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UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLUENCE OF ONLINE ISLAMISM AND COUNTERPUBLICITY: AN IDEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EGYPTIAN MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S RHETORIC IN *IKHWANWEB*

By

SOUMIA DHAR

B.A. (Honours), English Literature, University of Calcutta, 2001
M.A., Communication, University of Madras, 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Communication**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 2011

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother. *Ma*, I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this light—Albert Schweitzer

My years as graduate student were filled with trials and tribulations. And I am happy I embarked on this journey. That I did complete it, this work, is a testament to the help and involvement of a great many people. In the process I amassed vast arrears in debts of gratitude. A roster so large that I can, at best, hope only to make a few gestures of acknowledgement towards the most pressing of these debts. In making this grateful acknowledgement to them I might have, unintentionally, omitted some names from my personal honor roll: I ask those beautiful people to forgive me.

Today I sit proud with an academic accomplishment coveted dearly for many years; I also sit content with the realization that this journey made me stronger, and a better human being. These marvelous gifts that life has given did not come without the *light* in me needing to be rekindled, again and again.

All of you, in your unique and valuable ways, have blown my light into flame…

Professor John Oetzel, my advisor—for always being there, even when it would be easy to lose faith in me; for guiding me through the nuances of an academic environment that was foreign; for helping me see a possibility in even the apparently impossible. You were my voice of reason.

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I thank John and Karen, most dearly, for going through innumerable drafts of my dissertation, showing me the way and giving the benefit of their wisdom, for challenging me to be my best, and for being patient, understanding, and supportive through some tough personal times.

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Each one of you contributed to making my study reach its analytical and intellectual acme. Thank you.

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I thank each one of you for loving me unconditionally, making me laugh like never before, and for believing in me. You guys are the kind that lifelong friends are made of.

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Mo—you have shown me much affection, you have been a rock during moments of despair, and you have nurtured me like family. You have taught me to always see the positives of life; you have helped me believe in the value of optimism. Your passion for knowledge, your tenacity for perfection, your undeterred resolve when life strikes a hard blow, are exemplars for a lifetime. In addition, your knowledge of the dynamics of religion

and politics as regards the Middle East has served as an invaluable resource for this study. Thank you.

Last, but most significantly, for your support and encouragement I thank my family. The appreciation due them is beyond measure.

Mum and Papa, Ma and Baba, thanks for your unquestioning support, your love. For always telling me that I am the best, for being the reason why I never quit, even when the going got tough. It is because of the values you have instilled, and your unshaken belief in what I can achieve that I dare to dream. I hope I can always make you proud.

My sweetheart Ma, and Maime, I love you guys much and miss you so. But the look of joy I see in your eyes in my achievement makes success tempting. Ma, I have stayed away from you so long… and I know you have missed me dearly. You are and always will be, my best buddy. I thank you; I thank you all, for making my dream worth more than the sacrifice of staying away. I am who I am because of you all.

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation addresses two fundamental problems confronting most Islamist organizations: (a) their monolithic treatment by Western advocates of secular and democratic change, who by default associate Islamism with extremism; and (b) their struggle to function as unencumbered civil society actors and legitimate political entities in authoritarian political societies. In that endeavor, I carry out an ideological analysis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) English-language rhetoric in its website, *Ikhwanweb*: (a) to interpret the worldview manifest in its cyber rhetoric, and identify the rhetorical strategies that support this worldview; and b) to examine Ikhwanweb's potential as a tool for counterpublic expression in a repressive political environment, *counterpublics* being alternative, non-dominant publics, who voice their oppositional needs and values through diverse discursive practices. The timeframe for choice of rhetorical texts for this analysis was from 2005 to 2010, which corresponds with Hosni Mubarak's finals years as Egypt's President. My

analysis unearths a *Counterpublic Cyber Islamic* worldview held by the Egyptian MB; a worldview characterized by endemic dialectical tensions. The core tensions identified are: (a) *openness and closedness*, or the desire to be open and share information versus the desire to be private; (b) *autonomy and connectedness*, or the need to separate to maintain uniqueness versus the desire to have ties and connections with others; (c) *equality and inequality*, or the desire to be considered as equals versus the desire to develop levels of superiority; and (d) *possession and deficiency*, or the need to portray what *we* have versus the desire to manifest deficiency, or what *we* do not have. These dialectics point to four core elements that constitute this worldview: (a) *distrust* towards the Hosni Mubarak regime, and Western agents who aid and support authoritarian governments; (b) the need to be *valued*—to be respected, considered equals, understood without prejudices, and acknowledged despite differences—by Western agents; (c) the significance of *caution* in its online communications; and (d) the flux resulting from its efforts at *transitioning* into an organization that has an Islamic essence but nurtures democratic aspirations. This worldview is constructed through three rhetorical paradigms—*the show of support*, *the portrayal of opposition*, and *the display of contradiction*. These paradigms are demonstrated through specific rhetorical tactics—*consubstantiation*, *resource sharing*, *testimony*, *epithet*, *negative other-presentation*, *action over substance*, *generalization*, *implication*, and *antithesis*. Based on these findings I assert that the Egyptian MB has genuine democratic intentions. Inherent in its Counterpublic Cyber Islamic worldview is a *need* for an Islamic reformulation and an *effort* at becoming an entity within the Egyptian society that can counter authoritarianism, promote human rights and a robust civil society, and establish a system of governance based on democratic ideals yet preserve its Islamic ethos. In addition, a major success of using Ikhwanweb as a

counterpublic sphere is in the Egyptian MB's ability to reach out to the Western world. The intent is to apprise prejudiced agents in the West that Islamic organizations are not inherently extremist entities, and to disapprove Western agents' support for authoritarian regimes, which despite being secular neither support democracy nor foster robust civil societies. In fact, it becomes imperative that in today's post-Mubarak era the West pay attention to the moderate rhetoric of the Egyptian MB and support its attempts at helping Egyptians reach their *manifest destiny*—live as free citizens in a democratic Egypt.

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Chapter I: Setting the Stage

In a stimulating account of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Robert S. Leiken, Director of the Immigration and National Security Program at the Nixon Center, and Steven Brooke, a research associate of this public policy think tank, addressed it as one of the "world's oldest, largest, and most influential Islamist" organizations as well as the "most controversial, condemned by both conventional opinion in the West and radical opinion in the Middle East" (2007, p. 107). According to Leiken and Brooke, scholars and commentators from the West have called the Muslim Brothers "radical Islamists" and "a vital component of the enemy's assault force . . . deeply hostile to the United States" (p. 107). On the other hand, and rather ironically, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current leader of the militant Islamist group Al-Qaeda, accused the Muslim Brothers of "luring thousands of young Muslim men into lines for elections . . . instead of into the lines of *jihad*" (a holy war) (Leiken & Brooke, 2007, p. 107). This account aptly portrays the predicament of the Muslim Brotherhood; it is often under attack by agents of secular and democratic change as well as agents of militant jihad.

The controversial and complex nature of the Muslim Brotherhood—and consequently the ambiguity surrounding its ideology and objectives—have led scholars to explore the Brotherhood's stance on Islam and jihad, elections and democracy, civil society, Israel and the West, and most importantly, the type of society the group seeks to create (Burke & Lapidus, 1988; Kepel, 2002; Moaddel, 2005; Zollner, 2008). However, academics as well as policy makers often are handicapped by their tendency to see the Muslim Brotherhood, and Islamism as a whole, as a monolith (Leiken & Brooke, 2007).

In an effort to define Islamism, Rangus (2004) states that Islamists are those Muslims who seek to use the basic principles of Islam to seek reform. In other words, Islamists

consider Islam not only to be a religion, but also a political program. This description is at best simplistic. To get a comprehensive and contextual understanding of what Islamism is, what Islamists seek, and how they achieve it, one has to consider the diverse interactional dynamics that characterize religion—in this case Islam—and politics, in varied contexts. Leiken and Brooke (2007) describe the MB as "a collection of national Islamist groups with differing outlooks, and the various national factions often disagree about how best to advance its mission" (p. 108), reiterating the fact that Islamism is not a monolith. Thus, it becomes pertinent to analyze each national Muslim Brotherhood faction independently to: (a) understand and explore its specific ideology, actions, and motives; and (b) avoid a reductive treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood, and more broadly, Islamism.

In this dissertation, I focus primarily on the Egyptian faction of the Muslim Brotherhood since the MB was founded in Egypt. Today, Egypt is the main hub of the organization, with Cairo as its headquarters. Wickham (2002) states:

> The rise of a popular Islamic reform movement in Egypt not only has transformed the character of opposition politics in the world's largest Arab state, but also has affected political trends beyond Egypt's borders; looking ahead, Egypt's stature as a leader in the Arab world is such that an Islamic victory—at the polls or in the streets—could significantly alter regional alliances, as well as offer a model and source of inspiration for Islamist parties in neighboring states. Finally, the Mubarak regime's status in Egypt as an American ally and strategic partner in the Arab-Israeli peace process has given to a broader set of international actors a stake in Egypt's political stability. (p. 4)

Although the implications of the January 2011 Egyptian Revolution, which led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's regime, are numerous, the significant role Egypt played in affecting the regional balance of power in the Arab world and its political centrality in the region during Mubarak's rule, raised the importance and impact of the Islamic trend in Egypt (Wickham, 2002). All these factors make the Egyptian faction of the MB appropriate for exploration.

The evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, since its founding in that country in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a schoolteacher, has been associated with climactic resurgences interspersed by successive government crackdowns. The periods of resurgence usually have been marked by the coming into prominence of individuals, such as Sayyid Qutb or Hassan al-Hudaybi, who significantly influenced the Brotherhood's ideology and activities during their period of eminence. These episodes of resurgence, however, have been accompanied by major government intrusion and interference. Both dynastic and nationalist Egyptian governments have accused, suppressed, and tortured Brotherhood members after plots, or alleged plots, of assassination and overthrow were uncovered to the point that the group was officially banned from 1954, and remained as such till the ousting of erstwhile President Hosni Mubarak in 2011. For several decades the MB neither enjoyed legal status nor was recognized as a political party, and despite official renunciation of violence in the 1970s, the Brotherhood continued to face periodic suppressions (McDonough, 2005).

Nevertheless, the Brotherhood's position in Egypt as an influential and powerful non-governmental organization and its significant role in Egyptian civil society is irrefutable (McDonough, 2005). In addition, regardless of the ban it faced, the MB remained a prominent political force in Egyptian political life. Although it was banned, the group was

able to gain some representation in Parliament through members who ran as independents in previous elections.

The changing and complex roles the MB has been playing in Egyptian society has led diverse audiences—the secular Egyptian regime led by Hosni Mubarak till 2011, varied Western agents, especially the US, or militant fundamentalists—to form multiple and often contradictory perceptions of what the Brotherhood stands for and just what its ideology and motives are; Moaddel (2005) claims that these changes and complexities have led to the creation of multiple and changing discourses within the Brotherhood, and consequently, about the Brotherhood. This scenario reinforces the importance of exploring the Egyptian MB in this dissertation.

Specifically, I explore the rhetorical dynamics of the Egyptian Brotherhood, as present in the MB official English website, *Ikhwanweb*, during the final years of Hosni Mubarak's rule in Egypt. Counterpublic theory and rhetorical criticism form the conceptual and methodological foundations of this study. Through this dissertation, I seek an understanding of: (a) the Egyptian MB's ideology and motives as manifest in its English-language rhetoric in Ikhwanweb; (b) the rhetorical strategies the Egyptian MB uses to construct a worldview; and (c) the dynamics of counterpublicity exhibited rhetorically by the Egyptian MB and its possible implications on Western agents and the global civil sphere during Hosni Mubarak's final years as Egypt's President. In addition, I also address the use of the Internet by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for counterpublic expression, and consequently, the Internet's potential for revitalizing the role of the public sphere and civil society. The following sections include brief overviews (to be elaborated in Chapter 2) of the relation between the Habermasian public sphere, civil society, and counterpublic theory; the

role of rhetoric in counterpublic studies; the Internet as a communicative forum for counterpublics; the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's identity dilemma; and finally, the rationale and purpose of this study.

From Public Sphere to Counterpublics

The publication of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* in 1962 is widely considered to be the origin of post-war research on the public sphere, specifically in Western societies (Asen & Brouwer, 2001). It is also considered the basis of most contemporary public sphere theories. Through this work, Habermas gave a "historical-sociological account of the creation, brief flourishing, and demise of a bourgeois public sphere based on rational-critical debate and discussion" (Berdal, 2004, p. 21).

Habermas (1989) specifies that, due to certain unique historical circumstances, a new civic society emerged in Europe in the 18th century. Berdal (2004) states:

> Driven by a need for open commercial arenas where news and matters of common concern could be freely exchanged and discussed, accompanied by growing rates of literacy, accessibility to literature, and a new kind of critical journalism, a separate domain from ruling authorities started to evolve across Europe. (p. 21)

The emergent bourgeoisie created a public sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored, and the means to do that was informed and critical discourse, in other words, rational argument by the people (Habermas, 1989).

Habermas's views on the public sphere had considerable immediate influence, and his views enjoyed renewed prominence after *The Structural Transformation* was translated in 1989. Although it has led to important scholarship, especially on the late 18th and early 19th

century cases Habermas used for his analysis, two criticisms of his public sphere theory have been central: (a) the notion that Habermas neglected the proletariat; and (b) the privileging of reason too much over experience as a source of political judgment (Calhoun & McQuarrie, 2004). The first criticism is central to this study.

Before elaborating on this critique it becomes important to delve briefly into the concept of civil society for two key reasons. First, civil society finds itself at the cross-section of important intellectual debates and developments on topics such as democracy and the public sphere and Islam and the West. Second, civil society is a vital component of this study by virtue of its association with the concept of public sphere. According to Tlanhlua (2008), the Center for Civil Society at the London School of Economics defines civil society as follows:

> Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared
> interests, purposes, and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct
> from those of the state, family, and market, though in practice, the boundaries
> between state, civil society, family, and market are often complex, blurred, and
> negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors, and
> institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil
> societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities,
> development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's
> organizations, faith-based and religious organizations, professional associations, trade
> unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions,
> and advocacy groups. (para. 1)

According to Edwards (2005, para. 10), the concept of a *public*—"a whole polity that cares about the common good and has the capacity to deliberate about it democratically"—is central to a civil society as it leads to "effective governance, practical problem-solving, and the peaceful resolution of differences." Furthermore, as a public sphere, civil society also becomes the platform for debates and deliberation, association and institutional collaboration. Therefore, the flourishing of the civil sphere is crucial to the strengthening of democratic ideas and institutions. But, "if alternative viewpoints are silenced by exclusion or suppression or if one set of voices are heard more loudly than those of others, the public interest inevitably suffers" (Edwards, 2005, para. 10); in this respect civil society becomes a vital element of this study. The concern over silencing alternative viewpoints brings this discussion back to the critique of Habermas's public sphere theory—the idealization of the bourgeois public sphere as a forum for rational-critical debate—which leads to the neglect of the potential and dynamics of the proletarian public sphere.

Negt and Kluge (1993) suggest that the proletarian public sphere, in fact, worked in parallel to the bourgeois public sphere as a counterpublic. The term *counterpublic* took its place in academic discourse in 1972 as *Gegenöffentlichkeit* in the German-language work of Negt and Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Public Sphere and Experience), and as aforementioned, their work challenged Habermas's (1962/1989) account of the bourgeois public sphere. However, the term *counterpublic* entered English-language scholarship in 1989 through Rita Felski's work *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*. Notably, in this work Felski describes the counterpublic constituted by feminist literature as "oppositional discursive space" (p. 155) that alters, even as it is shaped by, the ideological structures within which it emerged. But Nancy Fraser's conceptualization of counterpublic is most widely applied in

academic circles (Brouwer, 2006). Fraser (1992) suggests that subordinated social groups, or "subaltern counterpublics," often find it "advantageous to constitute alternative public . . . in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (p.123).

According to Brouwer (2006), most definitions of counterpublic share three key features: oppositionality, constitution of a discursive arena, and a dialectic of retreat from and engagement with other publics. To elaborate on each, oppositionality is characterized by a stance of "resistance, rejection, or dissent" (Brouwer, 2006, p. 197). The notion of oppositionality is essentially perceptual, that is counterpublics are created when social actors perceive themselves to be marginalized within dominant publics, and they communicate about that exclusion. Second, according to Brouwer (2006), communication about marginality helps to comprise a discursive arena. *Discursive* "refers not just to speech— written or spoken language—but also to visual communication and bodily display" (p. 197). Further, this discursive arena is in fact a conceptual metaphor rather than just a specific place; here people who communicate oppositional stances have the ability to create *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991) through asynchronous communication, over and above simply meeting together in physical spaces (Brouwer, 2006).

Finally, counterpublics entail a dialectic of inward and outward address (Brouwer, 2006). In other words, oppositional communication exhibited by counterpublics necessitates not only interaction among themselves in moments of regrouping or reflection, but also, this inward communication anticipates and is in preparation of outward engagements with other publics. In that sense, "radical exclusions such as forced exile or chosen separatism, in which

social actors cannot or do not address other publics, do not constitute counterpublicity" (Brouwer, 2005, p. 197).

Several concerns arise in relation to the praxis and potential of counterpublic theory to study a particular phenomenon. For instance, Doxtader (2001) states that since few groups self-identify as counterpublic, it becomes difficult to assess whether counterpublics are an integral feature of democracy, a normative benchmark, or a figurative entity symbolizing certain kinds of activity. Also, with the promise to expand the form of public life, counterpublics may challenge the conventions of deliberation, creating alternative conduits of discussion, or they may use opposition to create the basis for consensus (Doxtader, 2001). Thus, a crucial question arises: how do counterpublics operate, and what might allow one to examine dynamics of counterpublics' communication and its political value? This question resonates with my interest in exploring the counterpublic dynamics of the Egyptian MB and assessing its political value and subsequent impact on civil society. Therein rests the justification of using counterpublic theory for this dissertation.

Rhetoric in Counterpublic Studies

Rhetoric, in one of its widely used descriptions, is defined as "the human use of symbols to communicate. This definition includes three primary dimensions: (a) humans as the creators of rhetoric; (b) symbols as the medium for rhetoric; and (c) communication as the purpose for rhetoric" (Foss, 2004, p. 4). The qualitative research method, according to Foss (2004), which is designed for the purpose of studying rhetoric, often begins with an interest in understanding particular symbols and how they operate to deepen appreciation and understanding of a rhetorical text.

Gronbeck (1975) defines rhetorical criticism as including "any examination of discourse and rhetors which essentially or primarily is *intrinsic* [emphasis in original], any analysis which finds most of its confirming materials *inside a rhetorical artifact* [emphasis in original]" (p. 314); the purpose of these studies is to extract the fundamental essence of a rhetorical artifact; principally to render aesthetic, ethical, or metacultural judgments; and consequently generate norms. The nature of these judgments is "not descriptive-causal but rather valuative-advisory-philosophical, not subject to tests of truthfulness or falsehood but to tests of consistency and insightfulness" (p. 315). Thus, based on Foss (2004) and Gronbeck (1975), rhetorical criticism generally is carried out for three primary reasons: (a) to appreciate rhetorical structures and processes; (b) to generate norms or productive guidelines; and (c) for advocacy.

To elaborate, "humanity . . . preconsciously seeks structure and organization" (Gronbeck, 1975, p. 315). From that standpoint, when rhetorical criticism is applied to a text, it is regarded not so much as an object of contemplation but as a structured instrument of communication; "rhetoricians are more interested in a work for what it *does* [emphasis in original] than for what it *is* [emphasis in original]" (Corbett, 1969, p. xxii). By unearthing what a text teaches about the nature of rhetoric, rhetorical critics make a contribution to rhetorical theory, thus improving the practice of communication. In terms of the second goal for rhetorical criticism, that of generating norms or productive guidelines for others, "either a single figure or a set of discourses can be examined to reveal some standard-for-judgment which the reader can apply to other discourses or to his own practice" (Gronbeck, 1975, p. 315). These norms, thus, help classify or typify problematic, or simply, varied discourses. An important step beyond norm-generation for rhetorical critics is advocacy. In this sense, critics

see themselves as advocates and address society rather than a rhetorical event; these critics

believe they are using the study of a certain discourse "to affect our feelings and cognitions

about the current world-at-large." Thus, the ultimate goal of the critic as advocate is to either

gain adherents or to stir counter-argument (Gronbeck, 1975, p. 317).

Brouwer (2006) claims that in the field of communication, rhetorical critics have been

the scholars who have most vigorously taken up counterpublic theory; such scholars are

prone to thinking in terms of conflict, dissent, and argument, and counterpublic's origins in

oppositionality thereby makes it an apt match for rhetorical scholars. According to Hauser

(2001):

> Insofar as a public sphere excludes ideas and speakers through impermeable
>
> boundaries, privileges public relations over deliberation, enforces the technical jargon
>
> of elites over contextualized language specific to issues and their consequences,
>
> presupposes conformity of values and ends, and imposes a preordained orientation, its
>
> discursive features undermine its status as a public sphere. Most importantly, when
>
> official public spheres repress the emergence of rhetorically salient meanings, those
>
> meanings are likely to emerge elsewhere in oppositional sites, or counterpublic
>
> spheres. (p. 36)

Therefore, the process for engaging in the study of counterpublic communication—of the

Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in this dissertation—is rhetorical criticism.

A counterpublic sphere is "a site of resistance" (Hauser, 2001, p. 36). Sometimes this

resistance is militant as in an underground movement, and sometimes it is apparently benign

as in the counterpublic sphere of a minority community, enacting its own internal business. It

must be kept in mind, however, that the rhetorical study of counterpublic spheres does not

always ascribe an interest in consensus to counterpublics; rather, it tries to unearth and explore whether local speech acts create an opportunity for dialogue and agreement (Doxtader, 2001). This distinction, Doxtader (2001) explains, means that the goal is to understand "how counterpublics identify themselves, challenge the conventions of dominant discourse, and recover the productive contingency of speech and action" (p. 66); these nuances are at the core of this study. Furthermore, the rhetorical study of counterpublic spheres harkens back to the goals of rhetorical criticism—that of analyzing the structure of a symbolic discourse to unearth what it *does*, to generate guidelines to classify or type complex discourses, and to affect feelings and cognitions about the world-at-large to gain adherents or to stir counter-argument. These conditions justify the importance of studying the rhetoric of counterpublics.

Internet as a Site of Counterpublic Communication

In work that is becoming increasingly key to studies in the public sphere, practitioners and scholars continue to explore the ways in which counterpublics and dominant publics employ the Internet in their engagements with each other, and the types of discursive fora to which the Internet gives rise. According to McDorman (2001), researchers also need to explore significant questions, such as how virtual space impacts the operation of the public sphere and whether it truly offers new opportunities for the advancement of resistance or merely presents the same obstacles in new forms. In this dissertation, I analyze the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's online rhetoric in Ikhwanweb, and by extension, the implications of its use of the Internet as a counterpublic sphere.

Globally, the growth of the Internet has been faster than any past communication technology: "In 1994, only four years after it became widely accessible, the Internet

supported a usership of 50 million people; by mid-1998, the Internet had over 140 million

users with a predicted usership of 700 million by 2001" (United Nations Development

Programme [UNDP] 1999, p. 58). As of March 2009, approximately 1,596,270,108 people

worldwide use the Internet, according to Internet World Stats. Given such an astounding rate

of growth, it is not unnatural to be optimistic about the ability of the Internet to enhance

communication, to invigorate already existing groups and collectives, and to create new

kinds of associations.

However, those who believe the potential impact of the Internet is either negligible or

almost entirely negative offer a variety of arguments. For instance, Asen and Brouwer (2001)

claim, "tempering such optimism, however, is the fact that structural exclusions often

alienate marginal peoples from the very technologies that could enable their amelioration" (p.

21). Four primary objections to the Internet are that commercialization will ruin its potential,

access is limited to the elite, reflective interaction among participants is rare, and it fails to

produce truly deliberative democracy (McDorman, 2001).

Nevertheless, even if one concurs with the negative aspects, it cannot be denied that

under certain circumstances the Internet presents opportunities favorable to a broad range of

counterpublics and social movements. In an analysis of how Indian immigrants use the

Internet, Mitra (1997) claims that the Internet plays a significant role in creating a virtually

connected community for the Indian diaspora. Resnick (1998) notes that the Internet has the

potential to facilitate democratic politics, while Kellner (1998) claims that "cyberactivists

have been attempting to carry out globalization from below, developing networks of

solidarity and circulating struggle throughout the globe" (p. 185).

In an effort to confront cynical evaluations of the potential of the Internet, Sampaio and Aragon (1998) argue that the Internet challenges traditional notions of language and social construction, disrupting "the production of more traditional subjectivities" and allowing for "the production of alternate subject positions, and by extension alternate political practices" (p. 145). Gurak (1997) adds that by extending the physical boundaries of local communities, new communication technologies create alternate fora for citizen participation. For counterpublics, such as the Egyptian MB, extended and diverse fora might mean valuable discursive spaces from which to engage and interact with dominant powers and wider publics, such as militant fundamentalists, Western agents, or state power.[1]

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Identity Dilemma

The Muslim Brotherhood is considered to be Egypt's oldest and most influential Islamist Sunni Muslim group (Biot Report, 2005). The Muslim Brotherhood was founded when Egypt was in the midst of a national turmoil; in 1928, its founder Hasan al-Banna created the MB "as an outlet to express political dissent to the short-lived half-hearted liberal experiment with parliamentary democracy" (Hassan, 2005, p. 3). During this experiment the unquestioned embrace of European values by the parliamentary regime, on top of concerns associated with foreign colonization, "ostensibly alienated the population from the parliamentary regime and from the politicians and intellectuals who claimed to speak for the

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[1] Estes (2011) states, "the United Nations counts Internet access as a basic human right in a report that bears implications both to ongoing events in the Arab Spring [a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests against dictatorial regimes that has been taking place in the Arab world since December 2010] and to the Obama administration's war on whistle-blowers. Acting as special rapporteur [*sic*], a human rights watchdog role appointed by the U.N. [*sic*] Secretary General, Frank La Rue takes a hard line on the importance of the Internet as 'an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress'" (para. 1).

people but ignored their economic grievances and insulted their Islamic sensibilities"
(Cleveland, 2004, p. 198), thus contributing to large scale national unrest.

The Muslim Brotherhood has rooted itself in Egypt through its successful social
programs and also seeks to assert its presence through a popular appeal, which on the other
hand the secular authoritarian Egyptian regime of Hosni Mubarak failed to capture (Hassan,
2005). Moreover, in recent years the organization's campaign for democratic reforms and
equal representation in elections and its fight for social justice and civil liberties placed it in
direct opposition to Hosni Mubarak's tyrannical tendencies.

The assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt on October 6, 1981, by a
military cell within the scattered ranks of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, an offshoot of the
Muslim Brothers, led by Sunni Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri, resulted in Zawahiri's
imprisonment by Hosni Mubarak for three years. According to Wright (2002), while in
prison, Zawahiri transformed from a relatively moderate Islamist into a violent extremist;
there he encountered Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (now imprisoned for life for crimes
relating to the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993), with whom he had numerous
debates about the best way to achieve a true Islamic revolution. According to the Biot Report
(2005) of the Suburban Energy Management Project, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad fused with
Al-Qaeda, led by Sunni Saudi Osama bin Laden, to form Qaeda al-Jihad in June 2001. The
Muslim Brotherhood's connection with extremist ideologies, such as its apparent association
with movements like the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, problematizes comprehension of the
ideology and objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood, both within Egypt and for the world.

Scholars and policymakers, nations and governments, have viewed the Egyptian
Muslim Brotherhood from various perspectives—an extremist and radical Islamist

organization, an illegal non-governmental organization, a civil association, and the Egyptian government's most popular opposition, to name a few. The Brotherhood has been portrayed as anti-secular, anti-Western, opposed to liberal nationalism, out to reclaim Islam's manifest destiny (Davidson, 1998), and as a proponent of democratic reform. This element of intrigue characterizing the Egyptian MB's identity dynamics predisposed this study to an exploration and understanding of how the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood rhetorically positions itself in its official English-language website, how it defines and delineates its ideology, acts, and goals, and the implications of these rhetorical positionings.

Rationale and Purpose

US President Barack Obama addressed the Muslim world from Cairo University on June 4, 2009. In opening a bold proposition to the Islamic world, President Obama confronted frictions between Muslims and the West, pledging "to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims." Following are excerpts from his speech:

> The relationship between Islam and the west includes centuries of co-existence and co-operation, but also conflict and religious wars . . . . Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and western countries, but also to human rights. This has bred more fear and mistrust . . . . So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, and who promote conflict rather than the co-operation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. This cycle of suspicion and discord must end . . . . I have come

here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the

world…. (The Huffingtonpost, 2009)

In this speech President Obama stated that stereotypes must be fought, and the cycle of

suspicion and discord must end. This dissertation is an endeavor towards this new beginning,

and therein rests this study's overall significance. A contextual understanding of the Egyptian

Muslim Brotherhood's ideology manifest in its English-language rhetoric in Ikhwanweb will

provide a unique perspective on the intent and actions of, and the challenges faced by

Islamist organizations. Consequently, this understanding will address the problem of a

monolithic and reductive treatment of Islamist organizations. This in turn could be

instrumental in slowing the cycle of discord between Muslims and Western agents.

The means used to address the concerns raised in this study are counterpublic theory

and rhetorical communication. In light of Egypt's history, the relationship between the

Muslim Brotherhood and the government has been one of conflict and tension, and some of

the reasons contributing to that are a history of exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood from

the mainstream political process, an unfamiliarity with the objectives of the Muslim

Brotherhood that breeds potential unease and mistrust, and systematic suppression of the

organization's members by state officials. In addition, since September 11, 2001, in the

minds of millions around the world and especially in the West, Islam has been

uncompromisingly associated with extremism, violence, and conflict; thus, any organization

or movement with an Islamist *ethos* has had a complex and often uphill relationship with the

West defending their stance, be it moderate or extremist. Whether episodically or enduringly,

openly or secretly, Islamist organizations such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have

encountered (a) militant fundamentalist organizations; (b) Western agents; and (c) the state in

complex, multiform relations. Using counterpublic theory as the theoretical framework for this study and situating the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a counterpublic to all three groups aforementioned, an exploration of counterpublic dynamics is undertaken in this dissertation.

According to Doxtader (2001), a rhetorical view endeavors to uncover the occasion, the figurative elements of communication, and representational functions of a counterpublic. It also provides an understating of the rhetorical processes by which the grounds of agreement are cultivated from within expressions of opposition, or whether, in the face of limitations dissidents engage in rhetorical resistance without reaching consensus (Hauser, 2001). To explore the dynamics of counterpublicity, thus, analysis of the rhetoric used by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood becomes important to this study.

Finally, "when engagement with counterpublic agents provokes too many risks such as the threat of damaging critique, loss of credibility, exposure of villainy or corruption, or instigation of anti-government uprising, states may act by removing agitator(s) from public view" (Asen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 19). Typically achieved through torture, exile, imprisonment, and so on, such removal places severe limitations on the political activities of counterpublics. According to Cleveland (2004), Al-Banna explored ways in which Muslims could take advantage of the technological capabilities provided by the 20th century. Following that legacy, one way the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood endeavors to take advantage of technology, especially in the face of severe limitations and constraints, is by maintaining their official English website, http://www.ikhwanweb.com/.

As aforementioned, use of the Internet by counterpublics highlights the "vitality of the Internet in promoting increased political activism of groups that have had a prolonged

physical existence," or the possibilities of the Internet to increase counterpublic expression, facilitate different styles and forms of discursive exchange, etc., in situations of opposition, repression, suspicion, and conflict (McDorman, 2001, p. 192). Furthermore, the *About Us* section of http://www.ikhwanweb.com/ states, "Our main mission is to present the Muslim Brotherhood vision right from the source and rebut misconceptions about the movement in western [*sic*] societies." A study focusing on the *English* language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in its website, therefore, can address the concerns raised in this dissertation.

To reiterate, broadly, this study: (a) addresses the problem of the monolithic treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood by Western agents; (b) explores the potential of the Internet as a tool for counterpublic expression; and (c) evaluates the role Islamist organizations might (or might not) play in strengthening civil society. Specifically, the purpose is to explore the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian MB in its official English website to understand: (a) the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as manifest in its English-language cyber rhetoric; (b) the dynamics of its relationship as a counterpublic to militant fundamentalist organizations, Western agents, and the Hosni Mubarak regime in Egypt; and (c) the implications of the Egyptian Brotherhood's online rhetorical manifestations of its worldview and counterpublic dynamics on Western agents and global civil society. The findings of this study will make a significant contribution to the literature on rhetoric and counterpublicity, and Internet and civil society, in the context of Islam and the Middle East as well as foster a unique perspective through which Western agents, and the rest of the world, can view the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

Preview of Chapters

The main focus of this dissertation, as detailed in this chapter, is to gain a contextual perspective of the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, its role as a counterpublic, and its use of the Internet, through analysis of its English-language rhetoric in www.ikhwanweb.com. In Chapter Two, with an aim to define *counterpublic* and *counterpublic sphere* for this study, I review Habermas's theory of the public sphere, discuss critiques of the same, and elaborate on the reconfigurations of the *public sphere*. Thereafter, I discuss and define the concepts of *rhetoric* and *rhetorical criticism* and review some key studies on rhetoric, communication, and counterpublics. Finally, I describe certain fundamental characteristics of the *Internet as technology* and evaluate significant debates on the promises and problems associated with Internet use in general and in the context of the Middle East.

In Chapter Three, I contextualize the Muslim Brotherhood for this study, and in that endeavor present an in-depth discussion of the Egyptian Brotherhood's origin and evolution. I also discuss the *Islamist ideology* and how it applies to this dissertation and review debates and perceptions surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood in both scholarly and policy circles, especially in the West. I conclude this chapter with the research questions, namely:

RQ1: What is the ideology manifest in the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in www.ikhwanweb.com?

RQ2: What rhetorical strategies provide support for this ideology?

In Chapter Four, I provide a comprehensive discussion and justification of the methodological framework utilized in this dissertation, including an overview of *ideological*

rhetorical analysis. A detailed description of the artifact for analysis, data-analysis techniques, the standards of evaluation, and role of researcher are included.

In Chapter Five, I present a detailed account of the analysis of the artifact, and in Chapter Six I answer the research questions. Chapter Seven includes commentaries based on the ideology and rhetorical strategies unearthed, specifically around the issues of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's counterpublic dynamics, and its use of www.ikhwanweb.com as a counterpublic sphere. I conclude by presenting a discussion of the implications and contributions of this study, and the challenges faced in its undertaking.

Chapter II: What the Literature Says

A study that explores the English-language rhetorical dynamics of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as manifest in its official English website, Ikhwanweb, can foster a contextual understanding of the Egyptian Brotherhood's ideology, role, and objectives by Western audiences. At the same time, this study sheds light on the Egyptian MB's role as a counterpublic and its use of the Internet for counterpublic expression. In this chapter, I review the origin and nature of the Habermasian public sphere and critiques surrounding it, eventually leading to a discussion of the concept of counterpublic. I include an overview of the role and contribution of rhetoric, communication, and rhetorical criticism to this study. Finally, I present a discussion of the strengths and shortcomings of the Internet, and review some key issues surrounding its discursive and emancipatory potential as applicable to this study.

