

# Brothers in Arms?

## Engaging the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

by Joshua Stacher

April 2008

© ippr 2008

## Contents

About ippr .....	3
About ippr’s international and security programme .....	3
About the author .....	3
Author’s acknowledgements.....	3
Abbreviations and definitions .....	4
Executive summary .....	5
1. Introduction .....	8
2. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.....	10
3. The Brotherhood’s policy positions .....	16
4. Acting politically: the Muslim Brotherhood in Parliament.....	21
5. International engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood.....	23
References.....	27

## About ippr

The Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) is the UK's leading progressive think tank, producing cutting-edge research and innovative policy ideas for a just, democratic and sustainable world.

Since 1988, we have been at the forefront of progressive debate and policymaking in the UK. Through our independent research and analysis we define new agendas for change and provide practical solutions to challenges across the full range of public policy issues.

With offices in both London and Newcastle, we ensure our outlook is as broad-based as possible, while our international and migration teams and climate change programme extend our partnerships and influence beyond the UK, giving us a truly world-class reputation for high quality research.

**ippr**, 30-32 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7RA. Tel: +44 (0)20 7470 6100 E: [info@ippr.org](mailto:info@ippr.org)  
[www.ippr.org](http://www.ippr.org). Registered Charity No. 800065

This paper was first published in April 2008. © ippr 2008

## ippr's international and security programme

ippr's international and security programme was created in July 2002. Its aim is to apply ippr's core values of social justice, opportunity and sustainability to some of the most pressing global issues and to formulate practical policy responses to them. The programme seeks to make a policy contribution in four broad areas: national and global security, poverty reduction and sustainable development, human rights, and national and global governance.

## About the author

Joshua Stacher is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Middle East Studies in the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, United States. Before this, he was an adjunct professor of contemporary Egyptian history in the Department of History at the American University in Cairo and a country consultant for the International Crisis Group. Joshua's research interests include Middle East politics and US foreign policy; leadership succession in Arab republics; human rights; and moderate political Islamist groups. His work has appeared in *Middle East Journal*, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *Arab Reform Bulletin* and the *Middle East Report*.

## Author's acknowledgements

I would like to thank Samer Shehata for all the research experiences that we have shared since beginning to jointly study the Egyptian Muslim Brothers. At this point, I am unsure whose ideas belong to who, but none of 'my' analysis would be as sharp or developed without Samer's input, advice or friendship. Also, I want to thank Syracuse University's Moynihan Institute for Global Affairs in the Maxwell School for providing me with an institutional home during the 2007-2008 academic year. Alex Glennie (ippr) also deserves a huge amount of thanks for working closely with me on this by providing thoughtful comments and patiently waiting as I went through the various iterations. Also at ippr, thanks to Ian Kearns, Carey Oppenheim and Georgina Kyriacou. Of course, any shortcomings are the responsibility of the author.

This commissioned paper is the third case study in ippr's research project on Political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa. Earlier reports on Morocco and Jordan can be accessed at [www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports](http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports)

The views expressed by the author in this paper are not necessarily those of ippr.

## Abbreviations

ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAF	Islamic Action Front [Jordan]
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NDP	National Democratic Party [Egypt]
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PJD	Party of Justice and Development [Morocco]
PPC	Political Parties Council

## Definitions

<b>al-Gama'a al-Islamiya:</b>	A militant Islamic group that waged a terrorist campaign in Egypt during the 1980s and 1990s. Although the group formally renounced the use of violence in 2003, some of its members are reportedly linked to al-Qaeda.
<b>Fatwa:</b>	A scholarly opinion on a matter of Islamic law, issued by a recognised Islamic religious authority.
<b>Iftar:</b>	Evening meal that breaks the daily fast during Ramadan.
<b>Jahiliyya:</b>	A pre-Islamic state of pagan ignorance.
<b>Shari'a</b>	The body of Islamic law that governs public life and certain aspects of private life for all Muslims. Rather than a set of codified laws, <i>Shari'a</i> law is based on the interpretation of a number of sources, including the <i>Qur'an</i> , traditions and sayings attributed to the Prophet Mohammed and religious <i>fatwas</i> (see above).
<b>Takfir:</b>	In Islamic law, <i>takfir</i> is the practice of declaring an individual or a group previously considered to be Muslim unbeliever or <i>kafir</i> .
<b>Takfir wa-Hajra:</b>	Muslim extremist group that emerged in the 1960s and turned to violence to overthrow the Egyptian government, which it considered to be <i>jahiliyya</i> (see above). Today Takfir wa-Hajra has supporters in several other countries that are allegedly allied to al-Qaeda.
<b>Tanzim al-Khas:</b>	Secret paramilitary wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that was active in the 1940s and 1950s.
<b>Ulema:</b>	The highest class of Muslim legal scholars. The <i>ulema</i> engage in many fields of Islamic study and are usually referred to as the arbiters of <i>Shari'a</i> law.
<b>Umma:</b>	Arabic word meaning 'community' or 'nation'. It is commonly used to denote the global community of Muslim believers.

## Executive summary

Within and between western governments, a heated policy debate is raging over the question of whether or not to engage with the world's oldest and most influential political Islamist group: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. In 2006, publication of a series of leaked memos in the *New Statesman* magazine revealed that political analysts within the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office recommended an enhancement of informal contacts with members of the Brotherhood. The authors of these documents argued that the UK government should be seeking to influence this group, given the extent of its grassroots support in Egypt. The British analysts further suggested that engagement could provide a valuable opportunity for challenging the Brotherhood's perceptions of the West, including the UK, and for detailed questioning of their prescriptions for solving the challenges facing Egypt and the wider region.

The Bush administration in the United States has been far less open to the idea of direct engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood, arguing that it would be inappropriate to enter into formal ties with a group that is not legally recognised by the Egyptian government. However, there are indications that the US position may be starting to shift. In 2007, it emerged that the State Department had approved a policy that would enable US diplomats to meet and coordinate with elected Brotherhood leaders in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and other Arab states.

### **A difficult balance**

The prospect of developing more formal ties with Islamist parties and movements in the Middle East and North Africa is challenging for North American and European policymakers. Although there are clear benefits to be derived from building better relations with a range of non-violent opposition movements pushing for democratic change, these have to be balanced against the risks inherent in such an approach. In particular, western governments have to carefully consider the likely impacts of engaging with organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood on their relationships with regimes in the region, which tend to be strongly opposed to external engagement with their Islamist opposition groups.

This is especially true in Egypt, where the regime has long sought to portray the Muslim Brotherhood as a dangerous movement that is simply biding its time until it is in a position to impose its dogmatic religious convictions on the rest of the population. In early 2007, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak argued that the Brotherhood's religious views posed a significant threat to state security. He cautioned that if the movement ever came to power, overseas investment in Egypt would cease, unemployment would rise and the country as a whole would become irrevocably isolated from the rest of the world.

To what extent is this merely hyperbole? When discussing the Muslim Brotherhood, it is important to remember that the movement remains an illegal organisation under Egyptian law, which prohibits the formation of political parties on the basis of religion. Over the past few decades, the Brotherhood has become skilled at circumventing these rules on formal political participation. Members of the movement have campaigned in national elections either on an independent basis or in alliance with other – secular – parties, and in 2005, representatives of the Brotherhood won an unprecedented 20 per cent of the total number of parliamentary seats. But this unexpected victory caused the regime to panic, and in 2007, the political space available to the Brotherhood was limited further by constitutional amendments that outlawed all political activity by groups with any kind of religious frame of reference. This has given the Egyptian government greater leeway to arrest and detain Brotherhood members on the charge of belonging to a banned group. It therefore seems highly improbable that the Muslim Brotherhood will achieve a monopoly on political power through legal political processes in the foreseeable future.

In spite of these restrictions, the Muslim Brotherhood remains a critical element of the Egyptian political landscape, and enjoys a great deal of support among the general population. This is partly due to the extensive social and charitable services that it provides through Egypt's network of

mosques. But it is also closely linked to the Muslim Brotherhood's reputation as a consistent advocate of political, social and judicial reform in Egypt.

Contrary to Mubarak's grim predictions, the Brotherhood parliamentary bloc has not focused its efforts on pushing through conservative religious legislation, but has managed to coordinate effectively with other opposition groups to tackle a much broader range of challenges facing Egypt. These include a weak parliament that exists primarily to rubberstamp executive decisions, deeply-rooted economic problems and an insufficiently independent judiciary. For example, in June 2006, a number of Brotherhood MPs worked closely with the Egyptian Judges Club to try to achieve the passage of legislation that would increase the judiciary's autonomy from the executive branch. In short, the Brotherhood has taken a much more proactive stance in promoting political openness and democratisation than most of the other secular opposition parties in Egypt.

This does not mean that western governments should offer the Muslim Brotherhood unqualified support. It remains a conservative social and religious group, although there are encouraging signs of debate and dissension inside the movement that may ultimately lead to important shifts in policy. The Brotherhood has also been insufficiently clear, if not outright inconsistent at times, in its statements on the questions of equal rights for women and minorities, on Egypt's international relations with the rest of the world (and especially Israel) and on how it would seek to further implement *Shari'a* law in Egypt if it were ever to gain a greater share of formal political power.

