Threat and Political Opportunity and the Development of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

By

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Threat and Political Opportunity and the Development of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

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Abstract

In order to better understand the Muslim Brotherhood's role in contemporary Egyptian politics, this paper studies how the Brotherhood's development has been shaped by interaction with the strong secular state and the changing political environment. By examining how social movements develop in authoritarian states, this paper demonstrates the effects of threat and political opportunity environments on the Muslim Brotherhood. The use of escalating state repression caused some elements of the Muslim Brotherhood to splinter off and form violent extremist organizations, while enabling political participation through increased institutional access and participation in competitive elections caused the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood to moderate and work toward democratic reform within the system.

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Introduction

The recent ouster of President Hosni Mubarak has led many to question what the future holds for Egyptian politics. One concern for some is the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in this influential Arab country and key US ally. The Muslim Brotherhood is a moderate Islamist organization with the "goal of establishing a state ruled by Islamic law (*shari'a*) with a democratic system that claims to protect a wide range of civil liberties" (Harnisch and Mecham 2009: 189). In order to gain a better understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood and its role, it is necessary to study its evolution in a strong secular state like Egypt and its complex relationship with the Egyptian state. An increasingly threatening environment from the state caused some members of the Muslim Brotherhood to break away and form radical movements, whereas increased opportunity to participate legitimately caused the mainstream members to moderate and work within the system for reform.

In order to better understand its evolution, it is important to analyze the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in the theoretical context of social movements in authoritarian states, as Almeida (2003) does with the example of El Salvador. In this study, he notes that opposition movements will generally mobilize along two paths generated by state action, "(1) *political opportunity* and (2) *threat*" (Almeida 2003: 346; Tilly 1978: 133-138). Political opportunities like increased access to institutions and competitive elections are important to the development of opposition groups (Almeida 2003: 349), while threats such as the loss of rights, increasing state repression and economic problems attributed to the state can radicalize organized opposition (Almeida 2003: 351-352). This is also supported by Loveman (1998: 485), who

writes that "excessive abuses by the state may *directly stimulate* the emergence of *certain types* of contentious collective action."

Upon gaining nominal independence from Great Britain in 1922, Egypt experienced an increase in political opportunity for nationalist opposition movements due to a constitutionally-established parliament which allowed for contested elections. As Osa (2001: 228) states, "the opening of political opportunity in a non-democratic setting stimulates both civic association and contention." In this environment, the Muslim Brotherhood was established by Hasan al-Banna in 1928 as a grassroots Islamist organization. The Brotherhood became increasingly involved politically, especially in opposition to continued British occupation as well as the Palestinian cause, leading to increasing levels of repression by the state, followed by increasing levels of radical action by the Muslim Brotherhood, in the 1940s.

The Free Officers' Revolution of July of 1952 and the rise of Nasser brought a brief respite to the Muslim Brotherhood, which quickly ended as Nasser's rule transitioned to a threat environment. All political parties were dissolved in 1953, followed by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954. State repression of the Brotherhood resulted in mass arrests and imprisonment, during which many members underwent physical and psychological torture at the hands of state security forces. In the economic arena, Nasser's policies of nationalization, massive expansion of the state sector, and import substitute industrialization spurred massive capital flight and led to economic slowdown and decline in the late 1960s that continued through the 1970s.

One of the leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood and important ideologue imprisoned and subjected to torture in the 1954 crackdown was Sayyid Qutb. A strong proponent of political Islam prior to his detention, his writings took on a far more radical and

revolutionary tone subsequent to his prison experience, leading him to declare that Egyptian society was in a state of *jahiliyya,* or ignorance of God, and that leaders of the regime were apostates, or not true Muslims, and could be overthrown by force. This message resonated with many of the younger and more radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who became disillusioned with the Brotherhood's gradual reformist approach. This led to the growth of radical movements, intent on putting Qutb's ideas into action, such as *Takfir wal Hijra,* Islamic Jihad, and *Gemaa Islamiyya.* This development accords with White's (1989: 1277) statement that state repression can lead to violent radicalization when the victims of repression "(1) view the authority repressing them as illegitimate, (2) view peaceful protest in the face of repression as ineffective, and (3) consider the reactions to repression of people with whom they have close ties."

The death of Nasser in 1970 and the succession of Anwar Sadat marked a transition to an environment of increased political opportunity for the Muslim Brotherhood. To counter the influence of the political left, Sadat embraced a pro-Islam message, releasing Supreme Guide Hudaybi and many other Muslim Brotherhood members from prison and allowing increased political participation, such as assistance in the rewriting of the constitution and increased access to institutions like the media. Sadat also introduced his *infitah* policies of economic liberalization designed to reform the policies of Nasser's era and improve foreign investment in Egypt. Economic problems persisted however, such as the 1977 bread riots that erupted over the attempted reduction of food subsidies. Violent opposition from the radical movements spawned of the prior regime's repressive policies was also persistent, leading Sadat to escalate his repressive policies, eventually leading to his assassination by Islamic Jihad.

Upon succeeding Sadat, Hosni Mubarak took a two-pronged approach of repressing radical Islamist groups, while encouraging the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood. This led to the Brotherhood forming a coalition with the Wafd Party in the 1984 parliamentary elections. During this period, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) became an increasingly important institution to many opposition activists, as it allowed a legitimate challenge to the regime's repressive laws. It had a major impact on the electoral process, with a 1987 ruling that reduced restrictions on independent candidates, allowing the Brotherhood to field its own candidates in an alliance with the Socialist Labor and Socialist Liberal Parties. It also allowed them to participate in local elections, as well as elections in Egypt's professional syndicates. The SCC's continued activism allowed greater access for opposition parties and human rights groups to continue to peacefully challenge the regime. Even the Mubarak regime's gradually more repressive policies towards opposition groups during elections and weakening of the SCC did not deter the Muslim Brotherhood in its political participation and work with other opposition groups. This was due to the Brotherhood's established history of participation and the recognition of the strength and value of democratization, as well as an understanding that "the extreme actions of radicals [had] become too costly" (Koopmans 1993: 641).

Taken as whole, this information demonstrates the different paths, threat and political opportunity, in the political process model as it applies to an authoritarian state like Egypt and how this shaped the Muslim Brotherhood as a social movement. The closing of political opportunities and increased threat of repression beginning in the 1940s and greatly escalating in the 1950s and 1960s caused a radicalization of some members of the Brotherhood and led to the formation of violent extremist organizations. Increased institutional access early in Sadat's reign and especially during the 1980s under Mubarak, as well participation, albeit limited, in the

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electoral process caused many members of the Muslim Brotherhood to accept a gradual reformist platform, operate within the system and cooperate with other opposition organizations. The utility of this approach and the failures of violent radicals due to the strength of the regime encouraged the Brotherhood to commit itself to the path of democratization and pluralism.

Increased Political Opportunity and the Formation of the Muslim Brotherhood

When discussing the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood, it is important to consider the political environment in which it emerged. Crucial to its development was the limited status of Egypt's independence from Great Britain, the formation of the new parliament and rise of electoral competition, and the increasing importance of the Palestinian issue developing next to Egypt. It is also essential to analyze the development of the Brotherhood's organizational infrastructure and how that was a critical element for its success and survival. Finally, this information will be applied theoretically in demonstrating how the Brotherhood's protest wave in the 1940s and the state's reaction of escalating repression shaped the development of the Brotherhood.