The Habermasian Public Sphere

The concept of the public sphere has a long and complex genealogy. Jurgen Habermas's (1962/1989) early study, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, traces much of that genealogy, revealing the shifting meanings that are attached to this concept and the various struggles and socio-historical changes, which have occasioned them. In this historical analysis the public sphere takes a variety of forms. After the demise of representative publicity the literary public sphere emerges, then transforms into the political sphere in the public realm.

Representative publicity operated in the feudal states of medieval and early modern Europe. Essentially, it consisted of the King or the nobility representing their political power before the people. According to Habermas (1989):

Publicness (or *publicity*) *of representation* was not constituted as a social realm, that

is, as a public sphere; rather, it was something like a status attribute. . . .The manorial

lord . . . displayed himself, presented himself as an embodiment of some "higher"

power. . . . Representation in the sense in which the members of a national assembly

represent a nation or a lawyer represents his clients had nothing to do with this

publicity of representation inseparable from the lord's concrete existence, that, as an

"aura," surrounded and endowed his authority. (p. 7)

The literary public sphere developed in the 18th century. Its key institutions were

literary journals, periodicals, and the coffee houses and salons where these publications were

discussed. For the first time, the public could critically discuss art and literature, drawing on

the emotional resources they developed within the family, and in the process began emerging

a novel, individualized sense of selfhood. In this manner, the literary public sphere spread

beyond the pages of the printed press and beyond the restricted strata of the pedagogues and

philosophers. According to Goode (2005), the 18th century literary public sphere was a pre-

political realm of self-clarification, a zone of freedom in which authentic subjectivity could

flourish, and whose protection was supposed to be the purpose of a just polity. The literary

public sphere developed into the political public sphere.

Habermas (1989) states that the political public sphere developed out of the literary

public sphere and represented private people who have come together as a public to use their

reason critically. Furthermore, a political public sphere was one where discussion concerned

the practice of the state; the coercive power of the state was considered the counterpart of the

political public sphere. According to Habermas (2000), one of the important elements of the

political public sphere was public opinion, which specifically refers "to the functions of

criticism and control of organized state authority that the public exercises informally as well as formally during periodic elections" (p. 92). Public opinion could be formed only when a public that engages in rational discussion exists.

Habermas (1989) considers three institutional criteria as preconditions for the emergence of the public sphere. The first institutional criterion was disregard of status, or in other words, the type of social interaction where a person's status is not a consideration. However, Habermas also qualified that this was not always realized in earnest, "but as an idea it had become institutionalized and thereby stated as an objective claim" (p. 36). The second institutional criterion was domain of common concern. "Discussion in the public sphere featured the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned," because till then the domain of common concern was the monopoly of church and state authorities, who consequently had the monopoly of interpretation (p. 36). The final criterion was inclusivity. Habermas claims:

> However exclusive the public might be in any given instance, it could never close
> itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique; for it always understood and
> found itself immersed within a more inclusive public of all private people—persons
> who, insofar as they were propertied and educated as readers, listeners, and spectators
> could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion.
> (p. 37)

The issues discussed became general not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility; everyone had to be able to participate.

A central concept in *The Structural Transformation* was the dynamic and complex relationship between public and private. Habermas (1989) traces the two concepts back to

ancient Greece and then through the hierarchical world of the Middle Ages where public and

private had no separate existence. *Public* and *private* assumed their presently recognized

forms with the development of the modern state and economy. In their current forms, public

usually relates to the public authority of the state, whereas private relates to the family,

society, and economy. The public sphere existed as part of the private world that moved into

the public domain (Habermas, 1989).

Thus, essentially as Kellner (2000) states, Habermas's concept of the public sphere

described a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in

civil society and the realm of state that often exerts arbitrary forms of power and domination. It

consisted of social spaces where individuals gathered to openly, through discursive

argumentation, discuss their common public affairs and to organize against arbitrary and

oppressive forms of social and public power.

However, Habermas (1989) also argues that a refeudalization of the public sphere began

occurring in the late 19th century. Kellner (2000) notes:

> The transformation involved private interests assuming direct political functions, as
>
> powerful corporations came to control and manipulate the media and state. On the other
>
> hand, the state began to play a more fundamental role in the private realm and everyday
>
> life, thus eroding the difference between state and civil society, between the public and
>
> private sphere. As the public sphere declined, citizens became consumers, dedicating
>
> themselves more to passive consumption and private concerns than to issues of the
>
> common good and democratic participation. (p. 4)

The conception of public opinion as independent discussion and rational critique of public

affairs that developed in the 18th century in Europe and North America, transformed in the

20th century into something to be measured and manipulated. As Habermas (1989) argues, this happened as a result of the expansion of capitalism and the bureaucratized state, as well as the seeming power of the state to construct and control social life.

Habermas's (1989) analysis sparked several debates and discussions in academic circles. These, in turn, have enabled the Habermasian public sphere to be extended, modified, and applied to different times, situations, and locations. One of the prominent discussions of Habermas's public sphere focuses on the issue of exclusions. In the following section I elaborate on these exclusions and specify how they apply to this study.

Reconfigurations of the Habermasian public sphere. According to Kellner (2000), Habermas's *Structural Transformation* has received extensive critique and promoted productive discussions on liberal democracy, civil society, public life, and social changes in the 20th century, among other issues. Furthermore, "intense critical arguments have clarified his earlier positions, led to revisions in later writings, and fostered intense historical and conceptual research on public sphere" (p. 5). Recognition of the historical and conceptual exclusions of the bourgeois public sphere, a fundamental component of this project, has led to efforts in rethinking the public sphere more inclusively. According to Asen and Brouwer (2001), these efforts have proceeded through three major moves: (a) to discern multiplicity of the public sphere; (b) to loosen boundaries and appreciate the permeability of borders; and (c) to reconsider the separation of the public sphere and the state.

The first key move in rethinking the public sphere more inclusively entails "discerning the public sphere as a multiplicity of dialectically related public spheres rather than a single, encompassing arena of discourse" (Asen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 6). Reformulations along these lines point at the ideology of Habermas's bourgeois public

sphere, which considers the presence of a single overarching arena of public deliberation as desirable to the bolstering of democracy, and conversely, regards the expansion of deliberation through a multiplicity of publics as a negative departure from democracy (Fraser, 1992a). Undoing this conceptual hierarchy, scholars (Felski, 1989; Fraser; 1992) have theorized alternative, non-dominant publics amid wider publics to explain the complex discursive practices among these realms.

A significant line of inquiry concerning alternatives to dominant public spheres has cumulated under the term *counterpublics*. As briefly stated in the introductory chapter of this study, Rita Felski and Nancy Fraser have been prominent articulators of this concept. Appearing around the time of the English translation of *Structural Transformation*, their early work in this area advocates recognition of the "current plurality of public spheres" (Felski, 1989, p. 155) and the "plurality of competing publics" (Fraser, 1992a, p. 122). Felski (1989) describes counterpublic as critical oppositional forces that seek to disrupt the homogenizing processes of a global mass-communication culture and voice oppositional needs and values by affirming specificity of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or some other axis of difference. In an often cited definition, Fraser (1992a) identifies counterpublics as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses" (p. 123).

Common to Fraser and Felski's conceptions is the vital characteristic exhibited by most counterpublics—that of the practice of both inward and outward address as a response to the experience and discernment of exclusion. Discussing the feminist counterpublic sphere, Felski (1989) explains:

The experience of discrimination, oppression, and cultural dislocation provides the

impetus for the development of a self-consciously oppositional identity. Yet insofar

as it is a public sphere, its arguments are also directed outward, toward a

dissemination of feminist ideas and values throughout society as a whole (p. 167).

Similarly, Fraser (1992a) asserts that counterpublics often assume a publicist orientation and

this reveals a dual character. She observes that they function both as spaces of withdrawal for

regroupment, as well as training grounds for agitational activities that are directed towards

wider publics. For both theorists, the emancipatory potential of counterpublics emerges in

this dialectical movement of withdrawal and reengagement with wider publics.

The second reconfiguration of the public sphere is that boundaries and borders

between public and private need to be loosened, because this leads to a silencing of the

concerns of certain excluded groups. In various case studies (Fraser, 1992b; McClure, 1996),

scholars have demonstrated how the separation of public and private function as discursive

strategies that offer advantage to one participant or another. Benhabib (1992) proclaims "all

struggles against oppression in the modern world begin by redefining what had previously

been considered *private*, non-public, and non-political issues as matters of public concern, as

issues of justice, as sites of power which need discursive legitimation" (p. 100). Furthermore,

these struggles manifest in various directions as antagonists encounter one another in the

multiple sites of the public sphere.

As scholars have loosened the restriction of discourse in the public sphere to the

common good, as aforementioned, so too they have sought to undo the status-bracketing

requirements of the bourgeois public sphere. Fraser (1992a) explains that the bourgeois

conception of the public sphere envisioned an arena in which participants set aside status

inequalities and spoke to one another as if they were equal in social and economic standing. Yet, "even in the absence of formal exclusions, social inequality can infect deliberation as modes of discussion and engagement mark inequalities" (Asen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 12). Thus, Fraser (1992a) calls instead for discourse in the public sphere to address and thematize inequalities as explicit topics of debate, in a larger effort to articulate difference as a resource for public deliberation and discourse in the public sphere; here difference, following Young (1997), is viewed as a resource necessary for discussion-based politics, the aim and objective of which is co-operation, reaching understanding, and doing justice.

Scholars have also sought to loosen boundaries and borders by arguing that consensus need not be viewed as the end of discourse in the public sphere. "Besides deliberation oriented toward agreement, discourse in the public sphere may serve a number of purposes, including expressing identity, raising awareness, celebrating difference, and enabling play" (Asen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 12). In fact, McCarthy (1992) explains that a background consensus may motivate members of diverse political communities to condone collective decisions with which they disagree. Various efforts of McCarthy and others (e.g., Estlund, 1997) lead toward what Bohman (1996) has called a "plural public reason" (p. 83), which does not presuppose a single norm of reasonableness and recognizes instead that participants may agree with one another for different publicly accessible reasons. Along these lines, some proponents of consensus (e.g., Cohen, 1989; 1997) do not necessarily regard its absence as an indicator of failed deliberation. As Asen and Brouwer (2001) argue, "elucidation of the nonconsensual ends of the public sphere has focused attention on the varied functions of public discourse, layered conceptions of reason and alternative agreements, and situations where action must be taken in the absence of agreement" (p. 13).

The final major move in reconfiguring Habermas's public sphere theory involves reconsideration of the separation of the public sphere and the state. This revision gains momentum from debates over the degree to which state institutions inform public discourse and publics influence state institutions (Asen & Brouwer, 2001). According to Asen and Brouwer (2001):

> The liberal political tradition from which Habermas derives his original theory of the bourgeois public sphere insisted on a conceptual distinction between the public sphere and the state on one side and the official economy on the other . . . . In significant respects, Habermas attributes the decline of the bourgeois public sphere to the interpenetration of public and private realms since the era of liberal capitalism, as the state has intervened in the affairs of civil society and society has increasingly assumed tasks previously accomplished under state authority. (pp. 13-14)

However, Fraser (1992a) argues that the strict separation of the bourgeois public sphere from the state, contrary to Habermas's claim, promotes weak publics—publics whose deliberations consist of opinion formation but not decision-making authority—thus undermining the role and functioning of a sovereign parliament. She also regards this attribution of functions as inadequate for understanding contemporary political arrangements, which, since the achievement of parliamentary sovereignty, have actually blurred lines separating civil society and the state.

Nevertheless, the dynamics between the public sphere and the state are complex. According to Asen and Brouwer (2001), in some scenarios autonomous publics are formed when members cannot access or are denied certain rights and resources offered or secured by state power; on the other hand, it is common knowledge that participation in state-sponsored

fora runs the risk of co-optation. Furthermore, the state itself is undergoing transformations. From within and from without national borders, states are under duress—"the significance of globalization, robust civil societies, and separatism and their influence on states, social and political practices, and public discourse cannot be underestimated" (Asen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 17). Therefore, as Schudson (1994) asserts, based on the complex and diverse relationships that manifest the public and the state, particular public spaces are created based on particular forms of political representation. In other words, the separation and relational dynamics characterizing the public sphere and the state is context specific.

Based on this review, I define *counterpublic* for this study as: (a) those alternative, non-dominant publics, amid wider publics; (b) who voice oppositional needs and values; (c) through discursive practices that affirm their specificity on some axis of difference from wider publics; (d) and are not restricted by the rigid separation of public and private in their discourse, or a separatist stance with the state. The emancipatory potential of counterpublics emerges in the dialectical movement of withdrawal and reengagement with wider publics, and the discursive aim of counterpublics is not necessarily reaching consensus—besides addressing and thematizing inequalities, counterpublic discourse may serve a number of purposes, including expressing identity, raising awareness, celebrating difference, and enabling play. In this study I position the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a counterpublic to three wider publics—militant fundamentalist organizations, Western agents, and the Hosni Mubarak regime.

A *counterpublic sphere* is a parallel discursive arena from which counterpublics carry out their discursive pursuits; the MB official English website, www.ikhwanweb.com, is the counterpublic sphere in this study. Considering discourse is an important component of

counterpublic theory, and rhetoric is fundamental to this study, a discussion on discourse and rhetoric becomes essential at this juncture.

Rhetoric

There is little consensus as to the meaning of the word *rhetoric*. It has been defined and redefined by scholars throughout history: "the ability to see, in any given case, the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle, 1991, p. 1355b26); "the art of speaking well—that is to say, with knowledge, skill and elegance" (Cicero, 1942, II 5); "that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end" (Campbell, 1988, p. 1); "the finding of suitable arguments to prove a given point, and the skilful arrangement of them" (Whately, 1963, p. 39); the process of "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas" (Bryant, 1972, p. 26). While some of these definitions equate rhetoric with persuasion, others define rhetoric more broadly as any type of instrumental expression; one definition identifies rhetoric with argumentation, another with eloquent language.

For Foss (2004), rhetoric involves symbols created and used by humans, where "a symbol is something that stands for or represents something else by virtue of relationship, association, or convention" (p. 4). Each symbolic choice humans make results in seeing the world in one way instead of another, and thus, rhetoric is limited to humans as the originators or creators of messages. Foss (2004) also states that though rhetoric often involves the deliberate choice of symbols for communication, actions not consciously constructed by rhetors can be interpreted symbolically too. "Humans often choose to interpret something rhetorically that the sender of the message did not intend to be symbolic. In this case, someone chooses to give an action or an object symbolic value even though the sender does not see it in symbolic terms" (p. 5).

Furthermore, rhetoric's purpose is the use of symbols for communication (Foss, 2004). Rhetoric functions in a variety of ways to allow humans to communicate with one another. In some cases, it is an effort to persuade others, "to encourage others to change in some way" (p. 6). In other instances, rhetoric is an invitation to understanding, wherein "we offer our perspectives and invite others to enter our worlds so they can understand us and our perspectives better" (p. 6). Sometimes, rhetoric is used simply as a means of "self-discovery or to come to self-knowledge" (p. 6). Another communicative function of rhetoric is to tell what reality is. Reality is not fixed but changes according to the symbols humans use to construct it. "This does not mean that things do not really exist . . . . Rather, the symbols through which our realities are filtered affect our view . . . and how we are motivated to act toward it" (Foss, 2004, p. 6). The labels we choose to apply, define, and describe what we encounter influence our perceptions of what we experience, and in the process construct the kinds of worlds in which we live.

According to Gill and Whedbee (1997), rhetoric includes two major characteristics. First, like all the major writers on rhetoric from antiquity, such as Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian claimed, the principal locus of rhetoric is the political stage. Thus, they designed their theories of rhetoric for use by political agents. More recent writers have suggested that rhetoric functions also in religion, science, philosophy, literature, and elsewhere; however, even these writers usually acknowledge political speaking and writing as the centerpiece of rhetorical practice. Second, rhetoric has an instrumental function, in other words, rhetoric is discourse calculated to influence an audience toward some end. It is, in one way or another, a vehicle for responding to, reinforcing, or altering the understandings of an audience or the social fabric of the community (Gill & Whedbee, 1997).

For the purpose of this study I ascribe the symbolic, the instrumental, and the political dimensions to rhetoric. In other words, rhetoric is the use of symbols by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to create discourse/s, with the purpose to respond to, reinforce, or alter the understandings of its audience/s or the social fabric of the community, with its essential activities located on a political stage. What these symbols are and the purpose and implications of the same are significant concerns of this study.

Counterpublic advancing communication. Brouwer (2006) asserts that the concept of counterpublic advances rhetorical, and consequently, communication theory in specific and productive ways. "The key communication dimensions of a counterpublic, including the expression of opposition, the constitution of discursive spaces, and the participation in multiple publics, mark it as potentially exciting and beneficial to . . . rhetorical scholarship in the field of communication studies" (p. 195).

To begin with, the concept of counterpublic advances communication theory by bringing within its purview objects of inquiry that are not restricted to rational-critical norms of public deliberation (Brouwer, 2006). Without denying the value of rational-critical standards, Brouwer states that these norms of deliberation elide full consideration of the affective, or emotional, aspects of human communication—the emotional aspects that motivate human communication, persuade, and more generally constitute a social realm. For instance, studies of unruly, passionate, ironic, or other modes of counterpublicity emphasize their significance to human communication. Additionally, "the specification of *counterpublic* is an explicit recognition and warning that not all publicly significant speech occurs in officially sanctioned *public* forums, by official representative of the public or the public good, or in dominant public idioms" (p. 198).

This concept also advances communication theory by recognizing the fact that humans are part of multiple publics and thus participate in multiple public fora (Brouwer, 2006). Brouwer states:

> Counterpublic was introduced as part of a larger theoretical argument about the multiplicity of spheres; as such, it should remind us of multiplicity each time it is deployed . . . . Responding more rigorously to concern about the "frustrating vagueness" of counterpublic or the potentially anemic utility of a counterpublic concept spread too thin (Asen & Brouwer, 2001; Squires, 2002), some have offered more elaborate typologies of publics: for example, circumscribed, co-opted, critical, circumventing publics (Chay-Nemeth, 2001, p. 129); and enclaved, satellite, and counter publics (Squires, 2002). (pp. 198-199)

In spite of the "frustrating vagueness," the recognition of multiplicity promotes contextualization, aids in identifying uniqueness, and enables greater precision of description, understanding, and analysis of publics.

Third, and related, counterpublic theory brings into attention the dialectic of inward and outward address, "which foregrounds the status of relations between dominant and subordinate as one of mutual influence and the status of rhetorical structures and practices as contingent" (Brouwer, 2006, pp. 199-200). This dialectic reveals that while counterpublics communicate with the like-minded, either overtly or obscurely, these interactions occur with an understanding that communication will be directed toward or constitute other wider publics.

A study of the rhetoric of counterpublics, thus, allows exploration of the rational-critical as well as the emotional components of public discourse, the multiplicity of publics

and the discursive dynamics at play in this multiplicity, and the dialectic of inward and outward address practiced by counterpublics that establishes the relational dynamics between counterpublics and wider publics. The concerns raised in this study reflect these issues, and analysis of English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood—the counterpublic in this study—is accomplished through the method of rhetorical criticism.

   Rhetorical analysis. In terms of the work of rhetoricians, much of the activity earlier was concentrated on pedagogy—teaching students how to create effective rhetorical discourse (Gill & Whedbee, 1997). In contemporary times, according to Gill and Whedbee (1997):

> The emphasis has shifted to include the criticism of rhetorical texts. The activities of rhetorical critics in the last 30 years have been quite varied. What they have in common is explication of the dynamic interaction of a rhetorical text with its context; that is, how a text responds to, reinforces, or alters the understandings of an audience or the social fabric of the community. (p. 159)

   Foss (2004) defines rhetorical criticism as "a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes" (p. 6). The difference between *act* and *artifact* is a key aspect in rhetorical analysis. An act is executed in the presence of a rhetor's intended audience; however, because an act tends to be ephemeral, making its analysis difficult, many rhetorical critics prefer to study the artifact of an act—"the text, trace or tangible evidence of the act. When a rhetorical act is transcribed and printed, posted on a website, recorded on film, or preserved on canvas, it becomes a rhetorical artifact that then is accessible to a wider audience than the one that witnessed the rhetorical act" (p. 7). Both acts

and artifacts are objects of rhetorical criticism. Henceforth I will use the term *artifact* in this study, because the object of analysis is text posted on the Muslim Brotherhood website.

The specific objectives of contemporary rhetorical criticism have been named and discussed variously. For instance, according to Zarefsky (2008), knowledge of how rhetorical texts or actions work and why they matter is valuable because it promotes appreciation of the artful use of rhetoric, as also, enhances perception of the possibility of its abuse. In addition, criticism enables one to assess whether and how particular works (in other words, acts or artifacts) build community and inspire people to achieve collective goals:

> The first function is performed as the rhetor identifies with the audience, establishing and strengthening common bonds among people and thereby constituting otherwise isolated individuals as a public with shared interests and values. The second is performed as the rhetor articulates a vision or goal and motivates an audience to seek and pursue it. (Zarefsky, 2008, p. 638)

In addition, rhetoric can also become a means of domination, for instance, in an act or artifact, rhetoric can be used to suppress female voices and emphasize and celebrate male ways of understanding and interpretation (Gill & Whedbee, 1997). In other words, every act or artifact, in making some things present to an audience, at one and the same time obscures something else (Burke, 1966; Derrida, 1982). Rhetorical critics, thus, need to keep in mind that not all individuals or groups have equal access to channels of communication and that discourse is not always benign but hegemonic. In this regard, rhetorical criticism helps identify the dominant and the subservient voices in an act or artifact as well as the strategies used to create discourses of domination and subservience.

Gill and Whedbee (1997) claim that at least two major schools of thought regarding the purpose of rhetorical criticism operate simultaneously. According to one school, rhetorical criticism aims to increase appreciation of the historical importance of rhetorical texts—to clarify the political effects of speeches and writings, to examine the inner workings and structure of canonical texts, or to recover unappreciated rhetorical texts and rhetors of the past. The second school aims to uncover how rhetoric constructs or reconstructs events and phenomena. In other words, "textual structures are identified, discussed, and in some cases dismantled to determine how they operate to create understandings, to sanction particular ways of viewing the world, or to silence particular people or points of view" (p. 160).

Anchoring on this overview, the overarching goal of rhetorical criticism is: (a) increasing, through analysis of an artifact, one's knowledge of how rhetoric operates in that artifact; and (b) understanding the implications of this knowledge on the relational and discursive dynamics between the creator and audience of this rhetoric. By explaining how this work is done in particular acts and artifacts, rhetorical criticism offers models for appreciation, insights for possible emulation, instances of abuse for condemnation, and opportunities for advocacy (Gronbeck, 1975).

Rhetoric and rhetorical criticism have been discussed and defined for the purpose of this study in this review. Emphasis now must be placed on the fact that the communication revolution has led to changing conceptions about numerous issues related to counterpublics and rhetoric. The standpoint of the communication revolution leads this review to the direction of the Internet, another vital element that sets the context of this study.

Internet: Fundamentals

New technologies often are welcomed with political optimism, and the Internet too is thought to bring with it new potential and possibilities for political participation (Bohman, 2004). As the Human Rights Watch (1999) notes: "the Internet can enable anyone with access to receive and to disseminate alternatives to state-controlled information at low cost" (p. 12). For instance, any person with access to a personal computer, a modem, and the basic skills, bears the potential to communicate with a huge local and international audience. According to Hansen (1998), a connection to the Internet can increase access to information by putting within easy reach one of the world's great repositories of information (much of which is free and continuously updated); the Internet also has features that enable easy managing and transferring of information. Cynics often argue that such benefits only come with the power to purchase a computer and learn the skills. However, computers available to the public at libraries, schools or community centers, or the presence of privately run Internet cafés or cybercafés have shown to promote use of the Internet even in relatively poor countries (Kavanaugh, 1998).

To focus on the Internet's vast potential for empowering people by providing them the means to exercise the right to free expression, some have argued that "governments have an affirmative obligation to facilitate Internet access for all segments of the population on terms of nondiscrimination" (Human Rights Watch Report, 1999, p. 13). Some also contend that the Internet can significantly assist governments to aid citizens to exercise their right, under article 25(a) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, "to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives" (1966). Thus, it suffices to say that the Internet's potential contribution to democratic and participatory

politics is indisputable. As the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the

right to freedom of opinion and expression of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Mr.

Abid Hussain, outlined in his 1998, 1999, and 2000 annual reports:

> The new technologies and, in particular, the Internet, are inherently democratic,
>
> provide the public and individuals with access to information and sources, and enable
>
> all to participate actively in the communication process. The Special Rapporteur also
>
> believes that action by States to impose excessive regulations on the use of these
>
> technologies and, again, particularly the Internet, on the grounds that control,
>
> regulation, and denial of access are necessary to preserve the moral fabric and cultural
>
> identity of societies, is paternalistic. These regulations presume to protect people
>
> from themselves and, as such are inherently incompatible with the principles of the
>
> worth and dignity of each individual. (E/CN.4/1998/40; E/CN.4/2000/63)

Some of the characteristics that make the Internet unique are interactivity, user

control, and open access. Castells (1996) states that in "a society organized around mass

media, the existence of messages that are outside the media is restricted to interpersonal

networks, thus disappearing from the collective mind" (p. 336). According to Underwood

(2010), in order to understand the concept of interactivity offered by the Internet, one has to

be able to picture the Internet's potential role as the electronic analogue of Castell's

interpersonal networks, which comes with the possibility to bring otherwise marginalized

topics before the collective mind.

The feature of user control is understood better in connection with the term *hypertext*.

According to Underwood (2010), hypertexts provide links that one can choose to follow or

not, thus making it different from printed text; by clicking on the links in an online text it

becomes possible to reach new webpages, and in the process search for specified text/s. A second significant difference between hypertext and printed text is that the former has the ability to be *live*, that is, hypertext allows an individual to store, add comments, rapidly retrieve documents, and to follow random associations between pairs of documents and store the trails of those associations (Underwood, 2010).

As for the Internet's being accessible to anyone, there are millions who cannot even afford a daily newspaper, let alone the costs to access the Internet. But it is naïve to overlook the fact that the Internet certainly provides open access to those who have the skill, the money, and the resources needed. Taking these qualities of the Internet together, Spender (1995) foresees Internet's effect on society as radical as the changes that resulted from the invention of the printing press.

Nonetheless, Internet critics nurture significant concerns. The claim that commercial forces will overwhelm the idealized free space of the Internet is among the most common issues debated (Barber, 1984; Buchstein, 1997; McChesney, 1999). Second, detractors argue that cyberspace is not representative of the world at large. While some individuals choose to remain low-tech, the cause for concern lies in that the poor and less educated have less access to the Internet and thus may be disproportionately excluded from participation (Barber, 1984; Streck, 1998). Most importantly, many Internet dystopians contend that the instantaneous nature of the Internet actually upsets the spirit of democracy, because it discourages critical democratic reflection and encourages reactionary decision-making (Barber, 1984; Buchstein, 1997).

McDorman (2001), advocating the strengths of the Internet states that all these factors cannot be denied, but the case for the Internet is not completely bleak; these concerns cannot

overshadow the positive characteristics of the Internet, or its rapid growth. The decentralized nature of the Internet makes commercialization a less powerful threat than in the centralized media. Unlike traditional electronic media, such as the radio and television, there is no limit to the number of frequencies or channels available. Despite the existence of commercial forces in other segments of the Web, the Internet can provide space for dissent through independent websites and chat rooms, thus minimizing the threat of corporate monopoly. Also, the digital divide based on income, education, and race continues to be problematic, but on the whole access is quickly rising; regardless of inequalities, more individuals have access to email and the Internet than have the opportunity to voice their opinion in other media fora (McDorman, 2001). Furthermore, to address the concern that the instantaneous nature of the Internet encourages reactionary decision making, McDorman (2001) argues:

> Internet dystopians fail to take into account the ongoing nature of many political discussions on the Internet. If a message or brief exchange is viewed in isolation, such a conclusion is understandable. However, observing an organization devoted to activism, as opposed to chat room where visitors air individual grievances, might produce much different conclusions. (p. 191)

It is understandable why many detractors would claim that unrealistic expectations are placed on the Internet. For instance, the Internet is expected to radically democratize authoritarian societies, and revolutionize the networking potential of civil society organizations in repressive environments; and if these are the expectations, the Internet undoubtedly will be a disappointment and a failure. But it is a matter of shifting focus and the discourse on the blessings that the Internet brings; in other words, it would be "better to view

the Internet as an advocacy tool, as a means of supplementing current efforts" (McDorman, 2001, p. 192).

Every technology has its strengths and limitations, and the Internet is no exception to that rule. It is naïve to claim that the Internet, with its emancipatory qualities, is the panacea to many a problem today's societies face. In the same vein, a complete disregard of this technology as a medium to solve some of the challenges of our times is a misjudgment. One of the goals of this study is to address this predicament; essentially, to explore how the Egyptian Brotherhood uses its English-language website as a rhetorical counterpublic sphere, and to gain insights into the implications of this use. To further contextualize the Internet's association to this study, in the following section I have detailed some perspectives on the scope of the Internet as it applies to the Middle East.

Scope of the Internet: perceptions and perspectives. Recent research on the emergence of World Wide Web communities acknowledges a growing role for cyberspace in a variety of communication contexts. From social networking, newsgroups, to e-commerce, the Internet is becoming a more mature and diverse fora for communication. "While the manner in which the Internet currently is being utilized is deserving of extended study, evaluations must also recognize that the Internet has not reached adulthood, making steadfast conclusions difficult" (Mitra, 1997, p. 162). The rapidity with which the Internet is changing communication makes any prediction of its ultimate effect "nearly impossible" (McChesney, 1999, p. 121). This is an equally important observation for both those who casually dismiss the potential of the Internet and those who, without qualification, celebrate the possibilities of the Internet. Specifically, in the context of politics and counterpublicity in repressive

societies, such as the Middle East, the question of the effect of the Internet is a complex one, and worth exploring.

According to the Human Rights Watch Report (1999), it is arguably in less developed and in more repressive countries that the Internet can have the greatest impact, although it may seem that the issue of Internet speech is an issue of least concern in societies where torture is commonplace and free elections a rarity. Moreover, it might appear to be an elitist concern in countries plagued with illiteracy and poverty. But wherever it is accessible, the Internet has provided dramatic new possibilities; for instance, it has been hailed by many as a force for eroding authoritarian political control[2] and aiding participatory democracy (Human Rights Watch Report, 1999). However, the dynamics of Internet use are not simplistic; debates abound around the discursive, technological, and emancipatory potential of the Internet. Furthermore, in the context of Muslim societies, such as Egypt, Islam further complicates our understanding of the contribution of the Internet. A review of some of these concerns and debates becomes necessary.

Political discourse on the Internet, a key component of this dissertation by virtue of its association with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric, is an important area of discussion. Gurak (1999) argues that politics on the Internet is unique, and a break of an essential nature from things as usual. She suggests:

> Two rhetorical features, community ethos and the novel mode of delivery on
>
> computer networks, are critical to rhetorical online communities because these
>
> features sustain the community and its motive for action in the absence of physical

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[2] The 2010-2011 Arab Spring is a case in point.

commonality or traditional face-to-face methods of establishing presence and

delivering a message. (p. 5)

Similarly, according to Poster (2001), political discourse has been mediated by electronic

machines earlier, but with the advent of the Internet new forms of decentralized dialogue and

new combinations of human-machine dynamics are being created, and these are becoming

the new building blocks of political formations and groupings. For instance, Poster argues

that "Internet discourse constitutes the subject as the subject fashions himself or herself . . . .

On the Internet individuals construct their identities, doing so in relation to ongoing

dialogues, not as acts of pure consciousness" (p. 211). Additionally, individuals

communicating online may bring their preexisting identities in the course of their

communication or invent themselves repeatedly and differentially in the course of conversing

or messaging electronically; thus, in the case of the Internet, an individual's performance of

communication requires "linguistic acts of self-positioning" (Poster, 1995, para. 11).

Summing up, the communication dynamics of politics on the Internet is distinctive and hence

should be understood and analyzed as such.

Because the Internet is a communication technology, a medium through which the

poetics and politics of discourse, rhetoric, and identity are played out, it becomes imperative

to discuss the concern with *technological determinism* many scholars voice in connection

with the Internet. According to Chandler (1995), technological determinism presumes that a

society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values.

Bohman (2004) rejects any form of technological determinism associated with the Internet,

as he argues that the hardware of the Internet is largely indeterminate; rather, he suggests that

the hardware must be given shape by software, a term that broadly refers to human uses of the technology and its organization.

Poster (2001) poses the question, "if the technological structure of the Internet institutes costless reproduction, instantaneous dissemination, and radical decentralization, what might be its effects upon the society, the culture, and the political institutions" (pp. 99-100)? According to Poster, there can be only one answer to this question—that this is the wrong question. Poster believes that the question of the deterministic nature of the Internet is a flawed premise. Rather, in line with both Bohman and Poster, it can be stated that:

> The Internet installs a new regime of relations between human and matter, and between matter and non-matter, reconfiguring the relation of technology to culture and thereby undermining the standpoint from within which, in the past, a discourse developed about the effects of technology; rather, the Internet is an efficient tool of communication, advancing the goals of its users, who are understood as reconstituted instrumental identities. (Poster, 2001, p. 100)

Yet another issue of significance to this project is the scope of the Internet to evade controls on the flow of information, usually by repressive governments. Some of the ways in which people work around the controls imposed on use of Internet are (Ristuccia, 1999): (a) in the absence of local Internet Service Providers (ISP), persons can pay a premium and dial service providers in other countries; (b) if a website is blocked, it is possible to change its address or mirror the same content on other websites; and (c) local users can view blocked websites by accessing them through free Anti-censorship Proxy (ACP) servers, or they can also have those, who because of their geographic location enjoy access to content that is blocked locally, e-mail content as attached files. "Wary e-mail correspondents can foil

surveillance by using pseudonymous e-mail accounts or encryption, or by routing messages through a Web-based re-mailing service that provides anonymity by stripping information that identifies the sender" (Human Rights Watch Report, 1999, p. 34).

But if the tricks available to users to evade controls are many, so is the technology on the other side; governments may not be able to stop, but they too have the means to slow the flow of content they consider objectionable or threatening, and to regulate access to the Internet. The Global Internet Liberty Campaign (1998) divides these methods into four categories: (a) Internet-specific laws; (b) application of existing laws; (c) content-based license (or contract) terms applied to users and service providers; and (d) compulsory use of filtering, rating or content labeling tools. Moreover, other government practices such as threats and intimidation, fear of government surveillance or reprisals, can foster self-censorship, and affect online speech of individuals and groups.

A report by Human Rights Watch on the repression of Internet users in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), *False Freedom: Online Censorship in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2005, documents online censorship and cases in which Internet users have been detained for their online activities in countries across the region, including Tunisia, Iran, Syria, and Egypt. This report is based on an examination of several websites from MENA countries, and interviews with dozens of writers, bloggers, computer experts, and human rights activists. According to the World Summit on the Information Society, 2005, held in Tunis, these repressive attempts contradict governments' national and international legal commitments to freedom of opinion and expression.

