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Schools of Democracy?
Democratic Behavior in Secular and Islamist Opposition Parties in Egypt

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Abstract

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This thesis challenges the assumption that civil society and its organizations act as schools of democracy. It argues that civil society organizations should be examined for their internal behavior. This thesis studies six oppositional organizations in Egypt to determine their levels of democratic behavior. It examines groups across ideological, generational, legal, and Islamist and secular divides. It finds that while all organizations studied call for democracy they do not all behave democratically internally.

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Introduction

The literature of democratization contains an inherent assumption – and sometimes outright assertion –that civil society is a necessary pre-condition for democratization. The general understanding among scholars toward civil society organizations is that they comprise 'schools of democracy' that generate values of tolerance, pluralism, moderation, and activism.   These values are understood as assisting in a democratic transition or helping to sustain any democratic government that may emerge. As a result the general feeling toward these civil society organizations has been the more the merrier.

More recent scholarship has begun to question the relationship between democracy and civil society and, more specifically, questioning whether civil society organizations necessarily contribute to the emergence of democratic values and practices (Berman 1997, Langohr 2004). Expanding on this trend in the field, this paper argues that measuring civil society for the sake of predicting democratization is in vain. Instead of examining the strength or weakness of civil society, this paper advocates examining the democratic behavior of organizations themselves. Both strong and weak civil society organizations may contribute to, or impede, democratization; it depends on how democratic they are in their orientations and behavior. Studying the various political organizations individually can more accurately determine whether these groups are in fact capable of functioning as schools of democracy.

In attempting to build upon existing civil society and democratization theory this paper discusses the factors that encourage democratic behavior

within groups focusing on the case of Egypt. I will first define civil society, discussing which groups comprise civil society, as understood within the literature. Second, I propose ways to determine democratic behavior within organizations by merging social movement and organization theory literatures. Specifically, I evaluate organizational procedures, sources of funding, and group statements and ideologies. This enables the study of each group within a particular society and across states and regions. Then I discuss the relevance of religiously based organizations and the special challenges facing secular political parties in Egypt. Finally, I examine the various political organizations within Egypt spanning ideological lines and evaluating established parties as well as newly formed groups.

I advocate examining individual organization to determine if they exhibit democratic behavior rather than studying the robustness of civil society for evidence of these values. Whether a group exhibits democratic behavior –for example, espousing rhetoric of tolerance and moderation, letting the members have a vote in the formation of platforms and party policies -- can convey if that particular organization can produce the democratic values civil society is said to generate.

Methodology

This paper focuses its study on Egypt an authoritarian state that maintains emergency laws and various other restrictions on political activity. For example, the government does not grant legal recognition to all political parties, restricts

parties from disseminating their message and campaigning, and interferes with elections. Yet the government has experimented with liberalizing measures and has allowed some social and political organizations to emerge. The result is limited activity within the legally accepted realm of political parties and the world of unrecognized, illegal political organizations. As a non-democratic state, Egypt provides an ideal setting to assess organizations to determine whether or not they germinate democratic values.

In assessing democratic behavior I examine the statements, edicts, and evaluate the organization's actions. Speeches, newsletters, mission statements, recruitment literature, and-- when present – organization websites are relied on to evaluate democratic rhetoric. Further, the study will incorporate information gained through interviews I conducted with the leadership and spokesmen of these organizations during the summer of 2004. These interviews helped to determine the organizations' sources of funds and internal procedures. Secondary literature is utilized to capture additional information about organizations' conduct and provide more up to date on the organizations.

While I have exhausted all of the information available in English some of the data needed for this study is simply not accessible at this time. In particular, determining sources of funding proved a challenge. For some cases, such as the *Karama* party, I was unable to determine the group's organizational procedures. I recognize that this reduces the impact of my findings; however, I am able to infer levels of democratic behavior by assessing rhetoric and actions despite a complete picture of the organizational structure.

This paper examines six Egyptian political groups across diverse ideological and generational lines to create a typology of their democratic behavior. These cases represent the more active political groups in Egypt today and include: *Wafd, Tagamuu*, the Muslim Brotherhood, *Wasat, Karama,* and *Ghad*. These organizations represent a spectrum of ideologies including left-wing – *Tagammu* and *Karama* –Liberal –*Wafd* and *Ghad* – and Islamist – the Muslim Brotherhood and *Wasat*. Further, the selection of these groups includes three established organizations with a history on the political scene – *Wafd*, *Tagammu*, and the Muslim Brotherhood – and three more recently developed parties that formed by breaking away from the elder parties: *Ghad, Karama*[1], and *Wasat*. Additionally, these organizations reflect differences in legal status. Only *Wafd, Tagammu,* and *Ghad* are legally recognized as political parties. Most important is that despite these differences across ideological, generational, and legal status divides, each of these organizations are calling for democracy. Table 1 highlights each of these features across the cases selected.

Each of the parties examined reflect a different time span based on the longevity of the organizations themselves. Parties are evaluated beginning with their inception on the political scene. This means that older parties, such as *Wafd, Tagammu*, and the Muslim Brotherhood, may exhibit changes in their ideologies and behavior over time while the more recently formed parties – *Ghad, Karama,* and *Wasat* – do not exhibit any change. I recognize the

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[1] Karama is a breakaway organization from the Nasserite party. However, the Nasserites are themselves a breakaway party from Tagammu. In attempting to capture generational differences I prefer to compare recently formed breakaway organizations and so rather than study the Nasserite party, I examine Karama.

discrepancy in time frames results in the comparison of ideologies, rhetoric, and actions developed over different lengths of time across cases. For the older parties this means their assessment includes a lengthy timeframe while the evaluation of the newer parties may seem to reflect a single instance in time. However, in both the older organizations and newly emerged groups I evaluate their democratic behavior based on the rhetoric and actions they currently exhibit.

In referring to the various political organizations in Egypt I rely on a combination of terms ranging from the very structured idea of a political party to the loose connotation of a political group. I use these terms interchangeably for various reasons. First, some organizations are recognized as established political parties while others are not. Second, some groups are internally questioning whether they wish to be a formal party rather than a movement. And some groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, function as quasi-parties despite lacking legal party status. Finally, for the ease of writing I prefer to allow the use of the multiple terms which signify a collective of people. It is not my intention to create any additional meaning in the use of either of these terms beyond the basic concept of a group of people united behind a cause.

This thesis provides a descriptive study of oppositional political parties in Egypt to assess whether these groups exhibit internally democratic behavior. This is a small but important piece of the democratization puzzle. It is not my intention to imply that groups exhibiting more democratic behavior will become the leading force behind democratization nor do I mean to suggest that they will

necessarily adhere to a democracy. Instead, this thesis provides evidence challenging the assumption that civil society organizations act as "schools of democracy" that teach their members the skills and values found in democracies. This study shows that some civil society organizations, while calling for democracy, are neither teaching their members these democratic values nor are they teaching them democratic skills. This shows that, in non-democratic settings, not all civil society organizations can be considered "schools of democracy".

In determining which level of democratic behavior each organization exhibits it should not be inferred that some of these groups are democratic while others are not. The research presented here cannot make this claim. As a result, I assess democratic behavior in terms of "more" or "less". Among the organizations studied some exhibit more democratic behavior than others. While all organizations call for democracy, only some of them adhere to internal procedures that can be considered democratic. Democratic behavior, what it entails and how it is observed is discussed more fully in its own section.

In undertaking this research I observe that each of the cases I examine call for democracy. But are these calls across each group for the same type of democracy? The question arises of what exactly these organizations mean when they say "democracy". To be specific, are these parties calling for democratic institutions, such as free and fair elections, or are they calling for the democratic values of freedom and liberty, tolerance of diversity, and pluralism toward women and minorities that is found within Liberal democracies?

This leads to a larger theoretical question of what is democracy. Is it simply a matter of representative structures or is there something more? Answering this question is well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to note the distinction between democratic institutions and democratic values. In the case of oppositional parties in Egypt, it is worth determining whether their calls for democracy are referring exclusively to democratic institutions or democratic values.

Assessing democratic behavior across these groups shows that each of the organizations examined call for democratic institutions but not all of the groups call for democratic values of tolerance and pluralism. There is a substantive difference between calls for democratic institutions and calls for democratic values. The fact that all of the opposition parties are calling for democratic institutions is significant. However, it should not be assumed that each of these groups adhere to democratic rules and institutions internally. As this study will show, even though all of the organizations are calling for democratic institutions they do not all adhere to democratic procedures internally. Table 2 provides an outline of which organizations are calling for values of pluralism and tolerance.

This paper makes several important contributions to the field. In developing a more precise empirical characterization of civil society organizations I aim to fill a gap in the literature. Rather than relying on confusing and contradictory understandings of civil society, I hope to offer a sharper description that enables scholars and policymakers to make better use of the

idea. In assessing democratic behavior of organizations I take apart the 'black box' of political parties to systematically evaluate whether these groups constitute 'schools of democracy'. By researching democratic behavior within political groups I provide the first systematic study of secular and Islamist parties, exploring parallels and differences between groups across important ideological divides in Egypt. In doing so this study merges two bodies of literature that have not spoken to each other: social movement and organization theories. Further, in my use of sources of funding as an indicator of democratic behavior I utilize an existing theory, Rentier State theory, in a unique way by applying it to an organization. It is my hope that this study will prove useful to policymakers and academic regional experts.

What is Civil Society?

Some generally agreed upon features for a civil society include a unified, stable state with an established legal system, separation from the state, and political institutions that allow for at least some freedom of assembly (Al-Sayyid 1993, Schwedler 1995, Zubaida 1992). Varshney (2002) defines civil society as "the part of our life that exists between the state on the one hand and families on the other, that allows people to come together for a whole variety of public activities…". Other studies define civil society more narrowly, focusing strictly on characterization of the organizations themselves. For example, Ibrahim (1998) defines them as "self-regulating volitional social formations, peacefully pursing a common interest…respecting the right of others to do the same…" Scholars

agree that civil society provides an area for group interaction where the characteristics essential to a democratic culture are developed.

Associations, as 'schools of democracy', have been assumed to promote democratic systems and check the power of the state (Tocqueville 1835, Lipset 1959, Putnam 1993, 2000, Diamond 1994, Stepan 2000, Warren 2001). They have been cited as key features for promoting civic education, trust, and democratic norms (Putnam 1993, 2000, Diamond 1994, Cohen and Rogers 1995, Warren 2001). As Tocqueville states, "[in associations] feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the human mind is developed…" (1835: 200). However, the causal process of these relationships has not been evaluated and it is not clear which civil society organizations contribute to these developments and which do not.

There is considerable debate regarding which organizations comprise civil society (Diamond 1994, Gellner 1991, Norton 1993, Putnam 1993, 2000, Varshney 2002, Warren 2001). Putnam (2000) differentiates between bridging organizations, groups that have inclusive attitudes toward potential members, and bonded organizations, groups that maintain exclusivity among its members. He argues that bonded groups cannot be considered part of civil society, yet he does not address their influence or popularity within general society. Hefner (2000) is somewhat unique in including religious groups within civil society. He defines civil society as "…the clubs, religious organizations, business groups, labor unions, human rights groups, and other associations located between the household and the state and organized on the basis of voluntarism and

mutuality" (23). Kamrava and Mora (1998) define civil society organizations as

"…self-organising [sic] and self-regulating groups with corporate identities that

are autonomous from the state…" (895). However, this view of civil society

incorporates organizations that are radical, violent, and, more specifically, not

civil.

Some civil society groups have been studied for their role in undermining

democratic systems. Berman (1997) points out that an active civil society helped

destabilize the democratic government of Weimar Germany and gave rise to the

Nazi party. Zubaida (1992) notes that Islamist organizations make up a thriving

arena of organizational life in Egypt and elsewhere in the region, yet these

groups are a far cry from the pluralistic, open forum for individual self-expression.

Rather, Zubaida finds the authoritarian relationship between these groups'

leaders to its members mimics that of the state to the masses. This suggests

further examination of the internal nature of civil society organizations is

necessary. Simply assuming that these groups are 'schools of democracy' is not

intellectually rigorous or empirically supported.

Instead of determining the presence or absence of civil society, I argue it

is better to examine the organizations comprising civil society. Specifically, these

groups should be evaluated for the characteristics civil society is assumed to

express: tolerance, pluralism, moderation, and activism, which I term democratic

behavior. Moving from prior definitions of civil society to the examination of

democratic behavior within groups enhances theories of civil society by helping

to determine whether its defining features, tolerance, pluralism, moderation, and

activism, travel outside of democratic states and across differing groups within society. It is my intention to examine individual organizations to clarify whether they are in fact 'schools of democracy'. That is, I intend to evaluate political groups to determine if their rhetoric and internal behavior is democratic.

Assessing Democratic Behavior

What is democratic behavior? Kamrava and Mora (1998) utilize the terms tolerance, trust, moderation, and accommodation in describing civil society organizations. Encarnacion (2003:4) states democratic culture involves "…tolerance for pluralism and dissent and increasing public spiritedness". For the sake of parsimony I merge these characteristics of civil society, tolerance, pluralism, moderation, and activism, and use the term democratic behavior.

I assess democratic behavior based on the internal procedures of the organization, their sources of funding, and their ideology. Building on existing classifications of organizations (Van Riper 1966, Etzioni 1975, Carper and Snizek 1980, Rich 1992, Wilson 1995), I assume two ideal types: democratic and non-democratic. The specifics of this typology are outlined within Table 3.

I determine democratic behavior using ideological commitments and procedural features. Ideology commitments are the group's beliefs and goals: do they call for democracy, human rights, civil and political freedoms? Procedural features represent the more day to day aspects of the group such as the decision-making process of the organization and the organization's sources of funding.

Other scholars tend to emphasize the causal power of one feature over another. Advocates of ideational approaches argue that organizations' ideological goals determine their behavior (Smelser 1963, Offe 1985, Pichardo 1997, Diamond 1994). They claim "[c]ollective goals set the criteria for deciding on collective actions" (Gamson 1990: 138). Yet, "[o]rganizational theorists suggest that finances often determine goals" (Sullivan, 1994: 25). In reality, there is likely a mutually reinforcing relationship between goals and processes. For example, an organization that espouses a highly pluralistic ideology, such as promoting human rights, may generate high democratic behavior. But there are cases where an organization, even while advocating pluralistic goals, will not generate high democratic behavior. Understanding the reason for the contradictory action is beyond the scope of this paper. My intention is merely to highlight the fact that calling for democracy – while significant– is not sufficient in calling an organization democratic.

Resource Mobilization Theory within the social movement literature argues that procedural features (such as voting rules) and resources (in terms of money and members) determine movements' formation and tactics (Oberschall 1973, McCarthy and Zald 1987, Tilly 1978). I rely strongly on this theory, assessing the tactics and behavior of organizations to the extent that I am able. However, Resource Mobilization Theory does not take into account the role of ideology. This study bridges the gap between scholarship focused exclusively on ideas and that focused exclusively on resources. Studying an organization's ideology in addition to its internal features more accurately reflects real world

phenomena by capturing all facets of organizational life. Studies that examine either calls for democracy or procedural features of organizations are missing key components of organizational behavior. One of the contributions of this study is its merger of organizational and social movement literature to use both approaches, ideological and procedural elements, to evaluate how groups behave.

I utilize the following indices in evaluating democratic behavior among political organizations: (1) calls by the organization for democracy (Kamrava and Mora 1998, Wickham 2004), (2) internal procedures of the organization and (3) an organization's source of funding comprise an indirect indicator of democratic behavior (Mahdavy 1994, Shambayati 1994, Londregan and Poole 1996, Vandewalle 1998, Ross 2001). The following discussion reviews these conditions.

An organization's commitment to democracy can, to some degree, be determined by whether or not they advocate a democratic form of government. Some argue that calling for democracy may be a strategic ploy rather than a reflection of democratic values (Pipes 2003); however, this tactic should not diminish the potential effects of their calls for democracy. Calling for democracy may be strategic in the sense that it increases member and outsiders expectations about the organization's willingness to follow through on democratizing. Leaders who publicly call for democracy make a commitment to their membership and to others in society who are evaluating the group. These organizations risk a certain amount of costs, loss of reputation or a drop in

membership, if they do not adhere to their commitments.

Internal procedures also help in evaluating a group's commitment to democracy. An organization that allows for debate and dialogue before settling on a policy exhibits more commitment to democratic values than an organization where the leadership sets the course of the party without any consultation or feedback from its members. Further, a group that allows dissent and disagreement displays an even higher commitment to democratic values than one where members and leaders are expected to fully support the party line. Groups that have an open membership policy where anyone can hold a leadership position are also considered to be more democratic than groups who have discriminatory policies, for example not allowing people to join or acquire a position of leadership because of religion or gender.

The indirect feature in assessing democratic behavior is the source of organizations' resources and is rooted primarily in rentier state literature. Scholars of rentier state theory (Russett 1964, Mahdavy 1994, Shambayati 1994, Londregan and Poole 1996, Vandewalle 1998, Ross 2001) argue that a rentier state "receives a substantial portion of its income in the form of external rents" (Shambayati 1994: 308). States are able to raise the funds they need abroad, circumventing the need for internal sources of funding such as taxes. The result is a system of 'no taxation, no representation' where the government does not feel responsible to its citizens and the citizens have no sense of ownership in the government.

I transform this state focused theory to an organizational level. Whether

the organization's money is acquired primarily from external sources, such as a financier, or internal sources, membership dues, impacts their commitment to their membership. Organizations that rely primarily on membership dues are theorized to be more likely to listen to members' concerns and act in accordance with their demands. Further, members who pay dues are more likely to demand and obtain leverage on organizational activities.

It can be argued that centralization of power is necessary for the survival of a party and therefore is not a credible indicator of an organization's democratic behavior. Political parties cannot afford to decentralization if it means the group will be torn apart with internal disagreements or will remain in a constant state of policy indecision. While this is a valid argument it eschews several key points. First, maintaining centralized power does not necessarily prevent a parties' demise. A highly centralized party is no less likely to split apart than a decentralized one. In fact, as the case of *al-Wafd* will show, the party imploded under conditions that can best be called authoritarian. Second, the development of multiple parties – and a civil society – to some extent requires breakaway groups to form and organizations to split. This is not automatically a sign of weakness but may be an indication of ideological or political development. Finally, the strength of an organization may, to some extent, depend on how well the leadership controls its base. However, this is not an indication of democracy and it does not bode well for an organization seeking to be a 'school of democracy'.

At this point it is important to pause and discuss the role religion plays in

some organizations and in assessing democratic behavior. Religious influence is a factor that has been largely under-studied in political science scholarship. Social movement literature discusses the role religion plays in generating and sustaining activism (Piven and Cloward 1977, McAdam 1986, Buechler 1990, Amenta and Zylan 1991, Pulido 1991, Staggenborg 1991, Mooney and Majka 1995, Kearns 1996, Smith 1995, 1996, Peek et al 1997, Katzenstein 1998, Bates 2000, Mirola 2003). Yet this literature is focused primarily on religious organizations functioning within a secular, liberal democratic setting.

Religion has been referred to as facilitating social movements due to shared beliefs among groups (Snow et al. 1986, Pichardo 1997) and existing social networks (McAdam 1984, Tarrow 1998). However, scholars have only just recently begun to study religiously based organizations as social movements themselves[2]. Studying the impact religion has on the nature of these organizations has only just recently begun. In particular, the case of Islamists, representing both a political and a religious organization, stands out as a distinct case necessitating further research.

Studying religious organizations within authoritarian regimes provides needed information about the interactive role of organizations and religion within these systems. However, it has not yet provided answers to pertinent questions about the relationship of these organizations to society. For example, whether religious organizations— specifically Islamist ones—encourage democratic behavior is still unresolved. This approach enables an answer to that question.

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[2] A good source for understanding Islamic organizations as social movements is <u>Islamic Activism A Social Movement Theory Approach</u>, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz (2004).

Current scholarly research is occupied with questions about the compatibility of Islam and democracy. A brief discussion of Islam is important before addressing this relationship. Islam is not a unified, cohesive religion. There are numerous sects with differing traditions and codes of law. Even within sects, and across them, Islamic scholars offer different interpretations of the *Qur'an* and *Shari'a*. Some of these organizations may hold highly pluralistic ideals, cooperating with non-Islamic organizations and promoting basic liberties for all individuals. However, there are also Islamic organizations that do not behave in this matter and instead are highly exclusive and in some cases violent.