### Policy implications

Despite the continued existence of 'grey zones' in the Brotherhood's thinking, the case for developing a more coherent and consistent approach towards the movement is a compelling one. Western governments have legitimate reservations about some of the policy positions adopted by the Brotherhood on issues mentioned above, such as political pluralism, the use of violence, the principles of equal citizenship and universal human rights, and the relationship between religion and state. For its part, the Muslim Brotherhood has been unwilling to enter into relations with European and North American states due to its grievances about western policy in the region, particularly in relation to the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. But a failure to engage in constructive dialogue and debate will do little to address these concerns on either side.

This line of argument raises a number of critical questions about the practicalities of engagement. A forthcoming ippr report will look at these issues in more detail. However, this paper offers the following recommendations for western governments in regard to their specific relations with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

#### **1. Western policymakers should press the Egyptian government more firmly on its political reform commitments, and should be more consistent in their criticism when opposition figures, including Islamists, are the arbitrary targets of state repression**

In the past, representatives of western governments have been reluctant to publicly condemn the Mubarak regime for its frequent crackdowns on opposition groups, fearing the damage that this might cause to relations with one of their key regional allies. However, there are welcome signs that this approach is starting to change. White House spokespeople and members of the European Parliament have recently been increasingly outspoken in their censure of the repressive Egyptian political system and the regime's practice of arbitrarily arresting prominent opposition figures, although they have so far failed to explicitly mention the detention without charge of more than 800 Brotherhood members during late 2007 and early 2008. Western policymakers should aim to be more consistent in their of all human rights abuses in Egypt, including against Islamists.

It is primarily for Egyptians to decide their own reform path, and pushing too hard and too fast from outside will only reinforce the widespread perception in the region that US and European governments are attempting to use their military and economic might to impose their own political vision on the Arab world. But if they hope to restore credibility to their message of reform, they must be more willing to put private and public pressure on the Egyptian government to open up the political system, and create space for civil society and political opposition groups, including non-violent Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, to participate in a dialogue about national reform.

## **2. Representatives of western governments should seek more opportunities for dialogue with political opposition groups in Egypt, including the Muslim Brotherhood**

Political dialogue between western governments and Islamist movements must be a sustained two-way process if it is to have any value. This will require movements like the Muslim Brotherhood to be more open in discussing and clarifying their political positions with a wide range of stakeholders, including western analysts and politicians. In return, European and North American policymakers must be more willing to engage with the Brotherhood directly on the basis of what it says and how it acts, rather than treating it as an inflexible religious organisation with which there can be no common ground. The Egyptian government must also cease being a barrier to such contacts and must not persecute or threaten any of those involved in formal or informal meetings.

This does not suggest that the Muslim Brotherhood should be given preferential treatment by European or North American governments. It simply reflects the fact that political reform in Egypt and the wider region is unlikely to progress if the mainstream Islamist movements are excluded from the process. As the electoral success of the region's Islamist groups in recent years has demonstrated, such movements are increasingly popular. Western governments therefore need to strengthen their efforts to engage in open and frank dialogue with moderate, non-violent Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the more centrist Egyptian Wasat party. It is to be hoped that this kind of exchange will encourage Islamist parties to move past their blanket condemnation of western policy in the region, and enable them to identify issues on which they could work more constructively with particular European and North American governments, but at a minimum, it will at least begin a process of clarifying points of disagreement in substantive policy terms.

## 1. Introduction

A heated policy debate is raging within western governments over how to classify and whether to engage with the world's oldest and most influential political Islamist group: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen*). While the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office appears to be receptive to the idea of engaging more substantively with the Brotherhood, the Bush administration in the United States has been staunchly against talking to its members since late 2001, justifying its approach by blaming the group's unwillingness for dialogue and by professing respect for Egyptian laws (Bright 2006, al-Ahram Weekly 2003, Rice 2005).

To date, the debate over the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has largely focused on speculations about how the group would behave should it come to power. Many observers pose questions that ignore the empirical record by asking: Has the Brotherhood really given up violence? What are the group's connections with radical groups like al-Qaeda? What would it do to the Coptic Christian<sup>1</sup> minority if it came to power? Would it cancel Egypt's democratic experiment if it won elections? Although these are valid questions, their answers will depend on unpredictable political developments in Egypt and the region, and therefore have limited value as analytical tools.

Some conservative analysts have bypassed these hypothetical questions to make strong arguments against engagement. For example, when discussing US policy towards the Brotherhood, Stanley Kurtz notes that there are analysts within both the Democrat and Republican parties that advocate taking the Bush strategy of promoting democracy in the Middle East to a whole new level, 'intentionally cultivating and empowering Egypt's powerful Muslim Brotherhood, in hopes of somehow isolating radical terrorists'. However, he contends that 'it would be a mistake to attempt to draw the Muslim Brotherhood into supposed moderation by licensing what would effectively be illiberal democracies in the Middle East' (Kurtz 2007). This kind of argument seeks to increase suspicion about the Brotherhood in order to preserve a conservative stance that is hostile to political Islamist groups and that, ultimately, questions Islam's compatibility with democracy.

In comparison, centrist commentators have been much more willing to suggest that dealing with moderate Islamists on a case-by-case basis is in the interest of western governments (see Leiken and Brooke 2007). As Shehata and Stacher argue:

'After the Brotherhood's success in the 2005 parliamentary elections and the increasing popularity of other Islamist groups in the region, the United States needs to consider an open and frank dialogue with moderate, non-violent Islamist groups. And there is no more important moderate Islamist group in the region than Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.' (Shehata and Stacher 2007)

In light of the unsettled political, economic and social conditions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, brought about by economic stagnation, the actions of autocratic regimes supported by the West, the September 11 attacks, the US-led invasion and overthrow of the Iraqi state apparatus and the growing prominence of Islamist parties and movements, it is imperative that western governments seek out a more effective strategy for encouraging political development and reform. Rather than dictating reform measures or launching initiatives that have little local cultural resonance, European and North American governments need to build on what the region offers in terms of reform capabilities. Beyond the authoritarian regimes that promise stability but ultimately rely on coercion to rule, Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood that have proved themselves to be sophisticated and responsible political actors should also be considered as potential partners in processes of regional political development.

---

1. Copts are the largest Christian community in North Africa and the Middle East. The term is most frequently used to describe the minority Christian population that belong to the Coptic churches in Egypt (with the name 'Coptic' deriving from the Greek word for 'Egyptian').



### **Purpose and structure of the paper**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. While acknowledging the criticisms that have been made of the group's positions on a number of issues, it seeks to demonstrate that over the past few decades, the Brotherhood has become both institutionally pragmatic and committed to peaceful political reform.

Section 2 of the paper describes the Brotherhood's historical trajectory and identifies the group's place within the Egyptian political spectrum, while section 3 considers their policy positions on issues such as minority and women's rights, political reform and the application of *Shari'a* law. Section 4 reviews the group's performance since winning 88 seats in Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections, to illustrate its recent record of political participation. A concluding section 5 focuses on western policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood, and makes the argument that European and North American governments should seek to engage with this group in a more constructive way, within the broader context of their support for political reform and development in Egypt and throughout the region.

## 2. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

The Muslim Brotherhood is an organisation that maintains strong grassroots links to local constituencies in Egypt where the state is either absent or withdrawn. It is widely assumed that the Brotherhood is popular because it provides social services. This is certainly true, but the Muslim Brotherhood's popularity also derives from its continuous recruitment and political and ideological training of new members. Although many commentators characterise the Brotherhood's ideology as being driven by a dogmatic adherence to a rigid Islamic culture, it is perhaps more appropriate to view the group's political beliefs as being based on universal values that are cloaked in an Islamic idiom. The Brotherhood is a political organisation first and foremost and an Islamist one only secondly. Furthermore, the Brotherhood can be typified as both politically responsible and predictably pragmatic, due to its practice of operating within and respecting existing institutional frameworks.

### History of the Muslim Brotherhood

Founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a schoolteacher based in the Suez Canal city of Ismailya, the organisation was intensely political in its origins. As scholars such as Sami Zubaida have demonstrated, the Muslim Brotherhood's emergence was a response to Egypt's subjugated colonial status (Zubaida 1993). Although Britain officially granted Egypt independence in 1922, it continued to exert a great deal of influence over the country's domestic affairs. Power struggles between British government officials, King Farouk (who ruled Egypt between 1936 and 1952) and wealthy and landed elite politicians prevented the emergence of a strong indigenous political system and stalled national development. Egyptian dependency on Britain left many feeling that the nation was in a state of perpetual decline, while the West profited and industrialised.

Al-Banna looked to religion to resolve Egypt's problems and to fill the political vacuum created by the foreign and Egyptian ruling elites. His residence in Ismailya, a Canal city occupied by Britain, provided a direct opportunity to mobilise Egypt's Islamic constituencies against external political and economic domination. However, rather than seeking to 'return' Egypt to an essentialised time of the Prophet Mohammed or Islam's advent, al-Banna's group was the very product of the modernity that Britain, the King and the landed elite were struggling to impose on Egyptians. When al-Banna's written work is read carefully, it is notable that he spends far less time discussing how to unite the *umma* (Islamic Nation) than on considering the solutions to Egypt's immediate and domestic political, social and economic ills (al-Banna 1978).

