the domestic, regional and international developments which have presented an essential framework for understanding the key patterns of the transformation in the Movement's Islamic ideology.

Within the general picture of different stages which provided the Muslim Brotherhood with different modes of political interaction, this thesis analyzed the interplay between the Movement and the other variables to draw some specific arguments with regard to the course of the change. First of all, this thesis concentrated on the domestic context that has been largely decisive in framing the progress of the Movement nearly until the end of the century. Exploring the state - Islamists relations and addressing the complexity of action-reaction cycle between the two sides, the first argument came as an essential counterpoint towards the general approach that analyzes the affections between the two sides. The common

[226] El-Ghobasy, "The Metamorphosis," 390.

view is firmly rooted in the belief that the relations between the Islamists and the government do follow a specific rotation where cooperation from the side of the government is responded with moderation and repression is followed by radicalization. In fact, the view proves significant in that it accurately reflects the pattern of the government strategy towards the Movement. Even during the period of cooperation where the political system shifts towards a degree of toleration, the state does not abandon its well-entrenched authoritarian character to enable a constructive political advancement. Hence every period that begins with the policy of accommodation to contain the Islamists ends without much success as the state directly passes into marginalization not to loose its prior interests. Therefore, the view provided a good picture of the highly personalized authoritarian rule of Egypt.

However, this thesis suggests that the relations between the Islamists and the state can not be understood simply in terms of looking through a state-oriented reading that underestimates the capacity of the Muslim Brotherhood by portraying it as a negligible group that only responds to state policy. The view is accurate in the sense that the regime shifts from cooperation to repression or vica versa with an authoritarian tendency; however, it fails to take into account the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is the influential force in transforming the state policies during these shifts. The relations between the two sides do not develop in form of state imposition but rather as 'interactions' where both sides transform each other. The state finds itself in need of reexpressing its policy as a response to the reaction coming from the other side as well.

Moreover, by drawing the relations within a cyclical path, this view fails to take into account the 'unexpected patterns of response' that can come into stage to disrupt the rotation of the chain anyhow. As the 1980s well illustrated, the relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the state took a far more complex turn and in contrast to the expectations, the Movement remained highly insistent on formulating an effective and consistently-moderate speech in responding to the conditions of the stage it operated - whether repressive or compromising. Due to this unexpected shift that broke the cooperation - cooperation, repression - radicalization chain, this thesis developed the second main argument: The 1980s came up as the first significant turning point in the ideological discourse of the Movement. This period served as

the opening stage of the Muslim Brotherhood's parliamentary life where it for the first time gained access to enter the political context with increased autonomy under the Mubarak regime. It was by no means an overall transformation towards political change but was an important step in the sense that the Movement entered a new phase of evolution by contesting the elections through alliances and achieved a degree of transparency. In contrast to the previous decades where it was radicalized as a response to state oppression, after this period it did not show any signal of confrontation with the regime irrespective of the policy employed on it. Government policy continued to be influential over the Movement as it has always been but did not generate a reversal in its moderate jargon. After this period, the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological composition would be broadened and recontextualized with the contribution of new and more dramatic developments at different levels but would not go back.

The third argument advanced by this thesis came as a result of the observation at the regional and international level that particularly came into limelight after the 1990s. In the light of the significant developments in the international system and its implications for the Islamists at the regional and local level, the thesis thirdly argued that the 1990s began to revitalize the political momentum of the Movement with a greater influence while the 2000s came forward as the second and the most significant watershed that hastened the pace of transformation with far-reaching developments. While much of the emphasis was placed on the 2000s as it sparked the course of global change, this thesis moved out of this narrow framework and advanced the center of its discussion to signify the centrality of 'continuity' between the two decades. Because the 1990s were crucial to understanding the accurate dynamics of the dramatic development that provided Islamists with a larger momentum after the 2000s. By analyzing this connection, this thesis argued that albeit not a turning point, the 1990s were certainly effective as it has opened a new conjuncture where the regional and international variables interacted to provide Islamists with an abundant domestic context to rearticulate their political discourse with a new phenomenon that was afoot around the world: democracy. In this respect, the 1990s acted as an 'intermediate stage' which prepared the framework of more dramatic developments of the 2000s where the global system took a far more

complex turn to impose an equally effective transformation over Islamists. The 2000s as the most pivotal landmark where the Muslim Brotherhood began to use democratic terminology in a more common fashion was driven by 9/11 events, the Iraq War and the democratization projects of the western actors. After these changing balances the Muslim Brotherhood would show an increased readiness to project itself as a moderate and legitimate political force which affirms full commitment to an accountable democratic system based on the principles of Islamic Law.