For instance, *False Freedom* (2005) states that although in Egypt the Internet has proven to be a boon to the development of civil society, and freedom of expression and

information, it has frequently provoked government backlash. Egyptian activists use the

Internet for social networking, e-mailing, blogging, chatting, and text messaging to publicize

their cause as well as to bring forth human rights abuses, to organize protests, and to network

with other activists. *The Egyptian Blog Ring*, a website set up to highlight and catalogue local

blogs, listed around 390 Egyptian blogs as of September 2005, according to *False Freedom*

(2005). However, an example of government backlash was the detainment of Egyptian

blogger Abd al-Karim Nabil Suleiman, a student of Islamic jurisprudence at Al-Azhar

University in Muharram Bek, a district of Alexandria in Egypt. On October 22, 2005

Suleiman had posted comments online criticizing Muslim rioters and Islam in response to

deadly sectarian riots that took place days earlier in Muharram Bek. At 3 a.m. on October 26,

2005 security agents in plain clothes entered his home, took him in custody, and confiscated

prints of his online writings.

Nevertheless, despite frequent repression experienced by users, Internet enthusiasts

continue to view the potential of the Internet in the Middle East optimistically. According to

Sajoo (2004):

> Through the use of the Internet, citizen demands for individual space, gender and
>
> minority inclusiveness, political participation and the rule of law, ethical
>
> accountability in public life, and the freedom to redefine the secular limits of the
>
> public sphere, have prompted fundamental political change in Indonesia and Iran,
>
> along with less radical but important transformations in Turkey, Morocco and Jordan.
>
> And they have triggered civil conflict in Tajikistan, Nigeria, Algeria and Afghanistan,
>
> with new expectations of accountability to society by future governments. (p. 17)

According to Sarah Leah Whitson (2005), Middle East and North Africa Director at Human Rights Watch, in spite of rigid controls, censorship, and government backlash, the speed with which the Internet has spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa testifies to the region's appetite for an alternative to the traditional and more constraining media of press, radio, and television as a means of receiving and transmitting information.

Therefore, the Internet can be considered a medium of emancipation. According to Naughton (2001), the rise of the Internet is an important development in human affairs, and there are plausible grounds for claiming that it is potentially a subversive technology, which can challenge and counter established political or economic structures. Albeit, in the context of repressive societies like many in the Middle East, the Internet's full emancipatory potential is often not realized.

A review of the Internet's scope in the Middle East requires a discussion on Islam and the Internet. Bunt (2000) states that the impact of the Internet on both Muslims and non-Muslims is hugely significant; it affects how Muslims approach and interpret Islam, and at the same time, it influences how non-Muslims perceive Islam and matters relating to Muslims. Some of the issues Bunt raises are: (a) the impact of the integration of multimedia applications into websites that enable Muslim surfers to listen to and see sermons delivered thousands of miles away on their religious experience; (b) the effect of global online networking by Muslim organizations on the understanding and negotiation of Islam and Muslim identities; (c) the implications of the availability of the Qur'an in its digital form; and (d) the dynamics of the use of the Internet to present diverse dialogues relating to Islam, often reaching wide audiences where other forms of communication are heavily censored.

Bunt (2003) adds that many Muslims and non-Muslims rely on the Internet as a primary source of information and communication about Islam, which has had a significant impact on areas of global Muslim consciousness; post-September 11, 2001 this phenomenon has grown more rapidly than ever. Bunt also identifies the emergence of two radical new concepts. First is the emergence of *e-jihad* (Electronic Jihad), which basically includes online activism such as promotion of militaristic activities to hacking, to coordinating peaceful protests, and Muslim expression post 9/11. Second is the issue of religious authority on the Internet, which includes the complexities of conflicting notions of religious authority, the concept of online *fatwas* (decrees), and their influence in diverse settings.

Bunt (2009) claims that a practice of Islam, distinct from Islam lived in real life, has emerged online. Bunt terms those who practice this form of Islam *iMuslims*—they often identify more with a website than a particular mosque or formal sect, they espouse their Muslim values online, and they need not always be jihadis, but also *hajjis* (pilgrims) and other bloggers. Sardar (2009) in his review of Bunt's concept of iMuslims reiterates that the *I* in iMuslims does not simply represent the Internet; it also stands for an innovative online universe characterized by new pathways and new dynamics of interactivity and interconnection among Muslims.

This cyber-Islamic environment has a strong historic resonance. Cooke and Lawrence (2005) state that crucial to understanding Islamic identity and social cohesion is recognition of the role networks have been playing for Muslims. The Mediterranean trade routes were the earliest networks the Muslims used as transregional paths for pilgrimage, scholarship, and conversion. Also, the scholarship that developed around the *hadith*, the collection of sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, was a result of collaborative networking. "Scholars

traveled far and wide, making connections with networks around centers of knowledge, both to collect and transmit versions of hadith. The criteria for evaluating hadith were also a product of collaborative efforts" (Sardar, 2009, para. 4). Bunt (2009) compares the new cyber networks to the traditional networks; for instance, he states that during the time of the Prophet Muhammad religious knowledge evolved as an open-source system, and just like Wikipedia, experts as well as ordinary people collaborated to develop a consensus on Islamic knowledge. Thus, networking, as a phenomenon is not a new concept for Muslims, and according to Bunt (2009), it has been rediscovered by today's Internet-savvy generation.

To enlist some specific uses of the Internet by today's Muslims, as enumerated by Bunt (2009), one has to begin with the unrestricted access the Internet provides to the Qur'an by way of online translations and commentaries. Several religious institutions, such as Egypt's Al-Azhar and Iran's Qom, have a web presence with designated *sheikhs* (Islamic scholars) and *ayatollahs* (clerics) corresponding with petitioners. One can find online versions of *madrasas,* where young Muslims normally go for religious education, as well as websites representing specific mosques or religious sects. Furthermore, a significant online presence belongs to Islamists, both extremists and moderates, as well as reformists. Extremist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, groups like Indonesia's Liberal Islam Network, or reformist blogs in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Malay, and Bengali, all use the Internet—either for logistic or publicity purposes, or for promoting their worldviews, to alter traditional ways of thinking, for shaping opinion and challenging state media, and sometimes as an instrument of resistance.

According to Eickelman and Anderson (1999), the Internet has created a public sphere where an increasing number of participants can take part in the discourse on Islam.

This online plurality leads to fragmentation and recombination of a myriad of ideas, understandings, and experiences about Islamic thought and practice. Muslims as well as non-Muslims, in today's global environment frequently marred with reductive views, stereotyping, cynicism, and suspicion, can use these sources to gain a contextualized understanding of Islam and its proponents. This dissertation is an endeavor towards that understanding.

Discussions on public sphere, counterpublic theory, rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, and finally, the dynamics of Internet use, then, create the foundation and framework on which this dissertation rests. In this overview, I explicated three fundamental components of this study: (a) I discussed the debates surrounding Habermas's notion of the public sphere, emphasized counterpublics as an extension of the public sphere concept, and defined counterpublics and the counterpublic sphere for this study; (b) I elaborated on the concept of rhetoric, rhetorical analysis, and the usefulness of these to study counterpublics; and (c) I offered an assessment of both the strengths and the limitations of the Internet, and its contextual importance to this study. A closer look at the origin and evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood, its historical and socio-political dynamics in Egypt, and debates surrounding Islamism and the Muslim Brotherhood in both academic and policy circles in the West, become vital to craft the research questions of this dissertation. In the following chapter I present some facts and discussions related to these issues, and thereafter, posit the research questions of this study.

Chapter III: Contextualizing the Muslim Brotherhood

The case of the Muslim Brotherhood is intriguing. The MB has been described, and its actions interpreted in numerous and sometimes conflicting ways (Dekmejian, 1995; Lia, 2006; Mitchell, 1993; Moaddel, 2005; Poole, 2007; Wickham, 2002; Zollner, 2008). In this dissertation, I seek to understand how the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, through the use of their official English website, www.ikhwanweb.com, rhetorically construct who they are, what they stand for, and how they describe and define their ideologies, objectives, and actions, especially for the Western audience. Also, I explore and interpret the counterpublic dynamics manifest in the English-language cyber rhetoric of the Egyptian MB, and their use of Ikhwanweb as a counterpublic sphere.

Assessing the Muslim Brotherhood as a single entity is difficult owing to the fact that its attributes vary from country to country. Nevertheless, since the Muslim Brotherhood was created in Egypt, and because the complex historical, religious, and socio-political environment Egypt presents to the Brotherhood further problematizes comprehension of its ideology and actions, in this dissertation I focus on the rhetoric of the Egyptian Brotherhood. In this chapter, I embark on a review of the social transformation of the Islamic world in the modern era that has led to the concerns and socio-political conditions of the day in Egypt, the origin of the Muslim Brotherhood and its dynamics in the context of Egypt today, and current debates associated with the organization in scholarly and political circles. I conclude this chapter with the research questions that guide this study.

A Century of Ideological Strife

In the modern era, the Islamic world went through major social transformations. According to Moaddel (2005), there was a decline of the traditional order, emergence of new

social classes and groups, development of the modern nation state, and the inclusion of local economies into the world capitalist structure. However, no lasting agreement on the "form government should take, the appropriate economic model, the relationship of Muslim nations with the outside world, the status of women, their national identities, and the relation of Islam to rational analysis and rule making" could be reached (Moaddel, 2005, p. 1). In other words, there was hardly any consensus regarding the most fundamental principles and features of social organization. Instead, Islamic societies experienced a sequence of diverse cultural episodes, such as Islamic modernism, liberal nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism; these were characterized by serious ideological disputes that were followed by socio-political crises, leading to revolutions or military coups.

A significant problem in building consensus was "the conflict between Islamic orthodoxy and the secular discourse that spread into the Islamic world, which either failed to produce a new synthesis, or where it did was not widely institutionalized" (Moaddel, 2005, p. 1). In the 19th century, efforts were made to bring Islam and values of the European Enlightenment together; these efforts gave rise to Islamic modernism. Closely associated with this movement was liberal nationalism with the kernel of its ideology in the modern nation state. Thereafter, with the decline of these ideologies, Islamic fundamentalism grew to become a major oppositional ideology to both Islamic modernism and liberal nationalism. It becomes pertinent to elaborate on these ideological contentions—Islamic modernism, liberal nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism—specifically in the context of Egypt.

Islamic modernism. The turn of the 19th century witnessed a cultural encounter between the West and the Islamic world. According to Moaddel (2005), Islamic modernism can be considered as the first Islamic response to the West's ideological challenge; it

originated in India and Egypt in the later half of the 19th century. Islamic modernism was characterized by "a critical reexamination of the classical conceptions and methods of jurisprudence and a formulation of a new approach to Islamic theology and Quranic exegesis," and it was "reflected in the work of a group of like-minded Muslim scholars" (p. 2). The impact of the cultural encounter with Western ideas led native Islamic intellectuals to evaluate the dynamics behind Muslim backwardness and decline, and to devise ways to create a new, progressive society. Although their assessments and resolutions were both numerous and diverse, a central intellectual point of contention was religion—in other words, Islam.

Specifically, the central theological questions surrounded the "credibility of the knowledge derived from sources external to Islam" and the "methodological adequacy of the four traditional sources of jurisprudence: (a) Qur'an; (b) the dicta attributed to the Prophet (*hadith*); (c) the consensus of the theologians (*ijma*); and (d) juristic reasoning by analogy (*qiyas*)" (Moaddel & Talattof, 2002, p. 1). Furthermore, influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, and impressed by the scientific and technological achievements of the West, intellectuals and theologians such as Sayyid Jamal ud-Din al-Afghani, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Chiragh Ali, Shibli Nu'mani, and Muhammad Abduh formulated a reformist model based on scientific rationality and modern social theory (Moaddel & Talattof, 2002). Their claim was that the essence of a perfect Islamic community is law and reason; hence Islam was equipped to adapt itself to the modern, rational ideas and changes the encounter with the West was heralding.

In Egypt of the 19th century, the discursive context in which Islamic modernism was produced was diverse, and these discourses included that of the European Enlightenment, the

Christian Evangelicals who were often considered proselytizing, and the orthodox Islamic

establishment. The movement started with Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, an Egyptian renaissance

intellectual, but gained considerable momentum decades later when Al-Afghani, an Islamic

ideologist and one of the founders of Islamic modernism, organized a circle of Muslim

scholars to address the sociopolitical and theological issues facing Islam. Specifically, the

Islamic modernists, in the context of Egypt, debated over complex intellectual questions such

as the implications of the rational sciences on the Islamic belief system, the apparent

contradiction between Islamic tradition and modern European thought and practice, the

maltreatment and status of women, and Islamic conceptions of sovereignty and political

theory (Moaddel, 2005). Thus, according to Atasoy (2005):

> Proponents of Islamic modernism assume that Islam is perfectly compatible with the
>
> instrumental reason of modern science and technology. In order to counter Western
>
> dominance in the world economy and the state system, Muslims must first recognize
>
> the scientific and economic dynamism of Western societies. They must then
>
> reinterpret the Koran's [*sic*] meaning in such a way that Muslims can catch up with
>
> European levels of development . . . . Islamic modernism was an ideology of Muslim
>
> restructuring according to the Western progress ideal, one which accommodated the
>
> secularization thesis. (para. 6)

Liberal nationalism. This movement developed as an offshoot of the modernist

project in the Islamic world, and one of its core features was the importance placed on the

concept of the nation state. In other words, Islamic ideologues emulated a "Western

conception of nation" to guide them with their understanding of what constitutes a nation,

and "Western principles of democratic institutions" to provide them with new principles of

governing and new forms of political institutions (Moaddel, 2005, p. 4). Some of the

fundamental ideals of this movement were the integration of the nation through cultural and

educational reforms, the promotion of indigenous national languages, and the separation of

religion and the state. Ironically, the nationalistic fervor of this project gave rise to political

movements, ideologies, and discourses that turned against the West's imperialistic strategies,

although it was the Islamic world's encounter with the West that led to the creation of liberal

nationalism. Given that some countries in the Islamic world, such as Egypt, were

monarchies, it becomes important to note that this nationalistic fervor also served to check

the arbitrariness that monarchical rule often entails (Moaddel, 2005).

One of the first nations to experience the wave of liberal nationalism in the Arab

world, Egypt's liberal nationalist ideology was distinct for its territorial nature, one that

revolved around "Egyptian rather than Arab or Islamic identity" (Moaddel, 2005, p. 4).

Intellectuals involved in this movement held constitutionalism to be the model of politics,

celebrated secularism and scientific rationalism, and advocated gender equality; most

naturally, the culmination of the liberal nationalist project in Egypt was the formation, in

1924, of a constitutional government based on hereditary monarchy (Moaddel, 2005).

However, excessive emphasis on secularist, and often antireligious values and practices by

liberal intellectuals backfired in the Islamic world in some significant ways, contributing to

the decline of the movement and rise of alternative discourses, such as Islamic

fundamentalism.

Islamic fundamentalism. Following the decline of liberal nationalism and the

overthrow of parliamentary politics through coups in many Islamic countries (including

Egypt in the 1930s), another cultural episode set in. Moaddel (2005) asserts:

The primary elements of this episode were the rise of an [socially] interventionist

ideological state, on the one hand, and the increasing popularity of the Islamic

opposition, on the other. In a marked contrast with the previous ideologies, Islamic

fundamentalism categorically rejected the Western model and outlook. (p. 5)

The most essential tenet of Islamic fundamentalism, as advanced by pioneers of this

movement, such as Ayatollah Ruhollah Mussaui Khomeini and Ayatollah Morteza

Motahhari from Iran, Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb from Egypt, Abul Ala Maududi from

Pakistan, Mustafa as-Siba'i from Syria, and Abbasi Madani, Shaikh Nahnah, and Ali Belhaj

from Algeria, was an unconditional acceptance and acknowledgement of, in other words,

fealty to Islam, to shape and influence all spheres of life. Furthermore, "fundamentalism

aimed at Islamizing society through social and political action, the seizure of the state power

being a necessary step in its overall Islamization project" (Moaddel, 2005, p. 5).

United by a common hostility toward Western values and ideas like parliamentary

politics and constitutionalism, and the consequent decline of the liberal nationalist ideology,

the late 1930s saw the rise of two significant cultural movements in Egypt (Moaddel, 2005).

One was pan-Arab nationalism, and the other was the Muslim Brotherhood movement; the

latter is significant to this study. It becomes imperative to mention that there are considerable

variations in the discourse and orientations of Islamic fundamentalists. There are

considerable variations in terminologies as well, one of which being *Islamist*. In this

dissertation I address the Muslim Brotherhood as an Islamist organization, instead of a

fundamentalist one, and in the following paragraphs I provide my rationale for this

terminological decision.

Islamists or fundamentalists? Hardly any analysis or commentary about the events in the Muslim world can avoid the concern and dilemma over the labeling of those Muslims who "invoke Islam as the source of authority for all political and social action" (Kramer, 2003, p. 65). Two of the most prominent labels are *Islamic fundamentalists* and *Islamists*. For a few decades now, this issue has been the subject of heated debates and discussions.

According to Kramer (2003), in Western scholarly circles in the 18th century, specifically by thinkers of the Enlightenment, huge steps were being taken to classify Islam on its own terms—that is, as a religion and faith practised by Muslims. Finally, it was Voltaire, the French philosopher, who coined the term *Islamisme* (Islamism) and defined it as the religion of *Mahomet* (Muhammad) (Versaille, 1994). In the course of the 19th century, this term became popular throughout Europe. However, since many scholars simply preferred the shorter and purely Arabic term *Islam*, by the turn of the 20th century Islamism began to disappear from the lexicon; by the date of the completion of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* in 1938, Islamism had been substituted by Islam (Kramer, 2003).

On the other hand, according to Kramer (2003), the term *fundamentalism* originated in the US in the 1920s. Kramer (2003) explains:

> As the pace of social change accelerated, Protestant Christians felt threatened by the higher criticism of the Bible and the spread of philosophical skepticism. They sought to reaffirm their belief in the literal text of the Bible and the "fundamentals" of Christian belief, including creationism. These Christians called themselves fundamentalists. (pp. 67-68)

At the time of its origin, fundamentalism received much flak and acquired a strongly pejorative association in the minds of liberals and modernists. Also, its association with

Islam, as *Islamic fundamentalism*, in terms of usage as well as meaning, was rare and inconsistent. It was only about 50 years later that Islamic fundamentalism came into widespread usage as the consequence of media coverage of Iran's revolution in 1979 (Kramer, 2003). Following this, the use of fundamentalism in connection with Islam spread rapidly, and by 1990 the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defined it not only as "the strict maintenance of traditional Protestant beliefs," but also as "the strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam" (1990, pp. 477, 628). Yet, the more popular Islamic fundamentalism as a label became, the more scholars of Islam debated about the aptness of its use to contexts beyond its origins.

For instance, Lewis (1988) states that the label fundamentalism cannot capture the essence of Iran's revolution and comparable Islamic movements because it actually represents only those Protestant churches and organizations "that maintain the literal divine origin and inerrancy of the Bible" (p. 117); in that sense, all Muslims are in principal fundamentalists in their attitude to the text of the Qur'an. But if that label needs to be extended, then what could specifically characterize fundamentalists in the Islamic sense and separate them from other Muslims and Christian fundamentalists is their "scholasticism and their legalism," that is "they base themselves not only on the Qur'an, but also on the Traditions of the Prophet [hadith], and on the corpus of transmitted theological and legal learning" (p. 117). They treat Islam as an all-embracing religion adept at guiding Muslims not just in the spiritual or the metaphysical, but also the legal and the scholastic. To sum up, fundamentalism is primarily a Christian term because its origin, nuances, and what it depicts are primarily Christian; hence, the use of fundamentalism in association with Islam requires specification of context.

Esposito (1992) protests that the label of fundamentalist unfairly stigmatizes forward-thinking Muslims. He states:

> For many liberal or mainline Christians, "fundamentalist" is pejorative or derogatory, being applied rather indiscriminately to all those who advocate a literalist biblical position . . . . and wish to return to and replicate the past. In fact, few individuals or organizations in the Middle East fit such a stereotype. Indeed, many fundamentalist leaders have had the best education, enjoy responsible positions in society, and are adept at harnessing the latest technology to propagate their views and create viable modern institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. (p. 7)

Esposito claims that this term is a victim of prejudice and prejudgment; it is often synonymized with extremism and anti-Americanism by default due to the pejorative connotation liberal and mainline Christians have attached to it. Consequently, fundamentalist stigmatizes anyone labeled as such.

With new Islamic movements such as the Iranian revolution gaining ground in the late 1970s, Europeans, specifically the French who gave birth to the term Islamisme, struggled with a new dilemma—to find an appropriate label to describe these movements. According to Kramer (2003), Islamisme became their choice for two key reasons. First, it had a French pedigree because it was Voltaire who created this label. Second, the only French alternative, *intégrisme*, was deeply embedded in its original Catholic context. By the mid-1980s in contemporary French usage Islamism was no longer simply a synonym for Islam, the religion; it stood for "Islam as a modern ideology and a political program" (Kramer, 2003, p. 71), thus also capturing the essence of the Islamic movements contemporaneous to the times.

By 1985 this term crossed over from French to English, and it greatly appealed to scholars who not only were averse to the pejorative connotations fundamentalism had, but also claimed that fundamentalism and Islamism were in fact essentially different phenomena. For instance, according to Fuller (1991) fundamentalism entails "a strict reversion to the institutions of a medieval or even early Islamic state," whereas Islamism suggests "not so much theology as an ideology whose implications are not at all old-fashioned, but thoroughly modern" (p. 2). Cantori (1993) likewise argues that fundamentalism "conveys a sense of extremism and dismissal," whereas Islamism "is used increasingly to denote the political manifestation of the religion of Islam" and "permits one to more dispassionately make distinctions between extremist and mainstream Islam" (p. 57).

It is not only in academic circles, but also within US agencies today that the issue of the use of fundamentalism in reference to Islam has been associated with numerous debates and discussions. According to Kramer (2003), in Washington Islamism has prevailed over fundamentalism as the term of choice in policy circles. At first, the term made a few rare appearances in policy statements, until it received an official definition from Robert Pelletreau, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs, in remarks made in 1994. Pelletreau cautioned that the term *Islamic fundamentalism* had to be used vigilantly and only to refer to the "broad revival of Islam" (Kramer, 2003, p. 72). Pelletreau (1994) claims, within that broad revival there were subdivisions:

> In the foreign affairs community, we often use the term "Political Islam" to refer to the movements and groups within the broader fundamentalist revival with a specific political agenda. "Islamists" are Muslims with political goals. We view these terms as analytical, not normative. They do not refer to phenomena that are necessarily

sinister: there are many legitimate, socially responsible Muslim groups with political

goals. However, there are also Islamists who operate outside the law. Groups or

individuals who operate outside the law—who espouse violence to achieve their

aims—are properly called extremists. (p. 2)

Thus, there are fundamentalists, some of whom are Islamists and some of whom are

extremists; only the latter constitute a threat. By 1996 Pelletreau worked out a comprehensive

definition of Islamism firmly grounding the term's privileged status, and in an address at the

Council on Foreign Relations in New York he stated:

We normally use the term "Islamist" to refer to Muslims who draw upon the belief,

symbols, and language of Islam to inspire, shape, and animate political activity. We

do not automatically seek to exclude moderate, tolerant, peaceful Islamists who seek

to apply their religious values to domestic political problems and foreign policy. We

do, however, object strongly to Islamists who preach intolerance and espouse

violence in the domestic and international arenas. (para. 11)

This brief overview suggests that both *Islamic fundamentalism* and *Islamism* are

complex terms. *Islamic fundamentalism* and *Islamism* are sometimes used synonymously, at

times in opposition, and in some instances as sub-categories of one another. Thus, it will not

be faulty to assume, as Kramer (2003) states, that a scholar's choice is not automatically a

substantive statement about either; the choice of a term has perhaps been reduced to a matter

of perception and style. For the purpose of this dissertation I address the Egyptian Muslim

Brotherhood as an Islamist movement, for the sole reason of keeping prejudgments and

negative perceptions often associated with fundamentalism away. I conform to Pelletreau's

(1996) definition of Islamism to describe the Egyptian Brotherhood. Nevertheless, the scope

for change of terminology and modification of perceptions to describe this organization,

based on the results of my analysis, stays open.[3] At this juncture I undertake a review of the

origin and activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the socio-political dynamics of the

Egyptian Brotherhood within Egypt and in relation to the West.

The Muslim Brotherhood: Origin and Evolution

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna in the city of

Ismailia, Egypt. The primary factors that promoted the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood

included the rise of the new middle class, rapid economic development, and the proliferation

of institutions of higher learning (Moaddel, 2005). According to the FAS Intelligence

Resource Program (2002), it began as a religious, political, and social movement with the

credo, "Allah is our objective; the Qur'an is our constitution; the Prophet is our leader; Jihad

[*sic*] is our way; and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations" (para. 1). In

fact, the highly secularist stance of the national intellectual leaders in Egypt—excessively

secularist and thus alienating in the eyes of some Muslims—fuelled the creation of the

oppositional discourse of the Muslim Brothers.

In a pronounced departure from the discourse of liberal nationalism, Moaddel (2005)

states, the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood "rejected the Western model, Egyptian

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[3] In the past decade, a new line of thinking and literature has emerged around the idea of post-Islamism. One of the most eminent proponents of the post-Islamist line of thinking is Asef Bayat, who, according to El-Affendi (2008), "first coined the term 'post-Islamism' in a 1996 essay to describe the nascent reform movement in Iran [of the late 1990s], and it caught on like wild fire" (p. 297). Bayat (2011) explains that post-Islamism upholds religion, and in that sense is not anti-Islamic; at the same time it also emphasizes citizens' rights, thereby supporting secular ideas. Thus, it envisions a pious social order within a democratic state. He further elaborates that several examples of post-Islamist movements exist, for instance, the reform movement in Iran in the late 1990s and the Green Movement in the country today, and Turkey's currently ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Each of these parties, Bayat claims, was associated with Islamist politics, but with time began critiquing Islamist excesses, its violation of democratic rights, and its use of Islam as an instrument to sanctify political power. They all eventually opted to work within a democratic framework.

territorial nationalism, the idea of the separation of religion and the state, parliamentary politics, and the Islamic modernist conception of gender relations" (p. 197). As an alternative, Al-Banna proposed a vision of Islam as an all-encompassing religion:

> We believe the provision of Islam and its teachings are all inclusive, encompassing the affairs of the people in this world and the hereafter. And those who think that these teachings are concerned only with the spiritual or ritualistic aspects are mistaken in this belief because Islam is a faith, a ritual, a nation [*watan*] and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirit and deed, holy text and sword . . . The Glorious Qur'an . . . considers [these things] [bracket in original] to be the core of Islam and its essence. (Moaddel, 2005, p. 197)

Kuntzel (2002) states that an all-encompassing vision of Islam essentially would mean the acceptance of Shari'a law, which is based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the sayings and living habits of Muhammad) as law passed down by Allah, and its application to all aspects of life, from handling of daily issues to the organization and working of the government.

Historically, the Muslim Brotherhood was a multifaceted organization that focused on social, educational, and service fields. It established domestic mosques, educational institutions, hospitals, and some commercial and industrial projects. Furthermore, as Chamieh (1994) claims, the mosque doubled up as a place for worship and a place for *tarbiah* (training), in other words, a place for gathering as well as mobilizing people. After the Second World War, the Muslim Brothers took up a major role in distributing and printing books and issuing magazines, and when the group moved its headquarters to Cairo, they devoted much of their time and resources to the establishment of universities and schools.

In terms of its growth, according to Hallett (1974) by 1936 the Brotherhood had 800 members, and this number increased greatly to 200,000 by 1938; by the late 1940s the Brotherhood's membership rose to around two million, and its Pan-Islamic ideology gained ground in other Arab societies. Specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood spread extensively among the middle classes. According to Ehrenfeld and Lappen (2006), this was due to the characteristics of the middle class in the Arab world—the middle class was oriented to change through reforms, they had a high political spirit that made them enthusiastic to participate in policy making, and finally, there was also a considerable effect of modern tarbiah, or training, on this class.

On its stance on violence, an issue that has been a point of contention in both academic and policy circles, since its inception in 1928 the Muslim Brotherhood has *officially* opposed violent means to fulfill its objectives. Nevertheless, there have been some exceptions, such as the overthrow of the secular Ba'athist rule in Syria (Aspden, 2006). According to Chamieh (1994), the Egyptian government has always been cynical and circumspect of this official position, and even accused the Muslim Brotherhood of a series of killings in Egypt after the Second World War. As claimed by the Egyptian government, following an assortment of bombings and assassination attempts by the Brotherhood's supposed secret apparatus, in November 1948 police seized an automobile containing the apparatus's classified documents and plans, which also included names of members. Subsequently, offices were raided and 32 of its leaders were arrested. In December 1948, the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mahmud Fahmi Nokrashi, ordered suspension of the Brotherhood. In what is assumed to be retaliation for the government's acts, veterinary student Abdel Meguid Ahmed Hassan, a member of the Brotherhood, assassinated the Prime Minister on

December 28, 1948. As part of a series of retaliatory killings, a month and half later, Al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was killed in Cairo by men believed to be government agents and/or supporters of the murdered Prime Minister (Chamieh, 1994).

To gain a clearer understanding of the contention between the Egyptian regime and the Brotherhood, a mention must be made at this juncture of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty that ruled Egypt (and Sudan) from the 19th to the mid-20th century. According to Hassan (2000), the reign of the penultimate ruler of Egypt from this dynasty, King Farouk I, was destabilized by ever increasing nationalist discontent over the British occupation, royal corruption and incompetence, and a disastrous 1948 Arab-Israeli War. All these factors undermined Farouk's position and paved the way for the Revolution of 1952 in Egypt; Farouk was forced to step down in favor of his infant son Ahmed-Fuad who became King Fuad II, while administration of the country passed to the Free Officers Movement. The clandestine revolutionary Free Officers Movement was composed of young junior army officers committed to challenging and ultimately ousting the Egyptian monarchy and its British advisors, and was founded by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Revolution proclaimed a new period of modernization and socialist reform in Egypt, and a significant advancement of pan-Arab nationalism.

The infant King Fuad II's rule lasted less than a year with the revolutionaries abolishing the monarchy and declaring Egypt a republic on June 18, 1953. In the meantime, disagreements with Gamal Nasser led to Muhammad Naguib's, the first President of Egypt, forced removal from office, and Nasser became President in 1956. According to Moaddel (2005):

The overthrow of the monarchy by the Free Army Officers' coup in 1952 and the inauguration of Gamal Abdel Nassir's [*sic*] regime based on pan-Arab nationalism brought the Muslim Brothers into a violent encounter with the government. The years following the coup gave rise to an extremist trend in the Muslim Brotherhood. The new trend was led by Sayyid Qutb [a leading Egyptian intellectual], who rejected the existing order as an embodiment of the *jahiliyya* [state of ignorance], the decadent cultural order[4] that in the Muslim view prevailed in pre-Islamic Arabia. (pp. 5-6)

Qutb, in his Islamic manifesto *Milestones* (1964) argues that it is only the use of Shari'a law that gives legitimacy to a state in the Muslim world, and unfortunately not all states, including his native land Egypt, are legitimate in that respect. He also states that Muslims should not violate God's sovereignty (*hakimiyyat Allah*) over all of creation, and therefore, resist any system where men are in servitude to other men. A truly Islamic polity would have no rulers, not even theocratic ones, since Muslims would need neither judges nor police to obey divine law. According to Qutb, the means to create a true Islamic polity was for a revolutionary vanguard to fight jahiliyya with a two-fold approach—preaching, and abolishing the organizations and authorities of the system by physical power and jihad. Once the vanguard movement were able to establish a truly Islamic community, they would then spread throughout the Islamic homeland, and finally throughout the entire world attaining leadership of humanity.

In 1954 the Brotherhood's alleged attempt to assassinate Gamal Nasser caused it to be considered an illegal organization by the Egyptian government. However, the

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[4] It must be mentioned that this stance could be considered to border on an extremist fundamentalist mode of thinking and praxis.

Brotherhood denied this accusation stating that it was actually an incident staged by the regime to use as a pretext to persecute the group and its members. But on the basis of this assassination attempt, from 1954 until Nasser's death in 1970, several Muslim Brotherhood members were systemically tortured under Nasser's secular regime. Nonetheless, Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, became president of Egypt in 1970 and gradually released imprisoned Brothers. He also promised the Brotherhood that Shari'a would be implemented as the Egyptian law and enlisted its help against leftist groups. Since then, and up until the Egyptian Revolution of January 2011 that led to the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak, the organization has been tolerated to an extent, but was officially illegal and subjected to periodic crackdowns (McDonough, 2005).

According to Hassan (2005), following their official ban in 1954, the Brotherhood had to make sure to abandon all traits of and connections to violence in order to politically assert its presence; following this, the "underlying themes of the Brotherhood had to take on a *social movement* dimension, which has managed to remain consistent in creed and broad in nature" (p. 4). Hassan also claims that "the Muslim Brotherhood has not only materialized successfully through its social programs and a consistent historical track, but it also seeks to assert its presence through a popular appeal that the government has desperately failed to capture" (p. 4). In recent years the organization's campaign for democratic reforms in elections placed it in direct opposition to erstwhile Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's tyrannical tendencies. The Muslim Brotherhood is on a political pedestal that indulges in the "open-ended language of equal representation and social justice" (p. 5); in this respect, the Muslim Brotherhood has come to embody a relentless campaign for democratic reforms and functions as a civil association (Hassan, 2005).

Elaborating on the Brotherhood's political standing and its relationship to the regime in Egypt during Hosni Mubarak's rule, it must be mentioned that in the 2005 parliamentary elections the Brotherhood's candidates, who had to run as independents due to their illegal status as a political party, won 88 seats (20% of the total) to form the largest opposition bloc. The electoral process, however, was tarnished by many irregularities caused by the regime, including the arrest of hundreds of Brotherhood members. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the Brotherhood would focus on broad reforms to open up Egypt's political system, such as ending the nation's 24-year-old Emergency Law that severely limited political activity in Egypt (Otterman, 2005).

Relatively few gains were made by the Brotherhood-led opposition in an assembly dominated by the National Democratic Party (NDP); despite the Brotherhood's unexpected victories, the number of seats held by non-NDP representatives fell short of the more than one-third minority needed to affect legislation. According to Saad al-Husseini (2010), a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood's bloc in the Egyptian parliament, the Brotherhood might have had the largest opposition bloc in Egyptian parliamentary history in terms of numbers, but in practical terms, they faced an NDP majority that simply rubberstamped almost everything the party wanted, regardless of its value to the Egyptian public.

Bleak as it may seem, and despite the Brotherhood's numerical disadvantage in the assembly in comparison to the ruling party, Brotherhood officials point to a handful of parliamentary accomplishments between 2005 to 2010 (Morrow & Al-Omrani, 2010). According to Al-Husseini (2010), when parliament renewed Egypt's longstanding Emergency in early 2010, Brotherhood representatives demanded that this law should be

applied only to crimes of terrorism and drug trafficking. In addition, they were able to establish hospitals and schools in most of their respective electoral districts, thus providing public service to their constituents.

But, according to Husseini (2010), they failed to stop the ruling party from altering the constitution in its favor in 2007, even though the Brotherhood launched a concerted campaign against the move. Morrow and Al-Omrani (2010) quote Hassan, another senior member of the Brotherhood's parliamentary bloc—"the constitutional changes, which effectively did away with judicial oversight of elections, were made by the ruling party expressly to prevent opposition candidates—especially Brotherhood candidates—from winning a large number of seats in parliament ever again" (para. 14). Amr Hashem Rabie (2010), expert in parliamentary affairs at the Egyptian research institute Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, claimed that the (now erstwhile) ruling party continued its hostility with the Brotherhood and did all it could to wreck the group's parliamentary initiatives.