Previous scholarship has argued that Islamists organizations and Islam more broadly is incompatible with democratic ideals (Kramer 1993, Huntington 1996). However, this argument is problematic for the reasons mentioned above and it has not been rigorously tested. A similar hypothesis about Catholicism, because of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, has been proven false. Given that Islam is by no means a unified or hierarchically organized religion it seems unlikely that this argument will prove resilient in an Islamic context either. This suggests that there is nothing inherent in Islam that makes it incompatible with democratic behavior. In studying democratic behavior in organizations, particularly religious ones, individual group's ideologies and procedures must be examined. Furthermore, the behavior of these organizations cannot be expected to apply broadly to other religious organizations; rather, each group must be analyzed on its own.

This debate about the compatibility of Islam and democracy leads to questions about the role Islamist organizations may play in the process of democratization. Are the Islamists who call for democracy sincere? Can these Islamists be the forerunners for a democratic system? Those who argue against the idea of moderate Islamists oppose relying on these organizations to bring in democracy. Missing from the debate is whether the secular political organizations– these are groups whose platform is not based on religious tenets -- are any more democratically minded. Few if any research has focused on the secular political parties to determine if these groups are any more effective as 'schools of democracy' for their members than their Islamist counterparts.

Little research has been done on the behavior of secular parties. This is surprising given that "they have become by default the organizations that the West counts on to promote democracy in the Arab World" (Ottoway and Hamzawy, 2007: 3). Yet, it is widely acknowledged that secular parties are the least popular within the region. Secular parties have a historical role in the political arena which will be discussed shortly; however, they currently offer the public little more than vague promises of reform. Whether they provide their membership with something more has not yet been investigated.

Secular party platforms have either been plagiarized by the regime or become politically out-dated. For example, *Wafd*'s calls for economic liberalization have been taken up by the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) (Langohr 2000, Amrani 2006). *Tagammu*'s Leftist policies for workers and peasants are muted by the regime's requirement that these groups receive fifty

percent representation in the People's Assembly and other councils. Ottoway and Hamzawy (2007) observe the secular parties have an "ambiguity of identity". These parties' platforms have been usurped by the regime, taking away the policies around which these groups would mobilize, leading to unclear messages and an unclear program.

Further, while some of these groups are recognized by the government and operate somewhat freely, this recognition comes at a cost. Many view these parties as a "loyal opposition", co-opted by the regime and unable to function in their role as a true opposition. When asked if the opposition parties were truly oppositional, Abeer Allam, a journalist with the New York Times, responded,

> I really don't think they are serious. They talk about government corruption
> and I don't see any of them have any vision for Egypt [sic]. They are content
> to complain and wine and dine with the government (personal interview July 15, 2004).

Fear of losing their legal status, right to publish a newspaper, and other perks associated with recognition, makes secular parties less outspoken in their demands for change and calls for reforming the government. This has been observed by the parties' unwillingness to work together and form an oppositional coalition. Ellen Lust-Okar (2004, 2005) finds that authoritarian regimes are able to manipulate the opposition by recognizing some parties while keeping others illegal. In granting legal status to some but not all groups the regime is able to play the interests of these parties against each other – preventing them from uniting against the regime.

This finding is borne out in the Egyptian political scene. Despite the fact that nearly all opposition parties call for democracy, an end to emergency laws and political reform there has yet to be any significant cooperation across party lines. Interestingly, efforts at cross-ideological cooperation have been initiated by Islamists. These efforts typically fail as the secular parties seem to fear the Islamists organizations more than the authoritarian regime (Lust-Okar 2004). Stacher (2004) notes, "[t]he parties propose different ideological platforms and assume it is more beneficial to stress these differences as they compete for the *government's* attention" (emphasis added). The legal opposition vies for government positions rather than working with the illegal opposition to effect a change.

Leadership disputes and bickering have preoccupied the parties with internal affairs at the expense of organizational strength, outreach, and recruitment. These internal disputes have gone as far as to permanently rupture the parties themselves – a welcome scenario from the government's perspective. The People's Party Council, the government agency that has the authority to recognize and de-legitimate political parties, uses internal leadership disputes as a reason to freeze party activities (Stacher 2004). Regardless of whether these parties behave in a democratic matter, a frozen party certainly is not capable of being a school for democracy.

History of the Political Party System

In order to analyze and assess democratic behavior in Egyptian political

parties it is important to first understand the history of these organizations.

Political parties in Egypt can be found prior to Egyptian independence from

England. In fact *Wafd*, with a liberal platform and advocating Egyptian

independence, is among the oldest political party, founded in 1919.

Following the Free Officers' coup of 1952 a single-party[3] , the Liberation

Rally, was established and opposition politics ceased. During Sadat's rule Law

40/1977 was passed which allowed the re-emergence of multiple political parties

(Kassem 1999, Stacher 2004). However, this should not give the impression that

political parties operated freely. Rather, in 1976 Sadat announced a move to a

multiparty system by splitting the existing political organization, the Arab Socialist

Union -- renamed from the Liberation Rally – into three different ideological

platforms: left, right, and center (Kassem 1999). One year later Sadat

announced Law 40/1977, formalizing the split as three legally recognized parties

with the government establishing the center platform as its own political party,

later to emerge as the National Democratic Party.

When Law 40/1977 was passed numerous requirements effectively

restricted the formation of additional political parties. These restrictions are still

in effect and hinder the development of political parties and other organizations

to date. For example, a party cannot be legalized if its platform resembles that of

an existing party, if the party existed prior to the Free Officers Coup (a clear

attempt to restrict the old *Wafd* party), if the organization has any financial

contributions from abroad, or if the party's platform is religious (an attempt to

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[3] Originally this single party was not considered a "party" as Nasser opposed the idea of
parliamentary government and debates. His intention was for the Liberation Rally to serve as a
mass movement (Kassem 1999).

restrict the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist

organizations). Interestingly, the parties' law was amended in 1979 to also

require parties to be in accordance with *Shari'a*, Islamic religious law, the

revolution, national unity, and social peace, i.e. no parties based on class

(Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1978-1979). Most recent changes reflect the greater

threat of Islamists rather than Marxists. In March 2007 constitutional amendment

5 was revised to prohibit the formation of any party based on religion but also

prevent any "political activity…within a religious frame of reference" (Brown,

Dunne, 2007) – clearly targeting the Muslim Brotherhood.

Sadat's goal in launching a multiparty structure was to simultaneously

open the door to political debate and dissent while manufacturing a system that

the government fully controlled. His aim was to create a multi-party system not

for these parties to come to power; rather, it was for "constructive" purposes of

criticizing the government" (Legum, Shaked, and Dishon 1978-1979). Opposition

parties in Egypt were born from an authoritarian government for the specific

purpose of creating an illusion of pluralism.

Secular opposition parties may exist but they owed this existence to the

very government they were supposed to be in opposition to. This is evidenced

by the fact that Sadat actually selected the leadership for each ideological wing

of these soon-to-be-parties (Kassem 1999). Finally, by creating political parties

from the top down, rather than allowing parties to develop naturally from the

demands and mobilization of the public, these opposition parties were

disconnected from the people at the outset. In creating these parties and their

leaders the government fashioned its own opposition, leaving the emergent

secular opposition to begin its political life from a position of weakness.

The history of the Muslim Brotherhood is a very different story than that of

the secular political parties.   Hasan al-Banna founded The Brotherhood in 1928

offering an Islamic response to the political and social problems facing the Middle

East under British control. With a goal of creating an Islamic state

(Esposito1991) and freeing Islamic countries from foreign powers (Abed-Kotob,

1995) The Brotherhood became a popular counterpart to the Arab Nationalist

approach of secularist pan-Arabism.

Under the ideological influence of Sayyid Qutb, a *Salafi*[4] thinker who

expanded acceptable forms of violence from rebellion against Britain to include

actions against fellow Muslims, the Muslim Brotherhood was initially a militant

organization. The Brotherhood took part in violent activities such as the

assassination of a judge and police chief in 1948, the Egyptian Prime Minister

Fahmy al-Nuqrashy in 1949, and the 1954 attempted assassination of Nasser

(Abed-Kotob 1995). Not surprisingly, following the Free Officer's revolution and

Nasser's rise to power the Muslim Brotherhood faced persecution.

Although denied legal status as an organization, the Muslim Brotherhood

was given more political space to maneuver following the establishment of the

multiparty system. This was largely seen as an attempt by Sadat to split the

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[4] *Salafi* is a revivalist movement in Islamic thought that encompasses a wide range of ideas about Islam. Some *Salafi* thinkers call for renewal and a rejection of imitation of the West and an internal process of reform while others advocate a stricter stance that actions not directly allowed in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* are forbidden. Since the 1970s the stricter Wahhabi version of the *Salafi* movement has dominated; however, the movement is not limited exclusively to this approach.

political opposition; politically active and vocal students were torn between the Islamists and the Leftists. During this period, The Brotherhood was able to print publications such as *al-Da'wa* that were critical of the government (Legum 1977-1978). They attempted to influence the government to enact laws such as the prohibition of usury (Al-Akhbar 16 Feb 1978), amputation for theft (Al-Ahram 10 Aug 1977), and the death penalty for apostasy (Le Monde 6 Sept 1977) but the government refused to enact these laws. The Brotherhood did succeed in getting the People's Assembly to pass a law flogging Muslims for trading or drinking alcohol (Al-Jumhuriyya 10 Feb 1978).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the Egyptian government attempted to look more Islamic. In August of 1979 a committee was set up to establish a supreme Islamic council for all Islamic activities to be united and financed by the state (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1979-80). In May of 1980 a referendum was held to change article 2 of the constitution from stating that *Shari'a* was "a" principal source of legislation to read that *Shari'a* was "the" principal source of legislation (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1979-80). The Law for the Protection of Ethics, a moral code, was established that, among other things, established a court of ethics for opposition to religion (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1979-80).

Despite these seemingly pro-Islamic policies, Islamists continued to oppose the regime, sometimes violently. An Islamist presence increased on university campuses and in social welfare organizations. Sectarian tensions grew between Muslims and Copts resulting in a crackdown on Islamists in

September of 1981. Regardless of how individual groups behaved, Sadat understood that Islamists were a threat to his leadership and he initiated an anti-Islamist policy. He began to single out the Muslim Brotherhood with harsh language and called all violent Islamist organizations an offshoot of the Brotherhood (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-81). Yet, the Brotherhood was not a violent organization. The militant Islamist organizations at this time included Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami and Jama'at al'Takfir wal-Hijra.

The government responded to the Islamists, including the Brotherhood, with arrests and detentions of thousands, the closing of newspapers, and religious associations, private mosques were taken over by the state, and publications were banned. Following the assassination of Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981 by Khalid Islambuli an Islamist who shouted, "I have killed the Pharaoh and I do not fear death" the government ceased to tolerate Islamist opposition. The political space previously granted to the Islamists began to be restricted.

During these times the Muslim Brotherhood was somewhat split between two ideological-organizational views. On the one side were members such as Sayf al-Islam al-Banna, son of Hasan al-Banna, Muhammad Nasr Ashur, former member of Parliament, and Parliamentarian, Salah Abu Isma'il who advocated an overtly political tactic of joining a national coalition in opposition to the government. The more popular viewpoint was connected with the activities of *al-Da'wa*: preaching, educating, and publishing works in order to promote an Islamic society (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1979-80). In fact, the Muslim

Brotherhood recognized the need to contest elections and run candidates in

elections even in 1941 (Esposito and Piscatori, 1991). This tension of *al-Da'wa*

versus a party would continue within the Brotherhood; however, as of the early

1990s the leadership recognized the need to organize as a political party while

still maintaining the importance of *al-Da'wa.*

Prior to recognizing the need for establishing a political organization

structure; the Brotherhood renounced the use of violence in obtaining its goal of

establishing an Islamic state. Currently, the Brotherhood denounces violent

activities and promotes change via constitutional reforms. Since 1984 the

Muslim Brotherhood exercised its popularity—and organizational skill-- to win

leadership seats among professional syndicates, such as the Engineers,

Doctors, and Lawyers, and student groups on university campuses (Wickham,

2002). Further, the Brotherhood has formed electoral alliances with secular

political parties, such as *Wafd* and the Liberals (Abed-Kotob, 1995). As Abed-

Kotob notes, "…the Muslim Brotherhood stands out as a politically centrist and

moderate group, representing mainstream political Islam" (1995:321).

Despite their illegal status the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has

established itself as the most popular oppositional organization, able to mobilize

vast numbers to protest and vote in elections. Using the framework of a political

party, electoral institutions, and parliamentary blocs the Muslim Brotherhood has

emerged as a fierce oppositional party in Egypt. In the face of the government

engineered weakness facing secular opposition parties these groups have

managed to survive -- and are even viewed by the West as an alternative to the

Islamists and the regime. Given that these parties have managed to survive –

and in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood to thrive – in such a restricted

environment makes them worthy of further attention and study.

Although each of these organizations holds a different ideological stance,

which will be discussed shortly, they share several goals that are outlined in their

platforms and seen through party statements. Party leadership and literature

articulates a demand for political liberalization with their calls to end emergency

laws. Some of the groups, such as *Ghad* and *Wasat* more clearly express a goal

of pluralism, while others' references to reform are more vague, yet all of the

organizations studied in this paper hold a commitment to political change and,

most important, claim to support democracy. Given that each oppositional party

calls for reform and specifically for democracy it worth investigating the sincerity

of these calls.

Yet judging the sincerity of these statements is a somewhat Herculean

task. How do you determine an organization's honesty? How do you measure a

statement for sincerity? Is it enough that the statement is made or is its

genuineness determined based on the frequency of the statement?

Determining sincerity is difficult; however, I offer a solution that is a first

step toward its assessment. I contend that how an organization behaves

internally is a good indicator of how they may behave once in power. As such,

calls for democracy can be believed if the group acts in a democratic manner.

The indices I use for determining democratic behavior are the following: while

calling for democracy and pluralism nationally do these groups allow for voting

and dissent internally? Are policies and platforms generated from the feedback and efforts of the membership or are they applied hierarchically from the leadership? Is the leadership determined from backroom deals and politicking or from clear procedures and voting? Are finances derived from a broad base, such as membership dues and grassroots efforts, or from a solitary benefactor such as another country or an international NGO? Internal behavior may provide an insight into which organizations calling for democracy may actually mean what they say.

Organizations' Democratic Behavior

Al-Wafd Al-Jedid

Party History

Wafd, meaning delegation, is the oldest political party in Egypt today with its founding in 1919. As stated previously, the *Wafd* party existed prior to the Free Officers' Coup while Egypt was still a British protectorate. Among its political aims were Egyptian independence, liberalism, and a liberal economic policy. During the "liberal" period while Egypt was nominally independent, yet denied full sovereignty to pursue Egyptian national interests, the *Wafd* party was the most popular political organization in Egypt until the 1930s and 1940s.   As a leader in the independence movement its founders were exiled to Malta as a result of anti-British activities, sparking mass protests and pro-independence rallies (Vatikiotis, 1969). *Wafd* became a powerful organization; the governing party in power and second in power only to the executive body of the king

despite some episodes of rule by decree and rule by the Constitutional party.

Following the ban on political parties and the emergence of pluralism during the Sadat era the *Wafd* party attempted to re-emerge as a political force in Egyptian politics. Yet the political parties' law denied party status if an organization existed prior to the Free Officers' coup. Circumventing this technicality, members of parliament who ran as Independents declared their allegiance with the "New *Wafd*" in mid-1977 (Legum 1977-78). New *Wafd* became the largest opposition party with 22 People's Assembly members, 224 founding members, 118 workers and fellahs (Legum 1977-78).

However, following the party's public statement to "put an end to the exclusive powers of the president of the republic" (Al-Ahram 6 Jan 1978, 5 and 11 Feb 1978) and deputy Shaykh 'Ashur Nasr's calls for overthrowing Sadat, he lost parliamentary immunity and Assembly membership (Legum 1977-78). In May of 1978 Sadat announced a "corrective revolution" against the opposition which stated, among other restrictions, that anyone who held party membership or worked in the government prior to 1952 was prohibited from party membership and was to be tried for crimes against democracy, morality, and liberty (Legum 1977-78). Further, in the late 1970s the government announced that the *Wafd* and the Progressive Unionist Socialist Alignment Party – a socialist organization – conspired against the regime (Al-Ahram 21 May 1978). The New *Wafd* party was dissolved and its Assembly members returned to their Independent status.

Following a legal battle for recognition, legal status was eventually granted by the courts to the New *Wafd* party in February of 1984 (Shaked, Dishon 1983-

84). They emerged as the legal opposition party with the largest numbers and were "pluralistic…open to all save those with destructive intentions" (Siraj al-Din leader, ibid: p. 355). That year *Wafd* and the Muslim Brotherhood formed an electoral alliance (Kassem 1999); enabling Brotherhood members to run for office backed by the title of a legal party and granting *Wafd* the benefits of the Brotherhood's popularity.

During the *Wafd*-Brotherhood alliance the *Wafd* party retained the highest number of opposition seats in the Assembly. For example, in the 1984 People's Assembly election the other legal opposition parties failed to meet the required 8% threshold to obtain seats; only *Wafd* exceeded this minimum threshold (Kassem, 1999). As a result, the votes for the other opposition parties were re-distributed to the National Democratic Party, granting them a total of 87% of the vote. *Wafd* emerged as the only opposition party with a presence in the People's Assembly, 12.95% of the vote, or 58 total seats (Shaked, Dishon 1983-84). Among these seats, 8 of them were officially for Muslim Brotherhood members. As Tilmisani, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, stated "[*Wafd* is] no longer secularist" (al-Anba Kuwait 5 March 1984, al-Sharq al-Aswat 19 April 1984 in Shaked, Dishon).

However, this Islamist-Secular alliance dissolved as *Wafd* supporters became disillusioned with their party's increasing Islamist stance in the following year. As Islamist activities continued to grow throughout the country the Muslim Brotherhood began to assert its policy stances more powerfully (Rabinovich and Shaked, 1984-5). Muslim Brotherhood-*Wafd* tensions came to a forefront over

the issue of *Shari'a.* While the Brotherhood wished to see *Shari'a* fully

implemented into society immediately, *Wafd* and other opposition parties

supported an approach of gradual implementation (Rabinovich and Shaked

1984-5). The resulting friction led the Muslim Brotherhood People's Assembly

member Salah Abu Isma'il to suspend his *Wafd* membership on the grounds that

"the party [*Wafd*] was not doing enough to further the Islamic cause" (Al-Ahar 28

Jan 1984).

As Islamist sentiments were on the rise throughout the state government

pressure on Islamists increased. The government began to attack *Wafd* in

particular among the opposition parties and charged that they had been "hijacked

by the Muslim Brotherhood" (al-Akhbar 3 April 1984 as printed in Shaked, Dishon

1983-4). Facing internal tensions and government pressure the *Wafd* party

chose to end its alliance with the Brotherhood. This can be seen most clearly

during the 1995 parliamentary elections where *Wafd* leader Abd al-Aziz

Muhammad stated "it is not in our interests to cooperate with an organization that

is targeted by the authorities" (Kassam, 1995: 110).

Ideology

New *Wafd* advocates democracy, political, economic, and social reform,

an end to emergency laws, and human rights. Specifically, their platform calls for

an independent judiciary, democracy based on a multi-party system, developing

the public sector and enhancing the role of the private sector. The party's five

main principles include: religious tolerance, revival of Egyptian nationalism,

implementation of democracy, a free economy, and social justice (Samaan and Walker 2004).

A superficial look at *Wafd* party's platform, statements, and history of cross-ideological cooperation leads to the assumption that *Wafd* is committed to democracy. Yet closer examinations of the inner workings of the organization challenge this assumption. Internal party behavior is autocratic and intolerant of diverse opinions. Unfortunately, I was unable to interview any members or leaders of the *Wafd* party as my research in Egypt coincided with internal party problems to be discussed shortly. However, based on secondary literature and interviews with Egyptain journalists I am able to assess *Wafd*'s democratic behavior and thus its commitment to democracy.