This prolonged and uneven process of transformation in the Muslim Brotherhood thinking from a traditional ideology to a mainstream liberal philosophy well demonstrated that the Movement was largely influenced with the structure of opportunities offered by the internal and external context at different levels at every stage. In fact, from the very beginning of its establishment, the sublime goal of the Brotherhood has been to undertake a gradual social and moral reform in order to constitute a new political, social and economic infrastructure that would bring a perfect Islamic system into existence. The Movement proposed a new vision of Egyptian society and politics in which the Islamisation of the society through *da'wa* and training was the first step. The creation of the 'Muslim society' would pave the way for political transformation at the right time and would create the 'Islamic state.'

While the Muslim Brotherhood did not alter the core of its original political message which its mainstream ideology rested upon, the methods of attaining this long-term goal have been readjusted from revolutionary to somehow evolutionary methods within time. While remaining devoted to the sacred goal, it rearticulated its methods to formulate an appealing political discourse in relation to the conditions it operated in. Therefore, the transformation of the Brotherhood meant less a matter of ideological transformation but more a matter of methodological change. Under more favorable conditions presented by the political systems, Islamists reinvented their interpretations in more rationalistic grounds and introduced a modernizing component that celebrated the achievements of modernity while sidestepping its deeper logic.

However, this thesis introduced this theoretically ideological but practically methodological and pragmatic shift of the Movement as the central matter of discussion in this study. While there are three fundamental challenges arising from the key remarks of this study, the first and the most important comes as the doctrinal challenges arising from the Muslim Brotherhood's political program. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood has the potential to advance the country in the direction of incremental political change does not totally mean that it has fulfilled all the obligations of an ideal democratic order.

In contemporary Egypt, the most important setback that constitutes a controversial deficiency in the Muslim Brotherhood's democratic progress is rooted in its own internal problems. In particular after the 1980s, as this thesis discussed, the Movement made a critical and equally affirmative opening in forming a consistently moderate stance that did not revert at any condition of repression; however, it failed to provide a decisive and concrete posture for this revamped ideological stance in the political stalemate. Though the Movement affords to position itself at the forefront of the liberal platform that advocates substantial political transformation, it can not make satisfactory openings to proof the actuality of its reform pledges. The Muslim Brotherhood displays a theoretical support to embrace democracy but it can not display a convincing level of progress to manifest that it has really absorbed and internalized its principles. The democratic agenda of the Movement that tries to reconcile the divine and the secular discourse in a unique ground provokes further suspicion because it can not provide a specific framework where it translates this theoretical combination into practice.

Much of the problem stems from the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood's democratic discourse is less an unconditional acknowledgement of democracy where all of the institutional rules, agencies and system of governance are absorbed, but more a calculated commitment which runs the risk of removing democracy when it no longer offers the interest it serves to it. However, the Movement fails to cover the fact that democracy is not an instrumental procedure that can be used with pragmatic concerns; it is a system of values, an intellectual tradition and a cultural observance that should be regarded within this inclusive perspective.

Equally challenging are the internal discrepancies that dominate the Movement. In fact, the high level of ambiguity that characterizes the Movement's discourse and the paradoxical declarations it issues - which have been well detailed during the study - is closely related with the fact that the group fails to speak decidedly with one determinant and disciplined voice. Therefore, it can not disseminate a clearly-argued message in its public speeches. This striking controversies signal the existence of dissident voices and rival currents within the Movement that try to set the direction of reform to different axis.

However, all these inner deficiencies contribute to the impression that the Muslim Brotherhood is uncertain about its newfound position and it still harbors secret aspirations behind its so-called democratic agenda. The prevailing doubts about its sincerity invoke the critics that the Movement will ultimately overturn any trace of democracy after deriving political legitimacy. The Muslim Brotherhood is well aware that it needs to start with bridging the rifts in its democratic program by more credible initiatives to introduce a respectively sound doctrine that will provide a measure of satisfaction to eradicate this criticisms.