In summary, the Egyptian Brotherhood has been perceived by some as dangerously violent and others as unjustly oppressed; its members have been arbitrarily arrested. At the same time, it has been the main opposition bloc in the Egyptian Parliament, it functions as a civil association, and advocates Islamic reform while maintaining a vast network of support through Islamic charities working among poor Egyptians (IRIN, 2006). The conflicting perceptions and concerns associated with the Brotherhood in both academic and policy circles in the West further complicate understanding of the Brotherhood.

The West and the Muslim Brotherhood

The question of whether Western governments should embrace or shun the Muslim Brotherhood is a vital topic at present in foreign policy circles. This issue came to the fore with force when Leiken and Brooke published "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood" in the 2007 March-April issue of *Foreign Affairs*, in which they argue that the Brotherhood can be considered an effective counterbalance to extremist Islamist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, by virtue of their evolution into a group that prefers a democratic stance in politics, and thereby is worthy of acceptance by the West (Breinholt, 2007). This view carried some resonance; on June 20, 2007, New York Sun's Eli Lake reported that Leikin has been asked to brief the US State Department on his views.

In fact, the Leikin-Brooke article set off a firestorm. Critics argued that the authors had been duped and were relying on poor scholarship. In a June 2007 *American Thinker* piece, Poole, an antiterrorism consultant, noted that Leikin had been wrong about the Soviet influence over the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1980s, and he was wrong again about the Muslim Brotherhood now. Furthermore, Douglas Farah of the Counterterrorism Blog critiqued Leikin and Brook's claim that *Milestones*, the book by Sayyid Qutb that had long considered the key source for Muslim Brotherhood's violent tradition, had been officially abandoned by the Brotherhood in favor of Hasan al-Hudaybi's *Preachers, Not Judges* (1969), generally taken to be the Brotherhood's refutation of Qutb's radical arguments. Farah (2007) claims that in fact *Preachers* has not been published in English and has not been available in the Arab world since 1985. Thus, to both Farah and Poole, the Brotherhood should not be trusted, since it is camouflaging its true violent intentions to distract the West (Breinholt, 2007).

Sayyid Qutb, as aforementioned, contributed significantly to the shaping of the Brotherhood's ideology, specifically its extremist strands. Focusing on Qutb-centric debates in Western academia, Utvik (2009) states, "according to a version of history that has been promoted by Kepel, among others, in his widely read *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam,* the main development of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt after Hasan al-Banna was its radicalization through the ideological works of Sayyid Qutb" (p. 519). This version resonates with the likes of Farah and Poole, who perceive the Brotherhood as a violent extremist group.

In her book *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology* (2009), Zollner makes an important, and somewhat contradictory comment on the development of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology. Hasan al-Hudaybi was the second *general guide*, or leader, of the Muslim Brotherhood appointed after founder Hasan al-Banna's assassination in 1949. "By outlining Hudaybi's policies and his understanding of Islam as guidance for politics and society" Zollner shows how Hudaybi carefully "laid out a path for the Muslim Brothers that steers away from the extremism of Qutb, while preserving the call for the individual Muslim to take responsibility in the fight for the cause of Islam and social justice" (Utvik, 2009, p. 519). Zollner (2009) argues that Hudaybi's moderation is evident in the fact that he distanced himself from extremist understandings of the sovereignty of God, extremist means for the implementation of the Shari'a, and aligned himself with the idea of the importance of human agency in legislation and general policy making. In other words, Hudaybi gave importance to human agency that is linked to political power, a power that is not ordained or delivered to anyone by divine means but emerges through elections and representation.

Zollner (2009) further states, considering the significance of Hudaybi's years as leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, it is startling that there is minimal scholarly work on Hudaybi. There are extensive studies available on Al-Banna, and there has been tremendous interest in the ideas of Sayyid Qutb; it is important to assess and review the work of these thinkers to understand currents of Islamist ideology and Islamist movements, however, "this focus has led to an incorrect perception that the Islamic movement is necessarily radical in its thinking and/or militant in its deeds" (Zollner, 2009, p. 1). As for *Preachers, Not Judges*, she states:

> There is reasonable evidence to suggest that the book may in fact have been written by a circle of [Hudaybi's] trusted companions. Yet, the completed work was distributed in his name and it therefore needs to be assumed that it had his editorial approval…. [This book] calls for tolerance. (p. 5)

Zollner's work may be significant in shifting the Qutb-centrism of much literature on the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist movements, in the West.

Breinholt (2007) states that knowledge and assessment of recent geopolitical events become vital to the understanding of the dynamics of the Muslim Brotherhood. In January 2007, Hamas, considered to be the Muslim Brotherhood's branch in Palestine, emerged victorious as it took over the Palestinian government through democratic elections. This was the first time that a Brotherhood wing had succeeded in taking over a government through the ballot box (Breinholt, 2007). According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2009), Hamas was an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a spiritual leader who preached and did charitable work in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, created it in the late 1960s; at this time both West Bank and Gaza were under Israeli control. It was only

in December 1987 that Yassin officially founded Hamas as the Muslim Brotherhood's local

political arm following the outbreak of the first *intifada* (uprising), a Palestinian uprising

against Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza.

The US, the European Union, and a few other countries classify Hamas as a terrorist

organization (BBC News, 2003; Guardia, 2003; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003;

Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook, 2005; US Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005). Ironically, as

Breinholt (2007) claims:

> This event [Hamas's victory in Palestine] proved to be controversial in radical
>
> Muslim circles. Al Qaeda [*sic*] leader Zahawahiri [*sic*] issued a statement taking the
>
> Brotherhood to task for even participating in democratic elections ("they [the
>
> Brotherhood] abandoned the movement of resistance and accepted the government of
>
> bargaining…"). To Brotherhood enthusiasts like Leikin and Brooke, this event and
>
> Zawahiri's reaction showed that the Brotherhood was well posed to thrive as a
>
> Western institution. (para. 16)

This overview suggests that the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood remains an open

question, and its worthiness and scope as an Islamist organization is far from settled. Without

professing empathy for Islamist movements, I argue that Islamism, quite like any other

ideology or movement, should not be treated as a monolith. According to Zollner (2009), in

the West political Islam is often associated with radical thought, and "this may be due to the

creation, on the part of power politics, of a fear of Islam as a religion, which is different,

strange and seemingly in opposition to Western thought" (p. 2); alternatively, it may be

because radical or even militant groups are constantly appearing in the media because of their

extremist actions. While radical thought and militant action make it necessary to study

extremist groups, the focus on terrorism in the name of Islam marginalizes moderate Islamists. And as Wickham (2002) claims, "in the Muslim world, the most insistent calls for reform have come not from movements favoring secular democracy but from those seeking to establish a political system based on Islam" (p. 1). Thus, it becomes important to advance contextual understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood's goals and capabilities—examine distinct Brotherhood factions, analyze different discourses and rhetoric emerging from the myriad Brotherhood sources, evaluate use of resources available to them—so that an informed comment can be made on the promises and problems the Muslim Brotherhood holds in today's challenging global environment, specifically in the context of the Middle East.

Research Questions

I analyze the English-language rhetoric in www.ikhwanweb.com to gain insights into: (a) the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's ideology as manifest in its official English website; (b) the dynamics of its relationship as a counterpublic to militant fundamentalist organizations, Western agents, and the Egyptian government under Hosni Mubarak's rule, as they play out in the Egyptian MB's cyber rhetoric; and (c) the implication the Egyptian Brotherhood's worldview and counterpublic dynamics, manifest in its English-language cyber rhetoric, might have apropos Western agents and global civil society.

I use counterpublic theory and rhetorical criticism as the theoretical and methodological frameworks, respectively, to guide this study. Also, it is situated, more broadly, within the discourse of *Islam and the West* prominent in both academic and policy circles, and particularly, within the context of the Egyptian socio-political sphere, specifically during the final years of the Hosni Mubarak regime. Yet another significant component

forming the context of this study is the use of the Internet by Islamist organizations in repressive environments. With these forming the theoretical, methodological, and contextual bases of this study, to understand and explore the concerns raised I pose two research questions:

RQ1: What is the ideology manifest in the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in www.ikhwanweb.com?

RQ2: What rhetorical strategies provide support for this ideology?

In concluding I discuss what the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and rhetorical strategies demonstrate about its counterpublic dynamics, and reveal about its use of www.ikhwanweb.com as a counterpublic sphere. In addition, I make a comment on the probable implications of the findings on: (a) the way Western agents view the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and Islamist organizations; (b) the potential the Internet might or might not have for Islamist organizations, specifically in the context of the Middle East; (c) the role of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the global civil sphere; and (d) the discourse on *Islam and the West*.

In the following chapter I present an in-depth discussion of ideological criticism, the form of rhetorical criticism I use to answer my research questions. I review the literature on *ideology* that leads me to define the concept as it pertains to this study. Finally, I offer the justification for my methods, a detailed description of the artifact, a commentary on my role and epistemological, ontological, and axiological positions, and close with an explanation of the data analysis techniques.

Chapter IV: Methods

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the ideology and explore the counterpublic dynamics exhibited by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as manifest in its English-language cyber rhetoric in www.ikhwanweb.com, the Muslim Brotherhood's official English website. Specifically, ideological criticism, a specific method of rhetorical criticism, is used to answer the research questions. In this chapter I provide a justification for using ideological criticism, a detailed description of the artifact for analysis, explain my role as researcher, and describe the data analysis techniques of the study.

Justification of Method

The aim of this study is to identify the ideology manifest in the rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as present in the MB official English website. Rhetoric is defined as the human use of symbols to create discourse/s, with the purpose to respond to, reinforce, or alter the understandings of an audience or the social fabric of the community, with its essential activities located on a political stage. In other words, rhetoric is the use of specific symbols by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in its website to create discourse/s.

Given this focus on rhetoric, rhetorical analysis is the obvious choice to answer the research questions. Foss (2004) explains, "rhetorical analysis is a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes" (p. 6). The artifact for this study is text posted on the Muslim Brotherhood's official English website, authored by or credited to Egyptian Brotherhood members. The overarching goal of rhetorical criticism is: (a) increasing, through analysis of an artifact, knowledge of how rhetoric operates in that artifact; and (b) understanding the implications of this knowledge on the relational and

discursive dynamics between the creator and audience of this rhetoric. In addition, when the

focus of rhetorical critics also includes unearthing what an artifact suggests about beliefs,

values, and worldviews, as in the instance of this dissertation, their focus is on ideology

(Foss, 2004).

      Ideology. The concept of *ideology* has been the topic of numerous discussions and

debate in the social sciences, in the mass media, and in politics. Numerous books and articles

have been devoted to exploring and understanding it. At the end of the 18th century, French

philosopher Destutt de Tracy coined the term "ideology" and according to van Dijk (1998),

de Tracy conceptualized ideology as "a general science of ideas, the study of how we think,

speak and argue" (p. 6). In the Marxist convention, ideologies were associated with the

notion of class (Joyce, 1995); ideologies were considered to be the tool of the ruling class

who disseminated them to hide or legitimize their power, inequality, or the status quo. In

many strands of thought within Marxism, and specifically in Engels's interpretation of Marx,

"ideologies were forms of false consciousness, that is, popular but misguided beliefs

inculcated by the ruling class in order to legitimate the status quo, and to conceal the real

socioeconomic conditions of the workers" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 7). Similarly, the Gramscian

notion of hegemony implies ideological domination by a power elite of a large dominated

group of citizens or mass public, whose worldviews are subtly and persuasively inculcated by

these elites. This negative notion of ideology, namely, as a system of false, misleading

beliefs, that serves dominant groups, has prevailed in the social sciences and has been

considered central to the political uses of the term.

      However, van Dijk (1998) proposes a more general notion of ideology, without

disregarding the fact that the legitimization of dominance is one of its important functions in

certain circumstances. He talks about ideologies, such as those of feminism and anti-racism, as positive ideologies. He suggests that they too are:

> Systems that sustain and legitimatize opposition and resistance "against" domination and social inequality . . . . Ideologies need not be negative, they need not be dominant—there are also non-dominant ideologies that are often widely considered to be negative, such as those of religious sects or right-wing extremists. (p. 8)

In addition, van Dijk (1998) claims that ideologies can entail positive functions—for instance, they can help dominated groups by empowering them to create solidarity, to organize struggle, and to sustain opposition. On a more neutral note, ideologies aid groups by enabling their members to organize and manage their goals and everyday social practices. In other words, according to van Dijk, theorizing the concept of ideology through a broader and more flexible lens is possible without restricting it to negative and narrow perceptions.

This study focuses on the ideology of a specific counterpublic, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In review, for the purpose of this dissertation, counterpublics are those alternative, non-dominant publics amid wider publics who voice oppositional needs and values through discursive practices that affirm their specificity on some axis of difference from wider publics, and are not restricted by the rigid separation of public and private in their discourse, or a separatist stance with the state. The emancipatory potential of counterpublics emerges in the dialectical movement of withdrawal and reengagement with wider publics, and the discursive aim of counterpublics is not necessarily reaching consensus—besides addressing and thematizing inequalities, counterpublic discourse may serve a number of purposes, including expressing identity, raising awareness, celebrating difference, and enabling play. This definition necessitates use of the concept of ideology more flexibly than

its traditional, and often pejorative descriptions, to study the ideology of the counterpublic—the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

Moreover, according to van Dijk (1998), ideologies are often associated with systems of beliefs, be they social, political, or religious, shared by a social movement or a social group; exemplars can be feminism and sexism, racism and antiracism, pacifism and militarism. "Group members who share such ideologies stand for a number of very general ideas that are at the basis of their more specific beliefs about the world, guide their interpretation of events, and monitor their social practices" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 6). An ideology is also a mental framework; an ideology is produced through systems of representation a movement or group deploys to make meaning and define the world or some aspect of it (Makus, 1990; van Dijk, 1998).

Based on this brief review of ideology, and for the purpose of this study, ideology entails a social and a cognitive component, and it is not prejudged as essentially dominant and/or negative. It is defined as beliefs a social group or movement shares, through systems of representation: (a) to interpret, make sense of, and define some aspect of life; and (b) to monitor their social practices—these beliefs are acquired, used, and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups, in complex social structures (van Dijk, 1998).

Ideological criticism. Ideological criticism, as a method, is appropriate to answer the research questions of this study because, through an ideological analysis the critic is able to: (a) identify the nature of a group or movement's ideology; (b) the interests included as part of that ideology; and (c) strategies used to support the ideology (Foss, 2004), as manifest in the artifact being analyzed. To elaborate, in an ideological analysis the suggestive elements of an

artifact are unearthed when the critic looks beyond the surface structures to explore the beliefs, values, and assumptions of a group. These beliefs, or ideologies, manifest in rhetorical artifacts potentially reflect a group's social, economic, political, or cultural interests (Foss, 2004). Docan (2004) explains:

> To identify the nature of the ideology, the critic frequently examines the artifact for what it asks the audience to believe, understand, feel, or think by exploring assumptions, premises, and particular characteristics of the artifact. A second step is to examine the interests included in the artifact, looking for whose voices are included and excluded, and whose interests are privileged, neglected, or oppressed. Finally an identification of rhetorical strategies allows for an understanding of how rhetoric is used to create or support the ideology identified. (p. 281)

With ideology and ideological criticism defined and contextualized for this study, a detailed description of the artifact follows.

Artifact: Ikhwanweb

The artifact chosen for this study is the Muslim Brotherhood's official English website, www.ikhwanweb.com; specifically, the written texts posted on this website credited to Ikhwanweb—either authored by Egyptian Brotherhood members, or contributed by independent individuals, groups, and organizations, and bylined by the Egyptian Brotherhood. The *About Us* section of the website states that Ikhwanweb is the "Brotherhood's only official English website," and the main mission behind it is to "present the Muslim Brotherhood vision right from the source and rebut misconceptions about the movement in Western societies." Thus, the intended and stated audience for this website is Western agents. One of the primary objectives of this study is the exploration of the Egyptian

Brotherhood's cyber rhetoric in English—to unearth its ideology, to identify rhetorical strategies supporting the ideology unearthed, and to interpret implications of the same on Western agents' treatment of the Egyptian Brotherhood. Hence, the English language website gains justification for the purpose of analysis. Furthermore, the choice of a website is justified since one of the broader objectives of the study is to comment on the role of the Internet as a counterpublic sphere for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

Ikhwanweb was founded by Khairat el Shater, deputy chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood, and was launched in 2005; in 2009, the website was updated, and this entailed enhancement and modification of the overall web design without any significant change to the substantive elements of the website. The term *Ikhwanweb* basically translates into Brothers who have a web presence, the term *Ikhwan* meaning *brotherhood* or *brethren.* One can reach the *Home Page* of this website through the url: http://www.ikhwanweb.com/. Ikhwanweb's main office is located in London; it has Brotherhood correspondents in most countries, which include both freelance writers and regular employees.

Ikhwanweb also features, as stated in their *About Us* section, "other views" that they claim are separate from Muslim Brotherhood opinions, and these have been excluded from this analysis. Derk (2008) reiterates that Ikhwanweb incorporates a collection of documents from both Ikhwan members or endorsed by them, as well as "other views" from non-members, thus making it a complex and multi-vocal space. This multi-vocality is a rich rhetorical resource for exploring and interpreting the Egyptian Brotherhood's ideology and counterpublic dynamics. However, due to constraints of time and space, and the limited scope of this project, I undertake a focused analysis only of the Egyptian Brotherhood's English-language rhetoric. Therefore, as aforementioned, written texts that are either

authored by Egyptian Brotherhood members, or contributed by independent individuals, groups, and organizations and bylined by the Egyptian Brotherhood were chosen for analysis.

The content of this website focuses on two primary areas—the Brotherhood's history, organization, structure, and evolution and on-going socio-political controversies in and outside of Egypt. Specifically, Ikhwanweb contains a plethora of descriptive as well as analytical pieces, news reports and editorials, academic debates and polemical write-ups, and transcriptions of speeches and interviews, which fall under numerous sections and sub-sections that the entire website is divided into; all content is archived since the date of its creation. For the purpose of my ideological analysis I selected texts from three different sections featured in Ikhwanweb, namely, *MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament* that were most appropriate for answering the research questions posed.

Counterpublic theory forms the theoretical basis of this study, and I have positioned the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a counterpublic to three wider publics—militant fundamentalist organizations, Western agents, and the Hosni Mubarak Egyptian regime. The three sections of Ikhwanweb—*MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament*—feature texts that are most closely and most clearly representative of the Brotherhood's dynamics with the wider publics aforementioned. In other words, to unearth the counterpublic dynamics exhibited by the Egyptian Brotherhood in relation to these three wider publics, choice of the aforementioned sections follow naturally, and justifiably so.

The timeframe for choice of texts was from 2005, which is the year of Ikhwanweb's creation, to late 2010, that is, a period of approximately five years. Over the period of five years and in all three sections written texts representing the Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetoric were featured inconsistently, with a barrage of documents published around certain times and

issues, and a conspicuous absence at others. As the focus of this study is not analysis of the Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetoric surrounding a specific issue or event, but rather an exploration of its online rhetoric in totality, the time frame of five years was both justified and effective.

Also, within this time frame, all written texts that met the requirements for selection from *MB versus Al-Qaeda* and *MB and the West* were analyzed; there was no data sampling procedure undertaken and every artifact that fit my criterion was studied to answer the research questions. However, due to the vast number of articles in the third section, *Parliament*, and to ensure that the analysis was manageable, quasi-random sampling[5] was performed to choose articles from this section.

Thus, out of a total of eight web pages in the *MB versus Al-Qaeda* section that contain archived material, with each web page containing approximately 20 articles, 53 articles were specifically authored or solicited by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The average length of each article was one page; this holds true for all three sections. Out of a total of nine web pages in the *MB and the West* section, with each web page containing approximately 20 articles, 42 articles were analyzed. Out of a total of 27 web pages in the *Parliament* section, with each web page containing approximately 20 articles, there were 170 articles specifically authored or endorsed by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; after quasi-random sampling 85—half of the 170 articles—were chosen for analysis from this section.

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[5] According to Castillo (2009), in this method of sampling the items are first arranged in some order. In the case of this study it was ascending order of year, starting from 2005. The first item is then chosen at random and subsequent items are then selected at a regular interval known as the period. The period is determined according to the population and sample sizes. If the population size is N and the sample size is n, then the period is N/n (or the nearest integer to the value of N/n). The period for my study was 2 (170/85=2), which means every second article was chosen for analysis.

Standards of Evaluation and Role of Researcher

The standards used in rhetorical criticism to judge analyses of artifacts are rooted in two primary assumptions (Foss, 2004). One assumption is that reality is a symbolic creation, constituted through the rhetoric one uses to talk about it (Foss, 2004). Precisely for this reason, the analysis of an artifact cannot unearth *a reality* that can be considered or proven to explain what the artifact really means, "because there are as many realities about the artifact as there are vocabularies from which to conduct inquiry about it" (p. 21). A second assumption, related to the first, is that a critic can explain an artifact only through a personal interpretation of it (Foss, 2004). "One cannot be objective, impartial, and removed from the data because one brings to the critical task particular values and experiences that are reflected in how one sees and writes about the artifact" (p. 21). These assumptions suggest that the task of a rhetorical critic is to provide one analytic interpretation of what an artifact symbolizes.

With these two assumptions as bases, the primary standard used in judging an essay of criticism is the argument made by a critic—in other words, the reasons and evidence offered by the critic in support of the claims made (Brockriede, 1974). Regarding evidence, Foss (2004) elaborates:

> This evidence constitutes the grounds of the argument—the data from the artifact on which the argument is based . . . . [such as] ample quotations from a discursive artifact and ample descriptions of the dimensions of the visual one. You [the critic] also must quote the evidence accurately, and the evidence you cite should be representative of the artifact as a whole. This standard of adequate, accurate

documentation requires that what the critic says exists in an artifact is, in fact, there.

(p. 21)

A second standard is reasonable inference (Foss, 2004), that is, the critic must be able to show how she/he reasonably inferred the claims made from the data. This can be done by explaining the warrants of the claims, as the warrants authorize the movement from the grounds to the claims (Toulmin, 1958). It must be kept in mind that each rhetorical critic brings biases and a unique framework to the process of criticism; therefore, although the audience of the critique must be able to follow and appreciate how the critic arrived at the claims, they do not have to agree with those claims (Foss, 2004).

According to Foss (2004), a third criterion by which essays of rhetorical criticism are judged is coherence—one must arrange, order, and present findings so they are congruent and consistent. Congruence results when findings do not contradict one another and are internally consistent; when all major dimensions of the artifact are included and explained in the theory the critic offers; and finally, when constructs and labels are parallel in terms of levels of abstraction and language (Foss, 2004). Yet another requirement of coherence is that the rhetorical critic has undertaken sufficient analysis of the findings to present them in an insightful and effective way.

In rhetorical criticism therefore "artifacts are dealt with more as the artist deals with experience than as the scientist does" (Foss, 2004, p. 22). As a rhetorical critic one needs to be creative and imaginative; one must be able to write in a way so that the reader can experience and envision the artifact as the critic does; one must be successful in conveying one's passion for the artifact; one must be able to persuade the reader to view the artifact's contribution to rhetorical theory in the manner of the critic; and finally, the rhetorical critic

must be able to offer a compelling account to readers so that they can experience some aspect

of the world in a novel way (Foss, 1983; Wander & Jenkins, 1972). I believe that every

artifact communicates rhetorically, and a rhetorical critic interprets messages manifest in the

artifact through the lens of her/his experience and understanding. The interpretation that

unfolds, thus, is subjective; when it comes to the task of interpretation, no means or method,

no amount of checks and guards can remove the element of subjectivity from the endeavor.

There is no foolproof way of grasping the correct version of reality in an artifact simply

because human actions, such as rhetorical performances, are symbolic creations, and the

interpretation of them is a complex, non-neutral pursuit.

It is impossible to grasp the *one* true intent of human action. But through logic and

rules, a rhetorical critic can help discover what an artifact teaches about the rhetorical claims

of its authors—in other words, the nature of rhetoric—and in the process make a contribution

to rhetorical theory. According to Foss (2004), through the study of one artifact the rhetorical

critic makes suggestions concerning some process of rhetoric, and the societal reality it

represents. In this manner, theories about rhetorical criticism enable one to develop a

cumulative body of research and thus improve the practice of communication. Therein lies

the value of this enterprise.

With this rationale in mind I chose to study the cyber rhetoric of a counterpublic, the

Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, in this dissertation. A few words also need to be said about

the choice of the Muslim Brotherhood for rhetorical analysis. Several years of study and

research dealing with the Middle East have led to personal insights on issues and phenomena

associated with Muslim societies, such as the role of religion in Muslim societies, the debate

on the compatibility between Islam and modernity, the complex dynamics of fundamentalism

and Islamism, and the place of Islamic traditions in the age of modern technology. These issues get further complicated through a varied understanding of concepts such as democracy, civil society, fundamentalism, and Islamism, and by the exceptionally complex political, social, and historical scenarios and circumstances characterizing countries, communities, and cliques in the region. These ambiguities and complications have led to some unfavorable actions by and towards the Islamic world, eventually leading to several forms of rejection, neglect, abandonment, and conflict.

I hold that proper communication is often the panacea for the most malignant problems of humanity. Through this dissertation, by focusing on a specific case—the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood—and carrying out a rhetorical criticism of its website, I endeavor to present a unique way of understanding this organization and making a positive contribution to the process of communication. Specifically, I hope to formulate effective strategies of communication that can prove potentially constructive to the ongoing dialogue between Western agents and the Egyptian Brotherhood. There are undoubtedly other research methods and means to address the concerns of the region; nevertheless, assessing from the perspective of feasibility and time, and the research questions raised, this project is original, effectual, and carries potential.

Data Analysis

In order to explore an artifact for the traces of ideology manifest in it, a rhetorical critic goes through four steps: (a) identifying the presented elements of the artifact; (b) identifying the suggested elements linked to the presented elements; (c) formulating an ideology; and (d) identifying the functions served by the ideology (Foss, 2009). To elaborate, one way to start the process of identifying the assumptions that contributes to a particular

ideology for an artifact is to code the artifact for presented or key elements (Foss &

Kanengieter, 1992; Kanengieter, 1990). In other words, identification of presented elements

involves identifying and coding the basic observable features of the artifact that provide clues

to its ideology. In the second step, the critic articulates themes and ideas that are suggested

by the presented elements, which serve as the basis for ideological tenets (Foss, 2009). Thus,

from the list of key elements coded at least one idea or concept is generated that the critic

believes each coded element suggests. According to Foss (2009), in the third step the critic

groups the suggested elements into categories and organizes them into a coherent framework;

this coherent framework constitutes the ideology the critic suggests is implicit in the artifact.

At this stage the critic no longer deals with presented or key elements but with major

ideational clusters, themes, or ideas that characterize all or most of the suggested elements.

The critic brings the presented elements back in later as support or evidence for the

ideological tenets the critic claims.

Cluster analysis. In this study, *cluster analysis* was used to realize the three

aforementioned steps of data analysis. Cluster analysis involves three basic tasks: (a)

identifying key terms; (b) charting the terms that cluster around the key terms; and (c)

discovering an explanation for the artifact. Burke (1973) explains the central idea of cluster

analysis:

> Now, the work of every writer [rhetor] contains a set of implicit equations. He uses
>
> "associational clusters." And you may, by examining his work, find "what goes with
>
> what" in these clusters- what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations
>
> go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc. (p. 20)

Thus, the task of a critic using this method is to note "what subjects cluster about other subjects" (Burke, 1984, p. 232). And the clusters manifest in someone's rhetoric can:

> Reveal, beneath an author's "official front," the level at which a lie is impossible. If a man's virtuous characters are dull, and his wicked characters are done vigorously, his art has voted for the wicked ones, regardless of his "official front." If a man talks dully of glory, but brilliantly employs the imagery of desolation, his true subject is desolation. (p. 233)

A cluster analysis, then, provides "a survey of the hills and valleys" of the rhetor's mind (Burke, 1984, pp. 232-233), resulting in insights or suggestions into the meanings of key terms, and thus the worldview of the rhetor.

To identify the key symbols or presented elements of the artifact I coded *action verbs*. Action verbs express action, physical or mental, by describing the behavior of the subject, be that a person, place, or thing (Melzow, 2005). The justification for coding for action verbs in this analysis is two-fold and is rooted in both the terms *action* and *verb*.

Beginning with the latter, the importance of *verb* rests in its derivation from the Latin for *word:* the verb may be considered the key word in the structure of a sentence. While the noun used as subject indicates what the writer is talking about, the verb indicates what, according to the writer, that noun is or does. Sometimes the subject can be omitted from a sentence, but there is no way a grammatically complete sentence can be written without a verb. Hence, from the point of view of both content and grammatical structure, the verb is an indispensible part of a sentence and justifies being coded for analysis.

Focusing on *action*, a Burkean explanation of the term is expedient at this point. According to Burke (1966):

Action corresponds to the neurological aspect of the human being . . . it is the ability

of an organism to acquire language or a symbol system . . . . When we strive to reach

goals in arenas such as education, politics, religion, or finance, we are motivated by

our symbolicity . . . . language use constitutes action. (p. 445)

Burke further states that action is separate from *motion*. Motion corresponds to the biological

or animal aspect of the human being, which is concerned with bodily processes and the

requirements for the maintenance of these processes. This biological level is nonsymbolic

because it does not involve the use of symbols (Burke, 1966).

Motion is a requirement for action (Burke, 1970) although the opposite is not true.

While motion can exist without action, action cannot exist without motion; symbolic activity

or action is grounded in the realm of the nonsymbolic. Foss (2004) states that the distinction

Burke proposes between motion and action is largely a theoretical one because once

organisms acquire a symbol system, we are virtually unable to do anything purely in the

realm of motion. Once we have a symbol system, everything we do is interpreted through the

lens of that symbol system. In the syntactical realm of language, *action verbs*, by virtue of

the function they perform in a sentence have the ability to manifest both the action and

motion components of language.

Furthermore, the crux of this study lies in the rhetorical interpretation of worldviews

behind actions. Humans use rhetoric to constitute and present a particular view of their

situation. Through rhetoric it is possible to size up a situation and name its structure and

outstanding ingredients. How rhetors describe a situation indicates how they perceive it, the

choices they see available to them, and the action they are likely to take in that situation. Our

language, then, provides clues to why we do what we do. Once it is known how rhetors have

justified, explained, and accounted for their actions (Burke, 1941), one is able to interpret their worldview.

Based on this brief review of the relation between language, action, and worldview, coding for *action verbs* to identify the presented elements in this artifact can be considered a logical first step for cluster analysis. For the purpose of this study, the presented elements were selected on the basis of *frequency*. A term that is used over and over again by a rhetor is likely to be a key term in that person's thought and rhetoric, so if one term frequently appears in the artifact that term probably should be selected as one of the rhetor's key terms (Foss, 2004).

After the key terms—the action verbs in this case—were identified, the clusters around those key terms were charted. This process involves close examination of the artifact to identify each occurrence of each key term, and identification of the terms that cluster around each key term. There are several ways in which terms may cluster around key terms; in this study, *proximity*, or nearness to the key action verb was the primary criterion that aided choice of terms that clustered around the key terms. Once the key terms and clusters around them were identified, I embarked on finding patterns in the linkages discovered in the charting of the clusters as a way of interpreting the worldview constructed manifest in my artifact. At this stage, to help find patterns in the clusters identified I turned to Burke's *dramatism*.

Burke and dramatism. Burke's notion of dramatism (1966) entails two basic assumptions: (a) language use constitutes action, not motion; and (b) humans develop and present messages in the same way a play is presented. In other words, humans use rhetoric to

constitute and present a particular view of their situation, and according to Burke (1945), as rhetors describe their situations they do so using certain basic elements of a drama:

> You must have some word that names the act (names what took place, in thought or deed)…also you must indicate what person or kind of person (agent) performed the act, [and] what means or instruments he used (agency). (p. xv)

These terms are used as principles for describing a symbolic act. Thus, with dramatism as basis, I identified the *major agents*, the *major agencies*, and the *major* and *minor issues and acts* manifest in each of the three sections[6]—*MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament*. These, in turn, formed the framework that constituted the ideology.

From clusters to ideology. According to Foss (2004), there are some typical components of an ideology, each of which functions to organize a number of beliefs. "Answering the questions about each provides one with a comprehensive view of the ideology in an artifact" (p. 244):

- *Membership*—Who are we? Where are we from? What do we like? Who belongs to us? Who can become a member of our group?

- *Activities*—What do we do? What is expected of us? Why are we here?

- *Goals*—Why do we do this? What do we want to realize?

- *Values/norms*—What are our main values? How do we evaluate ourselves and others? What should (not) be done?

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[6] Scene and purpose are two other elements Burke emphasizes, along with act, agent, and agency. However, they were not individually identified in this study. This is so because, for all the symbolic acts I hold Ikhwanweb as the *scene*. And, one of the aims of this study is to get to *purpose* by pulling out the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's ideology as manifest in its rhetoric in Ikhwanweb.

- *Position and group-relations—*What is our social position? Who are our enemies or opponents? Who is like us, and who is different?

- *Resources—*What are the essential social resources that our group has or needs to have?

For the purpose of articulating the ideology manifest in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's English-language rhetoric in Ikhwanweb, I used Foss's aforementioned components loosely as my framework.

Foss (2004) states that as a result of articulation of the ideology embodied in the artifact, as interpreted and claimed by the critic, it becomes possible to answer certain questions about the artifact as well as to identify the functions the ideology may serve—this forms the fourth and last step of an ideological analysis. Some of these questions are: What does the artifact ask the audience to believe and feel about an issue, concept, or phenomenon? What arguments are being made in the artifact and for what purpose? What are the particular characteristics, roles, actions, or ways of seeing being commended, and which are being negated in the artifact? What general conceptions of good and bad are suggested? What does the artifact suggest is unacceptable, negative, undesirable, marginal, or insignificant? The four steps elaborated above ensured the addressing and answering of RQ 1 of this study.

In order to answer RQ 2, I paid attention to certain dimensions of the rhetoric, such as content and style, which according to van Dijk (1998) are likely to facilitate acceptance of an ideology by an audience. In terms of content, as Foss (2004) states, in presenting a set of beliefs about an issue rhetors cannot include everything they know about it, and therefore

choose to focus on some things leaving out others. Van Dijk (1998) in a similar vein argues that speakers/writers make selections, and it is this selection that is liable to multiple forms of ideological control. Decisions about what content to highlight and feature, and what to suppress tend to be made according to these principles, wherein the rhetor of the artifact becomes *Us* and the wider public *Them*:[7] (a) express/emphasize information that is positive about Us; (b) express/emphasize information that is negative about Them; (c) suppress information that is positive about Them; and (d) suppress information that is negative about Us. These principles constitute what van Dijk (1998) calls the *ideological square*, and this plays a role in the broader contextual strategy of positive self-presentation or face-keeping and its outgroup corollary, negative other-presentation.