Organization Structure

Elections

The *Wafd* party holds elections for its officers (Arab Decision al Al-Wafd web page), yet the fairness of these elections is in dispute given the numerous critiques of Nomaan Gomaa's rise to the chairmanship (Samaan 2003, Samaan and Walker 2004). As Abeer Allam, a New York Times journalist, states, "internal elections [in *Wafd* are] like Egyptian elections…lots of twisting arms. Many people said this election was not fair (personal interview July 15, 2004)." This is best illustrated through recent events affecting *Wafd*.

Controversies

In the December 2005 parliamentary elections the *Wafd* party won only six seats. Monir Fakhri Abdel Nour, vice-chairman of the party, made statements to

the press to the effect that the *Wafd* party would need to change its leadership to perform better in future elections; a clear sign to the membership that it was time to vote for someone other than Nomaan Gomaa. Compounding matters, party chairman Nomaan Gomaa ran an unsuccessful campaign against Mubarak in the presidential elections earlier that year, winning less than three percent of the vote (Hamzawy 2005). Following these defeats, the party split into two factions – those backing Nour and those behind Gomaa.

Gomaa then dismissed the vice-chairman in a decision that was later reversed by the party's political board later that month. Incidentally, at the same time that the political board overruled Nour's dismissal, they also amended the party by-laws to reduce the powers of the chairman. In January 2006 the party's supreme committee removed Nomaan Gomaa from the party and from his position as chairman and role with the party newspaper and replaced him with an interim chairman (Arabic News Jan 2006). Gomaa contested the party ruling – which also banned him from the party headquarters --by challenging the decision in front of Egypt's prosecutor general (Associated Press 2006). To be clear, Nomaan Gomaa looked to a government institution backed by the ruling party to resolve an internal power dispute within an opposition party.

Following additional court appeals, the general assembly of the party voted to dismiss Gomaa from being chairman. Gomaa and his supporters then blockaded themselves in party headquarters where they opened fire on the rival faction in an attempt to gain back control of the party (Asharq alwasat Feb 2006). Nomaan Gomaa is currently serving time in prison and, as a result of this

acrimonious split within the party; it is unlikely that the *Wafd* party will be cohesive enough to offer itself as a realistic opposition party for sometime. In addition to this incident, as chairman Nomaan Gomaa has fired representatives – even those holding seats in parliament – for differing with the party's political message (Labidi, 2003).

Sources of Funding

The party's source of funding is a combination of internal and external sources. Internally the party relies on membership dues from among its estimated half a million members who are pulled from primarily the upper and business classes (Al-Ahram Oct 1995).   Dues may run as high as LE 5,000 for senior members (Al-Ahram Oct 1995) while externally it receives funds in the form of donations and from sales of their newspaper *al-Wafd* (Arab Decision *al-Wafd* web page). The party's publication likely generates substantial income for the party as it has been published daily since 1987 with a circulation of 125,000 (Post, 1987). As a legally recognized political party, *Wafd* also receives an income from the government (Stacher 2002). Financially, the *Wafd* party is not reliant on their members and this may help explain the disconnection between the leadership and its members; however, determining causation is outside the focus of this paper.

Analysis

Gomaa's policies of removing fellow members, firing journalists and closing down party papers (Labidi, 2003), and banning other party leaders from speaking with the press (Samaan and Walker 2004) make the *Wafd* party's

commitment to democracy questionable to say the least. Their internal behavior is autocratic and, as journalist Abeer Allam notes of party leader Nomaan Gomma, "he is another Mubarak" (personal interview July 15, 2004). Mustafa Al-Tawil was elected as chairman by *Wafd* 's General Assembly (4 April 2006 Egypt State Information Services) and recognized by the Committee for Political Parties Affairs on February 10, 2006 (Reuters April 2006). The relationship the *Wafd* membership has experienced with its leadership in the past does not evidence strong democratic behavior.

Unfortunately, there is limited information about the internal actions of *Wafd* under Al-Tawil. Until further information can be obtained the actions – and intentions – of the *Wafd* party remain unknown. However, I am not inclined to expect much action -- democratic or otherwise -- from the party for sometime. The dramatic events leading to the end of Nomaan Gomaa's chairmanship have critically handicapped the party leaving it stymied and in need of internally recovery. This process will take some time and I expect the party is currently undergoing a period of change and perhaps internal evaluation. It will be interesting to observe the effects of this process and to see what lessons were learned by the party and whether or not it will bode well for their democratic behavior.

Tagammu

Party History

The National Progressive Unionist Party, known as *Tagammu*, meaning

rally, was founded during Sadat's experiment with pluralism from above. *Tagammu* first emerged as the left-wing platform within the Arab Socialist Union in 1976 (Kassem 1999, Realism on the Left Nov 1995). In 1977 it achieved party status and with only two members in the People's Assembly it was largely seen as a scapegoat for the regime (Legum 1977-8). Later that same year the government argued that *Tagammu* and the *Wafd* party jointly conspired against the government and froze *Tagammu*'s activities which were resumed on June 11 (Legum 1977-8).

Tagammu emerged as a collection of Nasserists, Arab Nationalists, and Marxists under the banner of "freedom, socialism and unity" (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). These different factions frequently competed for top positions within the party and operated independently outside of the party framework (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Despite internal disputes *Tagammu* maintained party unity through the work of its chairman, Khaled Mohieddin, who was a leading member of the Free Officers Movement and garnered much respect (Realism on the Left Nov 1995).

Tagammu can be seen as a socialist-nationalist organization. It supported, and claims to still support, the 1952 Revolution, Gamal Abdel-Nasser, and national independence. *Tagammu* believes in upholding Egypt's Arab identity and Arab unity (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). They hold a commitment to democratic rights, freedom, and respect for religions (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Until 1981 when Sadat was assassinated *Tagammu* maintained a fierce opposition to the government (Al-Ahram 2-8 Nov 1995), at various times

throughout the seventies its newspaper was shut down, some of its members arrested, and the government claimed that *Tagammu* cooperated with Communists abroad (Legum 1977-8).

Internal divisions were becoming more problematic for *Tagammu*. Seeking to unite its divided membership under common ground *Tagammu* established an anti-Camp David Accord platform. The party also called on all opposition and nationalist forces to unite and demand the government's resignation and create a new government that tolerated political freedoms (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1979-80).   Despite these attempts to maintain unity internal strife continued to present challenges.   For example, the fights over leadership positions between Marxists and Nasserites became so contentious that the party's Second General Congress was cancelled: no internal elections were held in 1981, no candidates were in the People's Assembly, and the newspaper had not been published since the summer of 1978 (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-1). Eventually many members left the party and established the Nasserite party in 1983 (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1982-3).

Although *Tagammu* was suffering internal problems they maintained an active opposition to the regime. *Tagammu* boycotted the September 1980 consultative council elections[5] in protest over the new electoral requirement that candidates receive an absolute majority from the public (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-1). *Tagammu* demonstrated at the Israeli site of the international book fair in 1981 resulting in the arrest of ten people (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-1). *Tagammu*, along with a few other parties and professional syndicates, also held

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[5] The Consultative or Shura Council is the upper house of parliament.

protests marking the anniversary of normalization with Israel (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-1). This activism encouraged harsh reprisals from the government that resulted in the arrests of many opposition leaders, including leaders of *Tagammu* (Legum, Shaked, Dishon 1980-1).

Despite these reprisals *Tagammu* continued to actively oppose the government until the 1990s when the party underwent several internal changes. First, *Tagammu* began to moderate its highly socialist stand after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Hussein Abdel-Razek, a member of *Tagammu*'s central committee notes, "[t]here is definitely a trend towards a more practical approach…[w]e can no longer call for nationalisation or oppose privatisation [sic]" (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Among other things, the current party platform calls for building up an independent national economy; justice in the distribution of national income and services; and combating corruption (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). *Tagammu* even dropped the word "socialist" from its platform in 1995 (Langohr 2000). As Secretary Genera Rifaat El-Said said, "We cannot call for socialism at this stage because we do not have a clear definition of the term or how it could be applied" (Realism on the Left 2-8 Nov 1995). As of the mid-1990s, *Tagammu* advocates reforming the public sector and does not make any statement about its privatization (Realism on the Left Nov 1995).

Second, *Tagammu* took on a harsh anti-Islamist stance, going so far as to include in their platform the "rejection of religious extremism" (Egypt State

Information Services). Interestingly, *Tagammu*'s platform against religious

extremists includes the Muslim Brotherhood despite the fact that the Brotherhood

has renounced violence, operates within the existing political institutions, and

even shares some goals with *Tagammu*, such as social and economic justice.

During an interview with Rif'at Al-Said, current leader of *Tagammu*, I asked him

whether he had ever worked with the Muslim Brotherhood for these shared

goals. He said *Tagammu* has not and that "we are considered the most severe

enemies of the Muslim Brotherhood…because of their extremist attitudes…we

are secular" (personal interview July 19, 2004). In a more recent interview Al-

Sa'id spoke about the Brotherhood saying, "[h]ow can I possibly accept a

movement that rejects the future and looks back towards the past?" (Al-Mihwar

interview 2008). There is speculation that *Tagammu* has adopted this vehement

anti-Islamic, anti-Muslim Brotherhood position to curry favor with the regime (Al

Ahram 21 Dec 2005). This relates to Lust-Okar's (2004, 2005) argument that

political incentives are manipulated by the authoritarian regime to discourage

opposition party alliances or even friendly relations.

Third, *Tagammu* has become less critical of the regime and even seems

to pacify the government more. This also reinforces Lust-Okar's (2004, 2005)

argument that legally recognized opposition parties will appease the authoritarian

for fear of losing their privileged status. For example, while other opposition

parties chose to boycott the 1990 elections, *Tagammu* was the only opposition

party to field candidates (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Rather than oppose

Mubarak's 1999 reelection referendum *Tagammu* merely abstained from the vote

(Langohr 2000). When I asked Secretary-General Rifaat El-Said about his party's relationship with the government he responded," They offer dialogue and we accept… We continue dialogue…" (personal interview July 19, 2004) – this is a sharp deviation from the vehement opposition *Tagammu* expressed in the 1980s. Rifaat El-Said notes that *Tagammu*'s policies toward the regime have changed, "[w]e cannot deal with [President Hosni] Mubarak in the same way we used to deal with Sadat. Sadat suppressed us fiercely. But as this is no longer the case, we have to change too" (Realism on the Left Nov 1995).

This move away from staunch opposition to the government may have left *Tagammu* appearing too close to the regime. In an apparent effort to challenge this impression, Hussein Abdel-Razeq, a senior *Tagammu* member and head of the party's political office states "[w]e are the only political party that has in the last year [2002] organised rallies not just in solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada and against the occupation of Iraq, but also on local issues such as the Unified Labour Law, passed by Parliament this year, and the rise in the prices of basic commodities," (Farag, Al Ahram 2003). Despite this activism *Tagammu* registered a turnout of 1,000 people for internal party elections in 1998 (Farag, 2003). *Tagammu*'s performance in Egypt's general elections reflects their unpopularity. Despite being the only opposition party to run candidates in the 1990 elections only five of the thirty three won seats (Realism on the Left Nov 1995, Langohr 2000). In the 2000 elections, *Tagammu* ran sixty one candidates and gained only six seats (Egyptian State Information Services). As Abdel-

Ghaffar Shukr, a leading *Tagammu* member, stated "Over the past years the *Tagammu* has been turned into a government tail" (Farag, 2003).

According to Langohr (2000), government restrictions on labor unions prevent *Tagammu* from having access to what would otherwise be their "natural constituency – the Egyptian workers". However, given the dramatic change in *Tagammu*'s message, as well as in their actions, whether they have a natural constituency is unclear. Salah Eissa, the editor in chief of the weekly Al-Qahira and prominent party leader states, "the platform is self-contradictory…it reflects someone who wants to get out of his old clothes but does not have an alternative yet" (Al Ahram Sept 2000). Even Hussein Abdel-Razek notes that the party has lost some of its appeal and that members are divided over how to act toward the government (Realism on the Left Nov 1995).

Ideology

Tagammu has positioned itself ideologically as the left of center and as a party advocating a third alternative to the status quo or the Muslim Brotherhood. This third way is for democracy and change (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). In fact, their slogan reads "[c]hange in response to the people's will - against oppression, corruption and terrorism; for justice, progress and democracy" (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). Of course whether or not *Tagammu* would establish a democracy were they to obtain power remains to be seen.

Tagammu's ideological stance is somewhat inchoate as they have not articulated how they wish to achieve their goals and what these goals are

exactly. For example, while removing "socialism" from the platform and no

longer opposing privatization, *Tagammu*'s platform still calls for a massive state

apparatus supporting health, education, and housing (Realism on the Left Nov

1995). Further, *Tagammu* advocates giving priority to the under-privileged

(Realism on the Left Nov 1995). In an effort to re-establish their role in the

political arena and articulate their political goals *Tagammu* adopted a new

platform in 1998; up until then the organization had been working from a platform

developed in 1980 (El-Din, 1998).

This new platform has not yet united the party behind a clear ideology.

Maher Assal, the party's information secretary, argues that the platform "simply

uses new words to reformulate an old ideology that fell to pieces some years ago

all over the world" (El-Din, 1998). While the platform does appear to be vague,

lacking a clear ideological commitment to socialism or some other movement,

Tagammu seems to be working from within its membership to develop its

ideological framework. For example, *Tagammu* held a two-day conference to

discuss the platform and hold debates that would shape how the platform would

be written (El-Din, 1998). However, Assal argues that prior to holding debates

about ideological commitments the party should hold elections for new leaders

that will revitalize the party (El-Din, 1998).

Whether or not *Tagammu* still holds some commitment to socialism

remains unclear. *Tagammu* dropped its socialist slogans in 1995, yet Farida

Nakkah, editor of Ahali the party's publication, issued a statement on December

13, 2006 saying the paper will undergo changes to improve the "socialist

newspaper in Egypt" (Egypt Monitor). Interestingly, during internal party elections in March 2008 a former member of parliament and *Tagammu* member, Badry Fargali, shouted, "I don't want to die a capitalist, I want to die a socialist", yet Rifaat El-Said shouted repeated calls of "sit down, Badry" (Singer, 2008). While *Tagammu* has taken steps to re-evaluate their message and goals the party appears to remain internal divided over these issues.

Tagammu's calls for social justice could easily be understood as an ideological holdover to their socialist past. On the other hand, it could simply be politically savvy to voice these sentiments given the harsh inequalities and poverty that is prevalent throughout Egypt[6]. Whether these ideological holdovers are in tension with the current calls for democracy is unknown; *Tagammu* has yet to fully articulate what is their belief structure and until this is accomplished verifying any tensions cannot be done. However, the socialist ideals that remain among some of the leadership this do not necessarily diminish *Tagammu*'s calls for or belief in democracy. How the party merges these concepts, or jettisons one in favor of another, still remains to be seen. Given the party's ideological uncertainty and their calls for democracy, justice, and change according to the people's will, *Tagammu* faces the challenge of delineating what sort of democracy, justice, and change they are calling for.

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[6] For example, 43% of the Egyptian urban population lived below the poverty line between 2001-2007. The labor force increased by only 2.8% during 2007 despite a 1.8% increase in population size (World Bank, Development Economics LDB Database, 2007 http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/egy_aag.pdf)

Organization Structure

Membership and Meetings

  Tagammu has a complex organizational structure that seemingly supports democratic procedures. It is difficult to obtain official numbers; however, I have reason to believe the party maintains members into the thousands and among these members roughly 300 serve in a leadership position. The membership is divided into 24 districts (El-Din, 1998). *Tagammu* holds regular bi-weekly meetings for each of its branches. Members of these branches are allowed to attend and, according to Al Said, time permitting any member is able to speak (personal interview July 19, 2004 Cairo). Unfortunately, these meetings are not open to non-members and I was unable to attend. The organization's internal structure is detailed in Figure 1.

Leadership

  The leadership has several levels ranging from governance to congress to a central committee to the politburo and the ultimate leadership position, General Secretary[7] (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo). Party leadership positions are both appointed and elected. For instance, one third of the central committee is elected directly and the remaining two thirds are elected by the congress (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo). Appointment to the central committee is based on three requirements: 1- the number of members in a district 2- representation in the syndicates, unions, and civil society organizations and 3- membership in parliament (personal interview

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[7] Other publications frequently referred to the highest position, General Secretary, as Chairman or President although I try to the best of my ability to consistently use the title General Secretary unless I am directly quoting another source.

with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo). As Al Said explained, "if someone is elected in the board of general trade union then [they] automatically [are] added to central committee" (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo).

The three highest posts in the party are the politburo which functions as a legislative body, the central secretariat, although a council its functional role is executive in nature, and the General Secretary which is a single executive. The politburo is charged with holding the political party line and is elected by the central committee. The central secretariat applies the party line of the politburo and handles the organizational duties, party teachings, and activities. Both the central secretariat and the politburo have sixteen members on their boards. The General Secretary is understood as the official head of the party. In theory these three leadership positions are equal in power; however, when asked about this relationship Rifaat Al Said acknowledged, "… [that the] General Secretary can cancel anything" (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo).

The General Secretary is an elected position, yet Rifaat Al Said generally runs unopposed. Interestingly, he insists on holding these elections despite a lack of opposition. While this lack of opposition may be attributed to the dynamic personality of Rifaat Al Said or to a belief among the membership that no other candidate would win these elections, this move still bodes well for the party's commitment to democracy. Further, the General Secretary is a four year post with a two term limit. The original General Secretary, Khaled Mohieddin, was in power from 1976 until he voluntarily stepped down in 2003. Rifaat Al Said has been the General Secretary since then – his second term will be up in 2011 and

it remains to be seen whether he will run again or uphold the party's term limits. This leaves the question of the full extent of *Tagammu*'s commitment to internal democracy unanswered.

Sources of Funding

Tagammu receives money from personal, private contributions and subscriptions to the party newspaper. Government funding is also utilized but according to Al Said, "these government resources are the equivalent of $8,000 US – "less than the expense of one month" (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo). *Tagammu* officials insist that most funding comes from "donations, mainly from national capitalists, who do not exploit the masses" (Seeking a New Style, Nov 1995). Based on comments made during the interview with Al Said I suspect that *Tagammu* relies primarily on individual donors. Although Egyptian law demands that the names of individuals contributing over 500 pounds be published, *Tagammu* asks these contributors to break the donation into smaller denominations and contribute under a false name in order to avoid government scrutiny (personal interview with Rifaat Al Said July 19, 2004 Cairo).

Analysis

Unfortunately, there is limited information on *Tagammu* which prevents an in-depth assessment of their commitment to democracy. The more established secular parties are generally seen as somewhat irrelevant within Egyptian politics and *Tagammu* is no exception. This results in little reporting on their activities. However, a dearth of current information does not prevent me from making a few

observations about *Tagammu*'s internal behavior and suggesting what this may indicate for their commitment to democracy.

The organizational structure supports democratic behavior; it offers elections for leadership positions, term limits, and maintains some checks on power. But an organization's structure alone cannot determine democratic behavior, the party's ideology, goals, and statements also play a role. In the case of *Tagammu* these indices also support democratic aims. For example, *Tagammu* advocates ending the state monopoly of the media (Egypt State Information Services), guaranteed liberties, rights for women and Copts (Al-Mihwar interview 2008). In fact, Farida Nakkahs, editor of the party newspaper, is a woman and a founding member of *Tagammu*. *Tagammu*'s new slogan calls for "justice, progress and democracy" (Realism on the Left Nov 1995). But are liberal statements and representative structures enough to ensure a party's commitment to democracy?

I determine that *Tagammu* can be considered as behaving more democratically than other opposition parties. I make this assessment based on a combination of the party's organizational structure, their statements and ideologies, interactions within the party, and finally their actions toward other political groups. Internally, *Tagammu* has held conferences to bring its membership together toward a new ideological platform in an attempt to redefine itself in a Post-Soviet world. In its interactions with other groups *Tagammu* has shown a willingness to work with other political parties – even the Nasserites who took members from *Tagammu*.

It should be noted that *Tagammu*, especially Rifaat Al Said, has been adamant in his unwillingness to work with the Muslim Brotherhood. It can be argued that this is a sign that *Tagammu* is not open to diverse ideologies. Yet I argue just the opposite and see this as an adamant sign in favor of democratic behavior.