There is no doubt that expecting an instant transformation that will achieve these steps as an easy prospect is a far-fetched possibility. It would be unwise to expect an Islamic movement to totally deny the philosophy it has upheld for 70 years and to turn into a real democratic player within a short time. A complete transformation may last for decades. However, it is would be equally misleading to identify all the process as the total responsibility of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Movement's inner transformation is of central gravity but is not merely sufficient to convert it from an outlawed organization to a credible democratic actor.

This brings into question the existence of other factors that explain why the Muslim Brotherhood's democratic advancement becomes so troubling and attracts such wide-ranging criticisms. In this point arises the second challenge that this thesis detailed and discussed throughout the study as a major obstacle in front of the Movement: The authoritarian rule. Though the ideological gaps of its political doctrine carry the most weight, the ruling regimes responsibility in shaping the ideological outlook of the Movement can not be disregarded. As mentioned before,

after the 1980s, the state has been no longer in a position to affect the Movement's ideological content but remained central in the sense that it acted as a keystone of legal political access for the Movement. The willingness of the authoritarian regime to bring country closer to democracy by cultivating the political players, Islamists, the secular political parties, social movements in a more compromising fashion comes up as an important determinant of a democratic system. Therefore, the prominent role of the authoritarian regimes in backing the reform initiatives of the Movement is of great significance both for the Muslim Brotherhood and the credibility of democratic initiatives in the country.

However, as illustrated in every stage of the Muslim Brotherhood's historical progress, the state apparatus in Egypt has always remained highly personalized and autocratic in character that attempted to undercut the rising momentum of the Islamists at any cost. Within the present conjuncture, not much else has changed to influence or alter the nature of this political system. The authoritarian policy-making still dominates the political context thus undercutting the momentum of any source of opposition that contains the risk of getting out of its control and dangering its hold-on power. Therefore, one can possibly argue that even if the Muslim Brotherhood gets better organized to handle its own deficiencies, the legal constraints of the political arena stands yet as an equally significant obstacle that should be overcome by the Movement for free political representation and further progress.

However, the current picture illustrates that the process is harder for the Muslim Brotherhood then ever. Because the NDP does neither show any signal of compromise nor attempts to make affirmative use of the Movement's potential. For example, the outcomes of the 2005 elections shed light into the fact that the Islamists pursue a subsequent following and a considerable amount of supporters who they can handily convince to vote for them, if they are given an opportunity. However, while the Muslim Brotherhood has made a critical opening to gain a more visible position in the political context, the states position towards the Movement has not shown any beacon of moderation or tolerance for pluralism. Moreover, aside from acknowledging the Movement's political existence, the government gave an enormous boost to its repressive mechanisms over the Muslim Brotherhood. The

Movement is still exposed to periodical mass arrests (in particular on the eve of elections), pressure strategies and discriminatory policies intensely conducted by the government as a way of keeping the Movement in check. This illustrates that the government still seems to be focused on depriving the Muslim Brotherhood from an institutional base where it can freely practice its constitutional rights.

In this point, it will be useful to consider the third and the final challenge that adopts a similar understanding with that of the state towards the Islamists: External forces. What lies at the core of the central crisis with regard to the external actors is that they share the similar skepticism with the NDP and do not show any willingness to owe the Islamists a chance to show the degree of their attachment to democratization project. In fact, while foreign actors were determined to push for democratic change in the region in particular after 9/11, they began to regret about sustaining democracy-promotion programs that evidently began to empower liberal Islamic groups which began to share a common rhetoric with the western world. It is not uncommon to say that outside powers face an uncertainty in determining the way they will deal with the existence of liberal Islamists in the political milieu. Because for the outside powers, mainstream wing of the Islamic spectrum still runs the risk of representing the presentable face of radical Islamic ranks that have been regarded as the major threat for the world order.