There are a number of ways, such as major topics discussed, level of detail, and implicitness or explicitness through which artifacts can emphasize and de-emphasize information according to the aforementioned principles (Foss, 2004). The major topics discussed or referenced suggest what is most relevant or important for the rhetor. Artifacts also can emphasize and de-emphasize information in the level of detail they provide about a situation; for instance, they can provide a great deal of detail even if irrelevant if the details provide negative information about outgroups or reflect positively on the ingroup. Conversely, details may be more vague when the information being discussed portrays the ingroup negatively and outgroup positively. Implicitness and explicitness may be used in a similar fashion, such as negative properties of an outgroup may be made explicit, whereas their positive properties are likely to remain implicit in an artifact's ideology.

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[7] In an attempt to prevent generalizations, it might be worth conceptualizing *Us* and *Them* as two broad categories which contain within themselves several layers—who belong to Us and to what degree, and who belong to Them and to what degree.

As with content, style or form also can be used to signal ideological beliefs (Foss, 2004). Active or passive voice, which can show individuals either as agents or objects of action, respectively, is one way. Word order is another stylistic mechanism through which information can be placed in a more or a less prominent position. Also, while expressing concepts, outgroups usually are described in ideologies in neutral or negative terms and ingroups in neutral or positive terms. Other aspects of style include repetition of ideas thus ensuring emphasis, and use of figures of speech such as metaphors, rhyme, alliteration, euphemism, and understatement.

The data analysis techniques detailed above steered this study towards addressing the research questions, thereby enabling commentary on the monolithic treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood by Western agents, the potential of the Internet as a tool for counterpublic expression, and the role Islamist organizations might (or might not) play in strengthening civil society. In the following chapter I elucidate the details of analysis, and summarize the findings of each section analyzed.

Chapter V: A Worldview in the *Details*

The primary focus of this study is to explore and understand the rhetoric of a counterpublic—the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood—as featured in its official English-language website www.ikhwanweb.com, during the final years of the Mubarak regime in Egypt. This goal is accomplished through a rhetorical analysis of archival material in the website. In this chapter I present a detailed outline of the several steps involved in the process of analysis, and summarize the findings and symbolic dramas manifest in each section analyzed, namely, *MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament*. In the next chapter I answer the research questions of this study; in other words, I take the leap from the details to the big picture.

As elaborated in Chapter 4, I used cluster analysis to identify the presented or key elements, and the suggested elements, which led to the identification of assumptions contributing to the ideology present in the artifact (Foss & Kanengieter, 1992; Kanengieter, 1990). Cluster analysis involves three basic tasks: (a) identifying key terms; (b) charting the terms that cluster around the key terms; and (c) discovering an explanation for the artifact that entails unearthing the ideology manifest. This chapter will detail the first two tasks, and present the third task partially. That is, after identifying the key terms and the clusters with Burke's dramatism as basis I interpreted the symbolic dramas in each of the three sections, which in turn aided in constituting the ideology; in this chapter I present details of the symbolic dramas, and elaborate on the ideology in Chapter 6.

To unearth the worldview present in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's English-language rhetoric in their official English website, written texts posted and credited to Ikhwanweb—either authored by Egyptian Brotherhood members, or contributed by

independent individuals, groups, and organizations and bylined by the Egyptian

Brotherhood—were chosen. Specifically, I selected texts from three different sections

featured in Ikhwanweb: *Muslim Brotherhood versus Al-Qaeda*, *Muslim Brotherhood and the West*, and *Parliament*. I have positioned the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a

counterpublic to militant fundamentalist organizations, Western agents, and the Hosni

Mubarak regime; thus these three sections feature texts that are most representative of the

Egyptian Brotherhood's counterpublic dynamics.

Task I

To identify the key symbols or presented elements of the artifact I coded action verbs,

and these were selected on the basis of frequency. In the section *Muslim Brotherhood versus Al-Qaeda*, which included 53 articles for analysis, the key elements or the action verbs

identified were: (a) say; (b) use; (c) have; (d) reject; (e) claim; (f) lead; (g) point out; (h)

confirm; and (i) condemn. Thus, 9 action verbs stood out as key elements based on frequency

of their occurrence.

In the section *Muslim Brotherhood and the West*, which included 42 articles for

analysis, the action verbs identified were: (a) hold; (b) say; (c) support; (d) have; (e) use; (f)

believe; (g) add; (h) make; (i) come; (j) allow; and (k) reject. These 11 verbs were selected

based on frequency of their occurrence in the 42 articles coded for analysis from this section.

In *Parliament*, the key elements were: (a) say; (b) call; (c) hold; (d) confirm; and (e) submit.

These 5 verbs were selected based on frequency of occurrence in the 85 articles coded for

analysis from this section.

Task II

After the key terms—the action verbs in this case—were identified, the clusters around those key terms were charted. This process involves close examination of the artifact to identify each occurrence of each key term and identification of the terms that cluster around each key term. There are several ways terms may cluster around key terms; in this study, proximity, or nearness to the key action verb was the primary criterion that aided choice of terms that clustered around the key terms. I demonstrate the clusters with quotes from Ikhwanweb below; these are representative of the quotes that function as supportive evidence for claims I make later in the chapter, and to answer the research questions.[8]

In the *Muslim Brotherhood versus Al-Qaeda* section, the terms that clustered around each key action verb were:

1) Say—Al-Zawahiri[9], Muslim Brotherhood, Resistance, Elections, Ikhwanweb, Jihad

Some examples:

    a. "…Hamdan, a Hamas leader and representative in Lebanon **said** to **Ikhwanweb** that **Al-Zawahiri's** statements and criticism to Hamas movement will never have any impact…" ("Al Zawahiri [*sic*] Should Reconsider Political Views on Hamas," 2007)

    b. "The **MB** rejects…claims that **Al-Zawahiri** has been affiliated to it, **said** an **MB** leader to **Ikhwanweb**." ("Ayman Al-Zawahiri No MB Member: Leader," 2007)

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[8] In view of the fact that *proximity* was the criterion behind choice of terms that clustered around key terms, the examples presented include quotes that: (a) either feature only the terms clustering around the key term based on proximity; or (b) feature both the key term and terms clustering around it.

[9] Ayman Al-Zawahiri became the leader of Al-Qaeda after Osama bin Laden's death. During bin Laden's leadership, Zawahiri was often described as a *lieutenant* to the former, though bin Laden's chosen biographer has called Zawahiri the *real brains* of Al-Qaeda (Baldauf, 2001).

c. "…**MB said** in a statement to **Ikhwanweb** to push the peace process…" (Shehata, 2007)

d. "A lot has been **said** and published lately about the **Muslim Brotherhood**…" ("The Debate About the Moderate Muslim Brotherhood Continues," 2007)

e. "The **Jihad** group[10] declared days ago completing its juristic reviews over the repelling violence and not using it as a means to change rule in Egypt." (Ismail, 2007)

f. "…Moderate **Muslim Brotherhood**…" (Salam, 2007)

2) Use—Oppression, Muslim Brotherhood, Violence

Some examples:

a. "…Israeli occupation and **using violence** indiscriminately…" (Shehata, 2007)

b. "… [Egyptian] regime may think of **using oppression** as a counterforce…" (Ismail, 2007)

c. "…destroying properties, something the **MB** fully rejects." (Shehata, 2007)

d. **"MB** is shattered by Pakistani government's **oppressive** actions against the political opposition." ("MB Condemned the Heinous Crime Which Terrorized Pakistan Today," 2007)

e. "…justifying their [Al-Qaeda] **oppression** and their **use** of force…" ("Habib Denounces Al-Zawahri's [*sic*] Criticism of the Judges," 2006)

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[10] The Egyptian Islamic Jihad, or the Jihad Group, is an Egyptian Islamist group active since the late 1970s. As an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, it is under worldwide embargo by the United Nations (UN Security Council Committee, 2007); since the early 1990s the Jihad Group has been led by Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

f. "…Jihad will not be **used** as a counterforce against the Muslim Brotherhood…" (Ismail, 2007)

3) Have—Representative/s, Peaceful, Contact/s

Some examples:

a. "…Osama Hamdan, a Hamas leader and **representative** in Lebanon…" ("Hamas Dismisses Zawahiri's Criticism," 2007)

b. "…to **have contacts** with people…" (Raouf, 2008)

c. "…we [MB] still **have** our means for a peaceful change…" ("Habib: MB Adopts Democracy, Rejects Revolutions," 2007)

d. "MB representatives are credible and **have** the right **contacts**…" (Raouf, 2008)

e. "…there are no **contacts** between the Al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood…" (Abbadi, 2008)

f. "…Jihad movement will emerge again but in a **peaceful** method…" (Ismail, Ikhwanweb, 2007)

4) Reject—Hamas, Ideology, Occupation, Islam, Constitutional

Some examples:

a. "**Islam** bans that resisters deviate from the tenets of righteous Shari'a to adopt methods which are totally **rejected** by **Islam**." ("MB Demand Taliban Release Korean Hostages," 2007)

b. "…actions which are totally **rejected** by **Islam**." ("MB Demand Taliban Release Korean Hostages," 2007)

c. "…adopt right tenets of **Islam** and **reject** violence…" (Abbadi, 2007)

d. "Al-Zawahiri urges Hamas **reject** elections." ("Hamdan: Hamas and Al Qaeda

[*sic*] are Incompatible," 2006)

e. "…Israeli **occupation**[11] and using violence indiscriminately…" (Shehata, 2007)

f. "…[Al-Masri] claimed that MB cooperates with **occupation** forces…" (Abbadi,

2007)

5) Claim—Movement, Islam/Islamic, Al-Qaeda

Some examples:

a. "…frustration that hit **Al-Qaeda** network after it has been rejected…" (Abbadi,

2007)

b. "What kind of jihad has the **Al-Qaeda** network **claimed** to have done?" (Abbadi,

2007)

c. "…**Islam** prohibits military attacks against civilians and hospitals." (Ikhwanweb

& News Agencies, 2010)

d. "Morsy urged western researchers to come closer to **Islamic movements**…"

("Morsi [*sic*]: MB Never Exercised Violence and Always condemned It, No

Relation with Al-Qaeda," 2007)

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[11] Certain territories occupied by Israel from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria are termed Israeli-occupied territories. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are two such territories, which are, however, also referred to as *Occupied Palestinian Territory*, and herein lies a major point of contention between Israel and Palestine. To elaborate, *Occupied Palestinian Territory* is the term used to refer to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (United Nations, 2008) and the Gaza Strip—territories which were captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, having formerly been controlled by Jordan and Egypt, respectively (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). The Israeli government, on the other hand, uses the term *Disputed Territories*, to indicate that some territories cannot be called occupied as no nation had clear rights to them when Israel acquired them in 1967 (Gold, 2002; Israel Ministry of foreign Affairs, 2001).

e. "… MB hardliners[12] to block the **movement's** evolution in a more democratic direction." (Elad-Altman, 2007)

f. "Prominent **Islamic** scholar al-Qaradawi [*sic*] denounced the recent violent attacks…" ("Qaradawi: Islam is a Religion of Tolerance, Patience, Forbearance and Peace," 2010)

6) Lead—Factor/s, Palestine/Palestinian, Extremism

Some examples:

a. "…all motives and **factors** that have **led** to **extremism** will come to an end…" (Solaiman, 2007)

b. "…authorizing the **Palestinian** Liberation Organization[13]…" ("Abu Marzouk: Hamas Rejects Al Zawahri [*sic*] Statements," 2006)

c. "…[the Zionist enemy[14]] seeks to **lead** slyly and maliciously the **Palestinian** people…" ("Abu Marzouk: Hamas Rejects Al Zawahri [*sic*] Statements," 2006)

d. "Lacking a solution from the **Palestinian** powers for the current crisis…" (Shehata, 2007)

e. "…confirming that they [juristic reviews] **lead** to giving a halt to **extremism**…" (Ismail, 2007)

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[12] In politics, a position that is usually extremist and uncompromising.

[13] The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a political and paramilitary organization founded in 1964. It is recognized as the only legitimate representative of the people of Palestine by over 100 states with which it holds diplomatic relations (Al-Madfai, 1993). The PLO was considered by the United States and Israel to be a terrorist organization until the Madrid Conference in 1991. In 1993, the PLO rejected *terrorism and violence*; in response, Israel officially recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people (Murphy, 1993). In 2004, the United States Congress re-declared the PLO to be a terrorist organization (Legal Information Institute).

[14] Zionism is a Jewish political movement that basically has supported the self-determination of the Jewish people in a sovereign Jewish national homeland (Laqueur, 2003). Since the establishment of the State of Israel this movement advocates on behalf of the Jewish state and addresses threats to its existence.

f. "…several factors that **lead** to violence…" (Solaiman, 2007)

7) Point out—Marzouk, Morsy, Enemy, Al-Sameraie

Some examples:

a. "Abu **Marzouk pointed out** that the operation Wasted Illusion took place under Hamas government." ("Abu Marzouk: Hamas Rejects Al Zawahri [*sic*] Statements," 2006)

b. "**Morsi** [*sic*] **pointed out** that peaceful change does not happen overnight…" ("MB Leaders: We Will Maintain Our Peaceful Reformist Methods," 2007)

c. "…Al-Qaeda's method is based on the absolute **enemy**…" ("MB Leaders: We Will Maintain Our Peaceful Reformist Methods," 2007)

d. "**Al-Sameraie pointed out** that Al-Qaeda network in Iraq attacked all resistance factions…" (Abbadi, 2007)

e. "**Al-Sameraie pointed out** that Al-Qaeda network in Iraq has a foreign agenda…" (Abbadi, 2007)

f. "**Morsi** [*sic*] **pointed out** that the violent incidents allegedly committed by the MB, are separate and individual incidents…" ("Morsi [*sic*]: MB Never Exercised Violence and Always Condemned It, No Relation with Al-Qaeda," 2007)

8) Confirm—Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hamdan

Some examples:

a. "**Hamdan confirmed** that **Hamas** rejects Al-Qaeda…" ("Hamas Rejects Al Qaeda [*sic*], Rebuts Abbas Claims," 2007)

b. "…**Hamas** ideology is miles away from the ideology of Al-Qaeda…" ("Hamas Dismisses Zawahiri's Criticism," 2007)

c. "**Hamdan confirmed** Al-Zawahiri's continuous attack against **Hamas**…"

("Hamas Rejects Al Qaeda [*sic*], Rebuts Abbas Claims," 2007)

d. "The **MB** strongly **confirms** this criminal act…" ("Muslim Brotherhood

Condemns Jordan Hotel Bombings," 2005)

e. "The **MB confirm** their refusal and strongly condemn all such criminal acts."

("Muslim Brotherhood Condemns Jordan Hotel Bombings," 2005)

f. "The **MB** and others [not clearly specified] demanded a transparent trial…"

("Morsi [*sic*]: 9/11 a Calamity, Not Only for U.S. [*sic*]," 2007)

9) Condemn—Strongly, Denounce, Muslim Brotherhood, Violent/ce, Islam/Islamic

Some examples:

a. "**MB strongly condemns** these heinous attacks…" ("MB Strongly Condemns

Attack on Christians in Baghdad," 2010)

b. "The **MB condemns** the massacre of tourists in Cairo." ("Muslim Brotherhood

Condemns Attack on Tourists in Cairo," 2005)

c. "The **MB strongly condemns** the criminal and savage attack…" ("Muslim

Brotherhood Condemns Jordan Hotel Bombings," 2005)

d. "…[MB] **strongly condemn** all such criminal acts." ("Muslim Brotherhood

Condemns Jordan Hotel Bombings," 2005)

e. "…[MB] **denounce** and **condemn** the extremist and **violent** religious trends…"

(Radwan, 2008)

f. "…establishing of a world-wide **Islamic** Caliphate[15]…" ("Workshop in Cairo

Discusses Al-qaeda's [*sic*] Future," 2009)

In the *Muslim Brotherhood and the West* section, the terms that clustered around each

key action verb were:

1) Hold—Dialogue, Government, West/Western

Some examples:

a. "… MB's attitude towards **holding** a **dialogue** with the **West**…" (Abbadi, 2007)

b. "… MB does not refuse to **hold dialogue** with the **West**…" (Abbadi, 2007)

c. "… several **Western** diplomats had **held** talks on several occasions with Egyptian

Parliament members of the MB…" ("El-Shater: We Do Not Promote an Anti-

Western Agenda," 2006)

d. "…UK **government** to **hold** vis-à-vis **dialogues** with Hamas…" (Mansour, 2007)

e. "…Hamas is ready to **hold** any **dialogue** with the **West**…" (Mansour, 2007)

f. "…US **government holds** internal discussions…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

2) Say—Islamists, Modernization, Muslims, Islam/Islamic

Some examples:

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[15] Caliphate, or dominion of a *caliph* (successor, in this context, that of the Prophet Muhammad), refers to the first system of government established in Islam; this also represents the political unity of the Muslim *ummah* (nation). In theory, it is a constitutional republic (Lecker, 2008), which in simplistic terms means that the head of state, or the Caliph, and other officials are representatives of the people, and must govern according to an existing constitutional law that limits the government's power over citizens. This kind of society was initially led by Muhammad's disciples, specifically the first four caliphs, to continue the political system the Prophet established known as the *rashidun caliphate*. It represented the political unity, not the theological unity of Muslims, as theology was a personal matter. According to Voll (2007), the caliphate is considered to be the fundamental political concept of Sunni Islam.

a. "**Islam**, as Al Banna [*sic*] **says**, is a comprehensive system…" ("Habib: MB Adopts Democracy; Rejects Revolutions," 2006)

b. "…it is enough to **say** that **Islamists** and the West…" (Al-Katatny, 2007)

c. "…an **Islamic** source of authority…" (Ramadan, 2007)

d. "…Sadek Shaban [a Tunisian academic] (he was quoted as **saying** all **Islamists** deserve prison…" (Said, 2006)

e. "This is to **say**, the material under **modernization** remains…" (Al-Amri, 2006)

f. "… **said** [Jean-Louis Tauran, the Roman Catholic Cardinal] that **Muslims** do not accept to deeply discuss the Qur'an…" ("Aboul Fotouh: Interfaith Dialogue Should Handle Moral, Humanitarian Issues, Not Creed Issues," 2007)

3) Support—Brotherhood, West/Western, Government, Democracy, Palestinian, Fatah[16], Regime, Israel/Israelis

Some examples:

a. "…we [US Embassy in Cairo] **support** peace between the **Israelis** and the **Palestinians**…" ("Cairo: MB and US Embassy Deny Dialogue," 2007)

b. "…while they [Western governments] continue to **support regimes** that suppress…" (Ismail, 2008)

c. "This **support** for authoritarian **regimes** is destructive…" (Al-Katatny, 2007)

d. "…rejection to the policy of **supporting** one **Palestinian** party against another…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

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[16] Fatah is a major Palestinian political party and the largest faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, a multi-party confederation. Its main goal, as stated in Article 12 of the official 1965 Fatah constitution, is the "complete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military and cultural existence."

e. "…US should **support** any **government** democratically elected." (Mansour &

Assem, 2007)

f. "I [Nestor[17]] do not **support** US providing **Fatah** movement with weapons…"

(Mansour & Assem, 2007)

4) Have—Muslim Brotherhood, Rights, Security

Some examples:

a. "…[Egyptian] people **have** the genuine **right**…" ("Habib: MB Adopts

Democracy, Rejects Revolutions," 2008)

b. "They [Copts[18]] are citizens who **have** all the citizenship **rights**." (Habib, 2007)

c. "…and we [MB] **have** the **right** to reject that." (Ismail, 2008)

d. "**MB have** won a popular mandate after the last elections…" ("El-Shater: We Do

Not Promote an Anti Western Agenda," 2009)

e. "…**MB** do not **have** an ideological stance against the West…" (Al-Katatny, 2007)

f. "Western governments **have** been silent about the crime committed against

human **rights** and **security**." (Al-Katatny, 2007)

5) Use—Islam/Islamic, Hamas, Support

Some examples:

a. "…the file they [Egyptian authorities] wanted to **use** against the moderate **Islamic**

movement [MB]…" (Said, 2006)

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[17] Bruce Nestor visited Cairo in 2007 to monitor the military tribunal against top MB leaders.
[18] The Copts are native Egyptian Christians, and constitute the largest religious minority in the Middle East (Cole, 2008). As a religious minority, they are often subject to discrimination in modern Egypt, and attacks, usually by militant Islamic extremist groups.

b. "… [the military tribunal[19]] failed to prove that…money is ill gotten, **used** to **support** the Muslim Brotherhood group…" (Mansour, 2007)

c. "Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas… next legislative elections **using** the method of proportional representation[20]…unscrupulously targets defeating **Hamas**." (Mansour, 2007)

d. "…fringe extremist elements **using** their distortion of **Islam** as a pretext." (Frykberg, 2007)

e. "…UK government to open direct channels with the Muslim Brotherhood and **Hamas**…" (Mansour, 2007)

f. "…it is to the US interest to **support** democracy and human rights in Egypt." (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

6) Believe—Dialogue, Movement, Modernization, Islamist, US, Muslim Brotherhood

Some examples:

a. "…[the Tablighi[21]] **movement** that **believes** in spreading the Islamic mission…" (Said, 2006)

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[19] Egypt's military tribunals try civilian suspects in addition to military ones, and they have been harshly criticized by international human rights organizations for their quick verdicts, and lack of the provision for appeal. Several Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members have been tried by these courts, and convicted.

[20] This is an electoral system that seeks to create a representative body that reflects the overall distribution of public support for each political party. Majority systems effectively reward strong parties and penalize weak ones by providing the representation of a whole constituency to a single candidate who may have received fewer than half of the votes cast, but proportional representation ensures minority groups a measure of representation proportionate to their electoral support. According to Hill's (2011) opinion in *The New York Times*, in the Palestinian elections in 2006, Hamas won a majority of legislative seats as a result of the "winner take all" (para. 2) electoral system, which resulted in unrepresentative results. Thus, in the case of the forthcoming Egyptian elections, a polarizing outcome can be avoided through proportional representation, which would "ensure that the Muslim Brotherhood, former Mubarak supporters as well as the many secular constituencies in Tahrir Square would each get their fair share of representation" (para. 11).

b. "…the **US** administration **believes** the untrue allegations about the **MB**…"

("Essam El-Erian: Dialogue is a Foundation of Our Movement," 2007)

c. "…[MB] support **dialogue**, and **believe** in the necessity of openness…" (Al-Katatny, 2007)

d. "This **movement** [Salafist Jihad[22]] **believes** in Al-Qaeda ideas and adopts its ideology…" (Said, 2006)

e. "…Islam refuses that aspect of **modernization** which **believes** in the materialistic philosophy…" (Al-Amri, 2006)

f. "…[MB] do not **believe US** efforts for reform were sincere…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

7) Add—Dialogue, Muslim Brotherhood, US

Some examples:

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[21] Within Sunni Islamism there are two key currents of religious activism: the Tablighi movement, that took off in India in 1926, and the Salafiyya, which dates back to the 1880s, but has donned a new form hundred years later. In essence, both movements are often considered fundamentalist in terms of being backward-looking; and both are not wholly without political objectives, but they usually do not seek political power for themselves and reject party competition, elections, and so on, and concentrate on the religious mission of preaching and proselytizing (*al-da'wa*).

More specifically, the central feature of the organizationally cohesive and politically quietist Tablighi movement is to preserve the faith, cohesion, and identity of the Muslim population (usually in minority contexts) by offering elaborate definitions and explanations based on and legitimated by scripture. The Salafiyya movement, on the other hand, started as a modernist reform movement in the Middle East, to empower the Muslim world to rise to the challenge of the West. This reformist combination wore off following the First World War when the Salafiyya movement started moving towards an anti-Western direction. This involved a coming together of the Salafiyya movement and the Wahhabi doctrines epitomized by the Al-Saud dynasty in Arabia in the late 1920s; this has eventually resulted in the Salafiyya movement to be identified with the rigidly puritan fundamentalism of the Wahhabi tradition. In fact, today there is a significant strand of the Salafiyya movement, the Salafist Jihadi that includes individuals who have been radicalized, and have abandoned the non-violent activism of the da'wa (International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report No. 37, 2005).

[22] Salafist Jihadism is a school of thought of *Salafi* Muslims who support violent jihad; a Salafi is a follower of the pious predecessors, the *Salaf* (forefather) of the patristic period of early Islam (Moosa, 2005).

a. "...**adding** that the **MB** doesn't object to any **dialogue**..." (Abbady, 2007)

b. "...the **MB** group said, "**Dialogue** is a means for joint communication...""" ("Essam EL-Erian: Dialogue is a Foundation of Our Movement," 2007)

c. "El Erian [*sic*] **added** that the **US** administration has become a main factor..." ("Essam EL-Erian: Dialogue is a Foundation of Our Movement," 2007)

d. "Dr. Mohamed Habib, First Deputy Leader of the **MB**, **added** that there are no prospects of any **dialogue** with **US**..." ("Cairo: MB and US Embassy deny dialogue," 2007)

e. "Dr. Erian **added** that **dialogue** between **MB** and any foreign government has reached a deadlock..." ("Cairo: MB and US Embassy deny dialogue," 2007)

f. "...including European and **US** officials and academic powers..." (Abbady, 2008)

8) Make—Egyptian, Choice, Movement, Security, Coalition

Some examples:

a. "... this **movement** [MB] doesn't pose a challenge..." (Said, 2006)

b. "The popular **choice** if **made**, nobody could stop it." ("Habib: MB Adopts Democracy, Rejects Revolutions," 2007)

c. "...all refuse **making** a **coalition** with it [Al-Nahda (Renaissance) Movement[23]], for fear of it..." (Said, 2006)

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[23] The Al-Nahda Renaissance Party is an Islamist opposition political party in Tunisia. This party is believed to have been shaped by the thinking of Sayyid Qutb, the leading Islamic theologian of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Around the 1980s this party was beginning to be described as moderate Islamist, and recently, in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia on March 1, 2011, after the government of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali collapsed, Tunisia's interim government has granted the group permission to form a political party, something not possible during Ben Ali's presidency.

d. "…meet and **make coalitions** with it [the Left[24]] in the fight for freedom…" (Said, 2006)

e. "…**making** a **coalition** with the nationalist powers[25]…" ("Future of Political Islam," 2006)

f. "**Egyptian** President Hosni Mubarak conveniently use the Brotherhood as an excuse to prevent serious reform…" (Frykberg, 2007)

9) Come—Brotherhood, Power, West/Western, Islamists, Realization

Some examples:

a. "…have to **come** to realize that different views can be present in one single **Western** society." ("Katatny: Dialogue Between Islamists and the West a Necessity," 2006)

b. "…reject any person to undemocratically **come** to **power**…" ("Habib: MB Adopts Democracy, Rejects Revolutions," 2009)

c. "…should **Brotherhood come** to **power**," (Masrey, 2009)

d. "If **Brotherhood came** to **power**…" (Masrey, 2009)

e. "…**Islamists** will eventually **come** to **power**…" ("Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary Bloc Leader Calls for Dialogue with USG," 2006)

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[24] According to Said (2006), "there should be a methodic and clear differentiation between the radical opportunist Left which should be put in the same boat with the current authority and between a Left that kept away from authority and corrected its path, and it had heroic situations in support of people's issues first, and even with the Islamists, like the bloc fighters, the communist Labor Party and the Democratic Progressive Party or some independent, human rights and media activists" (para. 20).

[25] According to Said (2006), "all the frustrations that this movement represented across its different shapes for all elites and leaving it for the Unionist to represent the national movement inside and outside the country" (para. 21).

f. "…**Western** presence in the region will change if the **Islamists** were to **come** to **power**." ("Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary Bloc Leader Calls for Dialogue with USG," 2006)

10) Allow—Government, Regime

Some examples:

a. "…[MB] demanded the Egyptian **government** cancel the decree of Egyptian President Mubarak…" (Mansour, 2007)

b. "US **government allows** violations from the Egyptian **government**…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

c. "US **government's** claimed reform efforts…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

d. "…[US government] **allow** a friendly **regime** to maintain power." (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

e. "…US **government** is ready to **allow** human rights violations…" ("Nestor: Western Governments Don't back Trials Against MB Leaders," 2007)

f. "…political **regime** that **allows** discussions…" (Mansour & Assem, 2007)

11) Reject—Form

Some examples:

a. "…we [MB] frankly **reject** in **form** and content." ("Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy in Egypt," 2007)

b. "…[MB] **rejects** all **forms** of American control…" ("The Political Dialogue of the Moslem [*sic*] Brotherhood," 2005)

c. "The MB is against all **forms** of foreign interference and domination." ("Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy in Egypt," 2007)

In the *Parliament* section, the terms that clustered around each key action verb were:

1) Say—Statement/s, Anti-terrorism, Rights, Delegation

Some examples:

a. "Dr. Boutros Ghali[26] **said**, in press **statements** held on Sunday…" ("MB Bloc Calls for Activating Society's Role to Stop Torture," 2007)

b. "Al Husseini [*sic*] **said** in his **statement** that Egypt is seeking to provide Israeli territories…" (Abdullah, 2007)

c. "…Sobhi Saleh **said** that the **anti-terrorism**[27] draft bill confirms…" (Al-Abbadi, 2007)

d. "In a **statement** to Ikhwanweb, Hussein Ibrahim **said**…" ("Brotherhood MPs [Members of Parliament] Criticize new Anti-Terrorism Law," 2007)

e. "…MB and human **rights** organizations staunchly opposed it [anti-terrorism amendments]." ("Brotherhood MPs Criticize new Anti-Terrorism Law," 2007)

f. "…mercy, justice, equity, human **rights** as well as respect and honoring pledges and treaties…" ("Ikhwan MPs [*sic*] Delegation Meets with UN Representative," 2006)

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[26] As a result of the 2011 Egyptian protests, Dr. Boutros Ghali was replaced by Samir Radwan as Minister of Finance. Just before Hosni Mubarak resigned on February 11, 2011, Dr. Ghali fled to Lebanon with his wife. Egypt's Prosecutor General called for Boutros Ghali's arrest for charges that include corruption.

[27] President Hosni Mubarak proposed amendments to 34 articles of the Egyptian Constitution in late December 2006, claiming it was an important step toward democratization, and these amendments were passed by March 2007. However, opposition and civil society activists complained that these amendments "infringe dangerously on human rights protections and close off possibilities for peaceful political activity, particularly by the Muslim Brotherhood" (Brown & Dunne, 2007, p. 1). In 2007, the Mubarak regime started drafting an anti-terrorism law based on the new constitutional amendments. It was feared that if this law comes to pass, it would lead to violation of public freedoms and the regime would tighten the security grip on its critics, especially Islamists, under the ruse of combating terrorism.

2) Call—Egyptian, Amendment/s, Political, Abolish, Muslim Brotherhood

Some examples:

a. "…**MB** Parliamentary bloc **called** on the **Egyptian** government to do more efforts for the Palestinian cause…" (Abdullah, 2007)

b. "These **amendments** [amendment to article 86 in 1992] were **called** at that time anti-terrorism **amendments**." ("Brotherhood MPs Criticize new Anti-Terrorism Law," 2007)

c. "…the current charters are insufficient and Articles require major **amendments** in order to achieve the law's [the law of organ transplants[28]] goals." ("Organ Transport Law Debate Continues," 2010)

d. "…El Baradei[29] [*sic*] has **called** on all **political** movements and trends, intellectuals and scholars, to converge with him." ("Egypt's Representatives Meet with El Baradei [*sic*]," 2009)

e. "It [MB], moreover, **calls** on the **abolishment** of the Parties Court[30]." ("New Draft Law for Parties, a New Fruit of Brotherhood-Front Cooperation," 2005)

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[28] Ikhwanweb, February-March, 2010: It is debated by a number of Egyptian MPs, including MB MPs that the new draft law—the Law of Organ Transplants—supported in principle by the Egyptian Parliament, would open the door for human trafficking in Egypt; it will turn the Egyptian people into human spare parts, which violate the resolutions of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. The MPs, in their arguments against the new law, called on the end of permitting the donation of organs from Egyptians to non-relatives and foreigners, and demanded ending the penalty law in order to prevent this from happening. According to Saad el-Katatni (2010), head of the Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary bloc, it is imperative and a social necessity to pass a law that will regulate organ transplants, mainly because Egypt has become the third ranking country in the world in organ trafficking.

[29] Mohamed El-Baradei is an Egyptian law scholar and diplomat, who was the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). El-Baradei and the IAEA were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. He was an important figure in the 2011 Egyptian protests, which culminated in the resignation of Hosni Mubarak. El-Baradei has emerged as the leading voice of political reform and a challenger for Egypt's (2011) presidency.

g. "…**calling** for **abolishing** the emergency law[31] and unconditional freedom of creating **political** parties…" ("Ikhwan MPs [*sic*] Delegation Meets with UN Representative," 2006)

3) Hold—Muslim Brotherhood MP/Parliamentary Bloc, Amendment/s, Egyptian, Sit-in/s, Schedule/d, Conference/s

Some examples:

a. "**MB Parliamentary bloc held** on Thursday afternoon a press **conference**…" ("2 Muslim Brotherhood MPs Released on Bail," 2007)

b. "A discussion on the state's general budget was **held** at **MB MP** Al-Shoura's office." ("Ruling NDP's Policy Sink Egypt Into the Abyss," 2010)

c. "…**MB MPs held** a **sit-in** in the **Egyptian** parliament…" (Ben Gharbia, 2007)

d. "…there is no **MB MP** in the meeting **scheduled** to be **held** today…" ("Muslim Brotherhood MP's Complain," 2008)

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[30] President Anwar Sadat created the Political Parties Committee (PPC) after the implementation of the multi-party system in Egypt to both regulate party activities and license new parties within the guidelines of Law 40 (Maye, 2004). Law 40 empowers a committee chaired by the National Democratic Party (NDP), formed by President Sadat in 1978, to suspend other parties' activities *in the national interest* (Human Rights Watch, 2009). The PPC continued in form and purpose under President Hosni Mubarak; only two parties were approved by the PPC under the Mubarak presidency (BBC News, 2007; Maye, 2004). Although it is possible to appeal a PPC decision to the Political Parties Court, which has proved to be more independent, overturning sometimes the former's decisions and allowing some parties to see the light of day, it nevertheless in reality is only an irregular body composed of senior administrative court judges, and mostly regime loyalists. In this manner, the NDP has enjoyed uncontested power in state politics, usually considered a de facto single party with authoritarian characteristics inside an officially multi-party system, for over three decades.
[31] Emergency Law was first enacted in Egypt in 1958, and has remained in effect since 1967, except for an 18-month break in 1980. It has been continuously extended every three years since 1981 under Hosni Mubarak. Quintessentially, under the law, police powers are increased, constitutional rights are suspended, and censorship is legalized. Under state of Emergency, the Egyptian government has imprisoned individuals without any stated reason, and kept them in prison for uncertain periods without trials; it has circumscribed non-governmental political activity and street demonstrations at whim, and so on. Pro-democracy advocates have argued that the state of Emergency has been used by the Egyptian regime to violate individuals' democratic rights.

e. "**MB MPs**, independents, Karama Party[32] **held** a press **conference** in which they declared boycotting House sessions and rejecting President Mubarak's proposed constitutional **amendments**." (Mahmoud, 2007)

f. "**MB MPs** and other political and national powers **held** many **conferences** and seminars all over Egypt…" (Mahmoud, 2007)

4) Confirm—Bill, Egypt, MB MP/Parliamentary Bloc, Regime

Some examples:

a. "The sources **confirmed** that the **bill** [anti-terrorism bill] will be presented at the end of the current parliamentary round…" (Abbadi, 2007)

b. "…**bill confirms** that the Egyptian **regime** is planning to prevent any voice opposing it." (Abbadi, 2007)

c. "…**MB Parliamentary bloc confirms** its support to the journalists…" ("MB Parliamentary Bloc Backs Egyptian Journalists, Praises Role Against Regime's Tyranny," 2007)

d. "The **MB Parliamentary bloc confirmed** that it does not object to visiting US Congress and contacting it." ("MB House Bloc: OK to Visiting US Congress," 2007)

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[32] The Dignity (Al-Karama) Party is a left-leaning Nasserist Party, which was founded by Hamdeen Sabahi in 1996. Sabahi is a former parliamentary representative of the Arab Democratic Nasserist Party, who had left the group over disagreements with its leader. The Dignity Party has socialist tendencies and calls for political pluralism. The Party has condemned Mubarak's regime for its authoritarian ways, specifically, monopolizing political power and restricting opposition activities. The Party has petitioned the Political Parties Committee several times for legal party status, but with no success. However, in the 2000 parliamentary elections Sabahi ran as an independent candidate, and won a seat.

e. "The **MB Parliamentary bloc confirms** to place the **bill** [Parties Law bill[33]] under scrutiny to evaluate its feasibility." ("New Draft Law for Parties, a New Fruit of Brotherhood-Front Cooperation," 2005)

f. "The **MB Parliamentary bloc** issued a statement rejecting the judiciary **bill**[34] proposed by the government." ("MB Parliamentary Bloc Rejects Gov't's Proposed Judiciary Bill," 2006)

5) Submit—MB MP/Parliamentary Bloc, Urgent, Government

Some examples:

a. "…they [MB MP] **submitted** dozens of **urgent** interpellations and written questions…" ("MB Bloc Calls for Activating Society's Role to Stop Torture," 2007)

b. "…Egyptian **government's** failure in getting rid of mines left after the World War…" (Omar, 2009)

c. "…an **urgent** statement **submitted** to the Egyptian Prime Minister by **MB MP**…" (Al-Masry, 2007)

d. " 3 parliamentary questions have been **submitted** by members of the **MB Parliamentary bloc** revealing that the **government** has wasted approximately 15

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[33] In 2005, a draft law pertaining to Parties Law was prepared by the president of the Unified National Front for Change, Yahya el-Gamel, also a Professor of Constitutions at Cairo University. This bill designed a formula for launching and licensing parties in a way that would grant release from the PPC and the government's control; it also called for abolishing the Parties Court.