Al Said vehemently believes the Muslim Brotherhood is not willing to introduce a democratic system and that they will strip the public of basic freedoms and liberties. Regardless of whether or not this assessment is accurate, Al Said's commitment to democracy is reflected in his refusal to take the risk. The Brotherhood is the most popular opposition group in Egypt and *Tagammu* stands to gain from cooperating with them on areas of shared interests, yet Al Said refuses to cooperate. While this stance may be taken to preserve *Tagammu*'s privileged position with the regime it may also suggest that *Tagammu* may protect democratic principles in the face of a perceived threat such as Islamists – even if it comes at their own expense.

The following section includes two of the more recent political parties that have emerged in recent years. These parties were formed as breakaway parties from the three older secular political parties already discussed. They are more youthful, with leadership that is in their 40s, and are more connected with the public in terms of recruitment than the three parties previously discussed.   One of these parties, the *Ghad* party, is legally recognized while the other, *Karama,* is not. *Ghad* is a breakaway party from the *Wafd* party, with a similar liberal philosophy exhibited by its platform. *Karama* is a breakaway party from the

Nasserist party which is itself a breakaway party from *Tagammu*. However, the

Nasserist party has little political impact and few followers. As such I have not

evaluated this party and choose to study their younger successor: *Karama*.

Ghad

Party History

     Ghad, known as the Tomorrow party, became a legally recognized party in

October 2004. Their legal status was several years in the making; they had been

rejected by the Political Parties Committee on three previous occasions on the

grounds that *Ghad*'s platform was not significantly different than other political

parties (Mona El-Nahhas, "Tomorrow's Party Today", Al-Ahram Weekly, 4-10

Nov 2004). The Political Parties Committee announced the decision to approve

Ghad without giving any reasons for the change, prompting some analysts to

suggest this is the regime's attempt to undermine the *Wafd* party which shares a

history and somewhat similar platform with *Ghad* (El-Nahhas, 2004). However,

the Political Parties Court was due to announce a verdict on the status of the

party in early November and Ayman Nour argues "[the political parties

committee] found it better for the approval to come willingly from within rather

than be imposed on them by a court ruling" (El-Nahhas, 2004).

     Ghad party was founded by Aymen Nour, a former member of the *Wafd*

party. Nour began his political career as a journalist for the *Wafd* party's

newspaper in 1984 and continued to rise within the party since that time (El-

Nahhas, 2004). Nour served as a member of parliament in 1995 and again in

2000 (El-Nahhas, 2004). Following disputes with *Wafd* party chairman Noamaan

Gomaa, Aymen Nour was dismissed from *Wafd* and began work on a new

political party (El-Nahhas, 2004).

<div align="center">*Ideology*</div>

Ghad's platform is committed to democracy, liberal ideology, and support

for a free market economy while maintaining a focus on issues such as fighting

poverty. *Ghad* drafted a constitution for the state which indicates their ideological

commitments. For instance, *Ghad* is committed to reform and representation as

seen in their calls for a parliamentary system rather than the presidential system

that exists in Egypt today (El-Nahhas, 2004). This constitution was submitted to

the parliamentary speaker Fathi Sorour along with an explanatory letter noting

that "a parliamentary republic is the form of government that best gives the

people an effective and direct say in electing their rulers and ensuring power

rotates among political parties" (Essem El-Din, Gamal, Constitutional

Battleground, Al Ahram 20-26 Jan 2005). A parliamentary system would enable

the government to be formed by the party with a parliamentary majority and give

executive power to the prime minister, elected from the parliament.

Ghad's party platform and party leaders' statements contain a

commitment to the ideals and features of a democracy. In an interview with

Secretary-General Mona Makram Ebeid[8], she highlighted the party's

commitment to human rights, rule of law, freedom of expression, and

empowerment of women (Fatemah Farag, "Defining Tomorrow", Al Ahram 27

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[8] Mona Makram Ebeid resigned her position as Secretary-General in May 2005 citing personal reasons and internal divisions.

May-2 June 2004). It should be noted that *Ghad* not only includes women in the organization but they are able to achieve high office as witnessed by the Secretary-General. In fact, 37% of the founding members were female (El-Nahhas, 2004). Also interesting to note is that *Ghad* cultivates Coptic Christian membership and activism. For instance, the Secretary-General Mona Makram Ebeid, is a Coptic Christian.

Ghad calls for social justice in conjunction with a free market economy (Farag, 2004). In terms of domestic policy, *Ghad* is focused on addressing "the average citizen's problems" (El-Nahhas, 2004). Toward this end Ebeid stresses the need for English language and computer training for students (Farag, 2004) while *Ghad*'s foreign policy calls for open relations with the West. In an open letter to presidential candidate Barak Obama, Aymyn Nour argues that *Ghad* presents an alternative to an authoritarian regime and the Islamists (Nour, 2008).

Organization Structure

Leadership

Ghad's commitment to democratic ideology seems to be supported through their use of democratic procedures. They have an elected chairman and a higher committee, this is the party's governing body, composed of 46 members (El Nahhas, Tomorrow Party Today, 2004). They have a general assembly composed of 3,382 members and a wisdom committee to examine internal election disputes (Mazen, 2007).

Membership

In addition to its 5,200 founding members (El Nahhas, 2004), *Ghad* party had 2,000 members (Luke, 2004) at the time of its legal inception. These numbers seem to confirm *Ghad*'s popularity with the public as these membership numbers are higher than other legally recognized parties. Critics note these numbers simply show that Nour is "not selective enough in accepting party applications. These critics argue that the party cannot maintain itself with such a large number of members who, these critics argue, are not committed to the goals and ideologies of *Ghad*. As they note, Nour's "sole aim…[is] to widen his party's membership…" (El Nahhas, Ghad, 2005). In fact, Nour has even recruited members from the rank and file of the National Democratic Party, the ruling political party in Egypt. This has been criticized by some political experts as paving the way for government interference (El Nahhas, Candidates, 2005). Regardless of the reasons behind the surge in membership, these numbers attest that *Ghad* is committed to recruitment and is capable of mobilization – a clear distinction from other legal political parties.

Elections

Party statues allowed Ayman Nour to chair *Ghad* for five years without an election; however, Nour waived that right and held elections for party chairman (El Nahhas, Tomorrow Party Today, 2004). Former MP Mohamed Farid Hassanein ran against Nour in a supervised election (El Nahhas, Tomorrow Party Today, 2004). This was the first internal party elections to have judicial supervision of all political parties in Egypt. Nour established term limits, banning

the party chairman from nominating himself for more than two successive terms
(El Nahhas, Tomorrow Party Today, 2004).

Sources of Funding

Nour initially chose to reject government funding that comes with legal
recognition. He wanted to raise funds from among the membership as he felt
that government financing would "shackle" the party by being able to influence
party actions and decisions with the threat of withholding funds. However, years
before receiving official recognition Nour also realized relying on internal funds
would be problematic. For example, Nour noted the party's financial situation
was "very complicated", while expressing a desire to function "from our own
money" he also pointed out "…in the future we will have a quarter million people
to join and [that is] supposed to pay fees but [it] will not meet our aspirations. We
have a daily journal…we need more funds" (interview with author).

Despite a highly democratic, populist stance Nour did seek out
government funding. In early November 2005 Nour submitted an application for
an annual subsidy of LE100,000 (El Nahhas, Candidates Aplenty). However,
this move may have been done to combat a similar funding request made by
Moussa Mustafa Moussa, disputed leader of *Ghad*, which will be addressed
shortly.

Controversies

Perhaps due to its youth as an organization or due to the problems facing
its leader, Ayman Nour, the *Ghad* party has been weakened politically. Following

its official recognition *Ghad* had the momentum and drive to establish party structures. However, since shortly after recognition *Ghad* has been embroiled in controversy.   Ayman Nour ran against President Mubarak in the first multi-candidate elections held in Egyptian history in 2005. Nour received 7% of the vote, the second highest number of votes, and had the elections been freer he would have gained more.

Following the elections Nour faced trumped up charges of forging the required signatures needed to establish the *Ghad* party. Nour's immunity as a member of parliament was stripped, he stood trial, and was found guilty of forgery and in December 2005 he was sentenced to five years of hard labor, a term he served until his surprising release in February 2009. The Mubarak regime undoubtedly targeted Ayman Nour because of his popularity, receiving as much as 7% of the vote despite electoral disparities and ballot box stuffing is quite a feat, and perhaps because the West holds a positive view of Nour. As a secular, pro-democracy politician he is seen as a possible force for change. Both of these factors may have drawn the regime's attention.

Experts and policymakers generally view the criminal charges as politically motivated to discredit Nour and disrupt the mobilization of the *Ghad* party. Ayman Nour, more so than other leaders of other secular parties, encapsulates *Ghad*. Losing leadership early on hinders the formation and development of the party. Further, as a convicted felon, Ayman Nour will be legally barred from all future political activities (Egypt News, 2007).

Compounding the legal problems associated with Nour are the internal disputes that have arisen in his absence. In October 2005 former deputy chairman Moussa Mustafa Moussa held an emergency general assembly meeting to dismiss Nour and elect Moussa as party chairman (Egypt News, 2007). This was the second time Moussa had attempted to remove Nour from power, the first time being while Nour was in jail (El Nahhas, Ghad, 2005). Among Moussa's complaints was that Nour was a dictator (El Nahhas, Ghad 2005) and Moussa wanted to freeze the party's newspaper and reduce criticism of the government to "avoid direct confrontation with the state" (El Nahhas, Ghad, 2005).

Moussa and a few of his followers were dismissed from the party by the leadership body a few days prior to the emergency general assembly meeting (El Nahhas, Ghad, 2005). Whether or not the general assembly meeting held by Moussa was legal according to *Ghad* party's rules is the subject of the dispute which has made its way through the courts and Egypt's political parties committee. Currently, the political parties committee has recognized Moussa as the party chairman, yet this is disputed by Ehab El Khouly, current leader, and Gamila Ismael, Noor's wife and deputy chairman (Egypt News, 2007).

This leadership dispute has resulted in disagreements over the structure of the party itself. Two political parties calling themselves *Ghad* currently operate today. Each publishes a paper with the same name, *al-Ghad*, the same logo and orange branding, and Abdel-Nabi Abdel-Sattar the chief editor of the competing paper used to work for the original *al-Ghad* (El Nahhas, 2005). The only

differences between the periodicals are that the first *al-Ghad* remains highly

critical of the government while the newer version compliments the regime (El

Nahhas, 2005). Both *Ghad* parties run candidates in elections – using the same

party name. For example, Moussa's *Ghad* ran 65 candidates and competed for

the same seats as Nour's *Ghad* (El Nahhas, Candidates, 2005). Moussa even

submitted an application for the government subsidies granted to legal parties (El

Nahhas, Candidates, 2005).

Tensions within *Ghad* continue to mount and raise questions about the

sustainability of the party. Ehab El Khouly, current party leader, officially

resigned from his post September 17, 2008. This was after numerous

complaints by members that El Khouly was making decisions without party

support. Twenty one *Ghad* members resigned from the party in protest and

called on "immediate intervention to save the party from collapse which …would

be the result of haphazard management and personal whims" (Fadl, 2008).

Compounding these problems, the local authorities view the Ayman Nour faction

of *Ghad* party as illegal based on a previous court ruling (Fadl, 2008).

Analysis

The *Ghad* party seems to be committed to democratic principles and their

internal behavior is consistent with this end. Mobilization of the public toward

membership recruitment speaks to a grassroots form of activism. An attempt to

present a constitution creating a parliamentary system highlights a commitment

to reduce the powers of individual offices. Further, it challenges a tradition of a

strong executive and ineffective legislature. Finally, establishing judicial

supervision for internal party elections ensures against corruption and promotes

a fully democratic election. *Ghad* seeks to appeal across a wide range of

populace; running 200 candidates in the 2005 elections, from 70% of Egypt's

districts (El Nahhas, Candidates, 2005). The *Ghad* party also seeks to span

religious divides and encourages female participation. Among the above

candidates mentioned twelve are Copts and three women (El Nahhas,

Candidates, 2005).

The youthfulness of the party and its leadership has invigorated the public

toward *Ghad.* This is evidenced by the membership being recruited to the party

and by Nour's performance in the presidential election.   While obtaining only 7%

of the vote[9] Nour placed second to President Mubarak. Given the party's calls

for democracy and liberal stance, coupled with the appeal from the public, *Ghad*

has attracted the eye of the White House as a possible partner in the region

(Bush 2007).

However, it is difficult to say with certainty that *Ghad* is fully committed to

democracy. The *Ghad* party is a relatively new organization on the political

scene. The effects of Ayman Nour's imprisonment, internal leadership disputes,

and competing newspapers and political organizations, have weakened the

impact of *Ghad*'s presence on the political scene. Mired in controversy from its

inception, the *Ghad* party will have to muddle its way through several hurdles

before it can focus on a political agenda at the exclusion of all else.

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[9] This figure is according to the government's calculation. Election observers argue that Nour
received 12% or 13% of the vote.

Al Karama Al-Arabiyya

Party History

Al Karama Al Arabiyya, The Arab Dignity Party, was founded by Hamdein

Sabbahi as a breakaway party to the Nasserist party in 1996. An internal power

struggle between the younger generation and the older leadership in the

Nasserist party led to the suspension of five Nasserists' membership in March

1996 (El-Nahhas, 2000). These five members, Hamdin Sabahi, Amin Iskandar,

Salah El-Dessouki, Ali Abdel-Hamid and Shafiq El-Gazzar, decided to form their

own political party based on the ideologies of Nasser (El-Nahhas, 2000). *Al*

Karama party has been denied legal status twice, on the grounds that the party

platform was not sufficiently different than that of existing parties and later on the

grounds that the party espoused a radical ideology (al-Nahhas, 2004). It is

unclear which specific aspects of *Karama*'s ideology the government considers

radical. However, Sabbahi has published articles praising Hezbollah, a violent

Islamist organization, he has called on all Arabs to "end the existence of Israel" –

a problem for the Egyptian government that maintains a peace treaty with Israel,

and launched a debate in his newspaper over whether targeting "U.S. and Zionist

interests" was a legitimate act (Get Rid of Israel, 2006). As a founder of the

Kefaya movement, a grassroots organization meaning "Enough[10]," Hamdein

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[10] Kefeya, also known as the Popular Movement for Change, is not an officially recognized
political party nor does it seek party status (El Magd, Associated Press 2005). Rather, it is a
loose movement whose members make up a variety of ideological leanings. Nasserists, leftists,
Islamists, and secularists all comprise the group. Kefeya's demands include ending Mubarak's
rule (El Magd, Associated Press 2005), changing how the president is elected, modifying the
constitution to allow political change, and releasing illegal prisoners (Howeidy, "Enough is not
Enough", 24 Feb – 2 March 2005). Their blanket calls for reform – enough Mubarak, enough
emergency laws -- has inspired many people to take part in their demonstrations. The

Sabbahi has proven to be an active and vocal critic of Mubarak's regime which may have played no small part in his party's being denied legal status. Despite appeals to the State Council in March 2002 and Supreme Administrative Court in October 2006, it remains an illegal political organization (Human Rights Watch 2007). Sabbahi is currently considering working with other unrecognized parties to bypass the Political Parties Council. According to Sabbahi, guarantees in the constitution legitimate party operations (Human Rights Watch 2007).

Statements Sabbahi has made suggest that he might not be interested in becoming a legally recognized party. For example, Sabbahi claims, "[t]he role of legal political parties is ending, and if these parties remain alive, they'll be much weaker than they are now," (Amer, 2006). Given the amount of government intervention within the legal opposition parties – a brief look at the current state of the *Wafd* or *Ghad* parties highlights this point, the regime's manipulation of the legal opposition's interests, and the inability of most of the legal parties to generate much excitement or interest in the street Sabbahi may be accurate in his assessment. Of course, whether this is a broader trend in the Egyptian political scene remains to be seen.

Membership

Membership numbers are unknown as the party is not recognized; however, party founder Sabbahi asserts that membership is growing and the organization does track their membership. He notes that *Karama* has pulled members away from the Nasserite party (Amer, 2006); however, independent

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organization started with 300 members (El Magd, AP) but estimates of their membership currently are much lower (Khorshid, 2005)

journalists state the *Karama* party is minor in comparison to other opposition parties (Get Rid of Israel, 2006). *Karama* is represented in Parliament, holding two seats (Get Rid of Israel, 2006). Party members do seem to be mobilized; distributing party papers, the organization's constitution, and attending rallies, conferences, lectures and sit-ins (Amer, 2006).

Despite the groups' unofficial status, the *Karama* party is active in the Egyptian political scene. *Karama* works with other organizations, their closest and most public affiliation being with the *Kefaya* movement. Sabbahi expresses an interest in cooperating with all parties and has called for a "national opposition front" (Amer 2006). In October 2008 *Karama* hosted a press conference jointly attended by other opposition group leaders and activists where they called for the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak (Al-A'sar 2008).

Ideology

Information on the policy stances of an unrecognized party is scarce. *Karama*, like all opposition parties, calls for an end to the Emergency laws and an independent judiciary (Al-A'sar, 2008). Some general philosophies and a few specific policies have publicly emerged from Sabbahi and other members of *al-Karama* party. In particular, Sabbahi seeks to build from the Nasser ideology of Pan-Arabism and *Karama* is viewed as a leftist party. Amin Iskandr, a *Karama* member, says *Karama* seeks to "modernize Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arab program with an increased emphasis on democracy and pluralism" (human rights watch, 2007).

During the press conference with other opposition parties, several clear policy initiatives began to emerge. *Karama* along with other attendees announced plans to conduct public referenda on several controversial policies of the Egyptian government: the peace treaty with Israel, accepting aid from the United States, and privatization (Al-A'sar, 2008). Further, it was suggested that foreign currency reserves currently held in public investments should be utilized to target unemployment (Al-A'sar, 2008). These leaders also expressed an interest in freeing all political prisoners, ensure they are duly compensated, and hold public trails aimed at those responsible for corruption (Al-A'sar 2008).

Following the September 2008 tragedy where 100 people died from rockslides, Sabbahi announced his proposal that half of the country's annual budget which was set aside for government administrative offices should be put toward the construction of low-income housing for the urban poor (Morrow and al-Omrani, 2008). However Sabbahi points out that "until now the government has completely ignored the proposal…it's as if it cares nothing about public welfare" (Morrow and al-Omrani, 2008). Sabbahi, using this event to draw attention to his party, further noted "[there is a] state of overwhelming public anger…I don't know if President Mubarak even realises [sic] the extent of frustration on the street" (Morrow and al-Omrani, 2008). Interestingly, while Sabbahi highlights public discontent with the government he discusses public apathy toward the opposition parties as well. "The government has failed across the board, but the opposition, too, has failed to rally public discontent and bring about political change" (Morrow and al-Omrani, 2008).

While Sabbahi claims to support and advocate a democracy he has founded a party based on pan-Arab Nationalism. There is a contradiction between these two ideologies. On the one hand, *Karama* calls for democracy, pluralism, human rights, and political liberalism. On the other hand, *Karama* advocates Arab nationalism, a political ideology steeped in ethnic nationalism and socialism that requires an interventionist state. How Sabbahi and the *Karama* party reconcile this cognitive dissonance has yet to be determined. There is a shortage of information available at this time; however, we can deduce the intentions of *Karama* based on their statements and actions.

In studying the actions and statements of the party; however, we are left with further questions about the ideology of the organization. *Karama* is actively involved in *Kefaya* – a grassroots movement actively calling for greater civil and political liberties and democracy. In fact, Sabbahi is one of the founding members of the organization. Further, *Karama* has taken part in cooperative efforts with other opposition groups with different ideologies. Among the most coordinated cooperative enterprises was the 2005 National Front for Change. This coalition was made up of *Wasat, Kefaya*, and *Karama*, along with a few nationalist opposition parties that agreed to jointly run candidates for parliamentary elections (Schwedler and Clark, 2008). *Karama*'s ability to set aside ideological differences for the sake of achieving political change – presumably change toward democracy and greater political liberties – suggests

that *Karama* may be committed to the democratic values for which they are calling[11].