This indecisive stance of westerners wavers between cooperation and exclusion as they are dubious about the possibility of a backfire on democratic reform if the Islamists become the governing force. Their distrust is further incited by the ruling regime who successfully dissuades enthusiasm for democratic support by overemphasizing the unintended outcomes of an Islamic electoral victory that can plague the democratic process. Even though there is not an existing model in the world where Islamists came to power through democratic means and overthrew them, external actors do continue to allow the government to exploit their long-standing concerns over a probable radical backlash. They choose to remain equally distant towards all Islamic groups rather than advancing the policy of distinction between extremists and moderates to promote the democratic efforts of mainstream groups that come up as strong alternatives. As a result, these critical suspicions and dilemmas about a radical Islamic backlash prompt external actors to search for

different potential allies to place their expectations on. However, they are arguably left with limited alternatives: The authoritarian regime and the weak opposition groups.

In brief, the Muslim Brotherhood's own democratic endeavors are extremely necessary to puzzle out its own crisis and to make credible openings towards democratic change. However its own efforts do not make enough sense if the Movement does not overcome the other challenges and assure the full support of domestic and international circles it interacts with. In this respect, the remaining part of the responsibility can be ascribed to the internal and external actors and surely to the extent of their willingness to promote reform and democratic change. It can not be disregarded that given the inconvenience of necessary prerequisites for a smooth democratic transition in the country, the moderate Islamists come as an important choice that carry the potential to accelerate the slow pace of democratic process with their well-rooted public support.

The integration of a pro-democratic force that pretends to advocate change and reform is more desirable for the saliency of democratic change than an authoritarian regime that tries to maximize its own benefits at any cost or the outsiders who can not be the determinative force at the final stage. Given the fact that democracy in its essence presupposes a pluralistic political system that welcomes the registration of multiple actors competing for political power, the integration of the Islamists becomes a significant matter of concern for a full-fledged democratic experience in the country.

Needless to say, the prelude to a democratic system is not the transition of power from the hands of the authoritarian rule to the hands of the Islamists. The bloosom of a democratic stystem is the prerogative of a free and functional civil society which is assigned a balanced power to articulate its own interests in a liberalized political and social context thus being the driver of an institutionalized civil state. The political liberalization experiment in Egypt is far more likely to occur with the contribution of democratic opposition movements, pressure groups, active civil society and social movements in a free political environment. However, the virtual absence of popular opposition movements that can shoulder responsibility for democratic change

signifies a critical impasse in this respect. The civil society groups, liberal or secular intellectuals and leftists remain practically weak and lack the widespread public support and capacity to push hard on the autocratic regimes to open up their closed power circles to credible change and transformation.

In this respect, albeit not totally liberal in many aspects, the Muslim Brotherhood as the most organized opposition movement with a large public appeal nonetheless emerges as the only viable alternative that can be accommodated to take part in the political process for genuine democratic progress. Anyway, opening the political environment will be capable of bringing not only the Brotherhood but many different players into a participatory political context while forging some coalitions among them and mitigating the monopoly of the Islamists. This will certainly pave the way for a respectively pluralistic political system to prosper. The integration method is not the absolutely accurate strategy given the Movement's lacking political doctrine but certainly proves more profitable in the light of the current political, social or economic conjuncture.

It is clear that the problem of how to deal with the Islamists continues to be an important and a contentious issue for Egypt in many respects. Must of the discussions continue to revolve around the question of whether the Islamist's democratic commitment is without foundation or not. The possibility of an incremental synthesis between 'Islam and democracy' is largely debatable. However, wondering whether Islamist are the reason or the solution of the democracy crisis undermines the prior necessity of reaching consensus on the vital need for democracy and affirmative political development. Anyway, there is limited chance to predict for the time being, if democratic commitment has generated a real impact on the Islamist's thinking to directly affect their future behavior or not.

Therefore, rather than discussing the Islamist's modern relevance and speculating whether they will turn into more marginal forces in the future, more emphasis might be given on how to deal with the Islamists in a way that co-opts them into the system through more compromising channels. Moreover, resisting the Islamist's political engagement with long-lasting concerns over a radical upheaval provides a less desirable and more repressive political outlook that in turn guarantees radicalization

itself. In this respect, the pursuit of the integration of the moderate lines with an open readiness to cooperate may prove more influential in forestalling the rise of more radical and undemocratic ideologies within the Islamic current.