Despite the Muslim Brotherhood's politicised origins, it was not at that time the refined institutional machine that it has now become. Historical accounts, such as Mitchell's *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (Mitchell 1969), suggest that the group was rather loosely organised and driven by the personality of al-Banna at the outset, even though a number of councils and departments were created to facilitate the group's self-governance. But the Brotherhood paid a price for its weak investment in institution-building when some of its leaders decided to emulate Egypt's other political parties, such as the historic Wafd party, by creating a paramilitary wing to try to influence domestic politics. The Brotherhood's *Tanzim al-Khas* (Special Organisations) were active in the 1940s as Egypt's political and economic situation deteriorated, and carried out a number of bombings and assassination attempts. Al-Banna ultimately lost control of these factions in 1948, when a Brotherhood member assassinated the sitting Prime Minister al-Naqrashi. Despite his appeals for calm and accommodation, state orders were given to retaliate against the organisation, and al-Banna himself was assassinated in January 1949.

By the time Gamal Abdel Nasser's Free Officers Movement overthrew the monarchy in 1952, the Brotherhood's members and operations were highly fragmented. Relations between the new military regime and the Brotherhood were initially peaceful, if wary, until an apparent assassination attempt by the organisation on Nasser in Alexandria in October 1954. Although Nasser escaped unharmed, he used this event as an opportunity to crack down on the organisation and other potential opposition groups in the country. This marked the beginning of Nasser's attempt to crush the Muslim Brotherhood by imprisoning and torturing its members. Many of the group's most senior leaders,

including the current General Guide Mohamad Mahdi Akif, spent nearly two decades in Nasser's jails and were routinely exposed to inhumane treatment and harsh conditions (Akif 2004). As a consequence of this repression, the Brotherhood found it very difficult to transform itself into a coherent organisation. Until Nasser's death in September 1970, it remained fragmented and contributed little to domestic political life.

During this period a number of ideological disagreements began to emerge within the movement, and many of those espousing more extreme ideas split away from the Brotherhood to form their own political groups. The best known of these dissidents was the radical ideologue Sayid Qutb, who set out his controversial views in the 1964 book *Mu'alim fil-Tariq (Signposts)*. The influence of Qutb continues to be felt, and he has often been described as 'the father of modern terrorism' in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States (Bergesen 2005). Qutb's philosophies reflected the repression to which he and his fellow Brothers were exposed in Nasser's prisons. He drew on the work of 14th century thinker Ibn Taymiya to justify the use of violence to overthrow *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic) governments (Qutb 1964). In the Egyptian context, Nasser's torturous treatment of Muslim prisoners qualified his regime as *jahiliyya*. This introduced a radical doctrine for jailed Muslim Brothers to consider long after Qutb was hanged in August 1966.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has still failed to explicitly reject Qutb's ideas, it has distanced itself from his writings on the use of violence, notably in a 1977 publication called *Du'at la Qudat (Preachers, Not Judges)*, which was written by advisers to Hassan al-Hodeiby, al-Banna's successor as leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. Barbara Zollner has argued that *Preachers, Not Judges* reflected the changing nature of the Brotherhood's leadership, which had taken a clear stance against radical ideas by the late 1970s. According to Zollner, this text 'aimed to contest the ideological shift that became prevalent after 1965...and [addressed] the organization at large, [discussing] fundamental theological paradigms rather than merely contesting Qutb' (Zollner 2007: 427). The document did not criticise Qutb directly or, indeed, mention him by name, but it did reject the practice of *takfir*, and it served to demonstrate that the Brotherhood was moving definitively away from violent and radical ideologies. It has also been 'credited with imparting a moderate outlook to today's Muslim Brotherhood', by confirming their intention to preach the virtues of Islam rather than judge other Muslims on the strength of their belief (ibid).

However, the legacy of Qutb remains a thorny issue for the contemporary Brotherhood. He is revered as one of the leading figures of the movement, and as scholars have pointed out, his views cannot be reduced to the simple advocacy of violent jihad (Leiken and Brooke 2007). But the Brotherhood's argument that Qutb's views on the use of violence should not be taken out of context has not been unequivocal enough to reassure some commentators, many of whom claim that the Brotherhood has adapted to democracy on a pragmatic and temporary basis, and may revert to violence in the future (Azarva and Tadros 2007).

### **Political openings and closings**

The weak political position inherited by Anwar Sadat when he became President in 1970 led him to change the regime's policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Rather than treating the Islamists as a potential threat, he now needed them to counter the Nasserists, and so he granted the Brotherhood the freedom to operate, to hold marches, and to give out religious pamphlets. The Brothers used the political space provided by Sadat to infiltrate student political life, and by the late 1970s the organisation had established itself as the best-mobilised and most successful political machine in Egypt's vast national university system. Displaying much the same obsessive commitment to discipline and organisation as the group's elders, the Brotherhood's influx of younger members (who are often referred to as the '70s generation') became very active politically at this time.

It was at this point that the Brotherhood began to expand its national influence, and adopted a strategy of peaceful political participation. Its increasingly moderate approach allowed its members to participate more directly in the political system, which in turn permitted the group to penetrate Egypt's Professional Associations (or Syndicates). During the 1980s and 1990s, Brotherhood members made substantial gains in elections to engineering, medical and legal associations, as well as university

professorial clubs (International Crisis Group 2004). In this period the group also started getting its members elected to Parliament, winning eight seats in 1984 and 35 seats in 1987.

The Brotherhood's unexpected electoral success in the 1980s prompted the regime to reverse its policy of tolerance in the early 1990s. At this time, new president Hosni Mubarak was struggling to contain the jihadist *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* insurgency. In addition to violently suppressing that group, the Egyptian government also arrested scores of Brotherhood members, sending many of them before military tribunals. Yet in spite of the organisation's experience of state repression, it remained committed to a strategy of non-violent participation in formal institutional politics. To a certain extent, this can be attributed to the group's political experience in the universities, syndicates and in Parliament, which had discouraged a return to violence. As Abu Ala Madi, a former Brotherhood organiser in the Engineers syndicate, noted regarding how the group acted at its height of influence within the associations during the early 1990s: 'We were running the syndicates like political parties. This was never our intention. It just turned out this way' (quoted in Abdo 2002: 99).

As an organisational entity, the Muslim Brotherhood currently operates outside the formal political system. Egyptian law prohibits the formation of political parties on the basis of religion, and the constitution has recently been amended to limit further the space for all political activity by groups with any kind of religious frame of reference. However, over the past few decades, the Brotherhood has become adept at seeking out new methods of political participation. Members of the movement have campaigned in national elections either on an independent basis or in alliance with other – secular – parties, and in 2005 won an historic 20 per cent of the total number of parliamentary seats.

The organisation has also followed a strategy of infiltrating state-created institutions that are defunct or neglected and attempting to revive them by getting them to serve the purposes for which they were theoretically intended. Even in a legal climate that heavily favours the state, the Brotherhood continues to prove capable of winning early gains before the Government cracks down. The most recent example of this comes from the Brotherhood's activities in Parliament since their gains in the 2005 elections. As Shehata and Stacher argue:

'Even as the crackdown on its Brothers outside the legislature proceeds, the Brotherhood parliamentary bloc is being noticed in Egypt for its work across ideological lines to serve constituents and increase its collective knowledge of local, national and international affairs. Moreover, the delegation has...pursued an agenda of political reform. In addition, the bloc's political practice – its proactive study of political issues and use of parliamentary procedure to hold the government's feet to the fire – has the potential to strengthen permanently the institution of Parliament vis-à-vis the executive led by President Hosni Mubarak. Whether this will happen remains up to the executive.' (Shehata and Stacher 2006)

While this indicates that the group has learned how to be successful politically as well as how to effectively reinvigorate weak institutions, it also underscores the way in which the group has transformed itself into a moderate political actor under repressive circumstances.

Since 2000, the Brotherhood has consistently outperformed the other legal opposition parties in Egypt. In elections in 2000 and 2005, independent Brotherhood representatives managed to win more seats collectively than all the opposition parties combined, and it remains the only group that has proved capable of producing a formidable opposition electoral following. However, the nature of Egypt's electoral system makes it difficult to gauge the popularity of opposition groups with accuracy. When the Egyptian authorities decide that the opposition has won enough seats, security forces block voters from casting their ballots (Saleh 2007). Consequently, the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) has been able to maintain extraordinary majorities in Egypt's Parliament. Between 1995 and 2000, its majority was a staggering 95 per cent. It has fallen to 73 per cent since the 2005 elections, but this still allows it to control the passage or rejection of legislation in Parliament, which has led many to portray the institution of Parliament in Egypt as nothing more than a rubber stamp for the executive branch (BBC 2005).

### Other political Islamist movements in Egypt

Compared with the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's other Islamist groups (both radical and non-violent) have failed to make significant inroads into the country's political system. This is partly because of the willingness of some groups to respond to state repression with Qutbian-inspired Islamist violence. But even more moderate organisations have failed to build the kind of popular base enjoyed by the Brotherhood. The following section will assess where the Brotherhood situates itself in relation to other Islamist movements.