Yet other actions and statements made by the *Karama* party suggest that the party has not reconciled its competing ideologies. Sabbahi has expressed calls for pan-Arab Nationalism, a movement uniting all Arabs across states, which raises even further questions about the ideologies and goals of *Karama*. If *Karama* supports a pan-Arab movement this suggests they are less interested in the political system in Egypt and more concerned with developing a supra-nationalist movement. Raising further doubts about *Karama*'s support for democratic values can be seen in a brief review of the articles featured in *Karama*'s newspaper.

Although *Karama* was granted a license to distribute a newspaper, also named *Karama*, in July 2005 party leaders chose to issue their first paper in September on the day that Mubarak took the oath for office for his fifth six-year term. Establishing for them a reputation of being a harsh critic of the government, *Karama*'s first newspaper printed with the headline: "We swear by God almighty…Gamal Mubarak shall not inherit us" (Howeidy, 2005). As a side note, the reference to God is an interesting one given that *Karama* is a secular organization. Sabbahi notes that "a newspaper is an important tool for freedom of expression and political change" (Amer, 2006). However, following some

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[11] It should be noted that Sabbahi acknowledges there are areas of agreement between these diverse political ideologies. For example, Sabbahi notes four issues of agreement: opposition to American hegemony, Zionism, government corruption, calls for greater freedoms (al Ahram, 1995).

contentious articles in the party newspaper – for example praising Hezbollah and Moamar Al-Gaddafi, discussed below -- *Karama* has faced challenges.

Controversies

While *Karama* as a political organization claims to uphold democracy and pluralism a series of articles praising Moamar Al-Gaddafi, leader of Libya calls this stance into question. These articles highlighted "37 years of achievement" by Libyan leader Gaddafi (Amer, 2006). Given the known human rights abuses and a lack of civil and political freedoms in Libya this praise is troublesome for the public and the government as well. Among political activists, these articles have created doubt over whether *Karama* is committed to their stated goals of freedom and democracy Amer, 2006). Some of Sabbahi's co-activists in *Kefaya* have expressed resounding anger over this and others have even accused Sabbahi of accepting funds from Libya (Amer, 2006). As Wael Abbas, political writer, *Kefaya* member, and owner of Misr Digital blogspot stated, "[t]he matter is clear, no documents are needed … photographs or videos … the supplement[12] was printed, distributed and sold [referring to the article and its distribution newspaper]. People have in their hands material evidence of [*Karama*'s] crime…there is no justification for their 'betrayal and receipt of funding'" (Amer, 2006).

The article praising Gaddafi's "37 years of achievement" and other pieces denouncing Mubarak's son as a future leader did not escape the attention of the government which has caused trouble for the party. Since the publication of these articles, the newspaper's editor, Abdel-Halim Qandil known for his

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[12] This refers to a full page additional piece devoted to praising Gaddafi.

outspoken and biting criticisms of the government, has resigned. Qandil claims

that the State Security Apparatus had been pressuring Sabbahi to remove Qandil

since the first issue of the paper, taking such action as barring advertisements to

reduce the newspaper's funds (El-Sayed, 2007). He also stated the Sabbahi had

received repeated threats from key members of government (El-Sayed, 2007).

Qandil claims he offered *Al-Karama*'s owners his resignation to reduce

government pressure and the owners agreed (El-Sayed, 2007). As Qandil

states, "I preferred to resign so as not to make other people in the newspaper

bear the brunt of my strong opposition to the regime" (El-Sayed, 2007).

However, there are differing stories emerging about Qandil's resignation

from both Sabbahi and Qandil. Sabbahi states that he was never under any

pressure from the regime to remove Qandil from his position as editor (El-Sayed,

2007). Further, Sabbahi claims that Qandil demanded to leave the paper on

numerous occasions, believing his editorials scared away advertisers (El-Sayed,

1007). In another publication (Egyptian Gazette, Mahmoud, 2007) Qandil

asserts he was forced to resign. While admitting that he had offered his

resignation previously but, Qandil notes that in the past the owners never

accepted it on the grounds that "…my resignation would harm the future of the

party" (Mahmoud, 2007). After his resignation was accepted Qandil came to

believe that there was a deal made between the government and leaders of al-

Karama (Mahmoud, 2007). Qandil notes that only time will tell if this is true but

he believes following the tender of his resignation *Karama* may finally receive an

official license as a political party (Mahmoud, 2007). In the meantime, El-Sabbahi is the new editor of the party's publication.

Organization Structure

Meetings and Membership

Assessing *Karama*'s behavior is difficult as there is limited information about the organization's internal activities and funding. They do hold regular meetings (Amer, 2006); however, how the leadership conducts these meetings and whether the members have a voice in the organization's direction is unknown.

Sources of Funding

The organization's finances are also unknown at this time.

Analysis

Determining whether *Karama* exhibits democratic behavior is a difficult assessment to make. There is evidence for democratic behavior, for example the involvement and activism found among *Karama* members, their cooperation with other parties and organizations with different political ideologies, and willingness to work within the government system to obtain a license and, in the case of Hamdein Sabbahi, hold a seat in parliament. Further, Sabbahi's suggestion to hold a public referendum on the highly contentious issues of peace with Israel, United States aid, and privatization shows a willingness to utilize democratic modes of obtaining public opinion. Of course, this may also be a strategic tactic as most Egyptians are likely not pleased with either of these

government policies. This raises the question of whether Sabbahi is only interested in utilizing democratic structures – such as referenda and elections – when they are in line with his goals.

Yet there is reason to question *Karama*'s commitment to democratic principles. The party's foundation is steeped in Arab Nationalist ideology; this maintains a commitment to an ethnic, supra-national ideology that supersedes borders. Based on the party newspaper's praising of Libya, an authoritarian government with limited political and civil freedoms, and statements in praise of violence and terrorism it seems that *Karama* does not uphold the values of a democracy. It is currently premature to determine whether or not *Karama* behaves democratically; however, it can be inferred that the party's commitment to a democratic system where pluralism and civil and political liberties are granted is lacking.

Muslim Brotherhood

Party History

The Muslim Brotherhood is currently the most popular and mobilized organization in Egypt today. As stated previously, there is a tension within the party as to whether they should mobilize as a political party or remain committed to the *da'wa*. In the past when this question arose the Brotherhood opted to remain a religious movement rather than a political party. However, as recently as 2007 this question seems to have resurfaced with the release of a political platform, suggesting that the Brotherhood may be interested in attempting to

create an official party. The platform and its ramifications will be discussed

shortly.

The Brotherhood holds a historical commitment to remaining a religious

movement. For instance, they have mobilized the public since the 1990s around

the slogan "Islam is the Solution" (Kotob-Abed, 1995). Yet as an organization

they behave in a political manner. The Brotherhood encourages its members to

vote and be politically active. They encourage their university student members

to campaign for seats in student syndicates and they mobilize members to obtain

offices in professional syndicates as well (Wickham 2002). What is perhaps

most telling is that the Muslim Brotherhood runs candidates in national elections.

As the Brotherhood argues, the constitution's statement that *Shari'a* is the

principal source of legislation dissipated any strong hostilities with the

government and encourages the party to achieve their goals through legal

avenues (Kotob-Abed, 1995). While still highly critical of the regime, rather than

maintain a historically vehement and violent opposition to the government, the

Brotherhood has toned down its rhetoric and renounced violence. Interestingly,

the Muslim Brotherhood even utilizes government institutions, running in

elections for instance, and as a source for legitimate government critique. For

example, the constitution's recognition of *Shari'a* as a principal source of

legislation enables the Brotherhood to cite the constitution in their protests

against the regime, raising banners that state "respect the constitution". The

recent publication of a party platform signals a desire to gain formal recognition

as a political force. As such, even though they are an illegal organization that

has been denied party status I will evaluate the Muslim Brotherhood as if it were one.

Ideology

The Muslim Brotherhood advocates democracy and argues their religious goals do not contradict democratic principles. Spokesman 'Isam al-'Iryan stated that the Brotherhood's goals were "to establish a good Islamic society and to make good Islamic people" (personal interview July 27, 2004). A good Islamic society, according to al-'Iryan means that "the government implements Islamic values and laws through gradual, peaceful, *democratic* means (personal interview July 27, 2004). This raises the question of whether the Muslim Brotherhood only supports the means of democracy rather than democracy itself.

Considerable debate has emerged over whether the Muslim Brotherhood is sincere in their commitment to democracy or whether it is a strategic ploy. Some scholars, such as Saad Eddin Ibrahim, argue that the Brotherhood is committed and ready to play an active role in a democratic setting. Others are more circumspect about the Brotherhood's intentions; however, scholars have noted the Brotherhood's behavior in student and professional syndicates may be an indication of their willingness to participate in a democracy (Wickham, 2002). In these elections Brotherhood members quietly stepped down when they were not re-elected. Finally, others advocate that the Brotherhood has given no indication of its ability to work within a democratic system. As Khalil (2006) points out, "[t]he Muslim Brotherhood loudly advocates free elections. However, a free democratic society is based on a great deal more than elections".

Currently, it remains unclear whether democracy is valued by the Brotherhood as a goal in and of itself or only as a means for implementing Islamic values and laws. According to a Brotherhood member, the Brotherhood is committed to pluralism in politics as well as in Islam (Sallam, June 2008). As the party website states, "Islam is the Solution" "does not contradict the citizenship principle which means equality in rights and duties and non discrimination among citizens based belief, colour [sic] and sex" (ikhwanweb.com "the Electoral Programme [sic] of the Muslim Brotherhood for Shura Council 2007). However, other declarations challenge the pluralist message suggested by these statements. Former Supreme Guide Mustafa Mashur, as cited by Refaat al-Said in Against Illumination, "We accept the concept of pluralism for the time being; however, when we will have Islamic rule we might then reject this concept or accept it."(Khalil, 2006).

In fact, previous political initiatives are notable for their lack of democratic structures of pluralism and more notable for overt Islamism. For example, the Initiative for Reform released in March 2004 advocates an economic system consist with Islam, purifying the media in accordance with Islam, for women to hold posts that would preserve their virtue, and that the focus of education should be on learning the Quran by heart" (Khalil, 2006; Al-Qumni, 2004). However, the 2004 Muslim Brotherhood Initiative for Reform also stated that "[t]he state should have a democratic system compatible with Islam." (Khalil, 2006). The true intentions of the Muslim Brotherhood, whether they hold a commitment to democracy or simply to its electoral institutions, remain unclear.

The Muslim Brotherhood first publicized a political platform in January 2007. In fact, an official platform has not yet been released; rather, a draft version was sent by the Brotherhood to Egyptian intellectuals outside of the organization who leaked the document to the press (Azuri, 2007).

In the platform the Brotherhood repeated its oft-cited calls for democratic reform and laid out some specific policies on how the government should relate to society and the economy. Simultaneously, they call for contradictory socio-political and economic policies. While stressing the need for limiting the government's role in favor of civil society and non-governmental organizations, the Brotherhood's economic policy espouses an anti-free market stance, which would necessitate an interventionist political system (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008). These contradictory philosophies suggest the Brotherhood, an established religious movement, may be unprepared to be a political party forced to address the variety of social, economic, and political challenges that arise.

Interestingly, these contradictory political statements of advocating limited government while proposing policies of increased government intervention have not drawn criticism. Rather, two statements within the platform have drawn the ire of Muslim Brotherhood leaders – and indication of sharp internal divides -- and members as well as secularists. These two statements refer to the creation of a religious council and the exclusion of women and non-Muslims from senior political positions (Azuri, 2007). According to the platform, the religious scholars' council would be an elected body -- elected by religious scholars – that would advise the legislative and executive in matters of religious law. Where *Shari'a*

rule is clear and not subject to interpretation the council's word would be binding (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008). Following the release of the draft platform controversies emerged and Mohammed Akef, the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, convened a committee to review the more controversial elements. The meeting amended the role of the religious scholars' council so that their decisions are no longer binding and this contributed to the disputes quieting down around October 2007.

The segments of the platform dealing with the religious council and the restrictions to high office sparked a fierce and public debate among both secularist and Muslim Brotherhood leaders and members alike. Secularists oppose restricting high offices exclusively to Muslim men and fear the creation of a religious council as a first step toward a theocratic government. Their critique of the platform was not surprising. The volatile and public nature of the disagreements among Brotherhood leaders and members was unexpected and publicly exposed the diversity of viewpoints within the Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood has historically maintained a united front on statements and policies enacted by the organization. Whatever fierce and intense debate that may have arisen among the leadership and members was always silenced after the Guidance Council announced its position. While this seemingly supports the notion that the Brotherhood is authoritarian in its behavior, they insist that consultation occurs and consensus is achieved prior to official enactments (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008). The recent disputes are unique not only because they showcase the range of ideologies and generational

differences within the movement but also because, for the first time in the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, these debates were made public.

The nature of these disputes reveals divisions within the Brotherhood along ideological lines between conservative and more reformist minded elements. Comprising the more traditionally minded faction is First Deputy Guide Muhammed Habib, Secretary General Mahmud 'Izzat, and Guidence Council members Muhammed Mursi and Mahmud Ghuzlan. They argue in defense of the religious council as it was presented within the draft platform and support the exclusion of women and non-Muslims from high offices in government. Traditionally, Islam's leaders were men and, because political leadership was merged with religious leadership, being Muslim was an obvious requirement. For this historical reason Habib and the others support the restricting of high offices to male Muslims.

The more reformist-leaning faction includes: Guidance Bureau member 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu el-Futuh, former member of parliament Gamal Hishmat, and prominent member and political spokesman 'Isam al-'Iryan. This group takes issue with both the concept of a religious council and the restrictions imposed on high offices. Abu el-Futuh and the others within this faction argue that Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, an existing body within the current government, should assess whether legislation is consistent with *Shari'a* (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008). Further, they argue that establishing a religious council would encourage the supremacy of a single viewpoint of *Shari'a*, ignoring other interpretations (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008). As for the restrictions placed on

political office, this faction contends that The Brotherhood should uphold the Egyptian constitution which authorizes political equality regardless of sex and religion (Brown and Hamzay, 2008). This group also maintains that in modern times where Islamic leadership and political leadership are not mixed and where there exists a government apparatus that is distinct from the traditional leadership of early Islamic times there is no need to insist the ruler be a Muslim man. Brown and Hamzawy (2008: 9) note that within the reformist faction it has been suggested that a righteous Christian president or religious female president would be preferred to the corrupt leaders of today.

Controversies surround not only the elements of the platform but also the manner in which it was written. The conservative faction adhering to the platform claims it was written in accordance with Brotherhood procedures and values of consensus. The more reformist faction opposes some of the elements of the platform and argues it was not written with the proper consultation nor does it reflect a consensus. As one blogger asks, "Is this the platform of a political party or a religious organization?" (Lynch, 2007). In fact, the platform seems to have been written while the more moderate Brotherhood leaders were under arrest (Lynch, 2008). The platform has ushered in a sharp and public debate about the role of religion and politics but also a debate about the limits of public dissent regarding The Brotherhood (Lynch, 2007).

The conservative faction insists the platform was written by a special committee who presented a draft version to the Guidance Bureau and later adopted the changes requested by the Bureau. The Guidance Bureau then

circulated the revised platform to various branches of the Brotherhood throughout

Egypt and after receiving "wide consultation from within the movement" the

platform was released for outside opinions (Brown and Hamzawy, 2008).

According to the reformist-leaning camp within the Brotherhood, the platform was

written by a small group who did not take into account the differences in

viewpoints within the Brotherhood. Following heated disagreements Supreme

Guide Mohammed Akef convened a council to review the controversial elements

within the platform. This did not resolve the conflict; in fact, the Brotherhood has

yet to release a new version of the platform or any amendments to the

controversial items in the platform.

Perhaps what is most interesting about the internal tensions surrounding

the platform is not that it reflects diverse opinions within the Brotherhood but that,

for the first time in Brotherhood history, internal disagreements were made

public. Statements were made to the press, said during interviews, and written

on websites and blogs about the platform, the role of the Brotherhood in politics,

and even about frustrations within the internal dynamics of the organization. For

example, Abdel Moneim Mahmoud, a young Brotherhood member and internet

blogger, denounced the Brotherhood's opposition to women and Christians

holding high office on his blog Ana-Ikhwan --I am Brotherhood— and questioned

the Brotherhood's historic slogan "Islam is the Solution" (Williams, 2008).

Muhammad Hamza, another Brotherhood member and internet blogger,

expressed his aggravation about the "narrowmindedness [sic] and caution of …

the elderly leadership, throughout the recent years of political ferment in Egypt"

(Lynch, 2007). Rather than speaking to the media in one voice, as the Brotherhood prides itself on doing, the media became the forum for these internal debates. As a result of the publication of the platform, clear divisions were seen within the organization based on ideological and generational lines.

This internal disagreement took on a more public tone in part because of the younger generation. While much of the younger generation within the movement remains conservative (Muslim Brotherhood Today, 2008), particularly those residing outside of the big cities, a new type of Brotherhood member is emerging from the urban youth (Lynch, 2007). This "fourth generation" is technologically savvy and more reform-minded than their rural peers. This group relies on the Internet for self-expression and utilizes webblogs to converse with others who may not share their Islamist leanings. As such they are comfortable conversing with leftists, secularists, and are more welcoming of the idea of public debate --- something that the Brotherhood has not supported. According to 'Ala' 'Abd al-Fattah, a liberal blogger-activist, this new type of Muslim Brother "…reads blogs, watches al-Jazeera, sings *sha'bi* (popular) songs, talks about intense love stories and chants 'Down with Mubarak'" (Lynch 2007). While using the Internet to promote the Brotherhood this fourth generation has also enabled internal tensions to be made public.

Expressions of displeasure with the organization, frustrations over Brotherhood restraint on issues of Palestine, and concerns that the leadership is not listening to its membership base are all recorded online. Oftentimes, these policy oriented differences fall along generational lines and find the more

youthful, fourth generation in conflict with upper and mid-level leadership known

as the first and third generation, respectively[13]. The Muslim Brotherhood

leadership and some members comprise a generation of Islamists who entered

the organization during times of extreme repression. This older generation

became politically active in the period of Nasser which was highly repressive. As

such, they adopted tactics suitable to a more oppressive environment: secrecy, a

close allegiance to the organization, and a mentality of distrust.

The third generation of Brotherhood activists emerged during the 1980s

and occupies the mid-level leadership. This generation seems to be more

focused on bureaucratic goals and the more youthful members of the

Brotherhood accuse them of "stifling creativity and energy" (Lynch, 2007). The

more youthful generation of Islamists, the fourth generation, have grown up

within Mubarak's tenure and have experienced more political openness than their

elders. As such, they feel constrained by the controls within the organization and

rebel against the hierarchical structure. As 'Abd al-Rahman Rashwan a Muslim

Brotherhood blogger noted, "the style of education given to Brothers runs counter

to the idea of blogs, which rely on openness and independence…"(Lynch 2007).

These blogs are not restricted to other Brotherhood members nor are they

exclusively Brotherhood blog sites. These younger, more Internet savvy and

activist minded Brotherhood members express themselves online in a very public

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[13] According to Dr. Amr Hamzawy (Muslim Brotherhood Today, 2008) the Brotherhood is composed of only three generations. The first generation comprises the higher leadership and is conservative, the second generation is from the 1970s and holds some reformist views, although he argues it is not the dominate viewpoint, and the third generation is comprised of the youth which is predominately conservative. As Hamzawy notes, "overall, the organization is made up of these three generations that share common dominant conservative trend, however, the second and third generations are dotted with a weak and marginalized reformist voices".

way. This has caused some to predict that the Muslim Brotherhood may split; however, it may simply mean the end of the Brotherhood's single voice. How the leadership responds to the increasing number of blogs and the youthful generation of Brotherhood members will not only impact the Brotherhood as a movement but will do much to influence its democratic behavior.

Whether the leadership chooses to isolate and punish those critiquing the organization or accept these critiques as valid and worthy of discussion will send a very different signal to Brotherhood members and observers. A firm decision to reject and punish public dissent – even while allowing for criticism internally – will signal that conservative elements within the Brotherhood remain the dominate force and suggest an end to the reformist tendencies within the second and fourth generations. However, were the leadership to acknowledge this criticism and provide a formal, transparent mechanism for incorporating membership opinions then the Brotherhood will be encouraging further debate, discussion, and dissent. Each option will yield a very different kind of Brotherhood member and a very different kind of Muslim Brotherhood.