Another related point that merits attention is that while assessing the compatibility between Islam and democracy, most of the concerns concentrate on the negative contributions of Islamists to democracy but the capabilities of a democratic system are largely underestimated. As many case examples around the world demonstrate, democracy as a system of institutionalized governance necessarily causes some measure of liberalization over the groups that intend to operate under it and canalizes them to be more open-minded and flexible on many significant issues. Doubtlessly, in the Egyptian case, acknowledging the benefits to be gained from respecting democracy has also brought the Muslim Brotherhood much more closer to the principles of universally accepted concepts - a fact that makes their political outlook to a certain degree less harmful. Therefore, even if the Movement's plan is to adopt a provisional rhetoric to escape from the process with minimum harm in the long-run, it has been far more affected form these active interactions while learning how to cope with the changing realities of the modern world.

What is more, aside from the influence of its ideological framework, democracy possess constitutional mechanisms and safeguards as well, that will not allow such an instant coup or a direct abuse on the system. Therefore, expecting an immediate or gradual overthrow of democracy by Islamists would be misleading. Besides that, given the current political circumstances and strategic position of the country - as this thesis discussed - the local and internal monitoring organs in Egypt may also be reinforced by the contribution of external oversight through technical, economic, social assistance programs. Therefore, the more standards Islamists meet in advancing democracy through assistance, the less operating space they can find to turn from the system they have accessed.

Turning to the central discussion with all these detailed illustrations over 'Islamist's democracy paradox' in mind, it will be essential to make some conclusive remarks. Looking from a combination of these three underlying perspectives that constitute the different edges of the democracy puzzle in Egypt, it becomes clear that the crisis

of democracy in Egypt will be unfold by the principal axis of the political spectrum and the degree of their 'serious commitment' to solve it through a genuine liberalization process. A real democratic change is often difficult to distinguish as there are usually too many cosmetic manifestations of it. In the Egyptian case, the NDP paradigm illustrated how a regime can pretend to leap towards a less authoritarian regime without making a real headway in democracy.

'Real commitment to change' is therefore, the first and foremost prelude that will determine the significance of the long-term liberal evolution in the country. There is little doubt as to the significance of the preconditions that will open the way for the blossom of a democratic system. There are essential deficiencies in the political, social and economic structure of the country that are not conducive to democratic evolution. Some requirements, at least in minimal terms should be met for a credible opening like high level of economic development, equality, participation, protection of political and civil rights, rule of law and popular soverignty. Absence of the basic democratic requirements is doubtlessly a significant setback, but is not determinative in the first instance. As Ottoway argues, "Positive change can occur on many different fronts without democratization, and there can be democratization while other conditions are poor."[227] It may be argued that some socio-economic, cultural or political conditions might not to be fully prepared for a meaningful democratic transition in Egypt. However, the absence of a fruitful consensus between the internal and external actors eliminates the chances of handling these issues accurately. Therefore, perceptions come up as far more important requirements than the fulfillment of some socio-economic or political prerequisites in the first instance.

Some cosmetically, some pragmatically, some strategically, all the political actors express their rhetorical grievances on the lack of a conducive social and political conjuncture that will bring Egypt closer to democracy, but they prefer to introduce unique patterns of solution - usually shaped under their peculiar interests - when it comes to practice. Western actors fear of the Islamists and opt for confident but equally inefficient partnerships that in turn 'undermine democracy itself.' The NDP does not want to espouse restrictions on its monopolized power for democratic

[227] Ottaway, "Evaluating Middle East Reform," 6.

change and prefers to introduce artificial reform measures while suppressing the alternative power centers to prevent their entry to the system. Repression creates a stagnant political structure that in turn 'undermines democracy itself.' The Islamists do not prove earnest about where to stand as their pragmatic agenda is devoid of a well-constructed foundation that does not let them to transform their limited scope initiatives to far-reaching openings. Though most of the hopes are invested on the Islamists with their potential public support and extended organizational capabilities, their ambivalent democratic stance in turn 'undermines democracy itself.'

In conclusion, all these conflicting interests that attempt to handle democracy on their own priorities provide cross-cutting impasses for the saliency of healthy reform in the country and in turn 'undermine democracy itself.' A successful future for a smooth democratic progress in Egypt will primarily depend upon a real consensus among all the political actors that 'political change should be in *everybody's* interest.' A focused and sincere vision that aims to adjust the existing political disequilibrium in a conciliatory and cooperative gesture will be the key to a 'real' democratic transition in Egypt. The process is doubtlessly tough and lengthy, but not impossible.

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