The Muslim Brotherhood is the most popular Islamist group in Egypt, and represents most of those who belong to the Islamist-sympathising section of Egypt's political spectrum. As Abed-Kotob argues, 'the Muslim Brotherhood stands out as a politically centrist and moderate group, representing mainstream political Islam' (Abed-Kotob 1995: 322). On the Brotherhood's left side sit Islamist groups such as the unlicensed Wasat (Centre) party, while on the right it is flanked by groups that are radical in orientation, such as the dogmatically conservative *Takfir wa-Hajra*, and the violent *al-Jihad* and *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* movements. These extremist groups have been dispersed and broken by the Egyptian state in recent years, and so will not be the focus of this section. Instead, a brief comparison of the Brotherhood and the Wasat is provided.

A handful of former Muslim Brothers, including Abu Ala Madi, Salah Abd al-Karim and Essam Sultan, founded the Wasat party in late 1995, during a period of intense state persecution of the Brotherhood. Although many observers believed that this was a covert attempt on the part of the Brotherhood to establish a formal political party, the evidence to support such a claim is thin and, with more than a decade of hindsight, it is reasonable to argue the Wasat was its own project.

Analysts have identified two key reasons for why disaffected Brotherhood members decided to establish the Wasat. Stacher was argued that the Brotherhood's adherence to institutional guidelines was too slow a process for talented aspiring politicians that felt excluded from the group's leading ranks of power and who wanted the group to apply for legal party status. Frustrated by exclusion within the Brotherhood and by the leadership's unwillingness to commit to the party application process, more liberal minded people like Madi and Sultan left the Brotherhood to embark upon their own venture (Stacher 2002).

Other scholars have suggested that the emergence of the Wasat's more moderate brand of political Islamism can also be attributed to the experience of state repression. Challenging the conventional theory that state repression produces only violent responses, Rosefsky-Wickham has noted that the creation of the Wasat party is in a sense surprising, 'not only because the incentives for moderation created by democratization elsewhere were absent but because repression might more logically trigger Islamist radicalization'. But this group's experience suggests that repression can sometimes produce ideological moderation, as 'rational' opposition actors moderate their agendas, 'not only to seize new political opportunities but also to evade new political constraints' (Rosefsky-Wickham 2004: 213).

Since 1996, the Wasat has been one of the most progressive Islamist groups in the region, and it has taken a relatively liberal approach on a number of issues. For example, it has allowed women to join the organisation, and it has been open to the idea of working with non-Muslims. For a time, an evangelical Christian even served on its five-person board (although he eventually resigned, thinking that the project had hit an intractable end).

On these points, the Wasat initiative easily goes further than the Brotherhood. To date, men and women are segregated at Brotherhood elections, rallies and other public events such as the group's annual *Iftar* (the traditional meal that breaks the daily fast during Ramadan). Furthermore, while the Brotherhood does not have a history of being formally against Christians and women, neither of these demographic groups are eligible for membership. But there is less difference between the Brotherhood and the Wasat if one compares their formal policy positions. In written documents, both the Wasat and the Brotherhood have adopted a similar line on issues relating to the state, citizenship, economic reform and the role of civil society.

The Wasat has produced three policy platforms (in 1996, 1998 and 2004) that lay out the initiative's

political project in progressive, albeit general, terms. These envisage a democracy based on equal citizenship, and each platform released since 1996 has developed new ideas, such as paying more attention to civil society and neo-liberal economic reforms against ‘the backdrop of the Islamic heritage from which Egypt comes’ (Madi 2005). In this sense, the Wasat party bears a close resemblance to other moderate Islamist parties in the region like the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in Morocco, which portrays itself as a political party with an Islamic ‘frame of reference’ rather than a religious party. Indeed, Abu Ala Madi has stressed that the Wasat ‘does not put forward theocratic ideas, nor envisage theocratic government [but rather] presents a civic discourse’ (International Crisis Group 2004: 17).

It is this area where there may be some divergence between the Brotherhood and the Wasat. For example, the Brotherhood’s written documents support the idea of a civil state based on equal citizenship. Yet, article 2 of the Egyptian constitution also states that Egypt’s laws are based on *Shari’a* law. This loophole allows more conservative members of the Brotherhood to agree with the terminology of civil discourse while continuing to discuss the possibility of strengthening the Islamic character of the state. But the attitudes of more pragmatic factions within the Brotherhood are more in line with the Wasat party’s vision of Egypt, which is of a civil state that emphasises its Islamic traditions and heritage. For example, Dr Abdul Monem Abul-Futouh, a relatively liberal member of the Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau<sup>2</sup>, has asserted that ‘a distinction must be made between religion and political life’ and that ‘the affairs of the latter should be administered in a modern fashion’ (Abul-Futouh 2006).

The process of receiving a political party licence in Egypt is designed to give the state complete control over which groups are permitted to compete with the weak ruling party. The Political Parties Committee (PPC), which is a subsidiary of the Shura Council (the upper house of Egypt’s bicameral legislature) and is composed mostly of NDP members, handles all party applications and oversees political parties. The PPC has been described as ‘an agency of the regime...required by law to explain its decision, which, however, it [does] not always do’ (Kienle 2001: 29). As with most political organisations in Egypt, the PPC is an arm of the executive. It has only granted two party licences in 25 years: when the National Accord party was approved in March 2000 and when Ayman Nur’s al-Ghad received a licence in October 2004. Until 2000, the PPC had rejected all 51 party applications received to that point (Stacher 2004). The Political Parties Law was amended in 2005, expanding the membership of the Committee to include more judicial figures. However, the much-touted reform has failed to produce any tangible results for aspiring opposition parties.

The Wasat group has been denied legal status on three separate occasions: in 1996, 1998, and 2006. While the group claims that the Parliament has taken ideas from its various platforms, particularly in the realm of economic reform, and enacted them as law in Parliament, the reason that the group is routinely denied legal status is due to its failure to contribute something novel to Egyptian political life. Many critics of the Government – including Abu Ala Madi – consider this excuse to be baseless, and merely an attempt on the part of the regime to control its potential opposition.

Unfortunately, the Wasat’s talented former Brotherhood core has been unable to translate their experiences into making the party a viable political organisation, and interest in the project does not appear to have gone beyond intellectual curiosity among the country’s educated class. As evidence of this, the last time that the Wasat applied for a political party licence in 2006, just over 100 people signed the group’s founding documents. For a group that has explicitly distanced itself from the Muslim Brotherhood by being more inclusive and politically palatable to non-Muslims and Christians, and that seems to be developing a clear political and economic platform, it is perhaps surprising that the Wasat has not produced more of a following. But the institutional infrastructure that enables the Brotherhood to operate smoothly in times of political repression and shine in times of regime

---

2. Within the Brotherhood’s hierarchical structure, the General Guide, or leader, sits at the top, assisted by a General Guidance Bureau of key advisers.

tolerance is absent from the Wasat's 11-year experiment. At the time of writing (early 2008) it remains unclear whether the Wasat will reconstitute itself for a fourth attempt to obtain a licence, or whether it will transform itself into more of a social organisation.



### 3. The Brotherhood's policy positions

This section will consider the Muslim Brotherhood's political agenda, based on an analysis of its published policy documents and its public statements. The Brotherhood resembles a large corporation with well-developed hierarchies of responsibility and delegated authority. Although its core policies are decided from the top down, there is a great deal of debate within the movement on different issues, and its positions are continuously developing and being revised internally. Individual members sometimes disagree with or contradict specific policies that the organisation supports. However, on the major issues such as the role of non-Muslims in Egyptian society and on questions of political reform, the group has fairly definitive and consensually-decided positions. In recent years the Brotherhood has published three significant policy documents. While the documents are unhelpfully general on certain points, they are rhetorically consistent and do show signs of increasing moderation.

The first such document, *On the General Principles of Reform in Egypt*, was published in March 2004 and stands as the group's mission statement under Mohamad Mahdi Akif's leadership. It presents the Brotherhood's key political objectives and describes their positions on economics, the judiciary, elections, education, scientific research, the role that should be played by the Al-Azhar religious establishment (a major mosque and institution of learning based in Cairo), poverty, social reform, women, the rights of Coptic Christians, culture, and foreign policy. Three of the more contentious of these are explored below.

#### **Minority rights and the freedom of religion**

While the Egyptian constitution officially recognises and guarantees the freedom of religion, this principle is not always upheld in practice. In particular, Egypt's large community of Coptic Christians have frequently complained about their experience of discrimination and harassment at the hands of the state and of radical Islamic groups (although not the Muslim Brotherhood specifically). Analysts have suggested that although they constitute approximately 10 per cent of the population, Copts remain underrepresented in both the public and private sectors in Egypt (Freedom House 2007). It is worth pointing out, however, that Coptic Christians have historically had little electoral appeal in Egypt. In the 2005 parliamentary elections, the ruling party nominated only two Christian candidates out of a possible 444 nominees. While there is a qualitative difference in that they can be members of the ruling party and not the Brotherhood, their political and electoral status is more or less constant across the groups.