Rising Egyptian nationalism forced the British to allow a limited independence in 1922, installing King Fuad as ruler and maintaining influence over many aspects of Egypt's affairs (Sorenson 2008: 234). Egypt's "independence came with four conditions: control of the Suez and other British interests; control over Egyptian foreign policy and defense; control over the Sudan; and the right to protect foreign interests and religious minorities" (Kamrava 2005: 46). Despite the dubious status of Egypt's independence, one important result was the king's acceptance of a constitution in 1923, which established a parliament with seats to be contested in

popular elections (Sorenson 2008: 234). The implementation of competitive elections in an authoritarian context is a significant political opportunity as they "supply previously excluded groups an arena in which to begin organizing drives" and "contribute to the formation and organization of associations by protecting multiple challengers" (Almeida 2003: 349).

The first opposition movement that gained prominence in this opportunity environment was the Wafd Party, a nationalist movement founded in 1919 to protest the British role in Egypt. The introduction of the constitution and establishment of a parliament allowed them to transition from opposition movement to political party, becoming the most popular anti-British party at that time and presenting the most serious challenge to the monarchy. By 1952, ten elections had been conducted and "those in which voters were allowed a free choice generally ended up in a victory for the Wafd Party" (Owen 2000: 148). The Wafd Party's efforts to govern were often stymied, however, as "a combination of political enemies including the king, the British High Commissioner (later Ambassador) and the leaders of a number of smaller parties" would force them from power after only a few months each time (Owen 2000: 148). In light of the highly contested political arena and continued influence of the British in Egyptian governance, the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928.

The Muslim Brotherhood was established by Hasan al-Banna in Isma'iliya, a city in the Suez Canal Zone (Mitchell 1969: 7-8), an area in which the British presence and influence would have been readily apparent. As Aly and Wenner (1982: 339) note, "for him and others the Zone had become a (perhaps *the*) symbol of the sickness of the country." In 1932, al-Banna decided to relocate the Brotherhood's headquarters to Cairo in order to expand its operations (Munson 2001: 488). The Brotherhood then began to develop a number of community service

projects, to include: "(1) the building of neighborhood mosques; (2) creating small educational institutions, which offered courses in religion and literacy; (3) small hospitals and dispensaries for the public; (4) small industrial and commercial enterprises, designed to provide employment as well as income for the organization; and, (5) social clubs and organizations" as well as a massive publishing effort (Aly and Wenner 1982: 338).

The Muslim Brotherhood was able to expand rapidly, growing from five branches in 1930 to "fifteen by 1932, and three hundred by 1938. While exact membership figures are unknown, the three hundred branches probably represented between 50,000 and 150,000" (Munson 2003: 488). There were several factors critical to the Brotherhood's expansion, one of which being the way it established its new branches, allowing more effective mobilization by combining its organizational infrastructure with the informal network already existing in the community (Gould 1991: 716-717). Upon opening a new branch, it would begin one of the community service projects described above, adapting to the specific needs of the area and weaving itself into the fabric of the community (Mitchell 1969: 9). New recruits were then gradually introduced to the Brotherhood's principles and activities through its "three-tier membership structure," with "assistants" at the bottom merely paying their membership dues, "related" members with more involvement and knowledge, and "active" members completely dedicating themselves full-time to the organization (Munson 2003: 497).

Although the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters was located in Cairo, each individual branch throughout the country retained a degree of autonomy in a "federated structure of authority" that enabled the Brotherhood to move "coordination and communication responsibilities" when the headquarters was threatened by the state (Munson 2003: 497). The

Brotherhood's organizational infrastructure as it developed in this political opportunity environment would indeed prove critical to its endurance. As Almeida (2003: 350) acknowledges, "political opportunity periods deposit lasting organizational remnants or "holdovers" that persist in the political environment" and "the maintenance and survival of challenger organizations may be the most important outcome of a political opportunity-generated protest wave in authoritarian contexts."

In addition to the Brotherhood's activities and structure, another important element to its rapid growth was the political environment at the time, which was fueled by increased contention over the British presence and the increasing prominence of the Palestinian cause. As mentioned earlier, the continued British occupation and influence was a significant motivating factor in opposition politics. The situation was exacerbated by "the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty that failed to give full independence to Egypt" (Sorenson 2008: 234), which occurred during the period of the Brotherhood's expansion. The Wafd Party's continued inability to make headway in this situation cost them their credibility and resulted in them losing power and influence (Yapp 1996: 59), which "created an ideological vacuum into which the Muslim Brotherhood stepped" (Munson 2001: 495-496). Furthermore, the escalating conflict in neighboring Palestine beginning with "the Arab general strike" in 1936 brought the Brotherhood more into the political realm as it raised money to support the Palestinian cause, as well as distributing information pamphlets, organizing demonstrations and making several speeches (Mitchell 1969: 15-16). All of these factors together led to the increasing politicization of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as enhancing their recruitment efforts.

As a result of this political environment, the Brotherhood decided to field its own parliamentary candidates in the 1941 elections and began holding "increasingly large public rallies and demonstrations, calling for social reform and the immediate withdrawal of British troops" (Munson 2001: 488). This led to the British having al-Banna expelled from Cairo, which began a series of escalations by the Muslim Brotherhood on one hand and repression by the British and Egyptian government on the other. Later that year, security forces arrested and imprisoned al-Banna and other key Brotherhood leaders, then banned the organization's rallies after a public denunciation of Britain's war effort (Mitchell 1969: 21). Due to British focus on the war, however, these moves were not permanent, with al-Banna and his colleagues being freed and the Brotherhood renewing its public events. As a consequence of the leadership's detention, the Brotherhood also formed its own paramilitary wing, known as the Secret Apparatus. It is worth noting that due to the transition to a more threatening environment by the state they were not alone in this action, with the Wafd Party establishing its Blueshirts and Young Egypt its Greenshirts (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 108). The Brotherhood also began gaining support from disgruntled military officers at this time, with some even joining the Brotherhood. In addition, Hasan al-Banna actually had several meetings with an officer named Anwar Sadat, a key member in the future Free Officers movement and future President (Mitchell 1969: 24-26).

Tensions between the Muslim Brotherhood and authorities continued to escalate following World War II. A Secret Apparatus weapons cache was discovered and confiscated just outside of Cairo in 1947, and in 1948 an explosives-laden vehicle was apprehended. This prompted Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi to order the dissolution of the Brotherhood, as well as the arrest of many members (Yapp 1996: 66). In response, some

members of the Secret Apparatus assassinated the Prime Minister. "Despite his public denunciation of the assassins," al-Banna himself was assassinated shortly thereafter by state security forces (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 108). Another key event occurring at this time was the formation of the state of Israel in May 1948, with Egypt and several other Arab states declaring war on the new nation, resulting in their humiliating defeat by February 1949 (Kamrava 2005: 82-83). The Muslim Brotherhood also committed volunteers to the war effort, fighting beside and providing support to the Egyptian military (Mitchell 1969: 57-58). Despite being a banned organization, this failure by the Egyptian government bolstered support for the Brotherhood, with membership in 1949 estimated at 300,000 to 600,000 (Munson 2001: 489).

The failure to defeat Israel proved to be a turning point for the British-backed monarchy, as their control of Egypt became increasingly untenable. The Wafd Party regained control of parliament in the 1950 elections and then proceeded to formally withdraw from the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty (Sorenson 2008: 235). In January of 1952, large-scale riots broke out in Cairo to protest the continued British presence, of which the Muslim Brotherhood took part (Aly and Wenner 1982: 341-342). Later that year on July 23, a group called the Free Officers seized the government in a coup (Sorenson 2008: 235). This eventually resulted in Gamal Abdel Nasser assuming the presidency. From this point on, the Egyptian military would be the ultimate authority in the Egyptian government, with each of Nasser's successors, Sadat and Mubarak, being military officers.