[34] In 2006, the Egyptian government proposed a judiciary bill that would leave all significant judiciary posts under the control of the Executive Authority, and which would give it the absolute right to nominate or unseat judges. It would give the Executive Authority the right to refer a judge to the Disciplinary Council, in addition to appointing the head of the Supreme Judiciary Council, the Attorney General, and the Minister of Justice.

billion pounds…" ("Questioning by MB MPs Reveal Waste of L.E15 Billion!", 2010)

e. "All MPs **submitted** nine **urgent** statements in the Parliament to the Prime Minister…" ("Date Scheduled to Discuss the Interrogations by MB MPs in Parliament," 2010)

f. "…**MB MP submitted** an **urgent** statement to the Prime Minister regarding the **government's** construction of an iron wall on our borders with the Palestinians." (Al-Masry, 2009)

Tasks I and II constitute the steps that led to the last and final task of this study. Task III was instrumental in unpacking the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideology, as well as bringing forth the rhetorical strategies supporting the ideology. In the remainder of this chapter I analyze the clusters from all three sections, and present the symbolic dramas that manifest following analysis; this I term Task IIIA. In the following chapter, with the symbolic dramas as premise, I interpret the Egyptian Brotherhood's ideology and answer the research questions of this study; this forms Task IIIB.

Task III

Task III involves identifying the suggested elements, which serve as basis for ideological tenets, as well as unearthing the rhetorical strategies that support the ideology. In that endeavor, I started with Task IIIA, which included analyzing the clusters and identifying the symbolic dramas manifest therein. The symbolic dramas entailed the *major agents*, the *major agencies*, and the *major* and *minor issues and acts* manifest in each of the three sections—*MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament*. These are presented: (a)

as a table first; (b) elaborated and discussed thereafter[35]; and (c) summarized at the end of

each section.

Table 1. *From Clusters to Symbolic Categories/Dramas*

	MB vs. Al-Qaeda	MB and the West	Parliament
Major agents	MB MB associates Hamas Hamas associates Al-Zawahiri, senior Al-Qaeda leader Islam Some generalized agents	MB Some Western agents The West Islamists Some generalized agents	MB MB Parliamentary bloc MB MPs in general, and specific MB MPs US Congress delegation Some generalized agents
Major agencies	Jihad Violence *(None explicitly attributed to any agent)*	Dialogues	Statements, specifically press statements
Major issues and acts	Relation between MB and Al-Qaeda/Al-Zawahiri *(Explicitly Oppositional)* Relation between Hamas and Al-Qaeda/Al-Zawahiri *(Explicitly Oppositional)* General stance towards Al-Qaeda *(Negative)* Stance towards the Palestine-Israel Conflict *(Pro Palestinian people; Anti Israel, Zionists, and Fatah)* MB stance towards violence and peace *(Violence must be based on context; support peace)* Hamas stance towards violence and peace *(Violence must be based on context; for rational resistance, which remains undefined)* MB stance on elections and constitutional means *(Positive)*	Relationship between MB and Western agents *(Inconsistent and ambiguous)* MB stance on dialogue with Western agents *(Inconsistent and ambiguous)* MB stand on foreign interference *(Explicitly oppositional)* General stance towards Western agents *(Inconsistent)* Stance towards Hamas *(Unconditional support)* Stance on modernization *(Accept on Islamic terms)* Relationship between MB and the Egyptian regime *(Tension and opposition; MB's clout inconsistent)* Relationship between Western agents and authoritarian regimes *(Supportive and friendly)*	Portrayal of the Egyptian regime *(Negative)* Relationship between MB MPs/ MB Parliamentary bloc and Egyptian regime *(Oppositional; MB bloc and MPs are active and exercise influence)* Issue of bills, laws, and amendments *(Significant tools for political reform, which is platform for MB bloc's act of opposition towards regime)* Relationship and communication between Egyptian MPs, including MB MPs, and Western agents *(Ambiguous)*

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[35] All words, phrases, and statements cited from Ikhwanweb, as evidence for claims made, have been enclosed by double quotation marks.

Table 1. Continued

	MB vs. Al-Qaeda	MB and the West	Parliament
Major issues and acts	Portrayal of Islam and Islamic groups/movements *(Islam is righteous, rigid about Shari'a, and against violence; Islamic groups/movements are misunderstood and their stance on violence is ambiguous)*	Portrayal of Muslims *(Lack influence)*, Islam *(All-encompassing)*, and Islamists *(Ambiguous)*	
Minor issues and acts	Role of Hamas in Palestine *(Active, against occupation, support Palestinian people)* Portrayal of MB representatives *(Credible and right contacts)*	Israel and Palestine *(Opposition towards Israel, and support for democracy and people of Palestine)* The issue of rights *(Rights for all irrespective of religion or status)* The issue of security/security services *(Lacks elaboration and ambiguous)* The issue of choices *(Power of popular choice emphasized; violence not a choice)* The issue of coalitions *(No comprehensive picture; disjointed scenarios; informational)* The question of power *(Brotherhood and Islamists associated with political power; political power must be acquired through democratic means emphasized)*	Human rights and fundamental values *(Supportive)* Student protests *(Students carry clout)* Palestine *(MB bloc states regime's lack of support for Palestinian cause)* Miscellaneous *(Disjointed scenarios; informational)*

Muslim Brotherhood versus Al-Qaeda. Discussion and elaboration of the main findings (presented in Table 1) that emerge after analysis of the nine clusters in this section follows.

Major agents and agencies. The major agents identified in this section are the MB; MB associate Dr. Mohamed Morsy, a senior member of the MB's Executive Bureau; Hamas; Hamas associates Osama Hamdan, a Hamas leader and representative in Lebanon, and Dr. Moussa Abu Marzouk, deputy chief of the Hamas Political Bureau; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda after Osama bin Laden's death; Islam; and few generalized agents, namely, *army or a resistance group*, *others*, and *Islamic groups*. The predominant agencies in this section are jihad and violence; none of the agencies are attributed being used by any of the above agents.

Issues and acts. There are major and minor issues and acts, and these have been elaborated in this section. First I have discussed the major issues and acts, followed by the minor issues and acts, as outlined in Table 1.

Portrayal of relationship between the MB and Al-Qaeda, and Al-Zawahiri. A relationship of opposition is established between the MB and Al-Qaeda and the MB and Al-Zawahiri. The main point of difference is in ideology, although the specifics of the difference are not explicit. Ikhwanweb is the stated forum where this stance is presented. In addition, it is either the MB, or MB associates, who function as agents presenting and portraying this stance. The statements, "there are no contacts between the Al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood," "difference between MB's ideology and that of the Al-Qaeda network," "Al-Zawahiri was never a member of the Muslim Brotherhood," "the MB rejects…claims that Al-Zawahiri has been affiliated to it, said an MB leader to Ikhwanweb," are some examples that provide evidence for the aforementioned claims. The opposition is manifest in extensive use of negatives such as "never," "not the same," and "no contacts," performance of negative acts, such as rejection and defaming, and through pathos, like in the expression of

displeasure. In sum, the oppositional stance is portrayed clearly and directly, without any equivocation or ambiguity.

Portrayal of relationship between Hamas and Al-Qaeda, and Al-Zawahiri. Opposition is portrayed between Hamas and Al-Qaeda, and Hamas and Al-Zawahiri. The main points of difference are in praxis and ideology, specifically, in their stance towards elections and vision of resistance, respectively. Whereas Al-Qaeda is against elections, Hamas is for it; however, no specifics providing more details on the difference in ideology, and difference in vision of resistance comes forth. Ikhwanweb is the stated forum for the expression of this stance.

In addition, the agents who are active in presenting this stance are Hamas and its associates, like Hamdan. They make most comments and statements, and when they are not opposing Al-Qaeda, the acts performed are those of advising and counseling. In other words, Hamas and its associates are in control; whereas, Al-Qaeda and its associates, such as Al-Zawahiri, play a rather passive role. They are rarely present as agents, and when they are agents the acts performed are either negative, like "continuously attacking Hamas," or ones where they are urging or appealing.

The opposition is also manifest in the use of adjectives such as "huge" to intensify the opposition, or extensive use of negative terms and acts such as "never" and "denied any link," and finally, the portrayal of contradictions in statements such as "confirmed…rejects," "ideology…miles away," "vision of resistance…completely different," and "confirmed…continuous attacks." Thus, through the means described above that exhibit a confident and forceful directness, the portrayal of the oppositional stance lacks any ambiguity or equivocation.

General portrayal of and stance towards Al-Qaeda. The portrayal of Al-Qaeda in the Egyptian MB rhetoric is negative. It is associated with negative phenomena such as oppression and violence, and this is manifest in "justifying" "oppression" and "use of force." It is portrayed to have negative intent as manifest in "in Iraq…has foreign agenda," thereby also featuring ethos. The acts it is seen performing are negative, for instance, "attacked all resistance factions" and "criticized." However, the specifics of "all" of the resistance factions that were attacked and the nature of the foreign agenda remain unexplained.

The agent who embarks on many of these portrayals of Al-Qaeda is Al-Samaraie, a senior member of the Iraqi political system; the fact that a senior member makes these direct and negative portrayals add credibility to these claims. Finally, "Al-Qaeda's method is based on the absolute enemy" provides an insight into Al-Qaeda's method, but adds negativity by associating Al-Qaeda's method with the negative term "enemy." However, a clear definition and description of "absolute enemy" is not discussed.   In addition, at times Al-Qaeda is seen challenged and questioned, for instance with regards to its practice and conceptualization of jihad as seen in "What kind of jihad has the Al-Qaeda network claimed to have done?" Also, Al-Qaeda's image is portrayed as one that is compromised when it is presented as "rejected," "frustrated," and "hit." But here again the specifics of the nature of jihad, and the identity of the agent rejecting Al-Qaeda remain unknown.

The Palestine-Israel conflict. In the Palestine-Israel discourse, Israel and the Zionists are portrayed negatively. The Palestinian "powers" ironically are portrayed as helpless, and the Palestinian people are portrayed positively though gullible. To elaborate, Israel is associated with negative phenomena such as oppression and violence, as seen in use of the conjunction "and" to connect Israel with the same. Israel is also associated with negative acts

and adjectives, namely, Israel's use of "violence indiscriminately" and "dangerous" for global security. The agents who "point out" these nuances about Israel are often senior MB members, such as Morsy. Another specific tactic is use of Western agents as testimony to support the negative portrayal of Israel. For instance as manifest in "polls in Europe" suggest Israel is dangerous for global security; however, the details of the polls remain undisclosed. The use of negative qualifiers like "enemy" for Zionists, and the association of Zionists with negative instruments such as sly and malice for negative purposes, like duping and leading Palestinian people, portray the former as crafty and thus, negatively.

The use of adjectives like "legitimate" in "legitimate resistance" that is being carried out by the Palestinian people portray them positively, although, because they are getting influenced by the Zionist "enemy," they are gullible. In this "crisis," the Palestinian "powers" are seen as helpless due to "lack of any solution," calling into question how powerful these powers really are; the specifics of the crisis and the specific identity of these powers remain unknown.

The use of the qualifier "Islamic" for the Palestinian constitution directly characterizes the nature of the Palestinian constitution. Finally, although the portrayal of Israel is negative, the MB's stance towards Israel becomes ambiguous as a result of accusatory and direct statements such as "[Al-Masri] claimed that MB cooperates with occupation forces;" important to bear in mind is that the agent of this "claim" is an Al-Qaeda associate.

General stance towards violence and stance towards peace; the MB and Hamas's stance towards violence and peace. An overall stance against violence and support for peace and peaceful means is observed. An effort to contextualize use of, and define what violence

entails is manifest; though at some instances ambiguity is noticeable, which calls into question the stance on total rejection of violence and violent means. In the process of this portrayal discourse centering on the issues of violence and Israel, violence and Al-Qaeda, violence and jihad, violence and army and resistance groups, and extremism get featured.

For example, "ideology of violence and destruction" suggests that violence and destruction have their own ideological basis, and "several factors that lead to violence" points to the fact that no one factor or motive can be held solely responsible for propagating violence. The statement, "use of violence to change governments" expresses the possibility/fact of how violence can be/is used to "change governments," but "never be through violence, coups, and use of force," in the use of the negative "never," confidently suggests that "violence, coups, and use of force" are useless. However, in the last comment, for what purpose and in which context these become "useless" is not categorically specified. Therefore, even though these statements portray the effort at explaining what violence entails, and show an opposition towards its use, a complete rejection of violence in totality cannot be ascertained.

This lack of clarity is further noticed in "vocally denounce racial discrimination and terrorism" and "they [Islamic groups] would give up violence." The first comment makes clear that both "vocally" and in praxis, such as the act of "giving up," violence is opposed. However, the second statement insinuates that Islamic groups do use violence, and in future "would" give it up; the context of this action is missing and the future stance makes this statement speculative, thus making any accurate inference about the stance towards violence ambiguous.

As for Israel and Al-Qaeda, the statements "Israeli occupation and using violence indiscriminately" and "justifying their [Al-Qaeda] oppression and their use of force" associate both Israel and Al-Qaeda with oppression and violence unequivocally. In the first statement, use of the conjunction "and" to connect "Israeli occupation," and the qualifier "violence indiscriminately" point to the association. With regard to Al-Qaeda, its act of "justifying" "oppression" and "use of force" clearly associates it with oppression. Also, "there are some factors that might help Al-Qaeda to renew its vitality" suggests that at present Al-Qaeda is lacking vitality, but "some" factors are probable to renew it; the definition or description of "vitality" is not put in context here.

An effort is made at dissociating jihad from violence and associating it with peace, although these portrayals lack certainty. For example, "the Jihad group declared days ago completing its juristic reviews over the repelling violence and not using it as a means to change rule in Egypt" shows that an oppositional stance towards violence—which is qualified by the adjective "repelling"—has been adopted even by the Jihad Group, which, following its "juristic reviews" has publicly announced its decision to not use violence to change rule in Egypt. In other words, violence, frequently attributed to the Jihad Group, is being renounced in the context of rule change in Egypt. At the same time, "any way other than the method of jihad will only lead to loss and failure" insinuates that for success—an interpretation of which could be changing rule in Egypt—jihad is the way; but as seen in the case of the Jihad Group, violence need not be associated with jihad. Therefore, although a clear definition of what jihad means and entails cannot be put forth, support for jihad, opposition toward violence, and the possibility of the two being mutually exclusive can be assumed.

In addition, "Jihad movement will emerge again but in a peaceful method" shows support for a peaceful way, which will enable the Jihad movement to "emerge again." This statement also suggests that the Jihad movement has taken a back seat "again" for some reason, and the use of the conjunction "but" introduces an element of contrast (Algeo, 2006) insinuating that usually peaceful means are not used "but" this time will be to help the Jihad movement re-emerge. This new peaceful stance is perhaps an indicator of a new Jihad movement that will support peace. At the same time, the term "will" makes this hopeful statement a future-oriented, speculative claim.

In terms of army and resistance groups, the statement "whether it [targeting civilians in armed conflicts] is done by an army or a resistance group" insinuates that heinous acts like "targeting civilians in armed conflicts" are often attributed to the "army" or "resistance groups;" here both groups have been generalized. Finally, as regards extremism, "all motives and factors that have led to extremism will come to an end," "confirming that they [juristic reviews] lead to giving a halt to extremism," and "peace is choice over extremism" clearly insinuate the stance against extremism and choice of peace "over" it. There is hope in the belief that the "motives and factors" leading to extremism will come to an "end," and one specific means—"juristic reviews"—can "halt" extremism. Here again, the manner in which the "motives and factors" that have led to extremism will come to an end, and context are not specified, making this claim hopeful, yet speculative.

In terms of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood specifically, the concern that the MB has regarding use of violence against it, or attribution of violence to it for the purpose of tarnishing its image by opposition forces, is portrayed; this concern, however, is mostly speculative. The statement "MB is shattered by Pakistani government's oppressive actions

against the political opposition" shows that the MB is shocked and filled with despair at the Pakistani government's actions, and that could be for two reasons. First, the actions are "oppressive," and second, the actions are against the "political opposition;" it becomes difficult to infer, however, whether the MB's feeling "shattered" is primarily due to the fact that the actions are oppressive, or because these oppressive actions are against the political opposition considering the MB itself is a political opposition in Egypt. The statement "[Egyptian] regime may think of using oppression as a counterforce" points to this concern; since the Pakistani government has used oppression the Egyptian regime might also follow suit and use oppression against its political opposition. Nevertheless, the target of the Egyptian regime is not specified, and the use of "may think" in this statement, as aforementioned, places this concern in the realm of speculation.

Again, in "Jihad will not be used as a counterforce against the Muslim Brotherhood," use of the modal auxiliary verb[36] "will," and the negative "not" insinuate a confident claim that "jihad will not be used." However, the possibility of jihad being used as an opposing force to damage and destroy the MB is manifest, although the manner in which this will transpire, and who will use jihad against the MB is not stated. In addition, the statement "[Egyptian media] defaming the group [MB] with political violence" is a complaint and grievance against the Egyptian media, which is portrayed to be falsely "defaming" the MB by associating the MB with "political violence."

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[36] A modal or modal auxiliary verb is a type of auxiliary verb—a verb that gives further semantic or syntactic information about the main verb (Harrison, 1985)—that indicates modality. In linguistics, modality enables evaluation of a proposition relative to a set of other propositions (Kratzer, 1991). Thus, a modal auxiliary verb gives further information about the function of the main verb that follows it; these functions can all be related to a scale ranging from possibility (*can*) to necessity and obligation (*must*) (Jacobs, 1995).

Furthermore, as regards the MB, an overall stance against violence and support for peace and peaceful means is portrayed; here again, some ambiguity is noticeable at times. In "destroying properties, something the MB fully rejects," a clear picture of the MB's stance is manifest—that of "full" rejection of destruction of property, an act that can be described as violent and/or oppressive. The statements "the MB strongly confirms this criminal act," "the MB confirm their refusal and strongly condemn all such criminal acts," and "the MB and others [not clearly specified] demanded a transparent trial," portray the MB to be against criminal acts and supportive of transparency. The use of direct, potent, and forceful terms and actions such as "strongly confirms," "confirm refusal…strongly condemn," and "demanded" makes this portrayal convincing and compelling; repeated use of the adjective "strong" also points to the intensity with which they disagree and disapprove of criminal acts. But, the specific nature of the criminal acts, their particulars, the context of these events, and the identity of the "others" stay unknown.

"MB strongly condemns these heinous attacks," "the MB condemns the massacre of tourists in Cairo," "the MB strongly condemns the criminal and savage attack," and "[MB] denounce and condemn the extremist and violent religious trends" show the MB's oppositional stance towards violence; they are seen to "condemn" specific incidents of violence, or in general heinous attacks, massacres, criminal and savage attacks, extremist and violent religious trends. The multiple use of the adjective "strongly," and the qualifier "heinous" further emphasize the degree and intensity with which the MB condemns violence. In expressing their opposition to violence and agents of violence such as "extremist and violent religious trends," the MB is also distancing itself from the same. Thus, in sum, the MB does not support criminal acts, violence, and extremism.

As regards peace, "we [MB] will maintain our peaceful method" and "we (MB) still have our means for a peaceful change" position the MB as a supporter of peaceful means and methods for "change;" the terms "maintain" in the first statement, and "still have" in the second insinuate that this stance towards peace is not a recent and new development. "MB said in a statement to Ikhwanweb to push the peace process" and "moderate Muslim Brotherhood" position the MB as a group that is opposed to violence; "pushing" the "peace process," and the adjective "moderate" to qualify the MB provide evidence for this inference. Here, it must be noted, that Ikhwanweb is the stated forum for this particular positioning around peace.

The element of ambiguity, nevertheless, comes in through the two statements made by Morsy, a senior member of MB and its media spokesperson. "Morsi [*sic*] pointed out that the violent incidents allegedly committed by the MB, are separate and individual incidents" and "Morsi [*sic*] pointed out that peaceful change does not happen overnight;" these can be interpreted as a means to justify MB's "alleged" violent incidents and define the nature of peaceful change, respectively. Thus, by portraying MB's acts of violence as exceptions, since they "are separate and individual events," and most importantly unproven and "alleged," Morsy is trying to differentiate the MB from extremist tendencies and associate it with peaceful change, which in itself is conditional to the fact that it does not happen overnight.

Finally, as for Hamas, the statement "our [Hamas] weapons are only directed towards the occupation," suggests that Hamas's use of violence, or "weapons," is "only" in the context of the occupation. Thus, it uses violence, but in a specific context. At the same time, "Hamas never abandoned rational resistance" insinuates that Hamas is in favor of rational

resistance, although what "rational resistance" entails and how Hamas defines it is not elaborated.

   The MB's stance on elections and constitutional means. A positive stance towards elections is portrayed; also, the MB is presented as active regarding the matter of elections. The acts "calling for" and "defending," performed by the MB with respect to elections, portray the positive stance and show the MB to be active. Furthermore, voicing of disagreement in "can't be considered elections" for Shura council elections[37] points to the MB's clout. This criticism also places the MB in opposition to the Shura Council elections, although does not specify the reason why the Shura Council elections can't be considered elections. Like elections, the MB is seen supporting constitutional means. This is manifest in the use of qualifiers such as "right approach" to describe constitutional means, as well as use of the modal verb "must" insinuating obligation with the positive act of "respecting," to express respect for constitutional means. In addition, the positive adjective "non-violent" to qualify constitutional means provides further information on the nature of constitutional means being supported.

   Portrayal of Islam and Islamic groups/movements. Islam is portrayed to be preoccupied with righteousness, somewhat rigid, especially about Shari'a, and opposed to violence. The acts "banning" and "rejecting" performed by Islam as agent towards

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[37] The Shura Council is the upper house of the Egyptian bicameral Parliament. The lower house is the People's Assembly. The Shura Council was created in 1980 through a constitutional amendment. Of the 264 members who compose the Council, 174 are directly elected, and 88 are appointed by the President of the Republic for six-year terms. Membership is rotating with one-half of the Council renewed every three years. It is believed that the Council's legislative powers are limited, since on most matters of legislation, the People's Assembly retains the last word in the event of a disagreement.

anyone/anything it holds deviant, the presence of the negative term "resisters," and negative

act "deviate" for those who do not follow Shari'a, a "total" and complete rejection of

methods other than Shari'a, use of the adjective "right" in "adopt right tenets of Islam," and

the act "reject violence," all contribute to the abovementioned portrayal of Islam.

Furthermore, use of the qualifiers "prominent Islamic," and the noun "scholar"—someone

important, learned, and knowledgeable of Islam—for Al-Qaradawi who performed the act of

"denouncing" violent attacks, and finally, the act of "prohibiting" military attack on

innocuous civilians and hospitals attributed to Islam, portray Islam to be strongly and

zealously against violence. In fact, use of adjectives "tolerant" and "peaceful" for teachings

of Islam portray Islam as peace loving. It must be noted that in the Egyptian Muslim

Brotherhood rhetoric, Islam is personified at numerous instances.

In terms of portrayal of Islamic movements, an effort to contextualize Islamic

movements to garner better understanding and support for it, specifically from western

agents, is prominent. One of the ways to contextualize is through the use of logos; through

the claim that there are "different" political movements, and by logical reasoning that

therefore there must be "different" Islamic movements too, an instance of contextualization

is seen. Use of a senior MB member, Morsy, to appeal to "western researchers" to "come

closer" to Islamic movements insinuates presence of distance, and therefore lack of

understanding by western agents of Islamic movements. However, by logical reasoning

again, "coming closer" can reduce misunderstandings. Another effort at contextualizing is by

specifying, for instance, "MB hardliners" are in opposition to democracy; this insinuates that

the MB as a whole is not against democracy.

As for Islamic groups' stance on violence, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood rhetoric renders this ambiguous. For instance, the act of "giving up" violence insinuates that Islamic groups are actually associated with violence, but they will give it up. Nevertheless, the use of "would," and thus the future tense, makes the act of giving up violence a matter of speculation rendering Islamic groups' stance on violence, as aforementioned, ambiguous. On the issue of portrayal of Islam and Islamic groups/movements, a final issue needs to be mentioned, that of the clear and direct statement of the goal of "establishing" a "world-wide Islamic Caliphate;" however, the agents, agencies, and any further details associated with this goal, are not clearly specified.

Portrayal of the role of Hamas in Palestine. Hamas is portrayed to be playing an active role in Palestine; it is also featured to be against occupation, with the interest of the Palestinian people as its priority and purpose. These are manifest through use of a senior leader of Hamas, in other words, a credible representative to "point out" and "confirm" the Hamas government's active role. Also, the presence of antithetical ideas associated with Hamas such as "end" the occupation and "liberate" the Palestinian people, emphasizes Hamas's intent. The acts performed by Hamas, for instance "end," "liberate," Hamas "exercises" resistance, and resistance movement "took place" under Hamas, manifest definiteness and directness, although the nature of resistance is not defined or described. Hamas is also portrayed to be in opposition with the Zionists. This is manifest in the use of the adjective "enemy" by Hamas, specifically a senior Hamas leader, Marzouk, to qualify Zionists, as well as attribution of negative acts and events such as "infighting" to Zionists.

Portrayal of MB representatives. Through extensive use of adjectives such as "credible," having "right" contacts, and working "publicly" the MB representatives are

qualified by the Egyptian Brotherhood and portrayed positively. Furthermore, since they are credible and have right contacts, the clear and direct message expressed is that, information about the MB must be sought from MB representatives.

To sum up. Although several agents performing specific acts feature in this section, only few gain prominence in terms of the frequency with which they feature and are portrayed to be instrumental in some way. A similar comment can be made about instruments used by agents; many get featured, however, only some are used frequently. Nevertheless, the ones that do not appear frequently also gain prominence at times because of *intensity*. Foss (2004) elaborates on intensity by stating that "a term may not appear very often in a rhetor's work, but it may be critical because it is central to the argument being made, represents an ultimate commitment, or conveys great depth of feeling" (p. 73). In terms of issues, certain ones become conspicuous based on the amount of coverage they receive; there are also some that do not receive much emphasis. These patterns are a common feature in all three sections analyzed for this study.

Specifically for this section, the MB and its associates and Hamas and its associates are seen as the most active, positive, and influential agents. In the data analyzed, Hamas and its associates have received more mention and prominence when compared even with MB and its associates. When Al-Zawahiri or other Al-Qaeda associates are presented as agents, they are portrayed as passive and/or performing negative acts. Islam has been personified at several instances, and is portrayed as righteous, rigid about its stance on Shari'a, and opposed to violence. There are several generalized groups that serve as agents as well. Jihad and violence stand out as most frequently used agencies; interestingly, an explicit statement that

shows any of the major agents using either jihad or violence is absent. In other words, the use of jihad and violence is implied.

In addition, in this section the MB portrays its opposition towards Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri, and it portrays Hamas's stance towards Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri to be similar to the MB stance—one of opposition. The Egyptian MB's rhetoric portrays Al-Qaeda negatively and its position somewhat compromised. Also, an oppositional stance towards Israel and Zionists, and support for Palestinian people are manifest. A stance against violence and extremism, and support for peace is portrayed; an effort at dissociating jihad from violence and associating it with peace is seen. In addition, several pointers are present that help define what violence entails as regards the Egyptian MB. Support for elections, and constitutional means are manifest, and in this regard the MB is portrayed as an active political agent. An effort at contextualizing Islamic movements is exhibited. These form the major focuses of this section of Ikhwanweb.

Less emphasis is attached to the issue of Hamas's role in Palestine, although its stances are noticeably similar to the Egyptian MB's; for instance, opposition for Zionists and support for the Palestinian people. Finally, MB representatives are portrayed positively and as an important resource for the Egyptian MB. Nevertheless, the presence of ambiguity and uncertainty around several of the aforementioned issues is a striking characteristic of this section.

Muslim Brotherhood and the West. Discussion and elaboration of the main findings (presented in Table 1) that emerge after analysis of the eleven clusters in this section follows.

Major agents and agencies. The major agents in this section are the MB; Western agents, namely, US Embassy in Cairo, and Western governments, specifically, UK government, and US government/administration; the generalized West; Islamists (generalized); and other generalized agents, such as, *We* (people in general), *all*, *political regime*, *Muslims*, *fringe extremist elements*, and *Islamic movement*. The major agency is dialogues. Agents associated with dialogue are the MB; MB associates Dr. Essam El-Erian, a leading figure in the MB, and Dr. Mohamed Habib, a senior leader of the MB; Hamas; and Western agents, specifically, UK government, US government, and Western diplomats.

Issues and acts. There are major and minor issues and acts, and these have been elaborated in this section. First I have discussed the major issues and acts, followed by the minor issues and acts, as outlined in Table D.

The MB's relationship with Western agents, and the stance on MB's dialogue with Western agents. The portrayal of the MB's relationship with Western agents and its stance on dialogue are characterized by inconsistency and ambiguity. To elaborate, several contradictory statements and comments portray that the MB's relationship and stance towards, and position on dialogue with Western agents changes with time and context, although Western agents are presented as priority for the MB. Also, Western agents are portrayed to be more certain about holding dialogue in general.

The statement "[MB] support dialogue, and believe in the necessity of openness" emphasizes need for openness, and shows the MB's "support" for dialogue in general. Furthermore, "we [MB] believe that the dialogue with the West is the ideal method," suggests through the use of the adjective "ideal" the MB's positive stance towards "dialogue with the West." "The MB group said, 'dialogue is a means for joint communication'" is yet

another instance of clear support for the use of dialogue, which is also described and qualified as a method of "joint communication." These statements manifest the MB's positive stance towards dialogue, specifically, the use of dialogue to communicate with the West. They also manifest some characteristics and qualities of dialogue such as ideal method, joint communication, and openness.

On the other hand, in some instances the attitude towards dialogue becomes uncertain. The statement "MB does not refuse to hold dialogue with the West" introduces an element of uncertainty; the use of litotes[38]—"does not refuse"—which is expressing an affirmative by negating its contrary (Smyth, 1920), and the future tense "to hold" make the true intent of the Muslim Brotherhood towards holding dialogue ambiguous, uncertain, and a matter of speculation. "We [MB] hold no grudges against them" and "we object to certain policies by some Western governments towards the Middle East" bring in more ambiguity; yet again the use of litotes—"hold no grudges"—and the verb "object" raise doubt about the Muslim Brotherhood's intent for dialogue.

This lack of clarity is further portrayed in "MB doesn't object to any dialogue," "Dr. Mohamed Habib… added that there are no prospects of any dialogue with the US," and "Dr. Erian added that dialogue between MB and foreign government has reached a deadlock." In case of the first sentence, the use of litotes "doesn't object" presents an element of ambiguity and confusion regarding the use of dialogue. The second statement clearly indicates "no prospects" of any dialogue with the US. The final statement informs that dialogue between MB and foreign government "has reached a deadlock," in other words, a dialogue was taking

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[38] According to Allen (1992), "in its…semantic vagueness…litotes betrays an underlying uncertainty, a lack of assurance that equanimity can be preserved if any intended meaning is clarified" (p. 109).

place but a point has come where no progress can be made for fundamental disagreements; what or who is/are responsible for this deadlock is not known though.

In terms of overall stance towards Western agents, from the end of the MB certain ambiguities are manifest. The emphasis implied through the act "added," and the term "main" in "El Erian [*sic*] added that the US administration has become a main factor," insinuate that the US administration has gained priority with the MB. Nevertheless, the US administration has become a priority in which context remains unclear. At the same time, the statements "the US administration believes the untrue allegations about the MB" and "[MB] do not believe US efforts for reform were sincere" show the MB's opposition towards the US administration; the phrase "believes…untrue allegations" manifests grievance from the MB's end towards the US administration, and "do not believe" manifests skepticism and a somewhat retaliatory attitude of the MB.

However, the statement "especially the US administration, need to clarify their stance" suggests that the US administration is being given a chance to make their "stance" clear so that misunderstandings, if any, can be addressed. Thus, there is a requirement and necessity for the US administration to be transparent. Finally, the claim "MB do not have an ideological stance against the West" insinuates that the opposition and disagreement from the end of the MB is towards specific Western agents and acts, and in specific contexts, not necessarily the West in totality; nevertheless, the essence of "ideological stance" from the MB perspective is not elaborated.

It becomes important to point to the portrayal of Western agents' stance towards dialogue and communication. In case of Western agents such as Western diplomats, US and UK governments, the statement "Western diplomats had held talks on several occasions"

presents concrete evidence through the use of past tense that talks have been "held." "US government holds internal discussions" uses the present tense "hold," and shows that "discussions" are an oft-used means for the US government, thus insinuating that there is a high probability for the US government to get into discussions because it is a frequently used and familiar instrument. In addition, "US President Obama in Cairo…a positive language" shows that the instance of President Obama's speech in Cairo is associated with language that is qualified as "positive," and this has positive connotations for the way the US administration's approach towards dialogue and communication in general is viewed.

The MB's stand on foreign interference. The MB is against foreign interference. The statements "we frankly reject in form and content," "rejects all forms of American control," and "against all forms of foreign interference and domination" illustrate the MB's opposition towards foreign domination, interference, and control, specifically "American." Furthermore, the adjective "frankly" insinuates directness and forthrightness, the act "reject" insinuates dismissal and refusal, and "all" forms suggests finality and no room for alternatives. All these terms add emphasis to the determination and certainty of the MB's stand against foreign interference.