The Muslim Brotherhood's position on this issue has been relatively moderate in recent years. The group's 2004 initiative explicitly states that 'Copts are part of the fabric of the Egyptian society. They are partners of the nation and destiny. Our rights are theirs, and our duties theirs' (Society of Muslim Brothers 2004: 32). This document also asserts that the Brotherhood respects the freedom of belief and worship, and claims that religious cooperation and co-existence are paramount for maintaining national unity. Highlighting Egypt's long history of diversity, the Brotherhood has maintained that it is against and would condemn any act that might threaten social cohesion. According to these statements, it appears that the Muslim Brotherhood would – in theory – accept the election of Copts to any position within the political establishment (Akif 2006).

However, there remains a certain amount of ambiguity within the Brotherhood regarding the principle of universal citizenship. Some leading figures within the organisation, including First Deputy to the Supreme Guide Mohammad Habib, have argued that Copts should not be permitted to serve as president of Egypt, leading commentators to suggest that the Brotherhood regards them as second-class citizens.

While other more liberal members of the Brotherhood have explicitly argued that Christians can be elected to the presidency, few Coptic Egyptians have been persuaded or convinced of their sincerity on this point. During the 2005 parliamentary elections, Milad Hanna, a prominent Coptic intellectual, was widely quoted in the domestic and foreign press as saying:



‘If the Muslim Brothers come to power, Egypt will be an Islamic state like Iran and Sudan. The day the Muslim Brothers win more than 50 per cent, the rich Copts will leave the country and the poorer Copts will stay. Perhaps some of them will be converted... I hope I die before this happens.’ (quoted in Shahine 2005)

Statements like this reinforce the existing culture of suspicion and spread fear regarding the Brotherhood without acknowledging or engaging with the group’s public statements on these issues.

Few observers credit the Brotherhood when it does reach out to other religious groups. For example, Guidance Bureau member, Abdul Monem Abul-Futouh has publicly written and lectured on Muslim-Christian co-existence in Egypt. He even famously wrote in the domestic press:

‘This nation is your nation, this land is your land, and this Nile is your Nile. Do not listen to those who want to isolate you behind walls in order to stifle your voices while raising theirs. Our history together says the contrary. Our history together says one God, one nation.’ (Abul-Futouh 2005)

Similarly, when the current Brotherhood bloc was elected to Parliament, its leader, Mohamad Saad al-Kitatny, toured his constituency in the Upper Egyptian town of al-Minya. He visited Coptic priests and churches to assess the problems that they were facing as a community. Father Armia, Nazlet Ebeid church’s top priest, was quoted as saying that it was the first time that ‘our constituency’s MP [had visited] us to acquaint himself with our problems and grievances’ (quoted in Howeidy 2005).

### **Women’s rights**

The policy statement released by the Brotherhood in 2004 also addresses the role of women in Egyptian society. Its position is that women are entitled to the educational and professional rights of men, although the group does note that the primary role of a woman in society should be to nurture and mother the country’s children. The Brotherhood’s conservative and often-criticised position on women’s public service is apparent in the 2004 initiative. As the document states, ‘[Women are] entitled to hold public posts, except for [the post of] Grand Imam or presiding over the state’ (Society of Muslim Brothers 2004: 31).

Many Egyptian and western critics point to this statement as evidence of the chauvinist nature of the organisation, and suggest that Brotherhood rule will look like other ultra-conservative Islamic governments in states such as Iran or Saudi Arabia. The Brotherhood’s position on excluding women from serving as head of state is certainly a conservative policy. Yet the group is also clear that they would like Egypt to become a state that rules over fully equal and empowered members of both genders. As the group’s General Guide, Mohamad Mahdi Akif, has argued, ‘You must care for the nations’ interests and its citizens, both Muslims and Copts, men and women’ (quoted in Howeidy 2005). Jumping to the conclusion that the group wishes to create a Taliban-esque governing style is therefore disingenuous, and ignores what the group actually says on women’s rights.

Nonetheless, how does one reconcile the Brotherhood’s rhetorical support for ‘full and equal’ citizenship with their position on women’s participation in politics? A closer look reveals that there are significant differences of opinion within the organisation on this issue. Conservative factions within the Brotherhood do not advocate overt repression or persecution of women. However, they do tend to argue in favour of limited women’s participation, reflecting the more orthodox views on *Shari’a* law held by these individuals. They justify this stance with reference to Article 2 of the Constitution, which enshrines *Shari’a* as the principal source of legislation in Egypt. More pragmatic and liberal wings of the party would prefer to see greater movement towards equal and full citizenship, claiming that this is not incompatible with *Shari’a* law since article 11 of the Constitution also affirms that:

‘The State shall guarantee the proper coordination between the duties of woman towards the family and her work in the society, considering her equal with man in the fields of political, social, cultural and economic life without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence.’

The Brotherhood will eventually have to articulate a clearer position on women’s rights than the

general statements it has made thus far about Islam's respect for women. Only then will it address many of the criticisms made by western and secular Egyptian analysts about its ambiguity on this point (Brown *et al* 2007). However, while the organisation does not yet seem to have reached an internal consensus on this issue, the fact that it is being widely debated is in itself a positive sign. It suggests that future policies will be constructed and developed around a wider pool of input, and it must be hoped that they will be more nuanced and sophisticated as a result.

Despite the Brotherhood's relative conservatism on the issue of women's rights, the group does not lack female supporters. While numbers are traditionally unreliable, the Brotherhood has nominated one female candidate in each of the last two parliamentary elections. Women's branches of the Brotherhood remain somewhat distinct from the main body of the movement at present, although some female activists have been pushing for fuller integration (Abdellatif and Ottaway 2007). Nevertheless, there are 'sisterhood' organisations affiliated with the movement that undertake social outreach activities within both local communities and university student groups, and women constitute a sizable bloc at Brotherhood functions such as election rallies and the annual *Iftar* during Ramadan.

The Brotherhood's leadership view women as an integral and important part of society. While they see them as mothers and wives, they also respect them as university professors, medical doctors and, of course, voters. External observers often criticise the Muslim Brotherhood for its position on the issue of women's rights, but it should be noted that their views are shared by many Egyptians outside the movement. Women's efforts to attain a more equal political and social status have long been frustrated by the patriarchal nature of Egyptian society, as well as by conservative religious values. The point here is that the Muslim Brotherhood has not displayed an inclination to persecute or subjugate women. While the Brothers cannot be viewed as the liberators of women either, it is important to recognise that many of their positions reflect what is popularly understood by the local culture from which they come as well as operate within.

This suggests that western policymakers should fixate less on the question of whether or not the Muslim Brotherhood would support the election of women to the highest political posts, and instead put more energy into addressing the underlying problems faced by women in Egyptian society. This might involve working with civil society groups and the Government to tackle entrenched norms of discrimination against women, and to help women develop the advocacy and organisational skills that would enable them to participate more fully in political life. Improving women's rights in Egypt will necessarily be a long-term and incremental process. But it should be an important focus for western governments that have an interest in supporting political and social development in Egypt.

### **Political reform**

With regard to governance, the 2004 platform includes general statements emphasising the group's 'commitment to the regime as democratic, constitutional, parliamentary, and presidential...in the framework of Islamic principles', reaffirming its support for the freedoms of expression and religion, and arguing in favour of the practice of holding regular elections (Society of Muslim Brothers 2004: 12). However, it also makes more specific suggestions about how to enhance political freedom in Egypt, including the need to grant citizens the right to demonstrate and assemble and the desirability of removing the restrictions on forming political parties. The group also says that it wants to adjust the roles of the military, police and security apparatus to ensure that they serve their intended purposes of defending borders and protecting Egypt's citizens rather than simply shoring up the power of the regime. Furthermore, the group argues that presidential powers should be reduced and that there should be a maximum two-term limit for the President.

The Muslim Brotherhood has also indicated its support for amending the authoritarian and repressive legal system in Egypt. For example, the group claims that it would cancel the Emergency Law (which has been in place for the duration of Mubarak's presidency) and liberally reform other restrictive laws that impede political activity by parties, professional syndicates, the press and public prosecutors. These legal and institutional reforms would be supplemented by 'eliminating the phenomenon of torture' within the security apparatuses' headquarters and police stations throughout the country while

simultaneously releasing political prisoners of conscience (Society of Muslim Brothers 2004: 15).<sup>3</sup>

Parliamentary elections in 2005 offered the Brotherhood a valuable opportunity to put forward its ideas about reform at both the national and local levels. At this time, the Brotherhood published a campaign pamphlet entitled *Who Are We And What Do We Want?*, which was designed to serve as a political framework for its candidates. Among its general goals were promises to reform the Government so that it better serves the people, expressions of support for the Palestinian cause and pledges to liberate the nation from foreign political, cultural and economic dominance. The Brotherhood did not publish a detailed political programme, but allowed its candidates to develop locally-specific platforms, which included promises about creating jobs and educational opportunities, and improving access to clean drinking water and sewage facilities.

The aspects of the Brotherhood's 2004 reform programme discussed above reveal a group that has closely studied the authoritarian regime that has repressed them for decades, and that has identified some constructive ways in which to reform the system. As can be seen, the policy papers that the Muslim Brotherhood publishes are not often revolutionary. In many cases, the group merely reaffirms its support for the kind of state that already theoretically exists in Egypt, and makes recommendations as to how existing institutions could be reformed.