In summary, the limited independence established in 1922 and the introduction of a constitution and competitive elections for parliament represented an environment of increased political opportunity for anti-British and nationalist opposition movements in Egypt that lasted

until the early 1940s. This environment facilitated the rise of opposition movements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood which was able to develop an effective organizational infrastructure that would enable its survival during times of state repression. The continuously frustrated efforts of the Wafd Party to effect real change, the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the Palestinian Arab general strike in 1936 launched a protested wave that brought on the increasing politicization of the Muslim Brotherhood. This protest wave was met by the British and the monarchy by a transition to a threat environment with escalating state repression that initiated a radicalization of the opposition. This prompted the Brotherhood to establish its Secret Apparatus, with the increasing militancy of opposition movements and defeat of Egypt by the new state of Israel culminating in an overthrow of the monarchy and the rise of Nasser as President.

The Threat Environment and Increasing State Repression by Nasser

While the rise of Nasser and the Free Officers offered a brief reprieve for the Muslim Brotherhood from the state's draconian response to it, this would ultimately prove to be short-lived. Nasser would continue to consolidate power under the auspices of the President, and brooked no opposition from any movement, secular or religious. He would adopt a policy of incapacitation, with mass arrests and imprisonment of opposition figures, especially the Brotherhood.   In addition, Nasser initiated a massive expansion of the state sector, nationalizing many private companies and properties and beginning a state-focused modernization program. While many of these policies proved popular initially and even initiated some economic growth, they eventually stagnated and caused an economic decline that could be directly attributed to the state.

Due to the Brotherhood's contacts with the Free Officers prior to their assumption of power, they were permitted to legally re-establish the organization, and its members that had been imprisoned under the monarchy were freed (Aly and Wenner 1982: 342). While not as large as it was prior to dissolution, membership in 1953 was estimated at approximately 200,000 to 300,000 (Mitchell 1969: 328). The new government also began a process of consolidating power, and in doing so "abolished all Egypt's existing parties in 1953" (Owen 2000: 150). While the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to continue to operate after this period as it was a religious organization and not a political party (Aly and Wenner 1982: 342), this should have been a sign that Nasser was not about to let the Brotherhood participate politically. The crackdown on the Brotherhood began in 1954, after Nasser signed a new treaty with the British. Many members of the Brotherhood were opposed to the treaty, feeling it was a betrayal of Egypt (Aly and Wenner 1982: 344). An assassination attempt was made on Nasser by a Special Apparatus member, though it has been disputed how many members actually knew of the plot (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 109). In any case, it provided the necessary impetus for the government to initiate a large-scale campaign of incapacitation.

Nasser ordered the Muslim Brotherhood dissolved again. Supreme Guide Hasan al-Hudaybi, who had succeeded al-Banna after his assassination, was arrested and "condemned to labor for life" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 342), Sayyid Qutb and other leaders were arrested, as well as "thousands of members. Subsequent trials led to the execution of six Muslim Brotherhood leaders, while hundreds of others were tortured and jailed over the next decade" (Munson 2001: 489). Nasser ordered the release of many Brotherhood members in 1964 in an effort "to counterbalance the influence of the communists, who had been freed as well" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 342). Many were again rounded up the following year, however, on accusations

of plotting to overthrow the government, with one of the leaders being Sayyid Qutb, who was then executed in 1966 (Owen 2000: 184). The repressive actions of the state would produce consequences in the future that will be discussed in the next section.

Nasser's consolidation of power led to a series of nationalizations as well as a massive expansion of the state sector. One important area nationalized was religion. The *awqaf*, religious endowments, were seized and transferred to the new Ministry of Awqaf, which would also be made responsible for all mosques in the country. The *shari'a* courts were also dissolved, with their authority absorbed by the national court system. In 1964, the esteemed al-Ahzar University was placed under the authority of the President, and the head of the university appointed directly by the President (Aly and Wenner 1982: 343).

Not only was religion nationalized, beginning in 1952 large portions of the economic sector was as well. One of the regime's first new policies was land reform, which it conducted again in 1961, with "a seventh of total cultivated land" seized by the government, the majority of which was redistributed "to small proprietors and landless peasants" (Owen 2000: 30). In 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, which led to the British, French and Israelis invading to retake it. They were forced to withdraw due to international pressure from the United States and the UN (Kamrava 2005: 95), but Nasser also "retaliated by nationalizing all British and French companies and assets…including such major banking institutions as Barclay's and Credit Lyonnais" (Moustafa 2007: 60). This was followed in 1958 by the nationalization of all Belgian assets, resulting in foreign investment in Egypt between 1954 and 1961 falling to just $20 million, sparking a rapid decline in domestic investment as well (Moustafa 2007: 60-61). The regime then began targeting domestic companies, first nationalizing the Central Bank and Bank

Misr in 1960, and the following year nationalizing "the entire cotton trade…as well as all aspects of foreign trade" (Moustafa 2007: 62). 1963 and 1964 saw the government takeover of the pharmaceutical and construction industries and the raising of income taxes levels for those making over $23,000 to 90% (Moustafa 2007: 63).

Control of the judiciary was also centralized under the executive. The *Majlis al-Dawla*, the country's administrative court, was severely weakened by the forced retirement of judges the regime did not approve of, as well as by being "formally stripped of its power to cancel administrative acts" (Moustafa 2007: 59). New courts were established in 1953 and 1954, the Court of the Revolution and People's Courts, that "had sweeping mandates, few procedural guidelines, no appeals process, and were staffed by loyal supporters of the regime, typically from the military" (Moustafa 2007: 60). These measures, continued in the late 1960s, especially with what became known as the "massacre of the judiciary" in 1969, when "the board of the Judicial Association was dissolved" and over 200 judges were fired to silence their criticism of the regime (Moustafa 2007: 65). A new Supreme Court was also established after this, placing the "power of judicial review" firmly under the executive (Moustafa 2007: 65).

This sweeping consolidation of power and campaign of nationalization led to a rapid growth in the size of the state sector. Public employment leapt from 350,000 in 1950/1 to over a million in 1965/6, government ministries increased from 15 to 29, with the government employing "about a third of Egypt's non-agricultural labor force" by 1960 (Owen 2007: 29). The ranks of the Egyptian military swelled from 80,000 in 1955/6 to 180,000 ten years later, augmented by a paramilitary police force of approximately 90,000. This required far greater levels of spending, which rose in proportion of gross national product "from 18.3 per cent in

1954/5 to 55.7 per cent in 1970" (Owen 2007: 29). The state had to create so many new

positions in part because state-funded education was producing so many educated young people

that could not find work in the shrinking private sector. The number of students "in all types of

education rose from 1,900,000 in 1953/4 to 4,500,000 in 1965/5 and 5,900,000 in 1972/3. Of

these, 54,000 were in universities at the beginning of the period and 195,000 at the end" (Owen

2007: 30).