General stance towards Western agents. The stance towards Western agents is one of opposition and skepticism, and in several instances Western agents are portrayed negatively. But in other instances the Egyptian MB rhetoric manifests potential for cooperation and hope, and the importance of context. Certain instances, wherein Western agents are being cautioned, are also present. For example, in the statements "contradict with western [*sic*] interests," "used to support the Muslim Brotherhood," and "unconditionally "cooperate" with

Western governments," the word "contradict," the past tense "used to support," and the scare quote around "cooperate" suggest a breach in the relationship with some Western agents.

A disagreement is noticeable in the grievance "West continues to support undemocratic regimes." Nevertheless, despite the opposition, disagreement, and cynicism, the advisory statements "U.S. [*sic*] should support any government democratically elected," "coherent approach to supporting democracy abroad," and "dichotomy between Eastern and Western powers end up into one multi-language, multi-experience, and multi-good power" through the terms "support," "coherent," and "one" suggest a coming together and hope. In the last statement, however, the use of the term "power" with Eastern and Western begets the question, specifically, which are the Eastern and Western powers being referred to?

"Western governments have been silent about the crime committed against human rights and security" and "with regard to the MB, we [US Embassy in Cairo] disagree with them on a lot of subjects" feature opposition, specifically towards Western governments in the former statement, and towards the Muslim Brotherhood by the US Embassy in Cairo in the latter. Nevertheless, the claim "MB do not have an ideological stance against the West" can be inferred as opposition and disagreement from the end of the MB towards specific Western agents and acts, in specific contexts, and not necessarily the West in totality.

"US government allows violations from the Egyptian government," "US government allow a friendly regime to maintain power," and "US government is ready to allow human rights violations" portray grievance, disagreement, and opposition to the US government's act of allowing violations by the Egyptian government—US government's ally—and letting the Egyptian government maintain power. This scenario paints a negative image of the US government because it allows its allies to perform questionable acts. Furthermore, the

statement "West must not pressure regimes to curb Islamists" insinuates that the "West," generalized here, has considerable clout with regimes, and by virtue of being allies, supporters, or through authority the "West" can persuade, influence, or intimidate these regimes to act according to its wishes. The use of "must not…curb" in "West must not pressure regimes to curb Islamists" suggests empathy towards Islamists.

In addition, "US government's claimed reform efforts" and "resignations have clearly changed the government [US]" add to the unflattering portrayal. The US government has to "claim" reform efforts, and the act of claiming suggests asserting something without providing evidence; hence, the use of "claim" makes the US government's reform efforts questionable. Also, resignations often are undesirable and insinuate that things are not working well within the US government. Yet, "have to come to realize that different views can be present in one single Western society" and "coming closer to Western arenas," suggest awareness of the mistake of treating Western society as a monolith, and empathy and closeness with Western agents.

Finally, the rhetoric of the Egyptian MB on the issue of portrayal of the relationship with Western agents also features cautionary stances. A cautionary message is present in "the West has to come to a realization" and "Western presence in the region will change if the Islamists were to come to power," which insinuate that Western agents can be vulnerable and need to stay grounded. The statement "it is to the US interest to support democracy and human rights in Egypt" is advisory as well as cautionary; in addition, this statement implies a positive stance towards the promotion of democracy and human rights in Egypt.

Stance towards Hamas. The stance towards Hamas is supportive; the MB rhetoric is, for the most part, direct and clear about supporting Hamas. For instance, the phrase

"Brotherhood supports Hamas" portrays in the most direct manner the Muslim Brotherhood's backing for Hamas. In the statement "UK government to open direct channels with the MB and Hamas," the use of the conjunction "and" to connect the MB and Hamas, and the fact that a Western agent, namely, the UK government is keen to communicate with both, establishes a positive association between the MB and Hamas.

In addition, the statements "Palestinian President…next legislative elections using the method of proportional representation…unscrupulously targets defeating Hamas" and "Muslim Brotherhood supports Hamas although it is a terrorist organization" suggest a strong backing for Hamas; use of the term "unscrupulous" to qualify the way in which the Palestinian President is "targeting" Hamas, and the fact that the MB unconditionally "supports" Hamas, are evidence to the claim. However, the term "although" in "although it [Hamas] being a terrorist organization" introduces a contradiction and complicates understanding of the nature of support.

Stance on modernization. Modernization is not a completely rejected and opposed concept, although certain versions and praxis of modernization are; accepting modernization on Islamic terms is manifest. The statement "modernization in that sense highlights the importance of the faculties of (pure) reason" is informative; at the same time, the phrase "in that sense" suggests a way of characterizing modernization, where prominence is given to the "faculties of (pure) reason." In addition, "Islam refuses that aspect of modernization which believes in the materialistic philosophy" and "Islamic movement does not adopt that feature of modernization which calls for atheism" show that modernization is not being accepted in totality. Islam is in opposition to the "materialistic philosophy" of modernization, and Islamist movements disagree with the atheistic emphasis of modernization.

"The material under modernization remains" and "legislation is at the heart of modernization" insinuate that modernization is considered important, and a certain conception of modernization is also present—one in which "legislation" is central. However, in "Islamists have reservations about modernization," "Islamic stance on modernization, as a general approach, is not a total agreement about it," and "vision of Islamic movement of modernization differs," use of the term "reservations," the negative "not" a total agreement, and "vision…differs," respectively, exhibit that modernization as a general concept is not supported, rather an Islamic version of modernization is espoused.

Portrayal of the MB's relationship with the Egyptian regime. The portrayal of the MB's relationship with the Egyptian regime is one of tension and opposition; the Egyptian regime is presented negatively for the most part. Also, the clout the MB holds vis-à-vis the Egyptian regime is inconsistent, and insinuates being dependent on context. In the statements "the file they [Egyptian authority] wanted to use against the moderate Islamic movement [MB]" and "[the military tribunal] failed to prove that…money is ill gotten, used to support the Muslim Brotherhood group," use of the terms "against" and "ill gotten" show that the Egyptian regime frequently takes measures to attack the dignity of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the phrase "failed to prove" implies, despite the attacks by the regime the MB remains unscathed and is innocent. Thus, from these statements the innocence and moderate position of the MB, and the apparent tension between the MB and the Egyptian regime become evident.

"Independent members of the Egyptian parliament" and "the group [MB] says that the Egyptian regime" are fairly neutral statements; from these statements it can only be stated that there are independent members in the Egyptian regime, and that the MB has the

opportunity to "say" something about the Egyptian regime. Whereas "this movement [MB] does not pose a challenge" is a justification and explanation for the MB "movement." Although it cannot be known whether the MB "does not pose a challenge" to someone/something specific, or this is a general comment, the statement functions either to clarify preconceived notions, or allay concerns. The MB is clearly identified as a "movement" in this statement.

"Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak conveniently use the Brotherhood as an excuse to prevent serious reform" is an expression of grievance, where the MB is positioned as an instrument used by Hosni Mubarak; "convenience" insinuates the clout Hosni Mubarak has, "excuse" implies that Mubarak is at fault and has committed offence, and prevention of "serious reform" insinuates that Hosni Mubarak is not invested in earnest reform measures. Thus, all these statements position the MB as holding less influence than the Egyptian regime, and places the "movement" in opposition to the latter, specifically Hosni Mubarak.

The statement "demanded the Egyptian government cancel the decree of the Egyptian President Mubarak," however, clearly shows disagreement with Hosni Mubarak's decree, and also suggests MB's authority in presenting a "demand" to the government. "Political regime that allows discussions" does not provide information on which political regime is being referred to, whether a specific regime is being referred to at all, or the statement portrays an ideal political regime that allows discussions; in any case, an insinuation that discussions must be allowed is evident.

Portrayal of Western agents' relationship with authoritarian regimes. Western agents are portrayed as supporting authoritarian regimes like the Egyptian regime that suppress, allow violations of human rights, and do not allow promotion of democracy.

"Western governments have been supporting authoritarian regimes," "Western governments continue to support regimes that suppress," and "the West continues to support the Egyptian regime" show that Western agents have been promoting the interests and cause of authoritarian, suppressive regimes. Opposition towards this act of "support" is manifest in "this support for authoritarian regimes is destructive," "whether to allow the Muslim Brotherhood to participate openly," "obstacles in the way of their [Western governments] support to the Egyptian government," and "impossible to believe that Western governments are sincere in their promotion of democracy." The use of the adjective "destructive" is an outright show of opposition, and has a cautionary function; the term "whether" introduces an element of doubt about the MB's ability to "participate openly" in an authoritarian environment; "obstacles" insinuates that Western agents' support to the Egyptian government will not be opposition free; the phrase "impossible to believe" and the questioning stance towards the sincerity of Western agents' intent to promote democracy manifests criticism and cynicism.

Furthermore, "US government allows violations from the Egyptian government," "US government allow a friendly regime to maintain power," and "US government is ready to allow human rights violations," portray grievance, disagreement, and opposition to the US government's act of allowing violations by the Egyptian government—US government's ally—and letting the government maintain "power." This scenario paints a negative image of the US government by showing that it allows its allies to perform questionable acts. The statement "West must not pressure regimes to curb Islamists" insinuates that the "West," generalized here, has considerable clout with regimes; either by virtue of being allies, supporters, or through authority the "West" can persuade, influence, or intimidate these

regimes to act according to its wishes. Use of the term "pressure" problematizes understanding of the true nature of the relationship between Western agents and authoritarian regimes, as well as the reason behind the former's support. However, the use of "must not…curb" in "West must not pressure regimes to curb Islamists" suggests empathy towards Islamists, and the West's opposition towards them.

The discourse around and portrayal of Muslims, Islam, Islamic groups and movements, and Islamists. Muslims are portrayed in a manner that shows them lacking clout, specifically in relation to Western agents. The statement "significant number of Muslims in the West" points to the fact that the "West" is home to Muslims. Nevertheless, the use of the word "can" in "Muslims can build mosques in Europe" suggests possibility, but at the same time permission. The statement made by Jean-Louis Tauran, a French Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, "Muslims do not accept to deeply discuss the Qu'ran [*sic*]" portray Muslims unflatteringly. In Tauran's comment yet another generalization of "Muslims" has been done, and that they "do not accept…to deeply discuss the Qu'ran [*sic*]" insinuates that Muslims intentionally have "not accepted" to "deeply discuss" the Qur'an, which could mean with an intent to let the Qur'an remain incomprehensible, and its understanding perfunctory.

As for Islam, "Islam, as Al Banna [*sic*] says, is a comprehensive system," "an Islamic source of authority," and "Islamic world was then extending" feature the terms "comprehensive," "authority," and "extending," which emphasize an all-encompassing, influential image and vision of Islam. At the same time the claims "fringe extremist elements using their distortion of Islam as a pretext" and "Muslim Brotherhood supports Hamas although it is a terrorist organization," in the use of "distortion of Islam as a pretext" and "although" it (Hamas) is a terrorist organization insinuate a distancing from terrorism and

extremism. The phrase "distortion of Islam as a pretext" manifests a defense for Islam. Thus, an opposition towards terrorism and support for Islam in general, is clear. This also insinuates that Islam and terrorism can be mutually exclusive.

On the issue of movements, the Muslim Brotherhood clearly and unequivocally identifies itself as a "Muslim movement" in "Muslim movements as the Muslim Brotherhood." In terms of the other movements specified in the Egyptian MB rhetoric, only certain ideas about those are featured: for instance, "[the Tablighi] movement that believes in spreading the Islamic mission," "this movement [Salafist Jihad] believes in Al Qaeda [*sic*] ideas and adopts its ideology," "the Islamists believe also that the Muslims have freedom," and "worries that Islamists may assume power." Thus, the Tablighi movement "spreads the Islamic mission," the Salafist Jihad movement not only holds the Al-Qaeda ideology true, but also "adopts" it, and finally, Islamists believe in "freedom" for Muslims, and Islamists are anticipated to be in "power" and this is a "worry," although for whom and why is not stated. These statements do not state anything directly about the MB's position towards these movements, or whether the MB agrees, disagrees, or identifies with either of these.

Specifically about Islamists, "enough to say that Islamists and the West" insinuates Islamists' association with the generalized "West" through the use of the conjunction "and;" the nature of the association remains unknown. "If Brotherhood came to power," "should Brotherhood come to power," "Islamists will eventually come to power," and "Western presence in the region will change if the lslamists were to come to power" feature a gradual progression of thought about "coming" to power, from speculation to certainty and assertion. The use of "if" and "should" keep the idea of the Brotherhood coming to power in the realm of speculation, albeit portraying possibility. However, with the generalized "Islamists" the

scenario is more certain; "will eventually come" is a future-oriented claim but manifests more certainty than in the case of the Brotherhood through the use of "eventually," which connotes finality. The certainty is further manifest in the assertion that with Islamists coming to power "Western presence in the region will change." Thus, albeit in different degrees, association of "power" with the Brotherhood and Islamists is evident; also the deterministic relationship between Islamists and Western presence is manifest. But, whether the Brotherhood is an Islamist movement is not clearly stated at any point.

Continuing with the issue of the Islamists, "Islamists will not impose their beliefs" adds to what shall happen when they come to power, and here, in the use of the negative "not" in "not impose" a positive portrayal of Islamists is manifest. In fact, the use of "inability" in the statement "Islamists themselves in their inability to communicate their agenda" insinuates Islamists' helplessness for their lack of ability to communicate their agenda; this statement is, therefore, in defense of lslamists. However, to complicate this discourse, the statement made by Sadek Shaban, a professor at the University of Tunis, "all Islamists deserve prison," portray the Islamists unflatteringly; here Islamists have not only been generalized, but this statement also manifests a strong conviction that Islamists "deserve" prison even though the context is not specified. This last comment introduces some contradiction and ambiguity to the portrayal of and stance towards Islamists.

Israel and Palestine. An oppositional stance towards Israel and Fatah, and support for democracy, the Palestinian people, and Hamas are featured. The statement "disappointment towards Israel's destruction of the Palestinian society" shows opposition and displeasure towards Israel's negative action of "destruction." The term "rejection" in "rejection to the policy of supporting one Palestinian party against another," the act "destroy"

and the use of logos to state that "Israel adopts the policy of supporting Fatah to destroy the Palestinian people," and the negative "do not support" in Bruce Nestor's (political activist and attorney, and president of the National Lawyers Guild, a bar association in the US) comment, "I do not support US providing Fatah movement with weapons" manifest opposition towards certain policies, especially those that would harm Palestine and its people. The position that Israel supports Fatah is also made explicit here. Important to bear in mind is that the agent for this claim is not Israel. In addition, opposition towards US's act of siding with Fatah and providing it "weapons" is featured, but at the same time, the fact that the agent expressing this opposition represents the US in a sense redeems the US.

In the statement "we should respect the democratic option of the Palestinian people," use of the modal verb "should" manifests support for democracy and the Palestinian people as obligatory and recommended. Through the antithesis "supporting Hamas at the expense of Fatah," and negating Hamas's association with Israel in "do not mean Hamas is made by Israel," an obvious support for Hamas and opposition towards Fatah is expressed.

The issue of rights. On the issue of rights the statements "they are citizens who have all the citizenship rights" and "practice their rights in picking the reference they like," referring to the Copts, portray that Copts enjoy freedom of rights and are recognized citizens. "People have the genuine right" and "we [MB] have the right to reject that" also show that both the Egyptian people and the Muslim Brotherhood, like the Copts, enjoy freedom of rights. In addition, "MB have won a popular mandate after the last elections" insinuates that not only do the people have genuine rights, they also have exercised this right to support the MB; through the use of the qualifier "popular" in "popular mandate," this statement points to the support the MB enjoys with the people. Thus, the Copts, the Egyptian people, and the

Muslim Brotherhood are in association on the matter of rights, and their ability to enjoy and exercise the same. However, the statement "Western governments have been silent about the crime committed against human rights and security" is an expression of disapproval towards Western governments' act of remaining silent as regards violation of human rights and security.

The issue of security, and security services. A preoccupation with security and security services is manifest, although much ambiguity surrounds this issue. For instance, "anti-Western sentiment is harmful for Western security" and "Israel in terms of Egypt's security" show that Western and Egyptian security are of concern. For the former, that is Western security, anti-Western sentiment is considered to be the stated threat, and the statement has a cautionary function because it features the qualifier "is harmful." But, the agent of anti-Western sentiment is not explicit. For the latter no specific threat can be deciphered, but the phrase "in terms of" connotes that Israel has a bearing on Egypt's security; nevertheless, "Israel in terms of Egypt's security" introduces ambiguity.

In terms of security services, "elements of this group [Tablighi movement], and the state security services," "relations with the security services," and "it is Tunisian security trend" insinuate that there is a connection between the Tablighi movement and the state security services, especially manifest in the use of the conjunction "and." But the specific nature of the state security services' "relation" with the Tablighi movement, or any other entity is not clear; furthermore, what the Tunisian security "trend" is remains unknown.

The issue of choices. On the question of choice, "ruling is a popular choice," "the popular choice if made, nobody could stop it," and "violence is not a choice" manifest a directness of language and clarity of position. For instance, there is no equivocation around

"ruling" being a popular choice, and "violence" not being a choice. Furthermore, there is a certainty of tone and confidence in the prediction "nobody could stop" popular choice; the use of the negative "nobody" with the modal auxiliary "could" stop manifests the confidence and certainty. However, whether "nobody" is a generalized pronoun or a pronoun specific to a noun, remains unknown; thus, it cannot be inferred whether a direct opposition against someone/something is being insinuated here. This confident prediction asserts the power of "popular choice" and a strong agreement with "ruling."

The issue of coalitions. A comprehensive comment cannot be made on the issue of coalitions; for different groups and movements different positions and portrayals are manifest. "All refuse making a coalition with it [Al-Nahda (Renaissance) Movement], for fear of it" shows that a generalized "all" are in opposition to the Al-Nahda Movement, and the reason clearly stated is "fear," thus manifesting pathos. Whereas, "meet and make coalitions with it [the Left] in the fight for freedom" although does not specify an agent, nevertheless shows the affinity for the Left in "meet and make." The purpose remains the "fight for freedom," herein manifesting ethos. Finally, "making a coalition with the nationalist powers" and "nationalist movements' agenda in our Arab region" neither insinuate a stance towards "making a coalition" with the nationalist powers, nor specify this movement's agenda in the Arab region, thus rendering the discourse around the nationalist movement ambiguous. However, the use of "powers" with nationalist insinuates that this movement possesses leverage, although with whom and where remains unknown. The presence of nationalist movements in the Arab region is clearly manifest.

The question of power. In different degrees, but the association of "power" with the Brotherhood and Islamists is evident. "If Brotherhood came to power," "should Brotherhood

come to power," "Islamists will eventually come to power," and "Western presence in the region will change if the lslamists were to come to power" feature a gradual progression of thought, from speculation to certainty and assertion. The use of "if" and "should" in the first two comments keep the idea of the Brotherhood coming to power in the realm of speculation, albeit portraying possibility, but not confidence before certainty. However, with the generalized "Islamists" the scenario is more certain; "will eventually come" is a future-oriented claim but manifests more certainty than in the case of the Brotherhood through the use of "eventually," which connotes finality. The certainty is further manifest in the assertion that with Islamists coming to power "Western presence in region will change." Although Western presence is not qualified here, this comment insinuates that a deterministic relationship exists between Islamists and Western agents. In addition, "Gamal Mubarak come to power?" and "reject any person to undemocratically come to power," through questioning/challenging, and the act "reject," show opposition towards and rejection for anyone such as Gamal Mubarak, who use undemocratic means such as inheritance from his father Hosni Mubarak, to come to "power" in Egypt.

   To sum up. The Muslim Brotherhood as an organization and several Western agents find prominence in this section; all these agents are portrayed as influential. Interestingly, several generalized groups also are featured as agents, such as "the West" and "Islamists." Dialogue is the instrument that features most in this section, and the agents using it are the MB and its associates, Hamas, and several Western agents. One of the major issues in this section is the portrayal of the MB's relationship with Western agents and its stance on dialogue; this stance varies with time and context. In fact, the MB forthrightly portrays a mélange of stances towards Western agents and the issue of holding dialogue with the

latter—skepticism, retaliation, hope, support, understanding. However, the portrayal of Western agents' positive stance towards holding dialogue in general manifests no inconsistency.

In this section the MB positions itself to be clearly supportive of the Hamas, although, unlike the earlier section, Hamas does not get much coverage and prominence here. On the issue of modernization emphasis on accepting modernization on Islamic terms is indicated. An all-encompassing and influential image and vision of Islam, and insinuation that Islam and terrorism can be mutually exclusive, is portrayed. However, even though Islam is portrayed as all-encompassing the status of Muslims is portrayed in a manner that shows them lacking influence, specifically in relation to Western agents. Also in this section, albeit in different degrees and intensities, the Brotherhood and Islamists are seen associated with "power." Furthermore, and importantly, the identity of the Brotherhood as an Islamist movement is only implied, and never clearly stated; the Brotherhood is clearly identified as a *moderate, Muslim movement*. The Egyptian regime is portrayed negatively, and the MB's relation with the former is featured as one of tension and opposition. Grievance and opposition towards Western agents for supporting the Egyptian and other authoritarian regimes is clearly voiced. In addition, the clout the Egyptian MB holds with the Egyptian regime and in the Egyptian political scene is seen to be dependent on context, and consequently, inconsistent. These form the major focuses of this section.

Several issues are minor in terms of coverage. The Egyptian MB rhetoric portrays an oppositional stance towards Israel and Fatah, and support for democracy and the Palestinian people. Association with the Copts and the Egyptian people on the issue of rights is manifest. Support for popular choice, and a preoccupation with security and security services is

expressed. Although not a comprehensive comment, focus is laid on the topic of coalitions with different groups and movements, wherein different positions are manifest depending on context. Finally, as in the earlier section, ambiguity and equivocation around several of the issues discussed mark this section as well.

Parliament. Discussion and elaboration of the main findings (presented in Table 1) that emerge after analysis of the five clusters in this section follows.

Major agents and agencies. The major agents in this section are the MB; the MB Parliamentary bloc; MB MPs; Hussein Ibrahim, former MB MP and a senior leader; US Congress delegation; and few generalized agents, namely, *human rights organizations*, *independents*, *students*, *national and political powers*, *dictatorial regimes*, and *sources.* The major agency is statements, specifically, press statements. Agents associated with this instrument are Dr. Boutros Ghali, Egyptian Minister of Finance during Hosni Mubarak's rule; Saad Al-Husseini, a member of the MB Parliamentary bloc; Hussein Ibrahim, former MB MP; and MB Parliamentary bloc/MB MPs.

Issues and acts. There are major and minor issues and acts, and these have been elaborated in this section. First I have discussed the major issues and acts, followed by the minor issues and acts as outlined in Table A.

General portrayal of the Egyptian regime. The Egyptian regime is portrayed negatively. It is presented to be dictatorial, specifically in its association with negative acts of "tightening" security grip on critics, "prevent" voices opposing it, and "harass" movements. In addition, an insinuation is made to the regime's dictatorial measures specifically towards the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Through the use of the phrase "specially Islamists" in "tightening the security grip on the regime's critics, specially lslamists," the insinuation to

the Muslim Brotherhood is made as well as the regime's dictatorial attitude is exhibited. This can be inferred from the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is considered to be an Islamist movement, and has been a voice opposing the Egyptian regime. Thus, criticism of and opposition towards the Egyptian regime are manifest.

Portrayal of relationship between MB MPs/ MB Parliamentary bloc and Egyptian regime. The MB MPs/Parliamentary bloc are/is positioned in opposition to the Egyptian regime. However, the former are seen to exercise influence, and are not passive in their role as an oppositional force to the Egyptian regime. Several strategies point to this portrayal. For instance, the issue of amendments; the frequency with which the issue of amendments feature in the MB rhetoric, be it in the form of mere descriptions and information about amendments such as "these amendments were called…anti-terrorism amendments" and "amendment made public and added to Egyptian penal code," or amendments as instruments such as "require major amendments in order to achieve the law's goals," the importance of amendments as a significant backdrop for the MB's acts, especially those dealing with the Egyptian regime cannot be overlooked. Using the issue of amendments as backdrop, the MB voices disagreement, criticizes, presents conditions and modifications, makes demands, negotiates, boycotts, and rejects vis-à-vis the Egyptian regime.

An example is the opposition and disagreement portrayed in statements such as "MB MPs…declared boycotting House sessions and rejecting President Mubarak's proposed constitutional amendments" and "bad consequences of these amendments on the future of Egypt." From these statements it can be inferred that the disagreements, in this case over Mubarak's proposed constitutional amendments of 2007, are not just passive and verbal, but expressed through acts of "boycotting" and "rejecting."

The opposition is also manifest in the negative portrayal of the Egyptian regime. The negative portrayal is manifest in the Egyptian government being associated with acts and terms that present it as ineffectual and incompetent such as "failure" and "wasted." At the same time, the negative portrayal is manifest in the Egyptian regime being presented as aggressive and reactionary, for instance in the use of adjectives such as "fierce" in "fierce criticism from the Egyptian government" and negative acts such as "Egyptian regime turned the political competition into a security manhunt."

As for the portrayal of the MB MPs, along with being active as an opposition force for the Egyptian regime as aforementioned and manifest in "MB MPs held a sit-in [a form of protest] in the Egyptian Parliament," they are also featured as active in the overall political scenario and involved in acts like "submitting" statements, questions, and interpellations. In addition, frequent use of the adjective "urgent" while describing the MB MPs acts directly points to the priority the MB bloc attaches to addressing issues and concerns, and challenging the government thus playing an active role in the Egyptian political scene. Hence, without much ambiguity and equivocation the Egyptian political scene is qualified as "the theatre of a ferocious confrontation" between "Egyptian regime and opposition political forces," by implication the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, wherein the Egyptian Brotherhood is active and a determining force.

Issue of bills, laws, and amendments. Several statements exhibit that the preoccupation with bills and laws, necessary steps for political reform, within the Egyptian political scene is high. These statements also show that both the Egyptian government and the MB Parliamentary bloc are active in this regard. For instance, MB MP Hussein Ibrahim "confirms" there is no need for anti-terrorism law proposed by the Egyptian government, MB

"confirms" to place the Parties Law bill under scrutiny, and MB Parliamentary bloc "rejected" the judiciary bill proposed by the government. Thus, as much as the government has the capacity for and interest in political reform, the MB Parliamentary bloc also shows active participation by introducing, evaluating, rejecting, voicing, and enacting their support or disagreement. The paradigm, however, is one of criticism, disagreement, and rejection on the part of the MB Parliamentary bloc towards the government's proposals and steps.

The frequency with which the issue of amendments feature in the Egyptian MB rhetoric, be it in the form of mere descriptions and information about amendments, presentation of amendments as instruments, or the function of amendments as a significant backdrop for the MB's acts, especially those dealing with the Egyptian regime, cannot be overlooked. Using the issue of amendments as backdrop the MB voices disagreement, criticizes, presents conditions and modifications, makes demands, negotiates, boycotts, and rejects. Thus, bills, laws, and amendments frequently feature in this section of Ikhwanweb. In most cases, these become the basis on which the MB MPs/Parliamentary bloc can show their opposition towards the Egyptian regime, and also portray their active role in the Egyptian political scene.

An instance of opposition is when the MB paired itself with human rights organizations through the use of the conjunction "and" as agents to "staunchly oppose" the anti-terrorism amendments; the qualifier "staunchly" and the act "oppose" make a clear and direct statement of opposition. In addition, "in Egypt, need no new anti-terrorism law" directly negates the need for the anti-terrorism law. However, the statement "MB supports the Algerian peoples' anti-terrorism move" shows that the MB supports moves against terrorism, but as aforementioned, it opposes the Egyptian government's anti-terrorism

amendments. This insinuates the Muslim Brotherhood's lack of trust in the Egyptian regime; there is doubt that the anti-terrorism law, if it comes to pass, will actually function to combat terrorism instead of being used as a means to persecute the Muslim Brotherhood.

Yet another example is the issue of organ transplants. The two statements "abolish donating of organs to non-relatives" and "current charters are insufficient and Articles require major amendments in order to achieve law's goals" insinuate that the Law of Organ Transplants is not being completely dismissed. Instead, some conditions are being put, and some modifications such as donation of organs to relatives only, and major amendments to Articles since current charters are qualified as "insufficient" are being sought. This can be anticipated as the starting point of a negotiation and points to the capacity of the agent (MB MPs in this case) to verbalize disagreement.

On the issue of the Parties Court and the Emergency Law, the statements "calls on the abolishment of the Parties Court," "calling for abolishing the emergency law," and "calling for…unconditional freedom of creating political parties" express the agent's (MB MPs) demands—the statements manifest the agent's disagreement towards the Parties Court and the Emergency Law, hence the act of calling for their "abolishment." The final statement expresses the agent's demand and need for "freedom," qualified by the use of the adjective "unconditional."

Portrayal of relationship and communication between Egyptian MPs, including MB MPs, and Western agents (US Congress, European delegation). The portrayal of this relationship and communication is inconsistent. The discourse around this issue at times features acts and qualifiers such as "will meet," "previous visit," and "welcomed," which are clear and direct, insinuating that meetings between delegations from the West and the

Egyptian MPs, including MB MPs, have taken place before, will take place in future, are ongoing and appreciated. To add, the short phrase "MB MPs and the Congress delegation" although does not present any comprehensive information, but the use of the conjunction "and" insinuates the MB MPs' association with the US Congress delegation—a Western agent.

In some instances though the discourse lacks any clear assurance. "Egypt must have an important role in order to establish a dialogue" and "MB Parliamentary bloc confirmed that it does not object to visiting US Congress and contacting it" show that communication is under consideration. Specifically, the use of phrases "Egypt…must have an important role" and "does not object" complicate understanding, especially of the MB Parliamentary bloc's stance towards communication. The MB Parliamentary bloc states that a "dialogue" can be established when Egypt has an important role, thus introducing a condition and prerequisite while renouncing full responsibility and commitment towards communication; also, the use of litotes "does not object" creates confusion about the MB Parliamentary bloc's true intent. Nevertheless, the paradox must be noted that the primary act of the agent, the MB Parliamentary bloc, in the second statement is "confirmed," an act that insinuates certainty.

Human rights and fundamental values. The statements "mercy, justice, equity, human rights as well as respect and honoring pledges and treaties," "MB believes in democracy," and "MB advocates democracy and transparency which enjoin rotation of power and rights of citizenship," in their directness and presence of acts like "honoring" and "advocating" point to the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood not only upholds these values and rights, but also presents some details and clarity regarding what they entail; in other words, these are not abstract ideals.

Student protests. Students in general are portrayed as discontented, and they actively and fearlessly take it upon themselves to show their dissent. For instance, "a sit-in they [students] staged in protest at the situations that the universities are witnessing" and "there is no harm in sit-ins" feature "sit-in" as instrument, and qualifiers "in protest" and "no harm" point to students' discontent, dynamism, and fearlessness. However, the source or agent of the discontent is not directly stated.

Palestine. In terms of Palestine, the "MB Parliamentary bloc called on the Egyptian government to do more efforts for the Palestinian cause" shows that the MB Parliamentary bloc believes the Egyptian government is not doing enough, and that the MB is an apologist for the Palestinian cause. The act of "calling on" and the adjective "more" in "do more efforts" clearly and directly portray the Egyptian government as inefficient, show the MB Parliamentary bloc to be active and influential, and position the MB Parliamentary bloc and the Egyptian government in opposition.

Miscellaneous. There are some miscellaneous issues that could not be grouped under one umbrella scenario. Yet, they too contribute to manifest the Egyptian MB worldview. The statement "MB Parliamentary bloc confirms its support to the journalists" is not only informative, but also throws light on the MB bloc's supportive stance towards journalists; the directness of the act and phrase "confirms its support" is evidence to this claim. Also, "MB Parliamentary bloc stated that the group hasn't made its mind over its main candidates" seems to present the information about the MB Parliamentary bloc's status on candidates, but the statement could actually be a euphemistic way of evading commitment and sharing of the bloc's true decision.

Several statements merely inform. For instance, "no MB MP in the meeting scheduled to be held today," "Shura Council elections will be held scheduled in late April (2007)," and "to task the Human Rights Committee to schedule meetings to survey and discuss the violations committed" show that one important act being performed is that of "scheduling" (an act that denotes some kind of planning). However, no agent is directly associated with it; in the last statement although the Human Rights Committee is associated with the act of "scheduling," some other agent, unknown here, is "task"ing it to perform the act. Thus, these statements inform—that the "Shura Council elections will be held," and that "violations" are being committed and the Human Rights Committee can help in that regard through "surveys and discussions"—and they demonstrate planning, but they do not manifest any other information.

Other informative statements are, "El Baradei [*sic*] has called on all political movements and trends, intellectuals and scholars, to converge with him" and "the MB stances are approved by the Copts." These point to El-Baradei's call for convergence, and the Copts' support for the MB stances; nevertheless, context for both comments remain undisclosed.

To sum up. In this section the MB Parliamentary bloc and MB MPs stand out as significant agents. Other agents are the MB as an organization, the US congress, and, similar to the earlier sections of this study, some generalized groups. Statements, specifically press statements feature as most frequently used instruments, and these are seen to be used by MB MPs as well as Egyptian regime associates. One of the major issues in this section is the portrayal of the Egyptian regime; it is portrayed negatively, specifically, as dictatorial. The MB MPs and the Parliamentary bloc are presented to be in opposition to the Egyptian

regime, and in fact, function as an active opposition that holds significant clout. Preoccupation with amendments, bills, laws—necessary instruments for political reform—is manifest, and both the regime and the MB Parliamentary bloc are seen to be active in the area of political reform. In addition, by using the issue of amendments as backdrop, the MB is seen voicing disagreement, criticizing, presenting conditions and modifications, making demands, negotiating, boycotting, and rejecting with respect to the Egyptian regime. Yet another major issue is the portrayal of the relationship and communication between Egyptian MPs, including MB MPs, and Western agents; this portrayal is inconsistent, with stances varying from one context to another.

As regards the minor issues, insinuations are made towards upholding certain fundamental rights and values, and an effort at qualifying and defining the stated values is also manifest. University students are portrayed to carry clout when they voice their discontent and act upon their ideals. In terms of Palestine, the positioning of the MB as an apologist for the Palestinian cause is clear, and discontent towards the Egyptian government's lack of effort towards the Palestinian cause is also expressed. In addition, there are some miscellaneous issues that feature in this section as well, which could be termed merely informational. Finally, the ambiguity characteristic of the earlier sections is manifest in "Parliament" as well.

This summary closes this chapter, wherein I have presented the details of the analysis, and the symbolic dramas unearthed through analysis of clusters. In the following chapter I answer the two research questions of this study.

Chapter VI: Answering the Research Questions: MB Ideology and Rhetorical Moves

Analysis of clusters that emerged from the three sections, *MB versus Al-Qaeda*, *MB and the West*, and *Parliament* brought forth the main agents, primary agencies, the major and minor issues, and consequently, the symbolic dramas manifest in each of the sections; these findings, or symbolic scenarios, were discussed in depth in Chapter 5. These findings formed the basis for answering the research questions of this study:

> **RQ1**: What is the ideology manifest in the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian
>
> Muslim Brotherhood in www.ikhwanweb.com?

> **RQ2**: What rhetorical strategies provide support for this ideology?