There are few hints of a reactionary movement bent on religious rule by force. Instead, the group's public statements resemble the policy platforms of most other political parties in their calls for respect for the rule of law and the creation of more democratic governance structures.

Moreover, while the ruling National Democratic Party always errs on the side of extreme conservatism on questions of political reform – whether they relate to constitutional amendments, presidential term limits or judicial independence – the Brotherhood has consistently written and stated that more liberal reform measures are needed.

Prominent figures in the Egyptian government have frequently criticised the Brotherhood for its rhetoric. As one member of Gamal Mubarak's Policies Secretariat has argued, 'By allowing them to participate, they will be exposed as nothing more than a group with an empty slogan' (Badrawy 2005). But the Brotherhood's style of participation demonstrates an opposite dynamic at work. The group's actions in Parliament, as well as its social outreach and public awareness campaigns, suggest that it is committed to achieving more concrete political reforms.

### Recent political developments

In August 2007, the Brotherhood released a draft version of a comprehensive policy platform, the first of its kind in the group's 80-year history. Some analysts believe that this may be a prelude to establishing a formal political party, although the Brotherhood remains ambivalent about this idea. In terms of content, the platform stresses the Brotherhood's support for a political system that has a civil character and is based on a rotation of power, regular elections, and separation of branches. It also points out that judicial independence must be respected, which can be read as a condemnation of the Government's 2006 legislation that greatly diminished judicial institutional independence from the executive branch (Society of Muslim Brothers 2007). The 2007 platform also proposes reform measures to reverse and rectify recent legislation that is perceived to have further hampered political development. The document is the most pragmatic yet in terms of the Brotherhood's ideas about future political reform.

This document differs from previous policy statements in a number of important ways. For instance, while the group has previously been reluctant to comment in depth on its position towards the application of *Shari'a* law, the 2007 statement deals with this issue far more explicitly. It reiterates the group's assertion that nationality, and not religion, is the basis of citizenship. It also reaffirms the Brotherhood's support for Article 2 of the Constitution, which notes that *Shari'a* law is the 'principal'

---

3. For more on the regime's policy of arresting and detaining Muslim Brotherhood members without charge, see Human Rights Watch (2007).

basis of law. But the document goes further by suggesting that adherence to *Shari'a* law might best be ensured through the creation of an '*ulema* council' of religious scholars with the power to advise the legislative and executive branches in matters of religious law (for more on this see Brown and Hamzawy 2008). This has been described by many as a regressive step in their political evolution, and it is somewhat surprising that the Brotherhood chose to include this statement in the document, given that its primary purpose was to reassure people about the movement's intentions and the general de-emphasising of the *Shari'a* by many of the group's more pragmatic members.

This can be explained in part by the timing of the platform's release. Members of the group's political division, which is headed by Essam al-Erian, were responsible for preparing the draft platform. The political division is considered to be closely attached to the group's large pragmatic wing, which includes other members such as Mohamad Habib (Deputy General Guide) and Khariat al-Shater (Second Deputy Guide). The opponents of the pragmatic wing are the conservative branch, which is seen as being led by Guidance Bureau member Mahmoud Ezzat and parliamentary department head Mohamad Morsy (interview with anonymous Brotherhood member 2008).

When the draft platform was released in August 2007, it represented the views of the pragmatic wing, and took a more liberal stance on many issues than in previous statements of policy. However, when the conservative wing responded, as it normally would have, the internal dynamic in the relationship had been altered. Namely, Khariat al-Shater, whose internal power and influence is rumoured to be large, was lingering in an Egyptian prison while undergoing a military trial sanctioned by Mubarak. With al-Shater in prison, the group dynamic remained off kilter, giving Ezzat and Morsy a key opportunity to exert their influence on and dispute the platform (ibid).

Many controversial issues, such as the rights of Coptic Christians, have therefore re-emerged. Morsy has recently argued that the Islamic nature of Egypt's society, which is governed by *Shari'a* law, would be compromised if a Coptic Christian assumed the presidency. He is quick to point out that other societies have placed restrictions on who can and cannot be head of state (for instance, the fact that a naturalised citizen cannot become President in the US) and reserves the same right for Egypt. His position is that: 'Egypt – if it is to be an Islamic state – must be headed by a Muslim. Copts enjoy all rights and privileges as accorded by *Shari'a* law' (Morsy 2008).

These comments have provoked a great deal of criticism on the part of Egyptian Copts, women, secular politicians and western commentators. But they are not the Brotherhood's final word on the matter. As Morsy himself noted, the platform is at least a year away from being finalised, and will continue to be revised in light of the ongoing and intense debate. The Brotherhood has become institutionalised enough that it cannot be hijacked by one faction at the expense of the other. Heated discussions are taking place inside the group's meeting rooms over the points raised by the pragmatic, conservative, and liberal wings of the organisation but it is unlikely that any of these factions are willing to take actions that would lead the group to self-destruct. Indeed, there are already signs that the movement is trying to move away from the corrosive internal disputes of recent months and to forge a consensus on the difficult issues. Although the Brotherhood's position on the election of Copts and women to the presidency is unlikely to change, it seems as though the moderate wing of the organisation will succeed in diluting the idea of creating an *ulema* council with binding advisory powers (Brown and Hamzawy 2008).

In short, the Muslim Brotherhood is continuing to evolve as a political movement. Western and Egyptian policymakers may disagree with some of the content of its policy platforms, but this should not automatically preclude the idea of engaging in debate and discussion with the group on issues where there is common ground.

## 4. Acting politically: the Muslim Brotherhood in Parliament

In its efforts to hold onto power, the ruling National Democratic Party has been known to employ violence against protestors and voters, to direct the security services to arrest political opponents and to manipulate Egypt's legal framework. In contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood is active but peaceful in its mobilisation, and has demonstrated a preference for working through Parliament to advance its programme of reform, rather than resorting to violent protest against government policies it disagrees with.

Since 2005, the Government has made a number of constitutional and legislative amendments that have greatly reduced political freedoms in Egypt. From the Brotherhood's perspective, the most significant of these changes is the amendment criminalising 'political activity' by a religious organisation. While observers have grown used to arbitrary arrests of scores of Muslim Brothers on the charges of 'belonging to a banned organisation', the latest constitutional changes have granted the Government even more leeway to crack down on the political activities of the Muslim Brotherhood: its strongest and best-organised political opposition. They have also given the Government the option of further amending the country's electoral law so as to virtually ensure that the Brotherhood is prohibited from electoral participation. Unsurprisingly, Brotherhood members have been extremely vocal in their opposition to these measures.

The group does not only use its position in Parliament to protest against government policies that directly affect its own ability to participate in politics. For instance, in June 2006, the Brotherhood's MPs worked in close coordination with the Egyptian Judges Club in support of legislation that would increase the judiciary's independence from the executive branch. The bill that the Government eventually passed dismissed the proposal made by the Brotherhood bloc and rolled back judicial independence, but this incident still demonstrated the Brotherhood's interest in working alongside other reform actors in Egypt to seek political change. The organisation has also come out resolutely against other measures such as the 'Anti-Terrorism' act that will likely replace the Emergency Law in the near future. The proposed act would give the Government extensive wire-tapping powers without judicial oversight and would enable them to impose conditions that would effectively amount to martial law.

The Government has been able to defuse the Brotherhood's opposition to its policies without much difficulty, aided by the persistent suspicion and fear about the group. But this has not stopped the Muslim Brotherhood from continuing its efforts to make Parliament matter by taking it seriously. This is perhaps best described by one of the freshman legislators from the bloc, Hazim Farouk, who notes that the movement wants 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. Bringing about reform requires freedom, freedom, freedom' (Farouk 2006). As can be seen, the bloc's activities speak to moderate political behaviour on any criteria – whether secular or religious.

For European and North American governments considering how best to engage with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, it is important to remember that the organisation is not a monolithic bloc. While the group's senior positions are still held by elders in the party that logged years in Nasser's prisons, the younger largely pragmatic middle generation came of age during the 1970s and are largely responsible for the group's day-to-day operations and policy planning. Many serve as heads of the Brotherhood's various departments.

The middle generation also comprise a majority of the group's MPs, syndicate activists and local representatives throughout the country. This group has drastically transformed and regularised the organisation's ideology, organisational infrastructure, decision-making processes and behaviour in response to the regime's changing authoritarian demands. One of the outcomes is the group's committed participation in elections. As El-Ghobashy argues:

'Today, the social-welfare activities of the [Brotherhood] are as strong as ever, but the enforced top-down unanimity of the group is a thing of the past... The Ikhwan's

energetic capitalization on Egypt's sliver of electoral competition for seats in parliament, the professional unions, and municipal councils has had an especially profound effect on their political thought and organization.' (El-Ghobashy 2005: 373-374)

There are still conservative trends in the Brotherhood that worry many observers, particularly around questions of foreign policy. For example, a recent article by Mona Eltahawy quoted a leading figure on the group's 12-man Guidance Bureau as saying that the Egyptian people were never asked if they accepted the 1979 Camp David Accords and that it only seemed reasonable to put the treaty with 'the Zionist entity' to a national referendum. Eltahawy argues that 'such a revisionist attitude towards internationally recognised treaties reflects both the recklessness and the stubborn denial of reality that has become a trademark of many Arab Islamists' (Eltahawy 2007).