It initially seemed as if Nasser's Import Substitute Industrialization policies would prove

successful. Egypt's "GDP growth increased from 5.3 percent per year during the 1956-1961

period to 6.1 percent per year over the 1961-1966 period (Moustafa 2007: 63). By the end of

the 1960s however, serious problems began to manifest, such as "the drain on scarce currency

reserves to buy foreign machinery and raw materials, the lack of attention to agriculture and

exports, [and] the problems of managing huge industrial plants" (Owen 2000: 31). Between

1966 and 1971, Egypt's GDP growth slackened to 2.9 percent, which "after taking into account

the natural population growth rate, the real growth rate for the period averaged only 0.4 percent

per year" (Moustafa 2007: 64). The wave of nationalizations of private companies and property

and the lack of an independent judiciary to protect property rights triggered massive capital

flight. It is estimated that during the 1960s Egyptians transferred $20 billion outside the country,

with a roughly equal amount moved abroad during the 1970s. Comparatively, domestic

investment during the 1960s was only $5.8 billion, demonstrating the severity of the damage that

Nasser's economic policies did to the country (Moustafa 2007: 64-65).

Nasser also suffered a series of military setbacks during the 1960s that hurt the Egyptian

economy as well as his popularity among the people. In order to promote his vision of pan-Arab

socialism abroad, Nasser deployed roughly 75,000 troops to Yemen in support of antiroyalist revolutionaries fighting a civil war there between 1962 and 1967 (Sorenson 2008: 236). The bloody and protracted conflict yielded few results and cost Egypt precious resources, which possibly affected Egypt's performance in another conflict as the Yemeni conflict was ending. Egypt and other Arab states again suffered another defeat by Israel in the 1967 War, in which the Egyptian air force was virtually obliterated. Israel also occupied the Sinai Peninsula, depriving Egypt of revenues from the Suez Canal and its oil fields there (Moustafa 2007: 63).

All of this information is crucial to the theoretical application of its effects on the Muslim Brotherhood. As Almeida (2003: 351) notes, the "three principle threats that apply to authoritarian states in the global periphery include (1) *state-attributed economic problems,* (2) *erosion of rights,* and (3) *state repression.*" Nasser's economic policies of nationalizing foreign and domestic assets and substantially increasing the size of the state sector were key factors in the economic decline that began in the late 1960s. In other words, "the administrative expansion of the nation-state as regulator of economic life and vital resources make it a common target for redress of economic problems" (Almeida 2003: 352). These economic problems by themselves may lead to public protests, however, "the form of protest will likely only become more radicalized and violent when combined with an erosion of rights and escalating state repression" (Almeida 2003: 352). Nasser's era clearly saw the erosion of rights with the banning of political parties, outlawing of the Muslim Brotherhood and complete restructuring of the court system. State repression was evident by the mass arrests, imprisonment (sometimes without trial), torture and executions. These events combined to represent a turning point for some members of the Muslim Brotherhood, causing them to reject a reformist approach and led them to develop "radical and revolutionary organizations" (Almeida 2003: 384).

Threat-Induced Radicalization: Sayyid Qutb and the Growth of Radical Movements

Sayyid Qutb was a leading ideologue in the Muslim Brotherhood and an Egyptian nationalist who began his career as a civil servant during the monarchy. A religious and morally conservative man, he was concerned by the effects of Western influence on his country, even more so after witnessing Western support for the formation of Israel and a trip to the United States he took to study its education system. His ideas did not truly become radicalized, however, until he was imprisoned under Nasser and endured torture at the hands of state security forces. His writings took on a more violent and revolutionary tone, describing modern society as being in a state of *jahiliyya,* or ignorance, unbelief and barbarism. He espoused the doctrine of *takfir,* or the ability to declare rulers of Muslim countries that did not apply Islamic principles of governance apostates and thus able to be overthrown through violent revolution. His execution by the state made him a martyr, and his radical teachings endured and inspired more radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood to break away and form violent organizations dedicated to the overthrow of the Egyptian state.

Born in 1906 in a rural village in Upper Egypt, Sayyid Qutb was profoundly affected by the changing political and cultural dynamics in Egypt. His father was a nationalist, and his entire village participated in the 1919 uprising against the British (Calvert 2000: 89). He moved to Cairo in 1921 in order to advance his education, eventually "graduating in 1933 from Dar al-'Ulum, Cairo's well-known teachers' training college, he was hired by the Ministry of Education (Wizara al-Ma'arif) as an elementary school teacher, and then, after 1940, as an inspector of public schools" (Calvert 2000: 89). While appreciative of the "technical and organizational"

advances adapted from exposure to the West, he grew increasingly concerned by the Western

cultural influence on Egyptian society (Calvert 2000: 89-90).

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Qutb gradually adopted more religiously-framed

arguments against the British occupation and the imposition of Western culture on Egyptian life.

This was particularly true as Western, including US, support increased for Zionism in Palestine

in the post-World War II period at the expense of the Palestinian people. While accustomed to

Britain's machinations in Egypt and Palestine, the US's support seriously disillusioned Qutb's

view of America, placing it at the same level of the European imperial powers; aggressive,

materialistic and morally degenerate (Calvert 2000: 90-91). His use of Qur'anic reasoning for

cultural as well as political reform continued in the publication in 1949 of his first major Islamist

work, *Social Justice in Islam* (Calvert 2000: 91).

At this stage in Qutb's career, he was selected by the Ministry of Education to travel to

the United States to study the education system there to prepare for a reform of the Egyptian

system. He left Egypt in November 1948 on a journey that would last almost two years,

returning in August 1950 (Calvert 2000: 92). The trip would serve only to reinforce and harden

his views of the West and the US and the need to safeguard Egypt through political and cultural

reform based on the tenets of Islam. Calvert (2000: 93) notes that "Qutb would either

purposefully ignore or simply not see anomalies which contradicted a view of America that was

congruent with the exigencies of the Egyptian nationalist struggle." Even when he travelled to

Greeley, CO, the longest stay of his journey (approximately six months), he found little that met

his approval. A small town of only 20,000 people, Greeley was known for its "moral rigor,

temperance and civic-mindedness" and even had a ban on alcohol that had been in place since

the town's founding in 1870 (Calvert 2000: 95). Qutb still described the town's inhabitants as possessing "the same moral flaws of materialism and degeneracy that were characteristic of Occidental civilization in general" (Calvert 2000: 95).

While Qutb's American experience clearly strengthened his already negative impressions of Western culture and principles of governance, it was not the turning point that radicalized him. This occurred after he and many other members of the Muslim Brotherhood were imprisoned in 1954. State security officials subjected Qutb and many other members of the Brotherhood to torture, leading Qutb to question if "those tormenting devout Muslims [could] really be Muslims themselves" (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 110). It was this experience that prompted a profound shift to the radical and revolutionary in his writings, most notably in *Milestones* (also known as *Signposts on the Road*) and *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, a multi-volume series (Haddad 1983: 17). His writings at this time refer to society as in a state of *jahiliyya*, which historically refers to the pre-Islamic time of unbelief and barbarity, however, "in its revolutionary usage, it has come to designate any system, order, world view or ideology that is considered un-Islamic. In such a context, the enemy is no longer "out there"; rather the enemy is the Muslim community that lives life ignoring the Islamic *shari'a*" (Haddad 1983: 28-29). Under the concept of *takfir*, "to charge with being an infidel" (Haddad 1983: 28), such people are no longer considered Muslims and thus are considered legitimate targets in the revolution.

While mainstream Islamic teaching on jihad as armed conflict acknowledges it as strictly defensive and never offensive, Qutb rejected that notion in his writing. He believed "that Islam is committed to destroying *jahiliyya* and that Islam will fight when necessary to convey its message," seemingly rendering "these hostilities inevitable" (Shepard 2003: 531). His

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execution by the state in 1966 made him a martyr in the eyes of like-minded members of the

Muslim Brotherhood that were similarly radicalized by the brutality of their prison experience.