While the second option cannot guarantee that the Brotherhood will behave more democratically; it will certainly provide more opportunities to do so. For instance, were the Brotherhood to formally incorporate dialogue with their members then discussion and debate would increase. This will not only yield an atmosphere of greater openness but will generate a diversity of opinions. Were the leadership to take the additional step of enacting some of these newly expressed ideas then the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization would be more

representative of its members. This should not be construed as meaning that the

Brotherhood would adopt ideas of greater tolerance, moderation, or somehow be

less conservative – in fact, the reverse might prove true. As the data shows

(Muslim Brotherhood Today, 2008; Lynch 2007) the majority of the membership

is quite conservative. If the leadership of the Brotherhood were to formally

incorporate membership discussion and dissent and use these critiques to

shape the direction of the movement then the Muslim Brotherhood would,

according to one of the indices outlined in this paper, be behaving in a

democratic manner.

However, the leadership seems to have chosen to reject and punish public

dissent. Abdel Moneim Mahmoud, the Brotherhood member and internet blogger

mentioned above, was given the choice of either leaving the Brotherhood or

ending his webblog – he suspended his Brotherhood membership but still

considers himself a Muslim Brother (Williams, 2008). Other signs indicate that

the leadership is turning inward and has chosen to silence public dissent. While

the Deputy Supreme Guide Mohammed Habib announced continued dialogue

was needed regarding the party platform and that a committee to redraft the

more controversial statements would be formed[14] (Lynch, 2008) the Brotherhood

has refused to participate in public discourse regarding the proposed platform[15].

For example, the Brotherhood turned down an invitation to take part in a seminar

at the Cairo Center for Human Rights Studies (Muslim Brotherhood Today,

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[14] At the time of writing this the achievements of this committee have yet to be made known.
[15] In an interview with Amr Hamzawy (Musim Brotherhood Today, 2008) he suggests that the Brotherhood leadership has backed away from both internal commitments of dialogue and discussion as well as public ones.

2008).

The recent election of five new members to the Executive Bureau, the highest council within the organization, further suggests the Brotherhood seeks to discourage public discourse. Among the five newly elected leaders only one of them, Dr. Mohamed Saad El Katatni, has any association with professional syndicates, political groups, or other public organizations (Muslim Brotherhood Today, 2008). This suggests that the Brotherhood is less interested in cultivating its ties to the broader public and more focused on internal matters. More telling is the exclusion of Dr. Essam El-Erian who is recognized in the public at large (Muslim Brotherhood Today, 2008) and is among the reformist-minded minority faction. These events suggest that the Muslim Brotherhood is moving away from public engagement, returning to internal dialogue and rejecting public debate. While not directly indicative of democratic behavior, this option suggests fewer opportunities to exhibit democratic tendencies internally and threatens to reduce the organizations' level of democratic behavior.

Organizational Structure

Since its inception the Muslim Brotherhood has faced various levels of state repression. In large part because of the threat of state suppression the internal decision making of the Muslim Brotherhood is kept fairly secret and little is made public about internal, organizational affairs. Yet what is known about its organizational structure and leadership positions has not changed substantially in well over forty years. The Brotherhood operates as a system of numerous federated branches, each with its own leadership and local membership base,

while its physical and ideological headquarters are in Cairo (Munson, 2001).

This enables the individual branches to focus on the socio-political needs and

interests of their local members and helps keep the organization active and fluid

even during periods of state repression (Munson, 2001).

Leadership

The structure of the organization's central leadership can be seen in

Figure 2 and will be discussed here. The highest individual office within the

Muslim Brotherhood is the General Guide, also known as the Supreme Guide

and the Secretary General. This position is currently held by Mohammed Madi

Akef. This is an elected position requiring a four-fifths vote among the

Consultative Assembly (Mitchell 1969). The General Guide used to retain his

position for life; however, this was amended in recent years. The Supreme

Guide can now only retain his position for two six year terms (Palmer and

Palmer, 2008). These features suggest elements of a representative structure.

However, evidence of more authoritarian tendencies is that the Supreme Guide

is authorized to suspend members (Mitchell 1969: 169). Furthermore, the

General Guide is "required to devote all his time to the organization…" (Mitchell

1969: 165) and only with the Guidance Council's approval may he become

involved with other activities, including education (Mitchell 1969: 166). The

General Guide is understood to be a source of "imitation and emulation" and is

given "sweeping powers to…initiate policy as he sees fit" (Palmer and Plamer,

2008:50). Throughout the history of the Muslim Brotherhood there have only

been six General Guides[16].

Second in line to power is the Deputy Supreme Guide, also known as the Deputy Vice Guide. This figure serves as a second in command; ready to take the leadership reigns should something happen to the current Supreme Guide. The current Deputy Vice Guide is Mohammed Habib.

The Consultative Assembly and Guidance Council make up the next highest leadership bodies. The Consultative Assembly, or Shura Council, is considered "the general consultative council of the Society and the general assembly of the Guidance Council [sic]" (Mitchell 1969: 168). It is comprised of over 100 members, yet information on how these positions are filled is limited. The Guidance Council, also known as the Executive Bureau, consists of 15 members and is responsible for the administrative and policy aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood (Mitchell 1969: 166). Members of the Council are elected by a majority vote from the Assembly for a two year term (Mitchell 1969: 166). This may indicate democratic representation within the Brotherhood; however, other stipulations detract from this potential. First, whether these elections are free and fair is subject to some dispute. For instance, with each new leader elected there is talk of a rebellion among the younger and midlevel leadership as there is growing concern that the higher leadership is out of touch with the youth of the movement (Palmer and Palmer, 2008). Decisions made by the majority must be adhered to by all Council members and they are not allowed "to criticize or oppose once the decision [takes] a legal form" (Mitchell 1969: 167). Of course,

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[16] The six General Guides are: Hassan al-Banna (1928-1949); Hassan Ismai'l al-Hudaybi (1951-1973); Omar al-Telmesany (1976-1986); Muhammed Hamid Abu al-Nasr (1986-1996); Mustafa Mashour (1996-2002); Ma'amun al-Hodeiby (2002-2004); Mohammed Madi Akef (2004-present)

this rule has been broken recently with the public dissent regarding the party platform.

Controversies

There has been criticism against the Muslim Brotherhood that the leadership is unwilling to communicate with the rank and file. The leadership is seen by the "fourth generation" and many of the reformist-minded as disconnected from the membership, rigid, and inflexible. As one Muslim Brotherhood observer notes, "[t]he leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood forgot about the fundamental principle of collective leadership and mutual consulting – the principle which was claimed at the establishment of the organization" (Ash-Shankity, 2002). Among the more youthful "fourth generation" within the Brotherhood, there is frustration that the leadership occupying the mid-level offices have used their positions to "stifle the creativity and energy of the *shabab* (youth)" (Lynch 2007). Based on the organization's structure and the criticisms noted by the youth the Brotherhood seems to maintain a hierarchical, non-representative structure of leadership.

Sources of Funding

The Muslim Brotherhood's source of funding is difficult to determine. Donations to the organization are only accepted from people affiliated with the group; however, donations for projects, such as building mosques or hospitals, are accepted from anyone (personal interview with Essam Al Arian July 27, 2004). Members are expected to pay dues (Mitchell, 1969), yet I was unable to determine how much and how frequently. Further, I am unable to determine how

the finances are controlled, to what extent these stipulations are followed, and whether donations made for a project are not used for other purposes. The Muslim Brotherhood has financial resources, in the form of bank accounts and business, which were recently seized in a government crackdown (Lynch, 2008). Yet, whether the Brotherhood fully controls these assets is unclear. Additionally, as the organization does not generate a large amount of expenses – it cannot distribute a newspaper and its office operating costs are small (Interview with Essam Al Arian July 2004) – most of its expenditures may go toward its social projects. I expect that the Muslim Brotherhood's sources of funding are primarily internal, generated from the members themselves and therefore the Brotherhood exhibits somewhat representative qualities, yet it is possible this assessment of their finances may be in error.

Analysis

The Muslim Brotherhood seems to be an organization undergoing a transition. While they have grappled and dealt with the question of being a movement versus a political party it seems that this question has re-emerged and The Brotherhood has not given a clear answer. Further, the publication of a draft political platform has brought to the forefront many internal differences and disputes that had previously been suppressed. Not only have these disputes highlighted the ideological and generational differences within the Muslim Brotherhood but they have given outsiders a rare peek into the functioning of the organization.

This ideological transition has effected the internal operations of the

Brotherhood as well. Historically the Brotherhood was focused more on the

da'wa and was less concerned about politics in and of itself. Functionally, the

leadership maintained strict control over its members, ensuring any internal

disagreements were kept private and diverse opinions extinguished once the

organization decided on a course of action. Yet, in recent years there has been

an increased focus on the political, as can be seen by the recurrent issue of

whether to become a party[17].

The surge in public discussions about the Brotherhood's goals, interests,

and ideologies suggests a more mobilized Muslim Brother. This member is

committed to the organization but wants to be invested in it as well. This Muslim

Brother wants to be involved, active, and participate in the direction of the group.

This member wants to have his voice heard and taken into account when

formulating policies. In short, this Muslim Brother seeks an organization that

behaves democratically.

The Muslim Brotherhood is at an interesting point in their development:

whether to encourage this more mobilized and vocal member or whether to

silence him. While it is too early to say how the Brotherhood will act it seems that

they are looking inward and rejecting public dissent. The structure of the

Brotherhood has always been hierarchical and, despite its repeated claims of

consultation and consensus, critics within the movement argue they are not

represented. Facing a choice of being more representative or hierarchical

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[17] The significance of this issue is perhaps best seen by the emergence of *al-Wasat,* a breakaway group that split from the Muslim Brotherhood over the issue of whether or not to obtain political party status. This organization, an Islamist group with a more overtly political interest and approach, will be discussed shortly.

toward their membership, the Brotherhood appears to be choosing the latter. And this raises the question of their sincerity toward democratic values.

The Brotherhood is an advocate for democracy and is among the most voracious in their calls for democratic elections. Yet there is a question of whether democracy is valued in and of itself or simply for the sake of free and fair elections, which will undoubtedly yield a Brotherhood victory. This concern is sparked in particular by the Brotherhood's ambiguity on the matter of Islamic law, *Shari'a*, and democracy.

Adherents to the idea that Islam and democracy can work in tandem cite the elements of consultation, social justice, mercy and compassion that are integral parts of Islam and liberal democracies (Abou El Fadl, 2004). They suggest that Islamic law ensures these qualities are pervasive throughout society. Yet Islamic law is divine and, despite different viewpoints and interpretations of the law, there are many areas of *Shari'a* where many argue that the law is clear and explicit[18]. Democracy rests on the idea that the people in a state are sovereign – not its laws—in fact, in democracies laws are subject to change based on the will of the people. Establishing a government where laws are immutable and not subject to the people's will raises questions about how democratic such a government can be.

Whether an Islamic-democratic form of government is possible is the subject of almost unending debate, yet it is outside the scope of this paper. The question is not whether this system is possible but what role *Shari'a* would play in such a government. As an Islamist organization that simultaneously calls for

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[18] For example, areas of family law.

Shari'a and democracy the Muslim Brotherhood is charged with explicitly stating how they understand these two paradigms co-existing. Yet, the Brotherhood has not fully explained what role *Shari'a* would play in a democratic government, how this Islamic-democratic government would function, or even if there is a tension between the two.

The release of the party platform and previous statements by the leadership indicate that the leadership has not fully grappled with how the concept of *Shari'a* and democracy can work together. For instance, while calling for a democracy the Brotherhood advocates limiting high offices to Muslim men, despite the presence of a Copt minority. Previous Supreme Guide Mamoun al-Hudeibi has noted that the purpose of the Muslim Brotherhood "is to establish Islamic unity and an Islamic Caliphate similar to that which prevailed in the seventh century" (Al-sharq Al-Awsat, 2002). While other statements issued by the Brotherhood may be more pluralistic they still fail to articulate how Islam – *Shari'a* specifically – and democracy will work together. Ignoring the ideological inconsistencies and possible contradictions between democracy and Islamic law suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood may not be firmly committed to merging the two. Given the clear support for *Shari'a* this leaves a question of whether the Brotherhood is fully in support of democracy. A good indictor for assessing the sincerity of these calls is to gauge the internal processes of the organization. Although the Brotherhood claims to promote democracy it fails to behave in a fully democratic manner.

Wasat

Party History

       Wasat, meaning the Center, is a relatively new party that formed as a breakaway party from the Muslim Brotherhood. Abu Ayla Madi, part of the younger generation within the Brotherhood, formed *Wasat* in part to resolve some of the tensions and ambiguity associated with the Brotherhood identifying itself as a movement while still espousing political positions. The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, facing internal division over whether to pursue the *da'wa* or political party status, chose to maintain its focus on the *da'wa.*

       Abu Ayla Madi and his cohorts felt the Brotherhood erred in placing the movement over party status. Their goal was to establish a political arm of the Brotherhood; however, the leadership rejected this idea and ordered them to cease their actions. Many supports of a political party abandoned *Wasat* under pressure from the Brotherhood; the remaining supporters withdrew their membership in the Muslim Brotherhood in 1996 and sought to establish a formal political Islamist party.

       In creating *Wasat* Abu Ayla Madi attempted to eschew the *da'wa* and establish a clearly defined political party that maintains an Islamic frame of reference. *Wasat* is unambiguously a political organization and, despite its calls for *Shari'a* which will be discussed shortly, *Wasat* utilizes Islam as an ethical tool that shapes their political ideology. As Khalil El-Anani, (2006) a reporter for the state-run *Al-Ahram* newspaper states, "as is the case of the New *Wasat*, Islamists represent no more than the moral outlook governing a civil political

enterprise".

However, because of its Islamic leanings, its founding members' past affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the regime's fears that *Wasat* is actually still connected to the Muslim Brotherhood *Wasat* has been denied legal recognition four times[19]. With each attempt to apply for a license Ayla Madi has had to rename the organization, therefore it has undergone several variations to its name[20], the most recent one being the New Center Party, *Hizb al-Wasat al-Jadid.*

Ideology

While the Muslim Brotherhood struggles to reconcile its political platform with its Islamist creed, *Wasat* has managed to espouse a purely political agenda that is shaped within a predominately Islamic worldview. Ayla Madi notes that this is no different than religiously based political parties in the West. "Western countries, such as Germany, for example have Christian Democratic parties. I have a Muslim friend in Germany who is a member of the ruling Christian Democratic Union. Wasat is a civil party like the CDU – our culture is Islamic, while theirs is Christian" (al-Gawhary, 1996). For *Wasat* Islam is part of a cultural identity which they claim all Egyptians share. For instance, in pursuit of Egyptian

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[19] *Wasat*'s first attempt at party status was officially denied because the party failed to meet the minimum requirement of 50 founding members. *Wasat* originally had more than this number, but after the PPC made it clear that the party would not be recognized much of the founding members returned to the Muslim Brotherhood (Stacher, 2002). Following attempts to seek legal status via the courts, *Wasat* was denied status in 1998 on the grounds that they "failed to add anything new in the existing political parties" (Stacher, 2002). Other attempts to gain a license failed when the courts applied a law retroactively. This law, amended in 2005, stated that new parties were required to have 1000 founding members – up from the 200 needed in 2004 which *Wasat* had at the time they applied (El-Sayed, Fourth Time Lucky, 2007)

[20] Previous names include: *al-Wasat* (Center) in 1996 and *al-Wasat al-Misri* (Egyptian Middle) in 1998

political reform, *Wasat's* platform states, "[t]rue self-reform…is based on culture-specific values which, in Egypt's case, are essentially grounded in…Islam and Christianity" (party platform, 2004).

What is interesting to note about *Wasat* is the ease with which they merge traditionally Islamic terms and concepts with Western, democratic ones. For example, they understand the *umma* – historically a community of Muslim believers– as a civil society (al-Gawhary, 1996). This suggests that *Wasat* has managed to fuse these concepts in practice as well. For example, *Wasat* "invoke[s] the universal rights of man instead of critiquing them with their own substitute version, and they support the previously decried values of the impious West, like freedom of expression and women's liberties (Stacher, 2002).

Whether *Wasat* has achieved a balance between its political and Islamic ideologies is open to debate. Stacher (2002) suggests that on issues dealing with non-Muslims, women, and democracy *Wasat* offers clarity. This is interesting given that these issue areas are typically the ones in which Islamists tend to be vague and less consistent. Yet, Stacher (2002) argues on Islamic issues such as *Shari'a*, modernity, and the idea of Islam – areas where Islamists traditionally provide clear direction – *Wasat* is more vague and unsure. Although the party clearly calls for *Shari'a* and seeks democratic institutions in which to establish and administer it they have not articulated what *Shari'a* will entail and how it will be applied within a political environment of pluralism, equality, and democracy.

There is no question that *Wasat* is clear in their stance on democracy, women, and non-Muslim minorities. As the party platform clearly enumerates "[t]he people are the source of all powers", to be explicit, this is a substantial shift from other Islamists who claim that the source of all powers is *Shari'a* or God*.* Further, the party platform grants "the right of the people to legislate for themselves the laws which are to their interest", suggesting that even Islamic law is subject to a vote by the people based on their interests. Finally, the party platform states that '[t]here should be no discrimination between citizens on the basis of religion, gender, color or ethnicity in terms of their rights, including the right to hold public office" (Wasat party platform, 2004). This evidences that the rights of non-Muslims and women are not only respected in theory but may be protected in practice as well. As Ayla Madi stated:

> We accept all procedures of democracy and think it is compatible with Islam. We accept [the] full equivalen[ce] of men and women, especially in political rights. She can be a judge, president, and so on [which is different from the MB]. We accept a good relationship [with the West], we respect their culture as they should respect ours (personal interview July 25, 2004).

I find that *Wasat*'s stance on Islam and its role in a democratic environment is no less specific. *Wasat* provides clear statements for how *Shari'a* should be understood. For *Wasat*, "*Shari`a* is very simply a collection of guiding principles, which should be put to ijtihad, to a free interpretation in order to adapt them to a world in the process of change" (Rouleau, 1998). Abou Ayla Madi explains that *Shari'a* encompasses a set of basic principles but that details

cannot be found there (personal interview July 25, 2004). This implies that, for

Wasat, *Shari'a* is a set of standard values and cultural norms – such as do not

kill, do not steal, etc.

However, the party has been less clear in specifying the meaning and role

of *Shari'a* in daily life. I suspect this is because it falls outside the realm of the

party's agenda. According to *Wasat, Shari'a* is understood as a guiding set of

principles rather than an all-encompassing set of obligations. *Shari'a* is subject

to interpretation within an environment where the people are charged with

legislating according to their own interests. That is, *Shari'a* is not immutable nor

does it supersede the interests of the people. In fact, the entire approach of

Wasat specifies that the role of *Shari'a* will be determined by the people. As a

result, *Wasat* does not need to outline what *Shari'a* means and entails since it is

the responsibility of the public to determine.

The party's stance on how *Shari'a* will be determined seems to indicate

the party's commitment to pluralism, democracy, and minority rights. In outlining

how *Shari'a* will be decided and interpreted Abu Ayla Madi says, "[w]e would

have a discussion through the media and parliament deliberation" (personal

interview July 25, 2004). Essentially, Ayla Madi is saying that *Wasat* will utilize a

democratic system through which to apply and interpret Islamic law. The use of

the media and parliament provides the opportunity for the public – including

women and Christians alike – to take part in determining the meaning of *Shari'a*.

As Rafik Habib, himself a Christian although not a Copt and founding member of

the party argues, "we present our interpretation of Islam as human understanding

rather than an order from God that cannot be criticized" (al-Gawhary,1996). This

concept is an anathema to other Islamists' understanding of *Shari'a*.

Since its founding in 1995 *Wasat* has presented itself as a moderate

Islamist party, calling for democratic values, principles, and form of government.