The fact that some members of the Muslim Brotherhood question the legitimacy of the treaty with Israel has been used by many commentators to suggest that the organisation is anti-western and, as a consequence, irrational and politically irresponsible. Similarly, the Brotherhood's lack of internal consensus about how the group will treat women or Coptic Christians or whether they intend to ban alcohol and cigarettes should they come to power, have been used as evidence of an illiberal social agenda. But, as noted earlier in this paper, this argument does not take sufficient account of the internal debates that are changing the character of the organisation, and making it more politically moderate and pragmatic. The concluding section of this report assesses what this means for European and North American policymakers as they consider the most appropriate form of engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood, in the context of support for broader political reforms in Egypt.

## 5. International engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood

Since the Muslim Brotherhood's unprecedented gains in the 2005 parliamentary elections, the organisation has become the focus of increasing international interest and scrutiny. The parliamentary bloc's actions are drawing more attention to the group and are re-opening the debate how about the organisation operates.

Some analysts in the West and in Egypt continue to draw on the group's early history of violence to argue against engaging the Muslim Brotherhood in dialogue. For example, when describing a Brotherhood student demonstration in December 2006, Jameel Theyabi stated his belief that that 'given the group's history of assassinations and its tendency to resort to violence...the group's public power display represents a kind of coded message to awaken sleeping cells within Egypt and abroad' (Theyabi 2006). These arguments tend to make selective use of events or the Brotherhood's public statements as evidence that the group is masking its true intentions in order to gain political power so that they can rule by force. But counterfactual arguments that ignore the group's consistent actions and written platforms are not a useful basis from which to approach the question of engaging with the Brotherhood.

It is first necessary to contextualise the Brotherhood's involvement in the region's history of conflict and insecurity. Over the past 60 years, the Brotherhood's formal international role has been surprisingly limited. In fact, the only external activity that the Brotherhood has participated in as an organisation is the 1948 Palestinian war. Its leadership never issued decrees calling on members to engage in the jihad wars of Afghanistan in the 1980s or the various Arab-Israeli clashes over the past six decades. Some individual Brothers did take part in these conflicts on their own initiative, but the group as a whole has proven steadfast in its commitment to solving Egypt's national political and social problems, rather than seeking to influence regional politics. It is therefore more appropriate to view the Brotherhood as a national rather than regional non-state actor.

This is not to suggest that the group has no regional influence. There is no older or more established Islamist movement in the region, and many contemporary Islamist parties and movements across the Arab world – both non-violent and violent – can credit the Brotherhood as being their initial inspiration. For example, Hamas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan both look to the Egyptian Brotherhood for organisational ideas as well as ideological guidance. There is certainly a great deal of sympathy between the region's Islamist groups, although more often than not, this sympathy is generated on the basis of political problems rather than blind ideological adherence to Islam. Overall, the Egyptian Brotherhood serves primarily as a model for other like-minded opposition movements that adapt its operational example or advisory assistance to their particular country setting, rather than as an overarching umbrella organisation with direct influence on movements in other countries.

In contrast with the National Democratic Party, which remains reliant on patronage and the security apparatus to contain its political opposition and keep its ruling majority, the Muslim Brotherhood is well-organised and has a strong base of popular support. It is also important to note that the group is driven far more by its political convictions than by its Islamic ideals. To be certain, its members are believers and it will continue to express its ideologies and policies through an Islamic idiom. But behind the rhetoric, the group's platforms and behaviour suggest a sophisticated political reform agenda at work. Whether in Parliament or in local communities, the group is responsive to its constituents as well as pragmatic and responsible in handling situations.

It seems unlikely that the political balance of power in Egypt will shift dramatically in the foreseeable future. Even if the NDP did implode and the military proved incapable of responding, which would leave the Brotherhood in power by default, the tragedy would be that Egypt would remain a state dominated by one trend. Transferring power from the NDP to the Brotherhood still keeps Egypt as a single-party state. It is more probable that the status quo will prevail in Cairo. The NDP is not going away; neither will the Brotherhood make a dramatic bid for power. Since the other liberal, secular and leftist political movements in Egypt are either arranged in haplessly ineffective political parties or are



utterly incapable of formal political participation, the Egyptian political system will remain stagnant and underdeveloped. With rapid population increases, the Government's inability to redistribute the benefits of recent economic growth to all social sectors in the country, an inadequate national health and education system, and a mini-insurgency in the Sinai, there seems to be no shortage of reasons for political instability in Egypt.

A strong push for genuine political development and reform is therefore essential.

This is not just in Egypt's interest. Western governments, and particularly those in the European Union which border North Africa, also have a stake in Egypt becoming more liberal and prosperous. One way that these governments can promote political reform is by engaging with groups that are agents of positive, moderate reform. By encouraging indigenous regional groups that are actively promoting political development, the West will cease to look like it is imposing political reform on countries. It is within this context that the Egyptian Brotherhood should be viewed as an appropriate 'test case' for engaged debate.

### **Conclusions and policy implications**

This paper has sought to provide an overview of the Muslim Brotherhood's behaviour as a political actor in Egypt and to address some of the commonly-held misperceptions about the group. A number of broad policy implications arise from this analysis. These are summarised below.

#### **Western policymakers should press the Egyptian government more firmly on its political reform commitments, and should be more consistent in their criticism when opposition figures, including Islamists, are the arbitrary targets of state repression**

In the past, representatives of western governments have been reluctant to publicly criticise the Egyptian regime for its frequent crackdown on opposition groups, fearing that this would damage relations with one of their key partners in the region. However, there are encouraging signs that this approach may be starting to change. On a visit to Egypt in January 2008, President George Bush failed to comment on the unjust imprisonment of Ayman Nour (a secular opposition presidential candidate) and of scores of Brotherhood members, choosing instead to praise the Government for having made progress towards 'greater political openness'. But in a subtle dig at the lack of political and judicial freedom in Egypt, he did express his hope that 'the Egyptian government will build on these important steps and give the people of this proud nation a greater voice in [Egypt's] future. I think it will lead to peace, and I think it will lead to justice' (quoted in Gerstenzang 2008).

European policymakers have been far more outspoken in their condemnation of the Egyptian government's human rights record. In advance of a scheduled meeting of the EU-Egypt Subcommittee on Political Matters in January 2008 that had been organised to facilitate discussion of a range of issues, including democracy and human rights, the European Parliament passed a draft resolution urging Egypt 'to end all forms of harassment, including judicial measures, detention of media professionals and, more generally, human rights defenders and activists' (Shahine 2008). It also called for the immediate release of Ayman Nour and for a change in the law on military courts, which critics say Egyptian authorities have sometimes used against the Government's political opponents.

The response of the Egyptian regime to this provocation was predictably belligerent. The meeting was cancelled, and some lawmakers went so far as to recommend that ties with the European Union should be suspended. But it seems unlikely that this diplomatic row will lead to a long-term rift. The EU is Egypt's largest single trading partner, accounting for around 35 per cent of its total trade (European Commission 2007). The Egyptian government also receives a considerable amount of financial assistance through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which it would be unwilling to jeopardise. For example, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EU's Commissioner for External Affairs, recently announced a grant of €120 million to support educational development in Egypt (Ferrero-Waldner 2007).

This suggests that there is room in the bilateral relationship for constructive criticism and disagreement. Western policymakers must of course be extremely sensitive and careful in the way that they support political reform and human rights in Egypt. It is primarily for Egyptians to decide their



own reform path, and pushing too hard and too fast from outside will only reinforce the widespread perception in the region that US and European governments are attempting to use their military and economic might to impose their own political vision on the Arab world. But if they hope to restore credibility to their message of reform, they must be more willing to put private and public pressure on the Egyptian government to open up the political system, and create space for civil society and political opposition groups, including non-violent Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, to participate in a national reform dialogue. As Michele Dunne notes, 'such a dialogue among Egyptians themselves is where solutions to the problem of Islamist inclusion in the political sphere can emerge' (Dunne 2006: 15).

**Representatives of western governments should seek more opportunities for dialogue with political opposition groups in Egypt, including the Muslim Brotherhood**

Until recently, western embassies in Cairo have been in a difficult position regarding the banned Brotherhood. Most European embassies have extremely limited contact with one or two senior members of the group and wish to widen contact. Meanwhile, representatives of the US embassy as well as visiting congressional delegations have met with the head of the group's parliamentary bloc but have traditionally been discouraged from meeting with members of the wider group. Now is an appropriate time to re-evaluate this position and to begin to extend contacts between western governments and the wider Egyptian Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood has been receptive to meeting western organisations that they do not see as blindly contributing to the region's core problems of Palestine, Iraq and authoritarian governance. For example, in the spring of 2006, the Brotherhood met with board members and representatives of the international non-governmental organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW), largely because they perceived the organisation to be committed to issues deemed relevant to Egyptian political reform. A few prominent leaders have also taken part in public meetings and debates with western NGOs, including UK-based Forward Thinking, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington (Abul-Futouh 2007).