His message clearly resonated with some, serving as the inspiration for the formation of violent

extremist organizations committed to the overthrow of the regime. Several groups emerged by

the end of the 1960s and began conducting attacks through the 1970s and on; among them,

Muhammad's Youth (sometimes referred to as the Islamic Liberation Organization), Jamaat al-

Muslimin (Society of Muslims), more popularly known as Takfir wal Hijra (Excommunication

and Emigration), Salvation from Hell, Gamaa Islamiyya (Islamic Group), and Jamaat al-Jihad or

Islamic Jihad" (Esposito 2002: 62).

Among the first to strike was Muhammad's Youth, seizing "Cairo's Technical Military

Academy," however, "government forces foiled its attempt to assassinate Anwar Sadat and

declare an Islamic republic" in April 1974 (Esposito 1999: 142). Shukri Mustafa, a former

Brotherhood member who was imprisoned at the same time as Qutb in 1965, founded Takfir wal

Hijra in 1971 (Shepard 2003: 536), reaching 3000 to 5000 members by its peak in 1977

(Ibrahim 1980: 425). His organization was responsible for kidnapping Husayn al-Dhahabi, "a

teacher at al-Azhar University and former minister of religious endowments, who had been a

strong critic of extremists. They subsequently killed him when their demands were not met"

(Esposito 1999: 142). In both cases, most of the leadership and members of these organizations

were captured and imprisoned or executed by the regime, while some managed to elude security

forces and continued operating "in other radical groups such as the Jund Allah (Army of God)

and Jamaat al-Jihad (Holy War Society)" (Esposito 1999: 142). The latter organization was

responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981 (Esposito 2002: 89-90).

Since their emergence, these groups have also sought to recruit members of the military. While

they have not been effective with the higher-ranking career officer corps, throughout the years they have been able to recruit among the lower-ranking conscripts and younger members (Kechichian and Nazimek 1997: 129-131). Indeed, one of Sadat's assassins was a young army lieutenant named Khalid Islambuli (Esposito 1999: 93).

Hosni Mubarak's brutal crackdown on the radicals as he came to power substantially reduced the threat during the 1980s, but attacks on government targets and tourists by Islamic Jihad and Gamaa Islamiyya again escalated in the 1990s as they reconstituted themselves. Islamic Jihad succeeded in assassinating the speaker of the National Assembly in 1990, and attempted to assassinate the prime minister and interior minister in 1993, as well as attempting to assassinate Mubarak in 1995. They were also responsible for the murder of 58 tourists at Luxor in 1997 (Esposito 2002: 91). The regime's main tool in responding to this was mass arrests and the use of military courts that offered few legal protections, often resulting in extremely swift trials and sentences of hard labor or execution (Kechichian and Nazimek 1997: 131-132). The problem was internationalized as well, as Ayman al-Zawahiri, a leader of one branch of Islamic Jihad, merged that branch with al Qaeda. Furthermore, Omar Abdel Rahman (the 'blind shaykh'), a spiritual guide to both groups, was imprisoned in the US for his involvement in a plot to bomb targets in America (Esposito 2002: 91-92). In discussing the international impact, it is also worth noting that Osama bin Laden "studied under Mohammed Qutb, Sayyid's brother," who was responsible for the editing and publishing of Sayyid Qutb's works (Zimmerman 2004: 240). While the Mubarak regime was able to force the leadership of the Egyptian branch of Islamic Jihad and Gamaa Islamiyya to declare a cease-fire in 2000 through a ruthless campaign of "indiscriminate state repression," the problem had already moved beyond Egypt's borders (Esposito 2002: 92-93).

These radical groups rejected the Brotherhood's reforms that occurred after Nasser's death. They viewed the Brotherhood's calls for democratization and reform from within the system as akin to accommodating the apostate government and violated the organization's early principles as well as the tenets of Qutb's writings (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 110). Al-Banna and the Brotherhood originally rejected the concept of political parties as divisive to the Muslim community (Wendell 1978: 50). Qutb rejected capitalism as Western materialism and criticized those that tried to adopt Western political concepts or tried to justify them in Islamic terms (Qutb 2005: 96). Ayman al-Zawahiri and other notable radicals have rejected democracy completely as placing popular sovereignty over God's sovereignty, and scorn the Muslim Brotherhood's acceptance of it (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 111).

As can be seen, while Nasser's state repression of the Muslim Brotherhood may have brought about relative internal security, it had dire consequences for Egypt and the world. It "spawned the more militant ideological interpretation of Sayyid Qutb and the ascendance of a radical wing in the Muslim Brotherhood" that would eventually lead "to the formation of violent extremist splinter groups" (Esposito 1999: 272). This history shows that "radical wings, which disproportionally confront repression, are likely to be further radicalized and develop anti-systemic identities that may escalate violence on both sides" (Koopmans 1993: 645). This supports Almeida's (2003: 351-352) argument that a threat environment introduced by the state through state-attributed economic problems, the erosion of rights, and state repression can lead to radicalization and more violent forms of protest if there is an enduring organizational infrastructure that can be utilized. Even while this was occurring, however, a new wave of political opportunity was being introduced that would have a drastically different result, the moderation and commitment to reform of the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood.

Increased Political Opportunity for the Muslim Brotherhood Under Sadat

With Nasser's passing in September 1970, Anwar Sadat stepped into the Presidency and was immediately beset with serious issues (Sorenson 2008: 237-238). He had to contend with the serious economic problems described earlier, Israeli occupation of the Sinai and challenges from the political Left, which had risen in prominence during Nasser's era. To counteract the Leftists, Sadat appealed to the Muslim Brotherhood, freeing the leadership and many members and allowing their increased political participation. This would result in the Brotherhood embracing a moderate reformist approach advocating democratization. He also initiated several economic reforms, as well as attacking Israel in 1973, followed by a negotiated peace process with Israel. Peace with Israel and some of his economic policies proved to be extremely unpopular, causing him to turn to escalating repression to silence his detractors. Nevertheless, his opening of political opportunities to the Muslim Brotherhood convinced the leadership to remain committed to working within the system to initiate peaceful reform.

One of Sadat's first changes he enacted was to adopt a more Islamic message to distance himself from Nasser and counter the growing influence of the Leftists. He reached out to the Muslim Brotherhood, releasing Supreme Guide Hasan al-Hudaybi and the other imprisoned members of the Brotherhood. This was an important step, as al-Hudaybi was a moderate voice, rejecting the concept of *takfir* and shunning the use of violence in "his book, *Duah la Qudah* (Missionaries, not Judges)" (Abed-Kotob 1995: 335). His successor, Umar Tilmisani, who took over after al-Hudaybi's death in 1972, completely "renounced violence as a domestic strategy altogether" as a result of Sadat's allowing their increased participation in the political process (Wickham 2011). One of the ways he immediately involved them was in the writing of the new

Constitution, "he invited their participation in the drafting of relevant articles and sections" (Ali and Wenner 1982: 348). This led to Islam being recognized as the state religion, and the *shari'a* recognized as a "principle source of legislation" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 349). This would be amended in 1980, making it "the principle source of legislation" (Moustafa 2007: 107). The regime also granted permission for the publication of the Brotherhood's new monthly journal, "*al-Da'wa* (The Call, the traditional Islamic term for proselytizing activities by Islam)" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 350). These facts illustrate the importance of declining repression and greater media access for facilitating mobilization and greater political action (Osa 2001: 212).