When speaking about his party, Ayla Madi uses terms such as "moderate",

"developed", "open-minded", and "young" (al-Gawhary, 1996). The party

advocates elections with multi-presidential candidates where "the ability to

lead…come[s] before ideology"[21] (Hamzawy, 2005). They call on all public

servants to be accountable to the public, commit to fiscal oversight, and establish

a two year term limit (Hamzawy, 2005). Their economic policy has a

predominately free-market orientation while providing for the poor. This platform

shares some designs with the legislation put forward by the Nazif government

(Namatalla, 2005).

Perhaps what is most distinct about *Wasat*'s platform compared to other

opposition parties is their focus on minority rights. The organization argues it will

provide equal rights for Christians and other minorities. Ayla Madi states, "…the

majority has no right to impose its beliefs on the minority" (Abdelhadi, 2005).

Wasat advocates affirmative action for Copts and the use of quotas in elected

bodies (Brown, Hamzawy, Ottaway 2006). What is interesting to point out is that

rather than simply stating they will provide protection from the majority, Madi

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[21] This should not imply that *Wasat* is less motivated ideologically than the Muslim Brotherhood.
In fact, in their platform *Wasat* articulates their ideology more clearly than does the Brotherhood.
Wasat gives much attention to each aspect of their civil-political goals within a religious
framework to a much greater extent than the Brotherhood. The length of the party platform and
its sections devoted to specific issues areas –for example domestic politics, religion and politics,
economic goals, and foreign policy –evidence *Wasat's* ideological motivation.

further insists that the rights of minorities cannot be ignored (Abdelhadi, 2005).

Further, *Wasat* also clearly advocates women's rights. In addition to calling for equal civil and political rights for both men and women, the party platform also states "[c]ompetency, professional background and the ability to undertake the responsibility should be the criteria for holding of public office, for example in the judiciary, or for the presidency" (*Wasat* party platform, 2004). Unlike its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, *Wasat* party does not restrict offices on the bases of sex nor does it disallow female members to the organization. Roughly forty-four women are members of the party; interestingly some don the *hijab* while others do not (Stryjak, 2004).

Although skeptics may fear that, once in power, *Wasat* will change its stance toward minorities and women there is little reason to give credence to this mindset. Christians make up part of *Wasat's* membership and have even occupied leadership positions. Rafik Habib, a founding member of the party and a Christian, is one example of the minority presence within this Islamist party[22]. Habib has since left the party, which "dealt a huge blow to the party's image of interfaith tolerance" (Namatalla, 2005); however, Habib did not leave for any religious or even ideological reasons. Habib disagreed with Ayla Madi's plan to seek legal recognition from the government and felt *Wasat* should instead utilize other channels to disseminate its message and be a presence in civil society (Howeidy, Third Time, 1999). Although no longer a member, Rafik Habib left on

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[22] Since Habib's departure the number of Coptic Christians has dropped into the single digits. Yet, as one observer notes, "having Christians as members of your party does not mean anything. We have Christians that are members of liberal-leftist groups, Communist groups, conservative groups and the NDP. It's only a display of the diversity of their political beliefs" (Namatalla, 2005).

good terms and maintains daily contact with Ayla Madi (Namatalla, 2005).

In its relatively brief life as an organization *Wasat* has been repeatedly compared to the banned Muslim Brotherhood. Part of the reason stems from the make-up of its founding members: at the time Abu Ayla Madi first sought legal recognition the majority of the founding members were also members of the Muslim Brotherhood (Howeidy, 1999). Of the 74 original founding members, 62 were former Muslim Brothers (Stacher, 2002). Most of these members left *Wasat* and returned to the Brotherhood[23] and only 15 of the 200 formal founding members were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (Levinson, 2005). That is, since their third attempt to gain legal status in 2004 not more than seven percent of the formal founding members had a past association with the Brotherhood (Hamzawy, 2005).

The party claims to be open to all Egyptians and its composition seem to support this claim. As mentioned previously, the party is inclusive to Coptic Christians, women, and former Muslim Brothers. The religiously minded, businessmen, and secular Egyptians comprise the membership (Stryjak, 2004).

Sources of Funding

Unfortunately, there is limited information available on the organizational structure or finances of *Wasat.* The information I have uncovered is the result of a personal interview with Abu Ayla Madi. During this interview Ayla Madi noted that they do not accept any funds from non-members (personal interview July 25, 2004). If all monies are generated internally this suggests that the membership may help determine how the funds are spent.

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[23] See footnote 18 for further information about why these members left.

Leadership and Membership

Based on this interview I understand that the *Wasat* party, although it claims a total of 200 founding members, truly relies on the dedicated involvement of about 40-50 people (personal interview July 25, 2004). Further, the leadership is composed of only ten people (personal interview July 25, 2004).

However this does not indicate either representative or hierarchical tendencies. While the leadership is essentially composed of only ten people it remains to be seen whether or not these leaders take members' views and opinions into account when making decisions. Elements of democratic representation can be construed based on the leadership's demographic composition. That a Christian, Rafik Habib, was an active part of the leadership of *Wasat* suggests that the party aims to be representative of its members. While Copts comprise a religious minority within Egypt as well as within *Wasat* the fact that their interests are represented in the leadership implies *Wasat's* adherence to inclusiveness and pluralism.

The lack of information about the internal dynamics of *Wasat* is likely a consequence of the organization not being legally recognized and lacking a mass mobilization like that of the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result little research has been done on the internal procedures of the *Wasat* party. This should not indicate that such research is not needed nor does it indicate that the *Wasat* party is irrelevant. On the contrary, much research has been done on the ideological differences between the Muslim Brotherhood and *Wasat.* I suggest that further study should be conducted to evaluate the internal processes of the

Wasat party. Rather than understand the party's ideological commitments based simply on their words scholars would do well to understand them in connection to internal structures.

Lacking more information on these internal structures we must look to the party's involvement in other activities to assess their democratic behavior. While not awarded legal party status, *Wasat* did receive a license to form a non-governmental organization. The Ministry of Social Affairs granted the establishment of the Egyptian Society for Culture and Dialogue [*Misr lil-Thaqafa wa-l-Hiwar*] in April 2000 (Wickham, 2004). This organization holds conferences, seminars, and publishes research in an aim to promote a culture of dialogue across as many different fields as possible (Yokata, 2007). Among the aims of the society are to cultivate "freedom of expression and belief; promote pluralism and recognize differences of thought[24].

The Egyptian Society has been a useful tool for the political party. While the party itself is unable to develop as a viable, legal opposition the establishment of the NGO enables *Wasat* to advance their ideas. Stacher (2002) notes that the Egyptian Society allows *Wasat* to "incorporate[e] an increasing number of intellectuals were not formally connected to the party". Among the board of directors in the NGO is the President Muhammad Salim al-'Awwa, an intellectual; Atif al-Banna, editor of al-Ahram Center Strategic Report; secularist Wahid 'Abd Magid from al-Ahram; Amani Qandil, an active participant of NGO's and a female; Salah 'Abd al-Karim of the Engineer's Syndicate; and Rafiq Habib,

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[24] This information is listed on the NGO's website which has been closed since November 2007 but is quoted in Yokota, Takayuk "*Democratization and Islamic Politics: A Study on the Wasat Party in Egypt*" Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies 1-2 (2007):148-164.

Coptic Christian and former founding member of *Wasat;* Abu Ayla Madi founding member of *Wasat* (Hefner, 2004).

Based on the published goals of the Egyptian Society and the diverse composition of its board of directors it appears that the NGO also portrays a commitment to pluralism and inclusiveness as does the political party *Wasat.* The board members include secularists, intellectuals, Islamists, Copts, and men as well as women. Its activities encourage cooperation from and dialogue with different socio-political leanings. The Egyptian Society for Culture and Dialogue suggests that *Wasat* is committed to its ideology of pluralism. However, a Non-Governmental Organization whose function is to hold seminars and conferences is quite different from a political party that seeks the power to rule according to its own interests. An assessment of party behavior based on its activities as an NGO are somewhat lacking.

Another resource for assessing *Wasat's* behavior is through their involvement in the highly mobilized and more politically oriented *Kifaya* [enough] movement*.* Formally known as the Popular Movement for Change, *Kifaya* represents a grassroots network of numerous organizations, political parties, and unaffiliated individuals. *Kifaya* emerged in 2004 as a mobilized effort to protest the regime, the continued existence of emergency laws, and the lack of a democracy. As part of the movement *Wasat* took part in these demonstrations and Abu Ayla Madi was even one of *Kifaya*'s founding members (Yokota, 2007). *Kifaya's* pro-democracy orientation make it a perfect fit with the stated goals and aims of *Wasat*, as Abu Ayla Madi notes it is "quite natural" for *Wasat* members to

join *Kifaya* (Yokota, 2007)*.*

However, in recent years *Kifaya* as a movement has become less mobilized and has begun to sound less inclusive. Instead of continuing its calls for an end to corruption and advancing civil rights it now supports militant organizations such as *Hizbollah* (Rubin, 2007). *Kifaya* promotion of violent organizations is at odds with the pluralism, inclusion, and mutual understanding promoted by *Wasat.* There is little information available about how these recent changes in *Kifaya* have impacted their relationship with *Wasat.* It would be expected that *Wasat* separate itself from *Kifaya* in order to maintain its ideological stance; however, I cannot assume that this separation has occurred.

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Analysis

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Wasat seems to be among the more pluralistic, moderate, and democratic opposition parties in the Egyptian political scene today. While espousing an Islamist cultural framework they reject a traditional Islamist agenda. While calling for *Shari'a* they offer it up for interpretation to Muslim jurists, Coptic Egyptian citizens, and the general public through democratic procedures. They advocate minority and women's rights, seeing no problem with either Christians or Women serving as president. *Wasat*'s ideological commitment to the principals of liberal democracy seem strong.

Whether *Wasat* party can carry out its ideological beliefs in practice is more questionable. As a political party *Wasat* lacks the legitimacy which legal status provides. Yet by not portraying themselves as a movement *Wasat* lacks the mobilization and popular support of their Islamist counterparts. As Wickham

(2002) notes, "[r]ebuffed by the regime and the Brotherhood, the *Wasat* Islamists remain marginal political actors without a mass base". Ahmed Thabet, professor of political science at Cairo University, points out "to attract more supporters…the party's policy must be more direct and not shy away from being slightly exclusive. Otherwise, *Wasat* risks…ending up with a large number of members that do not necessarily agree on very basic matters" (Namatalla, 2005).

Currently, *Wasat* is in a developmental stalemate. As a political group they have yet to receive the legal party status necessary to allow them to compete for seats as a party. Further, by focusing on achieving party status they have not been able to mobilize a large number of supporters[25]. *Wasat* continues to articulate its goals and spread its ideology through their affiliated NGO, yet they have yet to become a viable political opposition. It remains to be seen whether the *Wasat* party is up to the task.

Conclusion

Civil society has long been touted as a fundamental feature for maintaining a healthy and stable democracy. Theory holds it provides a network of organizations where citizens articulate their interests, learn skills of activism and working in groups, and individuals learn to trust others beyond familial ties. As a result of the positive effects civil society have in existing democracies scholars and policymakers have begun to examine whether civil society can have the same effect in non-democratic settings. If a civil society can exist in

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[25] It should also be noted that mobilization may be difficult given their acrimonious history with the Muslim Brotherhood.

authoritarian environments then perhaps these same benefits can be generated.

However, civil society is an ambiguous and difficult concept to define much less measure and examine. Civil society has been claimed to generate conditions that are conducive to democracy: activism, voluntarism, trust, etc. Yet an active civil society helped bring down a democracy and usher in fascism in Nazi Germany (Berman 1997). Whether a civil society yields pro-democracy sentiment depends on the orientations and practices of the organizations that comprise it rather than simply its presence or absence.

Considerable debate has emerged over which organizations make up civil society in authoritarian settings. It seems reasonable to expect that non-violent, inclusive and moderate organizations can generate pro-democracy values while violent, exclusive, and radical groups cannot. But where does this leave the numerous organizations which fall somewhere in the middle of these two ideal types? If the groups are exclusive but non-violent can they be part of civil society? What if they support some democratic values but reject others? And perhaps more important, the fact remains that these groups are an active force on the political scene regardless of whether or not we as scholars choose to consider them part of civil society or not. Whatever values and skills these organizations are generating deserve to be studied.

As I have argued, scholars and policymakers interested in understanding democratization are better served by studying the internal norms and practices of the organizations themselves. Rather than focusing on contradictory notions of civil society it is methodologically more rigorous to measure the characteristics

civil society is assumed to express across individual organizations throughout society.   This enables the characteristics of civil society, pluralism, tolerance, moderation, and activism termed democratic behavior, to travel outside of democratic states in a way that civil society scholarship, mired in problems of measurement and definition, has not yet done. Further, this approach allows for clear measurements of democratic behavior across different types of groups including religious ones.   This ends the ongoing debate over whether religious groups can be democratic and whether they can generate democratic values by allowing each organization – religious or secular – to be evaluated based on their own rhetoric and behavior.

While all of the opposition groups examined in this study are calling for democracy and greater reforms there is much doubt over whether these groups will adhere to a democratic system. The Muslim Brotherhood stands out at the center of this question among policymakers and academics. Their ambiguous statements about how *Shari'a* will be applied and the issue areas they are willing or unwilling to compromise on are scrutinized for evidence of whether Islamists can be democrats. In reality, each of the political parties on the Egyptian scene deserves this scrutiny as it is not readily apparent that any of them are as democratic in practice as their voices would suggest.

Rather than relying exclusively on statements I have proposed also studying how organizations behave internally. I expect that statements do influence behavior; however, ideology alone does not necessarily determine how a group conducts itself. As this study has shown, it is possible that groups may

call for democracy while behaving undemocratically. Specifically, policy

procedures and funding also affect how an organizational structure interacts with

its members and others. As a result, both statements and internal procedures

evidence whether a group can be considered to behave more or less

democratically.

Another force affecting party behavior is the nature of the political

environment in which these groups operate. The Mubarak regime maintains a

policy of "divide and rule" toward its opposition parties (Lust-Okar 2004, 2005).

The government legally recognizes some groups but not others in order to

manipulate the interests of the opposition against each other rather than against

the government. This influences how groups interact with each other but

perhaps it also impacts how organizations behave internally. An overarching

political space that plays groups with similar goals against each other and

sometimes puts opposition parties in support of the government may very well

require a leadership that does not listen to its membership base. Further, as the

case of *Wafd* highlights, the government is even able to manipulate the internal

political dynamics of opposition parties. Leadership disputes splitting

organizations between two presidents enable the government to freeze a party's

legal status and help reduce the credibility of the opposition as a viable

organization.

Interestingly, a central finding of this study is the plethora of party

fragmentation, internal feuding, and government intervention in opposition parties

across ideological lines. The frequency with which internal disputes leads to

party splits and, more recently in the case of *Ghad*, duplicate parties suggest that this may not be a unique occurrence but an orchestrated event. I expect that the political environment plays a strong role in affecting this outcome. It is possible that the government is involved in the internal leadership disputes of *Wafd* and *Ghad*, as critics of the regime suggest. However, the reason behind party fragmentation is outside the scope of this paper and as such the role of the political environment has not been thoroughly examined here. I encourage further study about the relationship between the behavior of opposition groups and the political environment in which they are situated.

In addition to advocating the study of specific organizations, this paper offers a typology of the most active political parties historically and currently in Egypt. Egypt offers an interesting and valuable area of study. It is an authoritarian regime with a relatively active and lively political scene. Its opposition parties, whether legally recognized or not, all call for an end to emergency laws, greater human rights, civil, political liberties, and most importantly: democracy. And yet most of these organizations do not exhibit strong democratic behavior themselves.

Results

I determine democratic behavior based on ideological statements, internal procedures, source of funds, and policy statements. The availability of information is somewhat limited; however, using interviews and secondary sources I believe I have exhausted all sources of information available in English

at this time. Relying on the data at hand I assess the level of democratic behavior based on the organizations' ideological commitment to pluralism, internal organization procedures, and sources of funding.   I observe that among the six opposition parties examined three of them exhibit more democratic behavior: *Tagammu, Ghad*, and the *Wasat* parties while the *Wafd* party, the Muslim Brotherhood, and *Karama* parties exhibit less. These results are shown in Table 4.

Wafd is the oldest political party on the Egyptian scene. They are ideologically right of center and advocate political and economic liberalism. *Wafd* calls for democracy and their platform shows a commitment to pluralism and tolerance. Their funds are derived from both internal sources and external donors. Yet their organizational structure is hierarchical and has been described by outside observers as authoritarian. For example, Nomaan Gomaa once issued a gag order on all *Wafd* members and leaders preventing them from speaking to the press. Internal and sometimes violent disputes have stymied the party and invited government interference. Despite calls for democratic institutions and values I find they do not adhere to either and as a result describe *Wafd* as exhibiting less democratic behavior.

Tagammu is a legally recognized political party with a long history in Egyptian politics. Formerly socialist it is now considered left of center ideologically. *Tagammu* calls for democracy, yet these calls appear to be referring strictly to the institutions of democracy rather than democratic values. *Tagammu* is still undergoing a process of transition and change; however, their

new platform does not explicitly state a value of tolerance or pluralism.

Financially, *Tagammu* relies primarily on external support. The internal

organization is representative. Elections occur regularly and are competitive;

term limits are established and adhered to, and members offer their opinions on

the goals and future actions of the party. *Tagammu* may not call for democratic

values and relies on external funds but based on the membership representation

and the amount and strength of member involvement in the party, I asses

Tagammu as exhibiting more democratic behavior.

 Ghad is a new organization on the political scene that received legal

status in 2004. It formed by breaking away from the *Wafd* party in 1996 following

disagreements with *Wafd* chairman Gomaa. *Ghad* calls for both democratic

institutions and pluralism. Party statements reflect a commitment to human

rights, women's rights, and free speech. *Ghad* relies primarily on internally

derived funds. The structure of the organization is representative and *Ghad*

maintains a strict commitment to these procedures. For example, *Ghad* is the

only opposition group in Egypt to had judges oversee internal elections. Due to

Ghad's commitment to democratic institutions, values, and internally

representative procedures I observe *Ghad* as behaving more democratically.

 Karama is also a new organization in Egypt that is currently not

recognized as a legal political party. *Karama* formed as a breakaway

organization from *Tagammu.* Ideologically, they are a Socialist organization

advocating Pan-Arab Nationalism. While they call for democracy these calls

appear to refer exclusively to the institutions of democracy rather than

democratic values of pluralism and tolerance. In fact, the rhetoric and

publications from the group suggest *Karama* does not value pluralism and

tolerance. Unfortunately, data was not available for *Karama's* sources of funding

or for the organization procedures. Although there is a lack of data for this case

based on the organization's rhetoric I assess *Karama* as exhibiting less

democratic behavior.

     Wasat is another newly formed and not legally recognized group. *Wasat*

is an Islamist organization that broke away from the Muslim Brotherhood over the

issue of whether to become a political party. The statements and publications of

Wasat reflect calls for both democratic institutions and values. For example,

according to the party platform women and non-Muslims are able to hold offices

as high as the President. Further suggesting a commitment to these values is

the presence of women and Christians in the membership and leadership.

Financially, *Wasat* relies exclusively on internal funding and apparently rejects

donations from outside sources. There is limited data on the organization

structure so it cannot be said to be representative or hierarchical. However, it

may be considered representative based on the diversity among the leadership.

As a result of *Wasat's* calls for democratic institutions and values, their internal

sources of funding, and adherence to tolerance and pluralism I assess their

behavior as more democratic.

     The Muslim Brotherhood is an established, although not legal,

organization within the political scene. It is an Islamist movement and is the most

popular opposition group in Egypt today. As an organization they continually

face the question of whether to become a formal political party or remain an Islamic movement. Politically, they call for democracy but these calls seem to refer exclusively to the institutions of democracy. A closer examination of the rhetoric of the Brotherhood finds rather questionable calls for tolerance and pluralism. For example, the Brotherhood advocates that women and non-Muslims will be treated fairly under a Brotherhood government, yet their platform rejects women and non-Muslims holding high offices. Financially, the Muslim Brotherhood primarily uses internal sources of funding. The organizational structure is hierarchical and has also been called authoritarian by outside observers. The Brotherhood speaks in a single voice with no public dissent allowed. Although they insist that consultation occurs and that a consensus is reached newly aired grievances among Brotherhood members suggest this may not be true. Further, the lack of public dissent historically and the reaction of the Brotherhood to this public disagreement shows there are few representative structures and a devaluation of internal critique and disagreement. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood is observed as exhibiting less democratic behavior.