However, the Brotherhood has shown less inclination to meet formally with western governments. The group's official position is that it is happy to meet with representatives of the US government, provided that permission for this is granted by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and that an Egyptian government representative is in the room when any such meeting takes place. This is for the Brotherhood's own protection as much as to ensure that the record remains official. But this is also a way of discouraging such meetings, as they would require the American government to seek official Egyptian approval, as well as having to offer some form of recognition to the group. Setting these conditions makes it easy for the Brotherhood to minimise potential links with the US government, which it condemns for its involvement in the main regional conflicts, namely Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

The Brotherhood also considers the United States to be an untrustworthy and compromised broker, given that it is one of the key patrons of Egypt's repressive regime. While it would not take a wholesale repudiation of US policies in the region for the Brotherhood to countenance entering into dialogue, one would assume that there would have to be some movement to inspire a minimal level of confidence for communication with western governments. Being more consistent in criticising all human rights abuses in Egypt, including against Islamists, might be a good place for western governments to start.

It is clear that engagement must be a two-way process if it is to have any value. Although the Muslim Brotherhood certainly did not intend the August 2007 draft of its new political platform to be circulated so widely, it should use this leak as an opportunity to discuss and clarify its political positions with a wider range of stakeholders, including western analysts and politicians (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2007). Only then will both sides be able to come to a better understanding of each other's red lines and 'grey zones', and discover where there may be room for constructive cooperation. In return, European and North American policymakers must be more willing to engage with the Brotherhood on the basis of what it says and how it acts, rather than treating it as an inflexible and dogmatic religious organisation with which there can be no common ground.

This does not mean that the Muslim Brotherhood should be given preferential treatment by European or North American governments. It simply reflects the fact that political reform in Egypt and the wider region will not progress if the mainstream Islamist movements are excluded from the process. The Brotherhood may not come to power in the near future but that does not mean that they can or should be ignored by western governments when it comes to formulating country-to-country or regional policies. As the electoral success of the region's Islamist groups in recent years has demonstrated, such groups are increasing popular. Progressive western governments therefore need to strengthen their efforts to engage in open and frank dialogue with moderate, non-violent Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

## References

- Abdellatif O and Ottaway M (2007) *Women in Islamist Movements: Toward an Islamist Model of Women's Activism* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Abdo G (2002) *No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Abed-Kotob S (1995) 'The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* No. 27
- Abul-Futouh A (2005) 'One God, one nation', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 15-21 December, available at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/773/op152.htm>
- Abul-Futouh A (2006) 'The Muslim Brotherhood Comments on "Gray Zones" Carnegie Paper', 13 July, available at: [www.carnegieendowment.org/files/FutouhEnglishFullText\\_\\_5\\_.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/FutouhEnglishFullText__5_.pdf)
- Abul-Futouh A (2007) 'Reply to the Commentary by the Carnegie Endowment scholars', edited transcript of remarks made at a conference on 'Bridging the Divide: Can Islamists and Western Positions be Reconciled?', April 20, available at: [www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=1039&&prog=zgp&proj=zdl,zme](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=1039&&prog=zgp&proj=zdl,zme)
- al-Ahram Weekly (2003) 'Close encounters with US diplomat', 18-24 December 2003, available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/669/special.htm>
- Anonymous Brotherhood member (2008) Interview by author, Cairo, 3 January
- al-Banna H (1978) 'Between Yesterday and Today' in Wendell C (ed. and trans.) *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Akif M (2004) Interview by author, Cairo, April
- Akif M (2006) Interview by author and Samer Shehata, Cairo, July
- Azarva J and Tadros S (2007) *The Problem of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research Middle Eastern Outlook, No. 4, November 30, available at: [www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27174/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27174/pub_detail.asp)
- Badrawy H (2005) Interview by author, Cairo, 9 November
- BBC (2005) 'Egyptians vote for new parliament', 9 November, available at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4419872.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4419872.stm)
- Bergesen A (2005) 'The Islamist Ethic and the Spirit of Terrorism' Paper presented at the American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, August 12
- Bright M (2006) 'Talking to terrorists' *New Statesman*, 20 February, available at [www.newstatesman.com/200602200006](http://www.newstatesman.com/200602200006)
- Brown N, Hamzawy A and Ottaway M (2007) *What Islamists Need to Be Clear About: The Case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood* Policy Outlook, February, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Brown N and Hamzawy A (2008) *The Draft Party Platform of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Foray Into Political Integration or Retreat Into Old Positions?* Carnegie Paper, No. 89, January, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2007) 'The Muslim Brotherhood's Party Platform', edited transcript of speeches made by Marc Lynch, Nathan Brown and Amr Hamzawy, 15 November, available at: [www.carnegieendowment.org/files/07-11-16-muslim-brotherhood.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/07-11-16-muslim-brotherhood.pdf)
- Dunne M (2006) *Evaluating Egyptian Reform* Carnegie Paper, No. 66, January, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- El-Ghobashy M (2005) 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers' *International Journal of*

*Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 37

- Eltahawy M (2007) 'Success of Turkey's AK Party must not dilute worries over Arab Islamists' *Saudi Debate*, 4 September
- European Commission (2007) *Bilateral Trade Relations – Egypt*, October, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/egypt/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/egypt/index_en.htm)
- Farouk H (2006) Interview by Samer Shehata and author, Cairo, 5 April
- Ferrero-Waldner (2007) Speech at a luncheon hosted by the Egyptian-European Council, Cairo, 31 October, available at: [www.delegy.ec.europa.eu/en/News/Speech\\_by\\_BFW\\_EEC\\_Lunch\\_rev.doc](http://www.delegy.ec.europa.eu/en/News/Speech_by_BFW_EEC_Lunch_rev.doc)
- Freedom House (2007) *Countries at the Crossroads 2007, Country Report – Egypt*, available at: [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=8&ccrcountry=154&section=86&ccrpag e=37](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=8&ccrcountry=154&section=86&ccrpag e=37)
- Gerstenzang J (2008) 'Bush says Egypt on path to 'political openness'', *Los Angeles Times*, 17 January, available at: [www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-bush17jan17,0,5937628.story?coll=la-home-world](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-bush17jan17,0,5937628.story?coll=la-home-world)
- Howeidy A (2005) 'We Take Nobody's Permission', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 15-21 December, available at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/773/eg5.htm>
- Human Rights Watch (2007) 'Egypt: Faces of a Crackdown', Video interviews with former Muslim Brotherhood detainees, May 30, available at: <http://hrw.org/video/2007/egypt05/>
- International Crisis Group (2004) *Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's Opportunity*, ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefing, 20 April, Cairo/Brussels: International Crisis Group
- Kienle E (2001) *A Grand Delusion: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt* London: I.B. Tauris
- Kurtz S (2007) 'Doc Jihad: Part 2' *National Review*, 11 July, available at <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NzNhZDAzMjU1YjE1NTc5OWM0ZGE1MGJmZVJnJg0NWU=>
- Leiken R and Brooke S (2007) 'The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 2
- Madi A (2005) Interview by author, Cairo, 15 July
- Mitchell R (1969) *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Morsy M (2008) Interview by author, Cairo, 5 January
- Qutb S (1964) *Mu`alim fil Tariq (Signposts)*, Cairo
- Rice C (2005) Policy speech delivered at the American University in Cairo, Cairo, 20 June, available at: [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm)
- Rosefsky-Wickham C (2004) 'The Path to Moderation: Strategy and learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party' *Comparative Politics* 36 (2)
- Saleh H (2007) 'Egypt's Islamists allege poll irregularities', *Financial Times*, June 11, available at: <http://cachef.ft.com/cms/s/0/a7ede216-1803-11dc-b736-000b5df10621.html>
- Shahine A (2008) 'Angry Egypt cancels talks with EU officials', *Reuters News*, 19 January, available at: [www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL1946730720080119](http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL1946730720080119)
- Shahine G (2005) 'What Copts fear' *al-Ahram Weekly*, 8-14 December
- Shehata S and Stacher J (2006) 'The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament' *Middle East Report*, Fall, available at [www.merip.org/mer/mer240/shehata\\_stacher.html](http://www.merip.org/mer/mer240/shehata_stacher.html)
- Shehata S and Stacher J (2007) 'Hear Out the Muslim Brotherhood' *Boston Globe*, 26 March, available at: [www.merip.org/newspaper\\_opeds/oped032507.html](http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/oped032507.html)
- Society of Muslim Brothers (2004) 'On the General Principles of Reform in Egypt', Cairo, 3 March

- Society of Muslim Brothers (2005) 'Who are We and What Do We Want?', Cairo, October
- Society of Muslim Brothers (2007) 'Political Party Platform', Cairo, August
- Stacher J (2002) 'Post-Islamist Rumbings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 3
- Stacher J (2004) 'Parties Over: The Demise of Egypt's Opposition Parties' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 31, No.2
- Theyabi J (2006) 'The Brotherhood's Power Display' *Al-Hayat*, 18 December, available at:  
<http://english.daralhayat.com/opinion/OPED/12-2006/Article-20061218-95ae9eb8-c0a8-10ed-00b1-7119b3684228/story.html>
- Zollner B (2007) 'Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle During Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, No. 39, Issue 3, pp. 411-433
- Zubaida S (1993) *Islam, the People, and the State*, London: I.B. Tauris