It was during this period that the Muslim Brotherhood first began advocating for democratic reform, discussing democracy's compliance with Islam (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 110). They also pragmatically recognized "that individually and as an organization they are not safe if the whole political system is not "safe", i.e., democratic" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 353). This was a result of the demonstrated strength of the state and its capability of incapacitation, as well as the acknowledgment of the value of the more open political environment, emphasizing the importance of reform through legitimate participation. They also became increasingly supportive of capitalism and private ownership, emphasizing its compatibility with Islam, as "it is the origin of the *zakat, kaffara* and inheritance; it is the ideal system of economic activity" (Aly and Wenner 1982: 351). This moderate reformist strategy and commitment to democratization and capitalism were abhorrent to the adherents of Qutb's more militant philosophy, causing the radicals to abandon the Muslim Brotherhood in favor of establishing extremist organizations that would adopt the violent strategy described earlier (Leiken and Brooke 2007: 110).

Along with offering greater political opportunity to the Brotherhood, Sadat also

attempted to reform Egypt's struggling economy. In 1974, he adopted his *infitah*, or open door,

policies of economic liberalization, allowing some privatization of the economy in an effort to

attract foreign investment (Aly and Wenner 1982: 354). In order to deal with corruption in the

bloated state sector caused by a lack of transparency, "Sadat enhanced the independence and

capacity of the administrative court system to serve as a neutral forum for citizens to voice their

grievances" (Moustafa 2007: 82-85). Tackling the corruption issue was also important to foster

a better business climate for foreign investors, yet these reforms were still not enough to draw in

new investment. Investors were extremely skittish because of the lack of legal protection of

private property from government expropriation. With this in mind, the regime amended the

constitution to establish the Supreme Constitutional Court in 1979, according it considerable

independence and power in order to protect property rights (Mustafa 2007: 77-78). While the

intention in establishing the SCC was to assuage the fears of foreign investors, it would have

unforeseen consequences in the political environment in the years to come, which will be

addressed in the next section.

Increased political opportunity was also evident in the area of electoral reform. Under

Nasser, Egypt had a one-party system, known as the Arab Socialist Union. Sadat made a modest

effort to open the system with the establishment of a multi-party system with three parties

running in the 1976 People's Assembly elections; the "National Socialist Rally (later the Egypt

Party), the Liberal Socialists to the right and the National Progressive Unionists (Tagammu) to

the left" (Owen 2000: 151). Sadat later limited the power of the People's Assembly by creating

an upper house, the Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) in 1980 (Owen 2000: 152). While it

was still a far cry from completely free and fair elections, it represented an important step in allowing even limited participation by opposition parties in governance.

By the end of the 1970s, Sadat began implementing more repressive methods of control for several reasons. Following the 1973 War with Israel, Sadat initiated a peace process with Israel to regain control of the Sinai and Suez Canal, culminating in the 1978 Camp David Accords. While the war had ended in a stalemate, the Egyptian military's stronger performance as compared to the previous wars with Israel allowed Sadat "to negotiate from a position of relative strength," securing a large amount of financial and military aid from the US (Kechichian and Nazimek 1997: 126). While it was an important diplomatic achievement because it removed the threat of another war with Israel and secured a relationship with the US, it alienated Egypt from other Arab countries and was extremely unpopular domestically because it was viewed as an abandonment of the Palestinians (Kamrava 2005: 132-133; Sorenson 2008: 238-239). In addition, while economic reforms were necessary, they were not always popular. This was especially the case with attempts to reduce subsidies on basic items like bread in 1977, which led to widespread rioting that was violently suppressed (Owen 2000: 128). Another critical event was the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which increased Sadat's suspicions of the Muslim Brotherhood, causing him to place greater restrictions on their actions and refusing to allow them to form a political party (Aly and Wenner 1982: 354-355).

Ultimately, it was not the Muslim Brotherhood that posed the greatest threat to Sadat. While they opposed some of his policies, as described above they had committed themselves to a peaceful and gradual process of reform, emphasizing the need for democratization. Sadat's downfall came at the hands of the violent extremist organization Islamic Jihad. On October 6,

1981, while reviewing a military parade celebrating Egypt's performance in the 1973 war, members of the group jumped out of trucks passing his stand and shot and threw grenades at Sadat, killing him (Esposito 2002: 89-90). This ended Sadat's reign and led to the succession of Hosni Mubarak.

Sadat's rule marked a crucial time in the development of the Muslim Brotherhood, as it initiated an environment of political opportunity that allowed for greater participation by the Brotherhood. This caused the leadership to embrace a nonviolent and pro-democratic platform, focusing on reform by working within the system. In addition, allowing greater institutional access by granting more independence to the judiciary and reforming the electoral system would create essential openings in the political process that would provide more incentive in the future for the Brotherhood to maintain its commitment to democracy and political participation. While repression by the regime escalated in the last few years of Sadat's rule, the reforms he initiated earlier continued to provide increased political opportunity in the next decade that would help further cement the Brotherhood's position as a peaceful opposition movement that would work within the system.

The Political Opportunity Environment in the Mubarak Years and the Role of the Supreme Constitutional Court

While Mubarak did employ a policy of incapacitation to heavily repress radical Islamist organizations after Sadat's assassination, he encouraged the continued participation of the Muslim Brotherhood, albeit never as an actual political party. The 1980s was a period of increased electoral competition, although never completely free and fair. In addition, there was increased institutional access through the Supreme Constitutional Court, providing opposition

groups a legitimate arena to challenge the regime's authority. These political opportunities

enabled the Brotherhood to participate in elections as well as establish alliances with other

opposition groups, setting the precedent for continued involvement in the political process and

commitment to democratic reform, even during times of increased restriction by the state during

the 1990s. These restrictions, as well as important events like the second intifada, the US

invasion of Iraq and the apparent grooming of Gamal Mubarak for succession, would lead to

greater coordination of opposition movements, including the Brotherhood, during the 2000s.

While the Brotherhood was still not allowed to form its own political party, it was able to

leverage the new openness in the electoral system to become more involved in parliamentary

elections. This first occurred in 1984, when the Brotherhood established an alliance with the

newly reconstituted Wafd Party. The law at the time stated that eight percent of the vote was

needed for a party to obtain any seats in the People's Assembly (Owen 2000: 152-153). Thus, a

mutually beneficial partnership was struck that combined the Brotherhood's grassroots popular

support with the Wafd's access as a legitimate opposition party, leading the coalition to win 59

seats, with eight allotted to members of the Brotherhood (Harnisch and Mecham 2009: 190).

This represents an important moment in the Muslim Brotherhood's development, as it

successfully participated in national elections, as well as benefitting from pluralism in its

coordination with the secular Wafd Party.

The results of the 1984 elections were then contested in court by Kamal Khaled, a

"lawyer and political activist," who argued that the law banning independent candidates was

unconstitutional (Moustafa 2007: 97). The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled in December

1986 that it was unconstitutional, prompting opposition parties to call "for the reform of election

laws, the dissolution of the People's Assembly, and a new round of elections," to which the

government agreed (Moustafa 2007: 97). This was a landmark ruling, as it "was the first time in

Egyptian history that an electoral law was deemed unconstitutional" (Moustafa 2007: 97). New

elections were held in 1987, with a limited number of independent candidates allowed to

participate.

Once again, the Muslim Brotherhood competed in the elections by entering into an

alliance with secular parties, this time with the Socialist Labor and Socialist Liberal parties

(Owen 2000: 153). The coalition secured 60 seats, with 37 of them belonging to the

Brotherhood, further affirming their commitment to pluralism and the democratic process

(Harnisch and Mecham 2009: 191). The Brotherhood also found success in local elections and

elections in Egypt's professional syndicates, in 1987 winning "control of the Engineers'

Syndicate, an enormous body with 200,000 members and US$5 million in assets" (Walsh 2003:

33). By the end of the 1980s, they had also gained control of the Doctors' and Pharmacists'

Syndicates (Abed-Kotob 1995: 329).