It is interesting to note that these groups' democratic behavior is not split along ideological, religious, legal, or even generational lines. For example, *Tagammu* represents a left of center ideological group while the *Ghad* party leans to the ideological right and *Wasat* is an Islamist organization. *Tagammu* and *Ghad* are both legally recognized political parties while the *Wasat* party is currently an illegal organization. Finally, between these three groups the *Ghad* party and the *Wasat* party are breakaway parties from older, more established

organizations. *Tagammu* is one of these elder parties with a long history in the Egyptian political scene. Democratic behavior is present regardless of ideology, legality, or even religiosity.

What is it about these three groups that enable them to generate democratic behavior? A call for democracy in and of itself does not make an organization behave more democratically as each of the groups studied calls for democracy but they do not all exhibit more democratic behavior. In depth examinations of these calls for democracy reveals that, in calling for democracy, some organizations are calling for democratic institutions, such as elections, while others include a call for democratic values of tolerance and pluralism. Interestingly, calls for democratic values do not seem to affect an organization's behavior. The *Wafd* party calls for tolerance and pluralism in their party platform, yet their behavior is less democratic than other groups. Further, *Tagammu* does make explicit statements in favor of tolerance and pluralism but their organizational behavior is more democratic than other parties. This suggests that whether parties are calling for the institutions of democracy or the values of democracy has little effect on democratic behavior.

Legal status also cannot be a critical explanation in understanding differences in democratic behavior. While two of the three legally recognized parties exhibit more democratic behavior, *Tagammu* and *Ghad, Wafd* is a legal party exhibiting less democratic behavior. Further, *Wasat*, a political organization that has repeatedly been denied legal recognition, exhibits more democratic behavior. These findings indicate that both legally recognized parties and illegal

organizations may exhibit democratic behavior. An organization's legal status cannot explain democratic behavior.

The question arises of whether Islamist organizations can behave democratically. The results show that Islam has little effect on democratic behavior as two Islamist organizations, the Muslim Brotherhood and *Wasat,* yield two different results; the latter organization behaving more democratically. This study shows that Islam does not prevent democratic behavior any more than secularism does not promote democratic behavior. Among the six organizations examined in this study four of them are secular in nature, yet only two of these four exhibits more democratic behavior. Democratic behavior cannot be explained through the presence or absence of Islamists.

Possibly the age of the organization can have an effect on group behavior. Three of the six political groups examined in this study represent older, more established organizations. Among the oldest political groups are the Muslim Brotherhood, established in 1928, and *Wafd,* founded in 1919. *Tagammu* is also a more established political party with its founding in 1977. The younger organizations, *Ghad; Wasat;* and *Karama,* have all emerged fairly recently in the mid-1990s. Yet these generational differences also cannot explain democratic behavior. Here, too, we see that differences in democratic behavior cross generational lines. The more recent parties of *Ghad* and *Wasat* exhibit more democratic behavior while *Karama* exhibits less. Further, the more established *Tagammu* party is seen as having more democratic behavior. It is perhaps most intriguing that these generational differences cannot be used to explain

democratic behavior.

It is somewhat surprising to find *Tagammu* exhibiting more democratic behavior while its contemporaries exhibit less. It has been noted that in recent years *Tagammu* has been less confrontational with the government and more conciliatory. Is it possible that being less oppositional with a government – even with an authoritarian government – yields more democratic behavior?

Scholars have noted that radical parties actively participating within democratic institutions tend to moderate (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986). These studies suggest that groups, in pursuit of their own interests, adapt their behavior in response to their environment. For instance, parties running in elections, where they are forced to compete for votes among the populace will alter their platform to appeal to more people. Once in office these groups work with parties of different ideologies in order to pass legislation and run the government effectively. As Przeworski and Sprague (1986) find, in the case of Socialist parties in Europe, over time these parties' goals have shifted to less radical ones. The electoral institution was a force on the party which shaped the group's choices or decisions. Whether or not this phenomenon can occur in a non-democratic setting has yet to be fully examined. However, it is quite likely that *Tagammu*'s experience running in elections and working with other parties, including the ruling party in power, have prompted the group to alter its goals and behavior. Yet, I do not expect this to be the sole explanatory factor. Other factors that occurred at the same time that *Tagammu*'s relationship with the Mubarak regime changed may help explain this phenomenon.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union *Tagammu* underwent an identity crisis. Their ideological approach was no longer appealing as Communism and Socialism were seen to have failed. Membership was falling and their biggest political rival was not the government but Islamists being recruited to the Muslim Brotherhood. In the midst of these challenges *Tagammu* re-evaluated its ideology, platform, and goals.

Following this intense introspection *Tagammu* altered its behavior toward the government and internally. *Tagammu* became less bellicose in its opposition to the regime, for example the party began to compete in elections rather than boycotting them. Further, they became less vocal in their criticism of the government and instead increased their objections to Islamists. Internally, they began to reconsider their ideology. More important, they sought the input and ideas of their members in re-shaping the party's platform. Perhaps it was these challenges that prompted *Tagammu* to reassess its goals and strategies that ultimately resulted in their behavior being more democratic.

Area specialists and policymakers are well aware that the secular political parties provide little competition to the more mobilized and popular Muslim Brotherhood. Assessments of the problems facing these secular parties include an out of touch and aging leadership, weak and unappealing ideologies, lack of funds, and an ineffective organizational structure. Yet the case of *Tagammu* suggests that these problems provide opportunities for the parties to reconsider their aims and attitudes. Depending on how these parties choose to transform themselves may result in democratic behavior.

However, many of the parties in this study are facing their own set of challenges and they have not become more democratic as a result. For example, the *Wafd* party also faces low membership, the appeal of their message has diminished, and their ideological platform is unclear and unpopular, and they also compete with the more mobilized and popular Islamists groups, yet they remain among the less democratic of the parties examined. Challenges alone do not result in a shift in behavior; rather, it is how the party responds to these challenges that seem to affect their behavior.

Learning theory argues that organizations will change their beliefs and behavior as a result of the rewards and punishments from past experiences. Yet which lessons are learned, that is how beliefs and behavior will change is crucial. However, this is a subject which has yet to be fully explored. The literature notes that lessons will be drawn infrequently, they result from politically significant events, and reflect a desire to repeat past success and avoid past failures (Reiter 1996).

In the case of *Tagammu*, the party experienced harsh punishment from the government and its leadership was imprisoned. Rifaat El-Said, the current leader of *Tagammu,* himself was sentenced to five years of harsh labor (personal interview with the author, July 18, 2004). Perhaps these years of government reprisals have taught *Tagammu* and its leaders that cooperation with the regime yields a better result than antagonizing the government. The collapse of the Soviet Union, an ideological leader for Communist organizations, may have led *Tagammu* to re-evaluate their ideological commitments and remove any

references or connections to a failed government. Finally, the presence of the

Muslim Brotherhood, siphoning members and providing a highly mobilized

opposition, may have motivated *Tagammu* to take immediate action and undergo

a process of introspection. Each of these politically significant events may have

enabled political learning and can help explain the change in *Tagammu*'s

democratic behavior.

Studying the Muslim Brotherhood also suggests that political learning may

be occurring. The Brotherhood is an active and mobilized organization. While

we do not know exact figures, the Brotherhood does not lack support among the

populace. According to Islamists, Islam has not failed therefore Islam itself does

not require re-evaluating. As a result there is seemingly little need or opportunity

for introspection.

However, the Muslim Brotherhood has changed over time. Initially, the

Brotherhood was a violent organization; however, they renounced violence in the

1970s and seem committed to this stance. Tactical differences are not the only

thing that has changed. The Muslim Brotherhood's ideology has also evolved.

Originally the Brotherhood called for a purely Islamic system of government as

proscribed in the *Qur'an*. Today there is a clear call for human rights and

democracy. Although the Brotherhood seems to be referring exclusively to

democratic elections this still reflects a shift in attitudes and beliefs.

Perhaps this shift is in response to political lessons learned. After years of

violence between Islamists and the government which culminated with the

assassination of President Sadat[26] the Brotherhood experienced harsh

government reprisals. Its leadership and members were imprisoned. After

completing their prison term the leaders returned to political activity. However,

instead of engaging in violent acts, the Brotherhood announced they were

renouncing violence. Further, they encouraged their members to run for seats in

student and professional syndicates. Additionally, they began running as

independent candidates in parliamentary elections. These actions reflect more

than simple tactical changes. The Muslim Brotherhood began as an organization

that rejected democracy as a foreign system, yet today they loudly call for this

system of government. While the organization does not seem to fully support the

values of a democracy the Brotherhood is committed to democratic institutions

and this is an ideological shift. Interestingly, the recent attempt to create a

political platform has publicized a fierce and longstanding internal debate that

may enable scholars to view political learning in action. However, the result of

these debates and dialogue and whether they will lead to any internal re-

assessment and more democratic behavior remains to be seen.

In the course of the debate about whether the Brotherhood should be a

party or a movement a small fraction of the membership felt they should push to

be a party. This group could not convince the leadership and ultimately broke

away from the Brotherhood to form the *Wasat* party.

This scenario is mimicked in the experiences of the *Ghad* party. Both

Ghad and *Wasat* are breakaway parties from older, more established

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[26] It should be noted that the Muslim Brotherhood was not the only Islamist involved in violent activity. The introduction details other Islamist groups engaged in violence some of which are still violent organizations today.

organizations. And both the *Wasat* and *Ghad* parties exhibit more democratic

behavior than their original affiliates, the Muslim Brotherhood and *Wafd*,

respectively. As relatively young organizations *Wasat* and *Ghad* are unlikely to

have their own experiences to learn from or, at least, to have a shorter trajectory.

However, the leadership may have undergone a process of learning during its

years as part of the *Wafd* party and the Muslim Brotherhood. It has been noted

that "[b]oth cognitive psychology and organizational theory predict that crisis or

trauma is more likely to produce learning than a gradual accumulation of

knowledge" (McCoy, 2000:5). Both parties' past experiences with leadership not

listening to their demands and the subsequent rupture of the organizations may

explain the evidence of more democratic interactions with their own members.

As McCoy (2000:131) finds in studying political parties' attitudes and behavior

toward democracy in Latin America, "[t]rauma as a source of learning tended to

result in the reevaluation of both goals and means…" suggesting that breaking

away from an existing party may have a strong effect not just on behavior and

actions but goals as well.

This study has attempted to systematically evaluate democratic behavior

within the political opposition groups in Egypt. Within the constraints of an

authoritarian setting, the political scene in Egypt is lively, active, and diverse.

Established secular parties compete in elections against younger, breakaway

parties and oftentimes even illegal organizations. Leftist, right of center, and

Islamist organizations vie for members. Despite these ideological, generational,

legal, and religious differences all of these political organizations call for human

rights, greater civil and political freedoms, and perhaps more intriguingly, democracy. Yet they do not all behave democratically.

Among the six political parties examined in this study three of them can be considered more democratic than the rest: *Tagammu*, *Wasat*, and *Ghad*. However this should not be construed as meaning they are fully democratic. Some of these groups do not espouse calls for pluralism and tolerance. Some of these groups rely on the financial support of actors or organizations outside of the group. But does this suggest that these parties' are not sincere in their calls for democracy? Are these groups merely saying they want democracy but are unable to show a real commitment to democratic practices? Or is the lack of full democratic procedures and behavior a function of organizations?

To some extent organizations must be hierarchical and cannot be pluralistic to the extent that all peoples and ideologies are welcome. Veering too far from the ideological formation of the group may rend the foundation of the organization itself. Logistically, organizations beyond a certain size cannot listen to all of their members' ideas and concerns directly. But perhaps fully democratic procedures are simply not possible in a setting of government manipulation. As this study has shown, the regime frequently involves itself in the inner-workings of opposition organizations usually to the detriment of the group. Encouraging complete openness and direct member involvement could invite government exploitation. Perhaps political parties in authoritarian regimes simply cannot exhibit fully democratic behavior.

Organizations serve a role in society by aggregating people's interests

and mobilizing them to achieve their goals. Through group involvement people learn skills of outreach and recruitment. By working with other groups they learn tactical cooperation and possibly ideological moderation. Running in elections these parties learn how to compete effectively for seats. As this study has shown civil society organizations may not be "schools for democracy" but they are clearly teaching their members. The question remains what exactly is being taught.

It is because these groups are training grounds for political involvement that democratic behavior is an important feature for a political organization to have. Parties that hold regular internal elections teach their members the skills needed to be active in democratic elections. Organizations that actively encourage their members' input in decision making either directly or via representative structures teach their members how to voice demands within an organizational framework. Groups that allow internal dissent may be teaching their members the value of different ideas, helping generate tolerance and pluralism.

I do not mean to suggest that these organizations are the harbingers of democracy. It is just as likely that regime change may occur from an organization that exhibits less democratic behavior as it is possible from a group exhibiting more democratic behavior. Further, this is not to say that organizations which behave more democratically are more committed to democracy. It is conceivable that groups may behave democratically internally, among those who share a basic ideological commitment, yet act in a non-

democratic manner when working with different organizations. However, organizations that exhibit more democratic behavior may be teaching their members how to behave within a democracy. For this reason scholarship on civil society organizations in non-democratic settings is significant to the literature on democratization.

This suggests several areas for continued study for scholars interested in democratization in Egypt and the Middle East more broadly. Secular parties in the region seem to be languishing and this may encourage an internal re-assessment and possibly reinvigorate these parties. Additional studies should be done to determine whether this estimation can be borne out. While nearly all opposition groups are calling for democracy this study demonstrates that not all of them behave in a democratic manner. This promotes further investigation about the organizations' goals and ideologies. As this study shows, civil society organizations may not be "schools for democracy" but explaining internal democratic behavior may provide some insight into which organizations can be considered as such.

Table 1

<u>Oppositional Organizations</u>

Parties	Ideology	Breakaway	Legal Status	Calls for Democracy
Wafd	Liberal	No	Legal	Yes
Tagammu	Leftist	No	Legal	Yes
Ghad	Liberal	Yes	Legal	Yes
Karama	Leftist	Yes	Illegal	Yes
Muslim Brotherhood	Islamist	No	Illegal	Yes
Wasat	Islamist	Yes	Illegal	Yes

Table 2

<u>Calls for Democracy in Oppositional Organizations</u>

Parties	Ideology	Breakaway	Calls for Democratic Values[27]	Calls for Democratic Institutions
Wafd	Liberal	No	Yes	Yes
Tagammu	Leftist	No	No	Yes
Ghad	Liberal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karama	Leftist	Yes	No	Yes
Muslim Brotherhood	Islamist	No	No	Yes
Wasat	Islamist	Yes	Yes	Yes

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[27]This should be understood as reflecting pluralism and tolerance.
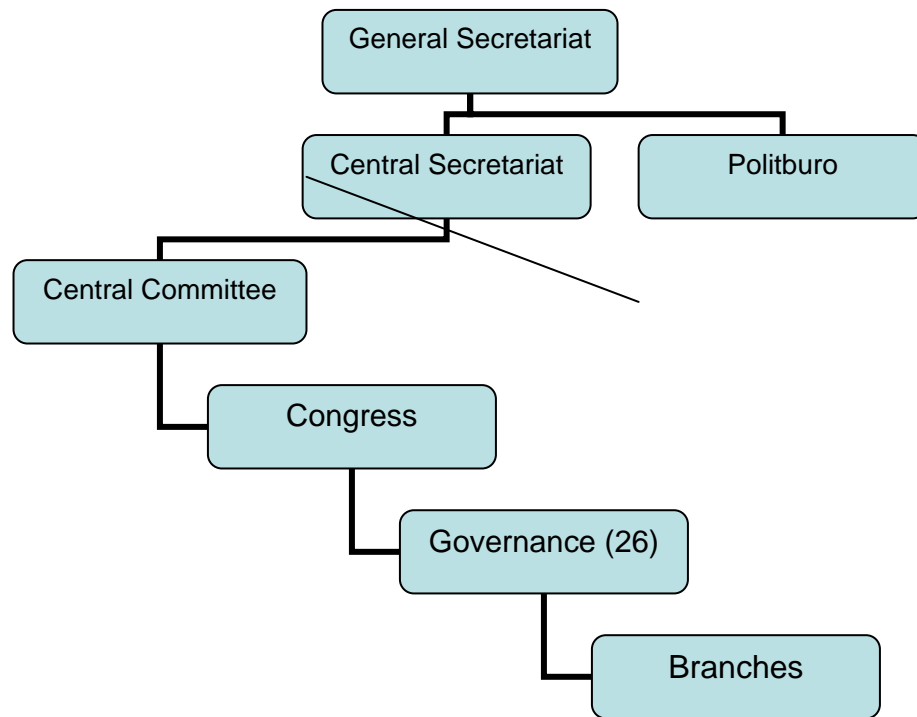
Table 3

<u>Typology of Organizational Procedures</u>

Relationship To:	Democratic Behavior	Non-Democratic Behavior
Officials	All or most officials are elected by members	Officials are not elected by members but possibly by elites
Elections	Elections are somewhat regular and fair	No Elections
Policies and Programs	Policies and Programs are determined by members or their elected representatives	Policies and Programs are elite-driven
Membership	Inclusive membership, members voice opinions	Restricted membership, lines of communication are top down not bottom up
Ideologies	Express values of pluralism, call for democracy and representation, espouse tolerance and moderation such as human rights and civil –political liberties	Exhibit violence, intolerant to diverse ideas, unwillingness to compromise ideologies
Funding	Member-driven	Limited donors or outside sources

Table 4

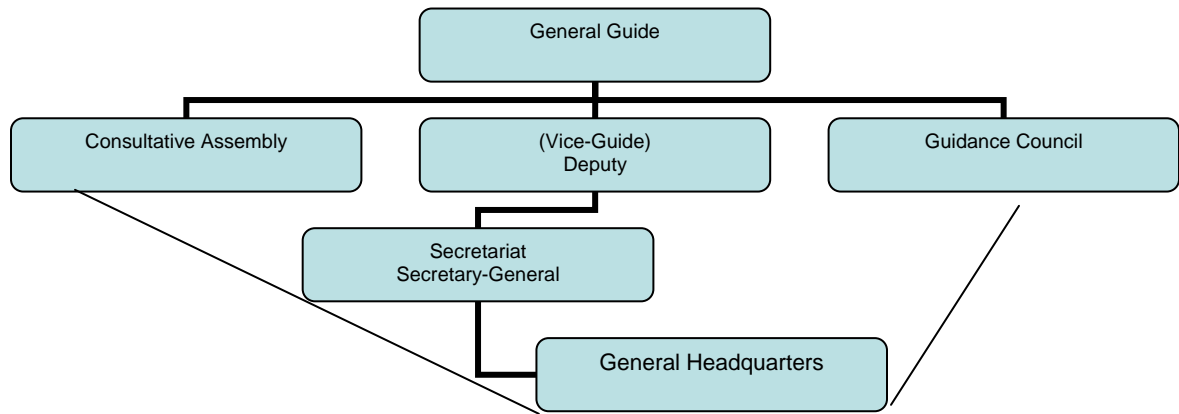**Features and Findings of Oppositional Organizations**

Parties	Ideology	Breakaway	Legal Status	Calls for Democratic Values	Calls for Democratic Institutions	Internal Procedures	Sources of Funding	Democratic Behavior
Wafd	Liberal	No	Legal	Yes	Yes	Hierarchical	Mixed	Less
Tagammu	Leftist	No	Legal	No	Yes	Representative	External	More
Ghad	Liberal	Yes	Legal	Yes	Yes	Representative	Internal	More
Karama	Leftist	Yes	Illegal	No	Yes	N/A	Insufficient Data	Less
Muslim Brotherhood	Islamist	No	Illegal	No	Yes	Hierarchical	Internal	Less
Wasat	Islamist	Yes	Illegal	Yes	Yes	N/A	Internal	More

Figure 1   Organization Structure of Tagammu

General Secretariat

Central Secretariat

Politburo

Central Committee

Congress

Governance (26)

Branches

Interview with Rifaat El-Said July 19, 2008

Figure 2: Leadership Positions of the Muslim Brotherhood

(Mitchell 1969: 164)

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