Kamal Khaled again challenged the results of the 1987 elections before the Supreme

Constitutional Court, arguing the unconstitutionality of the new election laws based on a bias

against independent candidates because political parties had access to state funding, the

limitation on the number of seats allotted to independents, as well as the number of seats per

district not corresponding with "the number of residents or registered voters" (Moustafa 2007:

98-99). The SCC again agreed with the challenge and ruled the laws unconstitutional, initiating

another early election in 1990. While the laws were amended, the regime refused other

opposition proposals to clean up elections, refused to repeal the emergency laws implemented

after Sadat's assassination and significantly "gerrymandered district boundaries to the substantial advantage of the" regime's National Democratic Party (Moustafa 2007: 100). This resulted in the Muslim Brotherhood joining with the Wafd, Labor and Liberal Parties "to boycott the elections with the vocal support of the majority of professional syndicates" (Moustafa 2007: 100). This demonstrated the Brotherhood's commitment to peaceful protest, as well as the ability to cooperate with other opposition organizations in the pursuit of a common goal. At the same time, they also worked to solidify support through lower-level elections, gaining control of several of the professional syndicates.

Despite the boycott, the Brotherhood remained committed to political participation. In 1992, elections in the Lawyers' Syndicate gave them control by "winning two-thirds of the seats in the administrative assembly," while also winning victories in several student and faculty organizations at universities around the country (Abed-Kotob 1995: 329). While it is difficult to ascertain membership numbers due to the Brotherhood's status as not a legal party, their impressive performances in the professional syndicates and on university campuses are a good indicator of their support. The rulings by the SCC in 1987 and 1990 also ensured that they would be able to run as independent candidates in future national elections (Moustafa 2007: 103). Members of the Brotherhood also continued to make public statements at this time, asserting "a belief in the civic and religious value of democracy and demanded its full implementation into the Egyptian political system" (Harnisch and Mecham 2009: 191). The Brotherhood's words and actions stand in sharp contrast to the violent acts committed against the regime, tourists and other targets during the same time period by violent radicals as described earlier.

The activism of the SCC, the successes of the Muslim Brotherhood and other factors caused "the regime to shift its method of maintaining political control from an unfair legal framework to one that increasingly depended on physical coercion, intimidation, and electoral fraud" (Moustafa 2007: 103). Not only was the regime contending with an increased political challenge from the Brotherhood and other opposition parties, as well as rising violence by radical Islamist organizations, it also was facing an economic crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Kienle 1998: 231). To combat the economic issues, the regime negotiated successive structural adjustment programs with the IMF and World Bank in 1987, 1990 and 1991, including privatization of hundreds of public companies, reforming the massive public sector and liberalizing trade policy (Kienle 1998: 231-232). The recovery process was slow, however, and did not benefit everyone evenly. "In terms of expenditure deciles, the bottom 80 percent of Egyptian society fared worse than previously, and only the top 20 percent fared better" (Kienle 1998: 232). Real wages fell in the late 1980s and either never came back "or were even lower by the mid-1990s" (Kienle 1998: 233). Between 1990 and 1995, total unemployment rose from 8.6 to 11.3 percent, and "among high school graduates it rose in the same period from 24 to 35 percent; among university graduates from 16 to 21 percent" (Kienle 1998: 233).

Given the severity of the economic problems and Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, many questioned the regime spending roughly "11 percent of its annual GDP (including U.S. aid) on defense" (Kechichian and Nazimek 1997: 136). To justify its position, the regime argued the necessity because of the terrorist threat as well as its role in serving the community through "building schools, fire fighting, relief and rescue operations, road and railway building, telephone-line extension and road maintenance" (Kechichian and Nazimek 1997: 128). This

emphasis on community service could also be used as a counterweight to the social service programs of the Muslim Brotherhood.

All of the opposition parties were critical of the regime on the economic issues of the uneven recovery process and growing gap between the rich and poor due to the IMF and World Bank reforms, to include the Muslim Brotherhood. It is important to note in the above statistics that young, educated people were particularly affected, and these people comprised a significant portion of the Brotherhood's base, especially when considering the professional syndicates. These were the groups that benefitted substantially from the Brotherhood's "extensive social resources" (Walsh 2003: 33-34). In addition, a 1995 survey by *al-Mishkat*, a nongovernmental think tank, conducted a survey that showed that 73 percent of those who participated "said that nonviolent Islamist groups operate for the benefit of the people" (Moustafa 2007: 156). The regime could thus use the violence by radical Islamists to justify a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, while also restricting other opposition parties to ensure an overwhelming majority of People's Assembly members would be from the NDP, enabling it to protect the highly unpopular economic reforms (Kienle 1998: 234).

That is exactly what the regime did in the 1995 People's Assembly elections. The Egyptian National Commission for Monitoring the 1995 Parliamentary Elections, "a citizen-based electoral monitoring commission," was established by combination of opposition parties and human rights organizations that had also proliferated as a result of the SCC's activism (Moustafa 2007: 156). Throughout the election, the commission monitored numerous acts of electoral fraud, ballot stuffing, intimidation and violence against voters, and arrests of many opposition figures, especially Muslim Brotherhood candidates and supporters (Moustafa 2007:

157-159). It is important to note that despite the repression by the government, the Brotherhood still chose to peacefully participate in the electoral process. A second important point is that the opposition parties continued to utilize institutional access by arguing their case before the Supreme Constitutional Court, challenging the elections on the fact that the Constitution called for judicial monitoring of elections (Moustafa 2007: 161). This would eventually result in the SCC ruling in 2000 before the next People's Assembly elections that would require "full judicial supervision of elections for the first time in Egyptian history" (Moustafa 2007: 191).

As stated above, the Muslim Brotherhood remained committed to political participation and nonviolence, despite repression by the state during the 1995 elections. One result was the development of a movement within the Brotherhood that wanted to accelerate the process of forming a legitimate political party faster than some of the older, more cautious members desired. This led some members to break with the Brotherhood in 1996 to establish the *Wasat* Party, with seven Christians also among the founding members (Browers 2007: 77). The *Wasat* was intended to be a centrist "civil political party with an Islamic frame of reference," while being inclusive to all Egyptians (Browers 2007: 78). As of 2006, their bid to become a legally recognized party had still not been approved by the government. Although some did leave the Brotherhood, there were important like-minded members that chose to remain within the Brotherhood to continue its gradual progress to democratization (Browers 2007: 78-79). Not only does this show the diversity of opinion in how to operate within the Brotherhood, it also reveals the commitment to a moderate and pluralist platform.

Judicial monitoring during the 2000 People's Assembly election was a significant milestone, making them "the cleanest *inside* the polling stations, although the degree of coercion

outside polling stations reached unprecedented levels" (Moustafa 2007: 196-197). The

supervision produced significant results for the opposition, winning more seats than they had in

over a decade. The Muslim Brotherhood, despite being one of the biggest targets for repression,

won 15 seats in the first two rounds of voting and an additional 17 in the third round, for the first

time securing more seats "than all of the candidates standing for election from the formal

opposition parties combined," which had won 16 seats (Moustafa 2007: 197-198). This

demonstrated the importance of institutional access, as well as reaffirming for the Brotherhood

the value of nonviolent participation in competitive elections. It also marked the beginning of an

increased effort by the regime to restrict the independence of the judiciary, by appointing a series

of pro-regime judges to the position of Chief Justice of the SCC as well as loading the Court with

additional pro-regime judges (Moustafa 2007: 198-205).

The beginning of the 2000s marked a turning point in opposition politics for several

reasons. Disparate opposition groups from across the political spectrum began to increasingly

coordinate their activities, first in support of the Palestinians during the second intifada and then

anti-war protests against the US invasion of Iraq (Browers 2007: 71). These events led to the

first public protests since the 1970s in defiance of the emergency laws, with demonstrators

occupying *Midan al-Tahrir*, the central square in downtown Cairo" (Moustafa 2007: 206). This

led to the formation of the Egyptian Movement for Change, or Kifaya, in July 2004, which began

to tackle domestic political reform (Browers 2007: 72), especially with "the widespread

recognition that Gamal Mubarak was being groomed by the regime to inherit the presidency"

(Moustafa 2007: 206). The movement was formed by members of the Wasat Party and

members from the different liberal and nationalist parties, and also began coordinating protest

activities with the Muslim Brotherhood.

The relative leniency in the government's response prompted additional protests, with Kifaya and a broad coalition of opposition movements holding the largest anti-Mubarak rally up to that point in Egyptian history on February 21, 2005 in Cairo (Browers 2007: 73). Shortly after, Mubarak announced that the Constitution would be amended to allow the first contested presidential elections later that year. While it would still be orchestrated in a way that would ensure the regime maintained control, the opening was enough to encourage further public protests. The following month, the Muslim Brotherhood organized one in conjunction with Kifaya, marking the Brotherhood's first public challenge of the regime over domestic issues (Browers 2007: 74).

Not only were the presidential elections held in 2005, People's Assembly elections were held as well. The Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition parties initially agreed to boycott the elections, but out of concern of having no opposition representation in parliament the Brotherhood then decided to participate. Numerous civil society organizations as well as judges monitored the elections, but the regime still responded with fraud and physical coercion, and "for the first time, judges were also subjected to violence" (Moustafa 2007: 214). The Brotherhood, of course, bore "the brunt of state repression…Yet, despite the crackdown and a strategic decision to run candidates in a limited number of districts, the Brotherhood won eighty-eight seats, many times more than all other opposition trends combined" (Moustafa 2007: 215).

The attacks on the judiciary and the loss of the Supreme Constitutional Court's independence led to additional protests after the elections coordinated by Kifaya, the Muslim Brotherhood and a wide spectrum of opposition groups (Browers 2007: 84). The continued coordinated protests demonstrated the crucial role of the SCC and the judiciary in establishing

important political opportunities for the opposition. The protests were important in another area in increasing the Brotherhood's experience and willingness to work within a pluralist movement to effect change. It also led to additional pledges of respect for minority rights, especially the Coptic Christians (Browers 2007: 87).

The beginning of Hosni Mubarak's rule marked a time of increased political opportunity for opposition organizations, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. The encouragement of increased participation as well as greater institutional access in challenging the regime through the courts, especially the Supreme Constitutional Court, led to relatively more open elections. This gave the Muslim Brotherhood a legitimate voice, if limited, in parliamentary politics as well as critical experience in the value of democratization. This path proved to have far more utility over the use of violence perpetrated by radical organizations, and gave the Brotherhood greater legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The increased successes of the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition groups in elections and through the courts as well as serious economic issues led to the regime tightening its control through increased repression during the elections. The regime's relative willingness to allow public protests in response to the second intifada, the US invasion of Iraq and then over domestic issues encouraged further opposition, leading to increased coordination with the Muslim Brotherhood. This provides further evidence of the Brotherhood's commitment to peaceful political participation and democratization, as well as a willingness to work within a pluralist setting.

Conclusion

The Egyptian government's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood has undergone several changes since the organization's foundation in 1928. The changing political environment

over the years has profoundly affected the Brotherhood's development. A more open environment of political opportunity after Egypt's limited independence in 1922, combined with the continued influence and occupation of the British and the failures of the Wafd Party allowed the Brotherhood to gain prominence and establish an enduring infrastructure. The increasing repression of the Brotherhood's activity led to an escalating militancy and the founding of the Secret Apparatus. Nasser's rise and the transition to a threat environment of massive incapacitation and repression led to the more radical ideology of Sayyid Qutb that inspired the more militant members of the Brotherhood that survived Nasser's repression to establish violent extremist organizations in the late 1960s and 1970s that would threaten the Egyptian state through the 1990s. The mainstream members of the Muslim Brotherhood that emerged from prison after Nasser's death were able to operate in a new political opportunity environment that would cause the leadership to embrace a gradual reformist approach and endorse democratization. As the access to institutions increased and the Brotherhood was able to compete in elections in the 1980s, their commitment to nonviolence and democratization has been repeatedly affirmed.

As Carrie Rosefsky Wickham (2011) has noted, "although the Brotherhood entered the political system in order to change it, it ended up being changed by the system." It gained a great deal of experience in national parliamentary politics, as well as organizing for elections at the local level. Members of the Brotherhood "engaged in sustained dialogue and cooperation with members of other political movements" and along the way "found common ground in the call for the expansion of public freedoms, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law" (Wickham 2011). Even when the government has taken repressive action against the

Muslim Brotherhood during the 1990s and each period before national elections, they have remained committed to their rejection of violence and participation within the system.

Despite their actions over the past 30 years as a nonviolent opposition political party in everything but name only, in the wake of the recent ouster of Hosni Mubarak some have questioned if the Muslim Brotherhood will stay on its democratic course. Their endorsement of Mohammed El Baradei as a viable candidate for president in the transition to democracy is promising (Wickham 2011). Their parliamentary record also indicates that the day to day issues of governance and meeting the concerns of their electorate have the most substantial influence on their agenda. In 2006, Brotherhood members in the People's Assembly submitted 244 motions, with 66 addressing issues such as "dilapidated hospitals, crowded schools, and inadequate housing" (Masoud 2008: 23). They also brought up issues of unemployment, electoral fraud "and the importation of carcinogenic pesticides. Only one of these dealt with a religious issue— strengthening religious education in public schools" (Masoud 2008: 23).

While this may reflect only one year of legislative action by the Muslim Brotherhood, Kurzman and Naqvi (2010) have conducted a far more extensive survey of Islamic parties and their performance in electoral politics. Their study revealed that Islamic parties have participated in "89 parliamentary elections in 21 countries" over the past 40 years (Kurzman and Naqvi 2010: 50-51). In these elections, "*the electoral performance of Islamic parties has been generally unimpressive*," with most only winning a small portion of the votes (Kurzman and Naqvi 2010: 52). Furthermore, the study also showed that countries with freest elections generally saw the worst performance of Islamic parties (Kurzman and Naqvi 2010: 55). Participation in the political process has also caused Islamic parties to liberalize their platforms on issues of

democracy and women's and minority rights (Kurzman and Naqvi 2010: 57). Allowing the

Muslim Brotherhood to form a political party and participate in free and fair elections, therefore,

does not mean that they will win control or transform Egypt into Iran. The Muslim Brotherhood

has shown its capability of working with a broad spectrum of political parties and civil society

movements, has vocalized its support of minority communities like the Copts, and has overall

demonstrated a greater commitment to democracy than the ruling regime and the National

Democratic Party ever did. Political participation has dramatically affected their development,

and as a result they represent a substantial and credible portion of the opposition with a

willingness to work toward Egypt's democratization.

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