In this chapter, I perform Task IIIB while maintaining continuity with the tasks performed in Chapter 5, and answer the research questions. Thus, I move from the symbolic scenarios to the big picture—the ideology—and present the rhetorical strategies that support it.

Dialectical Contradictions: A Worldview in Flux

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric manifests *dialectical contradictions*. Borrowing from a concept within communication theory—relational dialectics—and applying it to social processes and movements, this concept shows that communication patterns in relationships are seen as a result of endemic dialectical tensions, or contradictions (Baxter, 1988; Rawlins, 1988). To elaborate, in relationships, when making decisions, individuals, groups, movements, etc., give voice to multiple viewpoints, positioning, and desires that often contradict each other (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011). When understood in terms of social processes, instances such as a group or movement fluctuating between disclosure and secretiveness, between periods of honest and open communication (Miller, 2005), and between ambiguity and equivocation are manifestations of dialectical

contradictions. The English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood reveals endemic dialectical tensions, which characterize its ideology.

Four core contradictions are identified in the Egyptian MB rhetoric. The first three are consistent with core tensions identified in previous research (Cheney et al., 2011):

- *Openness and Closedness*—The desire to be open and share information versus the desire to be private

- *Autonomy and Connectedness*—The need to separate to maintain uniqueness versus the desire to have ties and connections with others

- *Equality and Inequality*—The desire to be considered as equals versus the desire to develop levels of superiority

The fourth core tension is unique to the Egyptian MB rhetoric:

- *Possession and Deficiency*—The need to portray what *we* have versus the desire to manifest deficiency, or what *we* do not have

In the following sections I elaborate on these core tensions to answer the first research question. In other words, after discussing the dialectical tensions, supported by rhetorical exemplars from Ikhwanweb, I embark upon naming and detailing the ideology. Thereafter, I specify the rhetorical moves that manifest the ideology to address the second research question.

Openness and closedness. This dialectical tension, to reiterate, manifests a desire to be open and share information versus a desire to be private and secretive. It is predominant in the Egyptian MB rhetoric, and is noticeable across all three sections of Ikhwanweb analyzed in this study. To elaborate, the dialectical contradiction of openness and closedness is evident

in the Egyptian MB's implicitness associated with the *Islamist identity*, in the portrayal of complete opposition towards Al-Qaeda yet remaining evasive on the details of the axis of difference, and in the expression of what the ideal society for the Egyptian MB looks like while keeping fundamental details that characterize this ideal society unnamed and unexplained. Each of these open and closed tensions is further elaborated.

  Islamists: To be or not to be. The English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian MB explicitly and clearly identifies it as a *moderate Islamic movement* and *a Muslim movement*, and implicitly through innuendo as *Islamists*. Thus, being qualified as moderate in its overall stance and Islamic in its orientation is the Egyptian MB's clear choice and the identity and image it openly promotes. As stated in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2011), the moderate stance in politics and religion is one that distances itself from extremism, radicalism, and any partisan affinities. The Islamic identity emphasizes a religious positioning by the Egyptian MB.

  Interestingly, although the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization is often characterized as an Islamist organization (Biot Report, 2005; Leiken & Brooke, 2007), the Egyptian MB rhetoric does not explicitly avow the Islamist identity. Nevertheless, innuendos abound around the issue of Islamism. In the rhetoric analyzed, several instances featuring implications and insinuations associate the Egyptian MB with Islamists or "Muslims who draw upon the belief, symbols, and language of Islam to inspire, shape, and animate political activity" (Pelletreau, Address at the Council on Foreign Relations, 1996). In this implicitness lies the element of the closed, if we consider implicitness as a form of informational closedness (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) in the way indirectness (Buller & Burgoon, 1994; O'Hair & Cody, 1994) is.

To explicate with examples, the openness surrounding the Egyptian MB's *Muslim*, *Islamic*, and *moderate* identities is discerned in the mention of qualifiers in: "Muslim movements as the Muslim Brotherhood" and "the file they [Egyptian authorities] wanted to use against the moderate Islamic movement [MB]." The association with Islamists, however, is implied; the statements "if Brotherhood came to power," "should Brotherhood come to power," "Islamists will eventually come to power," and "Western presence in the region will change if the lslamists were to come to power," do not show any explicit identification between Brotherhood and Islamists, but a clear association in the use of "power" as the fulcrum about which both Brotherhood and Islamists pivot. This by implication points to the Brotherhood sharing an aspect of the Islamist *ethos*.

Furthermore, in the Egyptian MB rhetoric Islamists are portrayed positively; at numerous instances the rhetoric presents a defense and support for Islamism; Islamists are also depicted to be influential and powerful, with the clout to affect even Western agents. Exemplars are "Islamists will not impose their beliefs," "the Islamists believe also that the Muslims have the freedom," "Islamists themselves in their inability to communicate and defend their agenda," and "Western presence in the region will change if the Islamists were to come to power."

These dynamics point to the portrayal of the Egyptian MB's preoccupation with Islamism and its core tension and dilemma surrounding positioning itself as an Islamist organization. In other words, *to be or not to be* with an *Islamist* identity becomes a crucial issue for the Egyptian MB's positioning of itself. The core tension of openness and closedness is manifest herein. On the one hand, the Egyptian MB rhetoric features several

explicit expressions of its moderate and religious identities, and on the other implications of

an Islamist ethos, yet never an open avowal of it.

We are different…but exactly how? There is no ambiguity present in the Egyptian

MB rhetoric surrounding the opposition it exhibits towards Al-Qaeda and Ayman Al-

Zawahiri. And although Ayman Al-Zawahiri features as an important agent in Ikhwanweb,

he is presented as an agent performing negative acts, and with negative ideas and intent.

Certain instances of this are, "Al-Zawahiri was never a member of the Muslim Brotherhood"

and "Al-Zawahiri urges Hamas reject elections [a positive component in the Egyptian MB

rhetoric]." Thus, opposition and negative portrayal of Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri

characterizes the relationship between the Egyptian MB and Al-Qaeda. Also, the Egyptian

MB states that the primary point of difference between it and Al-Qaeda is in their respective

ideologies, for example, "there is difference between MB's ideology and that of the Al-

Qaeda network" and "our [MB] ideology is not the same as Al-Qaeda's."

However, no description or definition to qualify factors that entail the *difference* in

ideology is openly stated. Thus, all factors that get portrayed as negatives in the Egyptian

MB rhetoric and form the basis on which Al-Qaeda or Al-Zawahiri are presented

unflatteringly become implicit pointers to the ideological difference. The negatives are Al-

Qaeda's use of violence and oppression and carrying a foreign agenda; its act of attacking

resistance factions; its creed of the *absolute enemy*, and its questionable practice and

conceptualization of jihad. The following statements exemplify this: "justifying their [Al-

Qaeda] oppression and their use of force," "Al-Qaeda network in Iraq has a foreign agenda,"

"Al-Qaeda network in Iraq attacked all resistance factions," "Al-Qaeda's method is based on

the absolute enemy," and "What kind of jihad has the Al-Qaeda network claimed to have

done?" By implication, the Egyptian MB exhibits a departure from these beliefs and praxis attributed to Al-Qaeda.

Moreover, several of these concepts and issues vis-à-vis Al-Qaeda lack context and elaboration. For instance, the nature of foreign agenda, the identity of specific resistance factions, the definition and description of the absolute enemy, and the nature of jihad practised by Al-Qaeda are issues that remain elusive; as a result, the ideological difference aforementioned falls short of reinforcement.

Therefore, although the oppositional stance and a negative portrayal of Al-Qaeda are explicit and unambiguous, and by implication the general areas of difference can be outlined, the distinct nature and context of the differences that separate the Egyptian MB ideology from that of Al-Qaeda remain unstated. The audience becomes aware of the opposition, but what explicitly makes the Egyptian MB different remains evasive. This contradiction points to the tension between openness and closedness, that is, the need to be open about its oppositional stance, yet the necessity to keep some aspects unrevealed and somewhat implicit.

Our ideal society…or a semblance of it? The Egyptian MB rhetoric presents several pointers that enable interpretation of what an ideal society looks like. This society is based on Islam and is open to adopt new concepts and praxis, such as modernization, but on Islamic terms. The type of government this society promotes is one that supports democracy, elections, non-violent constitutional means, popular choice, and political reform. This society does not believe in use of violence without context, and promotes human rights and values.

The Egyptian MB rhetoric presents an all-encompassing, and influential image and vision of Islam; in addition, Islam promotes the path of righteousness, it is somewhat rigid in

its support of methods based on Shari'a, or the Islamic law, and it is tolerant and peace loving, opposed to violence and terrorism. These are manifest in such statements as, "Islam, as Al Banna [*sic*] says, is a comprehensive system," "Islam bans that resisters deviate from the tenets of righteous Shari'a to adopt methods which are totally rejected by Islam," and "adopt right tenets of Islam and reject violence." Although based on Islam, concepts and praxis not rooted in Islam are embraced in this society. But these are accepted and contextualized in Islamic terms. For instance, modernization is not opposed yet its emphasis on the *materialist philosophy* and *atheism* are rejected. To exemplify, "Islam refuses that aspect of modernization which believes in the materialistic philosophy" and "[Islamists] does not adopt that feature of modernization which calls for atheism." In this manner, although certain versions and praxis of modernization are opposed, an Islamic version of modernization is espoused.

Also, the Egyptian MB rhetoric shows support for democracy and transparency, which enjoin rotation of political power and rights of citizenship. This is seen in "MB advocates democracy and transparency which enjoin rotation of power and rights of citizenship." It rejects power and position acquired by undemocratic means, such as inheritance, as in the case of the Mubarak regime; it also rejects farce in the name of elections, insinuating the pointlessness of the Shura council elections in Egypt. For instance, "reject any person to undemocratically come to power" and "the Shura Council elections [see footnote 37 in Chapter 5] can't be considered elections." The Egyptian MB rhetoric shows support for elections and the power of popular choice; it also promotes non-violent constitutional means and the presence of a robust opposition for healthy governance and political reform. Some exemplars are, "the popular choice if made, nobody could stop it,"

"[MB] called for holding early elections," and "[MB] believes in non-violent constitutional strife." Important to mention here is that the Egyptian MB distances itself from MB hardliners who oppose democracy, as clearly stated in, "MB hardliners [see footnote 12 in Chapter 5] to block the movement's [MB] evolution in a more democratic direction."

The Egyptian MB rhetoric also stresses that citizens of an ideal society distance themselves from violence in general and uphold peace and peaceful means. Its rhetoric gives an idea, mostly by implication, of what violence entails—violence has its own ideological basis, and is dependent on several factors; it entails destruction of property, criminal and savage attacks, massacres, oppression and use of force, extremist tendencies associated with religion, political violence, criminal acts, targeting of civilians in armed conflicts, racial discrimination, and terrorism. Certain statements that manifest this are, "destroying properties, something the MB fully rejects," "[MB] denounce and condemn the extremist and violent religious trends," "Islam prohibits military attacks against civilians and hospitals," as against "peace is choice over extremism," "we [MB] will maintain our peaceful method," and "we [MB] still have our means for a peaceful change."

However, violence is portrayed to be context-specific; that is, a total rejection of violence and violent means is not promoted. For instance, "several factors that lead to violence" and "Morsi [*sic*] [a senior MB leader] pointed out that the violent incidents allegedly committed by the MB, are separate and individual incidents." Support is shown towards moderation, opposition is featured towards extremism, and it is stated that peaceful change demands time and does not happen fast. Some instances from the Egyptian MB rhetoric are, "allow discussions," "moderate movements, like the MB," and "Morsi [*sic*] pointed out that peaceful change does not happen overnight." The Egyptian MB rhetoric does

not define what jihad entails, but shows support for it and lays emphasis on the fact that jihad

and violence can be mutually exclusive. This is manifest in the statements, "any way other

than the method of jihad will only lead to loss and failure" and "jihad movement will emerge

again but in a peaceful method." Mercy, justice, equity, human rights, and respect and honor

for pledges and treaties, are values that are espoused in this society, as seen in "mercy,

justice, equity, human rights as well as respect and honoring pledges and treaties." In

addition, all these values and rights are guaranteed to all citizens, irrespective of position or

religious differences; an example in relation to Copts [see footnote 18 in Chapter 5] is

"practice their [Copts] rights in picking the reference they like."

Despite the pointers that mark the kind of society the Egyptian MB rhetoric espouses,

many of these inferences are drawn based on implications. Thereby portraying lack of

openness and rendering questions such as: what does jihad for the Egyptian MB really look

like?; what does democracy explicitly entail in a society based on Islam?; how does Islam,

Shari'a, and democracy work harmoniously together? These are some questions that remain

unanswered.

Along with the absence of answers to these elemental concerns, the pointers in the

Egyptian MB rhetoric that show that the Egyptian MB society strongly opposes foreign

interference, promotes Islamism and associates it with power, cautions Western agents

against Islamists, and insinuates establishing a *worldwide Islamic Caliphate* [see footnote 15

in Chapter 5]—all of which lack context—call into question the authenticity of many of the

Egyptian MB's intentions and positionings in the portrayal of its ideal society. Exemplars

are: "the MB is against all forms of foreign interference and domination," "Islamists will

eventually come to power," and "establishing of a world-wide Islamic Caliphate." This

scenario points to the dialectical contradiction of openness and closedness; the rhetoric provides a portrayal of the Egyptian MB's ideal society, and at the same time keeps certain fundamental aspects characterizing that ideal society hidden and unexplained, thus raising concern whether the portrayal is a mere semblance.

To summarize, the Egyptian MB rhetoric portrays the openness and closedness dialectic through: (a) explicit avowal of a moderate stance and its Islamic/religious identity, and implicit pointers to its Islamist ethos, without any open assertion of the Islamist identity; (b) show of opposition towards Al-Qaeda, but conspicuous absence of context and clarifications that could ascertain and denote the axis of difference; and (c) portrayal of an ideal society, which upon closer analysis seems to be a semblance of it. In these explicit/implicit rhetorical dynamics the dialectical contradiction of openness and closedness finds expression.

Autonomy and connectedness. This dialectical tension manifests the need to separate to maintain uniqueness versus the desire to have ties and connections with others. In the Egyptian MB rhetoric, it features primarily in the Egyptian MB's portrayal of its relationship with Hamas; the sections *MB versus Al-Qaeda* and *MB and the West* primarily present this scenario. The Egyptian MB expresses support for Hamas, and there is an element of *unconditional* manifest in this support; however, on the issue of terrorism the former disconnects itself from Hamas, thus exhibiting the dialectic of autonomy and connectedness.

If an explicit depiction of support and friendship is brought to question, Hamas unquestioningly stands out as the Egyptian MB's favorite ally. In the Egyptian MB rhetoric, unequivocal support is manifest towards Hamas. By positioning and associating Hamas positively with *substances* the Egyptian MB qualifies positive, and dissociating Hamas from

anything the Egyptian MB portrays as negative, the Egyptian MB rhetoric manifests a consubstantial relationship between Hamas and the Egyptian MB. Burke (1945; 1950) uses the term *consubstantial* to describe the sort of association where two entities are united in substance through common ideas, attitudes, and material possessions that leads to identification. The positive stance the Egyptian MB and Hamas share towards elections and the Palestinian people, and the negative stance towards Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri are instances of their consubstantial relationship. Examples from the Egyptian MB rhetoric portraying this relationship are, "[MB] defended participating in the election" and "Al-Zawahiri urges Hamas reject elections," which show that both the MB and Hamas support elections; in addition, "our [MB] ideology is not the same as Al-Qaeda's" and "Hamas ideology is miles away from the ideology of Al-Qaeda" manifest their opposition towards Al-Qaeda.

The expression of support does not stop at consubstantiality; like a supportive ally, the Egyptian MB shares its resources with Hamas. Providing a forum in Ikhwanweb for Hamas agents such as Osama Hamdan and Dr. Moussa Abu Marzouk, to express their ideas and promote Hamas views, stands as an example. A statement reflecting this is, "Hamdan, a Hamas leader and representative in Lebanon said to Ikhwanweb that Al-Zawahiri's statements and criticism to Hamas movement will never have any impact."

Nevertheless, although the Egyptian MB rhetoric shows support, a prominent instance of distancing from Hamas is decried in the Egyptian MB's positioning of Hamas as a terrorist organization. The use of *although* in "Muslim Brotherhood supports Hamas although it is a terrorist organization" illustrates distancing from Hamas. Hence, the unconditional support of

the Egyptian MB for Hamas manifests itself in not sharing consubstantiality with Hamas on the issue of terrorism, yet being supportive of the latter.

On another note, the US and the European Union (among others) classify Hamas as a terrorist organization (BBC News, 2003; Guardia, 2003; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003; Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook, 2005; US Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005). In this regard, the Egyptian MB is in agreement with the US, the European Union, and countries that identify Hamas as a terrorist organization. Thus, despite being unconditional, the autonomy and connectedness aspect of dialectic contradiction comes forth in the Egyptian MB openly professing its support for Hamas, but maintaining distance and its unique stance on the question of terrorism.

Equality and inequality. The equality and inequality dialectic exhibits the core tension between the desire to be considered equals versus the desire to develop levels of superiority. This dialectic finds manifestation in the Egyptian MB's relation to Western agents, and is prominent in the *MB and the West* and *Parliament* sections. The Egyptian MB manifests the desire to cooperate and have dialogue with Western agents, thereby exhibiting the desire to be considered equal. On the other hand, by showing inconsistency towards the issue of dialogue with Western agents and by taking on an advisorial stance towards the latter at times, the Egyptian MB also places itself in a position of superiority.

To elaborate, at times a distinct and positive approach towards dialogue and cooperation with Western agents is explicit. For instance, "We [MB] believe that the dialogue with the West is the ideal method." Sometimes the Egyptian MB rhetoric presents the positive idea that Western agents cannot and should not be seen as a monolith, and it is faulty to approach *the West* as a totality. An exemplar of this stance is, "have to come to

realize that different views can be present in one single Western society." Thus, cooperation with certain Western agents appears desirable.

On the other hand, in some other instances the attitude manifest towards Western agents ranges from uncertainty to skepticism to strong opposition to retaliation to an impasse. In the expression of all these non-conforming and pro-active attitudes, the Egyptian MB exhibits the exercise of agency, a position of power, and therefore, a certain level of superiority. In fact, this range of attitudes exhibited by the Egyptian MB calls into question Western agents' *actual* intent towards democracy promotion, respect for human rights, reform efforts, and support for Islamists, in the context of Egypt. Some instances of this in the rhetoric are, "West continues to support undemocratic regimes," "US government is ready to allow human rights violations," "US government allows violations from the Egyptian government," "[MB] do not believe US efforts for reform were sincere," and "West must not pressure regimes to curb Islamists."

Also, the Egyptian MB cautions Western agents and makes advisory gestures to the latter on issues such as democracy promotion, the necessity of being transparent and curbing support for authoritarian regimes, and understanding the consequences of Islamist victory in the Middle East. Exemplars of these cautionary and advisory rhetoric are, "the West has to come to a realization," "US should support any government democratically elected," and "Western presence in the region will change if the Islamists were to come to power."

The dialectic characteristic of the Egyptian MB's relationship with Western agents is noticeable also in the portrayal of the relationship between the Egyptian MB Members of Parliament/MB Parliamentary bloc and Western agents, and the stance toward dialogue between the two. At times a coming together is evident, and at others an ambiguous attitude

towards the possibility of dialogue and positive relationship with Western agents is displayed. To elaborate, the short phrase "MB MPs and the Congress delegation" does not present any comprehensive information, but the use of the conjunction "and" insinuates the MB MPs' association with the US Congress delegation, a Western agent. In this association the desire to be considered equals is manifest. On the other hand, the use of litotes "does not object" in the statement "MB Parliamentary bloc does not object to visiting US Congress and contacting it," raises questions about the MB MPs true intent; litotes, as defined in Chapter 5, is the expression of an affirmative by negating its contrary, and is used to create uncertainty and ambiguity around an issue. The portrayal of uncertainty and ambiguity can create confusion and render Western agents helpless; in this manner the Egyptian MB MPs exercise agency and exhibit a level of superiority.

Thus, not only the Egyptian MB as a movement, but also its representatives in the Egyptian political scene portray the dialectic of equality and inequality. The Egyptian MB and the MB MPs at times explicitly empathize and associate itself/themselves with Western agents, and in the process show the desire for cooperation and equality. Yet, at other instances, it/they voice disagreement and opposition, or advise and extend caution, as regards Western agents thus exercising agency and exhibiting a level of superiority. This scenario presents the dialectical contradiction of equality and inequality.

Possession and deficiency. This core tension exhibits the desire to portray possession, that is, what *we* have versus the desire to manifest deficiency, or what *we* do not have. This dialectic finds expression in the Egyptian MB rhetoric across all three sections, specifically in the portrayal of its relationship with the Egyptian regime, and the resources it sees available and unavailable to it.

The theatre of conflict—the Egyptian political scene. Before embarking on the dialectic, it must be mentioned that the Egyptian MB rhetoric portrays the Egyptian political scene as the overarching setting where the Egyptian MB and the Hosni Mubarak regime display a relationship of tension. Within this setting, the portrayal of agency the Egyptian MB holds vis-à-vis the Egyptian regime is where the dialectical tension between possession and deficiency is manifest.

To elaborate, the Egyptian regime frequently takes measures to attack the dignity and image of the Egyptian MB; the latter is used by the regime as an instrument and excuse to prevent serious reform. Some examples that corroborate this are, "the file they [Egyptian authorities] wanted to use against the moderate Islamic movement [MB]," "the Egyptian media [working under the regime] defames the MB with political violence," and "Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak conveniently use the Brotherhood as an excuse to prevent serious reform." To clarify, the Mubarak regime uses the discourse of violence and positions the Egyptian MB as an extremist organization to eject it from the political scene. In this manner, the Egyptian regime hopes to gain empathy and clout with Western agents, as well as rule unhindered and unquestioned in the absence of a significant opposition force, the Egyptian MB. This scenario portrays the Egyptian MB to be in a position of compromised agency.

On another note, the Egyptian regime's efforts at *demonizing* the Egyptian MB, and associating it with extremist tendencies have implications. They imply that the dynamics of the Egyptian political scene can serve as motivation that shapes much of the Egyptian MB ideology and praxis, specifically in its relationship with Western agents, its stance towards militant fundamentalist organizations, and its goals and actions (this is discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation).

Reverting to the core tension of possession and deficiency, the Egyptian MB rhetoric does not portray it as completely devoid of agency though, with respect to the Hosni Mubarak regime. Through its representatives in the Egyptian Parliament, the MB MPs, the Egyptian MB makes demands, shows disagreement, and clarifies misconceptions. The MB MPs/Parliamentary bloc are/is not portrayed to be passive in their/its role as oppositional force to the Egyptian regime. By using the issue of amendments, bills, and laws, necessary tools for political reform, as basis, the MB MPs voice disagreement, criticize, present conditions and modifications, make demands, negotiate, boycott, and reject. In this sense the Egyptian MB possesses agency. Some instances that depict the possession of agency are: "calling for abolishing the emergency law [see footnote 31 in Chapter 5] and unconditional freedom of creating political parties," "MB MPs, independents, Karama Party [see footnote 32 in Chapter 5] held a press conference in which they declared boycotting House sessions and rejecting President Mubarak's proposed constitutional amendments," "the MB Parliamentary bloc confirms to place the bill [Parties Law bill; see footnote 33 in Chapter 5] under scrutiny to evaluate its feasibility," and "the MB Parliamentary bloc issued a statement rejecting the judiciary bill [see footnote 34 in Chapter 5] proposed by the government."

In summary, the Egyptian MB portrays lack of agency when the Hosni Mubarak regime attacks its dignity and image and tries to defame it with the intent to oust it from the Egyptian political scene. On the other hand, the Egyptian MB representatives in the Egyptian Parliament, the MB MPs, not only function as active opposition to the regime, but also participate zealously in political reform efforts. This manifests the dialectic of deficiency and possession, wherein, the Egyptian MB organization portrays compromised agency, but at the same time the MB MPs exhibit exercise of agency.

What we have, and what we have not. The Egyptian MB rhetoric manifests the core tension of possession and deficiency also through the desire to portray that resources are available to them versus the desire to portray that they are deficient in certain resources. By broad generalization, two types of resources manifest in the rhetoric: (a) social; and (b) political. The Egyptian MB rhetoric exhibits possession and deficiency on both counts.

Ikhwanweb and *MB representatives* stand out as two significant and beneficial social resources the Egyptian MB owns. Ikhwanweb functions as a forum for voicing dissent, opposition, support, and caution, for conjecture, and for providing information and clarification. MB representatives are portrayed as credible and correct channels of information dissemination about the Egyptian MB. Two examples depicting this are, "MB said in a statement to Ikhwanweb to push the peace process" and "MB representatives are credible and have the right contacts," respectively.

The Egyptian MB is also portrayed to be functioning in a society that has a fair degree of *social capital*. According to Putnam (2000), social capital refers to "the connections among individuals' social networks [whom people know] and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p. 19). It is an elemental component to building and maintaining democracy. The presence of social capital is manifest in the Egyptian MB rhetoric in the portrayal of: a society where Egyptian citizens and different religious groups/movements, such as Islamic movements and Coptic Christians, are not in brutal opposition to one another, can exercise rights and in certain instances even support one another; a society where journalists and human rights committees are present; and a society where students and discontented groups can voice their opposition, through sit-ins for

instance, and reformists such as El-Baradei [see footnote 29 in Chapter 5] can be socially active.

Examples that point to this portrayal are, "[Egyptian] people have the genuine right," "they [Copts] are citizens who have all the citizenship rights," "the MB stances are approved by the Copts," "MB and human rights organizations staunchly opposed it [anti-terrorism amendments; see footnote 27 in Chapter 5]," "MB Parliamentary bloc confirms its support to the journalists," "a sit-in they [students] staged in protest at the situations that the universities are witnessing," and "El Baradei [*sic*] has called on all political movements and trends, intellectuals and scholars, to converge with him."

On the other hand, the social resource that the Egyptian MB lacks is *a good image*. The rhetoric presents this in "the Egyptian media defames the MB with political violence" and "the Egyptian regime attacks it by portraying it as an extremist movement." Connected to and consequent to this negative image is another intangible resource that the Egyptian MB fails to own—*understanding*. The Egyptian MB rhetoric shows that prejudices and negative predispositions are attached to it primarily due to lack of understanding of its goals and actions, especially by Western agents. The lack of understanding is manifest in, "the US administration believes the untrue allegations about the MB."

From the point of view of political resources, a vital resource of positive implication the Egyptian MB owns is the *MB Parliamentary bloc* within the Egyptian regime, wherein MB MPs function as an active opposition, participate in facilitating political reform, advance and encourage dialogue and communication with Western agents, and represent the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood organization. By using instruments and tools such as press statements, interpellations, questions, sit-ins, dialogue, amendments, bills, and laws, MB MPs exercise

influence and *act* within the Egyptian political system. Thus, in an authoritarian environment, and despite being outlawed as an organization, by fielding independent candidates the Egyptian MB is able to find representation in the Egyptian Parliament and voice within the Egyptian political scene.

At the same time, *a dictatorial regime* supported by Western agents also brings in the element of deficiency for the Egyptian MB organization in the political sphere. "[Egyptian] regime may think of using oppression as a counterforce" points to the dictatorial attitude of the Egyptian regime, and "while they [Western governments] continue to support regimes that suppress," shows Western governments' support for suppressive regimes such as Hosni Mubarak and his regime. In addition to being oppressive, the Egyptian regime attacks the Egyptian Brotherhood's image by portraying it as an extremist movement that is responsible for promoting political violence. In this manner it maneuvers to oust the Egyptian MB from the political scene. And although elections are in place, the Shura Council elections are claimed to be a façade, with the power to govern and hold office resting mainly on inheritance instead of participatory democratic practices. This is manifest in the statements, "the Shura Council elections can't be considered elections" and "Gamal Mubarak [Hosni Mubarak's son] come to power?" Thus, a dictatorial, corrupt, and conniving regime, with Western agents as allies constricts and represses the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

To summarize, in the Egyptian MB's portrayal of what it possesses and what it does not, a core tension is manifest in the rhetoric. Through MB representatives in the Egyptian Parliament the MB organization finds voice, and is able to exercise a certain amount of agency as an opposition force to the Egyptian regime, within the Egyptian political scene. However, the Hosni Mubarak regime vilifies the MB organization by promoting the latter as

an extremist and violent Islamist group, thus creating a negative image and misconceptions about it, with the intent to demonize the MB in the mind of Western agents as well as eject it from the Egyptian political scene. Furthermore, the rhetoric portrays the Egyptian MB's existence within a society with a certain degree of social capital, and at the same time, it is also portrayed to function within the framework of a political regime that is dictatorial, which has a negative impact on social capital. This brings the discussion on dialectical contradictions to an end, and leads this study towards formulation of the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, as manifest in its rhetoric in Ikhwanweb.

The ideology. To reiterate, for the purpose of this study ideology has been defined as beliefs a social group or movement shares, through systems of representation: (a) to interpret, make sense of, and define some aspect of life; and (b) to monitor their social practices—these beliefs are acquired, used, and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups, in complex social structures (van Dijk, 1998). Ideology entails a social and a cognitive component, and it is not prejudged as essentially dominant and/or negative.

With this definition of ideology as my anchor and based on my analysis of the Egyptian MB's rhetoric in Ikhwanweb, I contend that the Egyptian MB's ideology as manifest in its rhetoric is one that albeit entails certain beliefs, values, and goals, but is predominantly characterized by dialectical tensions. The rhetorical representation of these tensions problematizes understanding of the Egyptian MB's true intent. That is, ambiguities, tensions, inconsistencies, and incongruities render nebulous the true objectives, purposes, and motives of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The question of its strategic or long-term goals versus its tactical or short-term maneuvers for immediate gain becomes an important one to

consider. To address these concerns I elaborate on some of the beliefs and values that have emerged following analysis, as well as focus on dialectics characterizing them.

- The Egyptian MB considers its *moderate* and *Muslim* identities to be significant, and does not equivocate ascribing itself as such. As aforementioned, the moderate stance in politics and religion is one that distances itself from extremism, radicalism, and any partisan affinities; the Islamic identity emphasizes a religious positioning. Thus, the Egyptian MB does not promote extremism, radicalism, or partisan behavior and beliefs, and holds its Islamic identity, and religion, to be significant.

- Implications and insinuations abound that show the Egyptian MB's support for Islamists, or "Muslims who draw upon the belief, symbols, and language of Islam to inspire, shape, and animate political activity" (Pelletreau, Address at the Council on Foreign Relations, 1996). However, there are no explicit and clear ascriptions of itself as *Islamist* in the rhetoric. Thus, although the Egyptian MB believes in the coming together of Islam and politics, and the importance of Islam in shaping its political activity, it holds the term *Islamist* as a contentious one.

- The Egyptian MB considers Islam to be all-encompassing; it is a religion that promotes the path of righteousness, is tolerant and peace-loving, and opposed to violence and terrorism. The Egyptian MB is somewhat rigid around support of methods based on Shari'a, or the Islamic law, and it embraces concepts and praxis not rooted in Islam, but contextualizes them in Islamic terms. For instance, modernization is not opposed, yet its focus on the *materialist philosophy* and *atheism* is rejected.

- Violence is considered to be context-specific, although extremism is completely opposed, and moderation, peace, and peaceful means, are strongly espoused. The belief that peaceful change demands time and does not happen fast is also promoted. Support is shown for non-violent jihad.

- Support for a political system that is democratic, transparent, enjoins rotation of power, and safeguards rights of citizenship is promoted. The Egyptian MB rhetoric rejects political power and position gained through undemocratic means such as inheritance; it shows support for elections and popular choice; and it promotes non-violent constitutional methods. The Egyptian MB believes in the presence of an active political opposition in the Parliament that can ensure healthy, effective, and democratic governance, and political reform. Also, the Egyptian MB explicitly distances itself from MB hardliners who oppose democracy.

- The Egyptian MB believes in promoting social capital, an elemental component to building and maintaining democracy, and creating a strong civil society. It promotes a society where Egyptian citizens and different religious groups/movements, such as Islamic movements and Coptic Christians, are not hostile towards one another and hold equal rights; a society where journalists and human rights committees are free and functional; a society where students and discontented groups can voice their opposition, and reformists can be active; and a society where technology is used as a means to promote communication and networking. Mercy, justice, equity, human rights, and respect and honor for pledges and treaties, are values that are espoused, and all these values and rights are guaranteed to all citizens, irrespective of position

or religious differences. A society marked by diversity, and where differences enhance rather than curb the healthy functioning of life; in other words, the Egyptian MB believes in a strong civil society, or "the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values….[which] commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors, and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power" (Tlanhlua, 2008, para. 1).

- The Egyptian MB separates itself ideologically from Al-Qaeda, an extremist, fundamentalist, Islamic group. By implication it can be inferred that the Egyptian MB reprimands the use of violence and oppression, holding of a foreign agenda, attack on resistance factions, creed of the absolute enemy, and questionable practice of jihad— all of which it accuses Al-Qaeda of.

- The support for Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood's arm in Palestine, is explicit. Specifically, the Egyptian MB supports and shares Hamas's positive stance towards elections and the Palestinian people, and Hamas's negative stance towards Al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, the Egyptian MB distances itself from Hamas's positive stance towards terrorism, thereby explicating that it does not support terrorism.

- The Egyptian MB rhetoric unreservedly criticizes authoritarianism and dictatorial regimes and considers Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt to be one such. It also shows discontent towards certain Western agents' acts of supporting and forming alliance with these dictatorial, corrupt, conniving regimes that constrict, tyrannize, and oppress individuals, groups, or movements, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, opposing them. Distinctly, the Egyptian MB declares that the Mubarak

regime uses the discourse of violence to position the Egyptian MB as an extremist organization with the intent to eject it from the political scene. In this manner, the Egyptian regime gains empathy with Western agents, and continues to rule unhindered and unchallenged in the absence of a significant opposition force that ensures prevention of any serious political reform. In addition, under the Hosni Mubarak regime, although elections seem to be in place they are a façade and actual power rests in inheritance. In sum, the Egyptian MB voices dissent against the authoritarian, secular, corrupt, and conniving regime headed by Hosni Mubarak and supported by certain Western agents.

- The Egyptian MB presents itself as an organization that is oppressed, demonized, and victimized by the Hosni Mubarak regime. Nevertheless, the Egyptian MB rhetoric also shows that its representatives in the Parliament, the MB MPs, are an active and apparently influential force within the Egyptian political scene. Thus, as part of the official political framework, the Egyptian MB MPs have the potential to exercise more clout and influence than the Egyptian MB as an organization can.

- The Egyptian MB expresses discontent, as aforementioned, and criticizes certain Western agents' act of supporting authoritarian regimes. Thus, the former also questions Western agents' true intent towards promotion of democratic institutions, human rights, reform, and a robust civil society. At the same time, the Egyptian MB rhetoric shows open-mindedness and flexibility by stating that the West must not be viewed and understood as a monolith, and that different Western agents have different values and goals. Extending that vein of thought the Egyptian MB believes

that dialogue and communication can be established with certain Western agents. The Egyptian MB considers it absolutely important for Western agents to gain a contextual understanding of the former's objectives and actions so that misconceptions can be cleared and prejudices can be reduced.

These issues make evident that the Egyptian MB: (a) believes in the coming together of Islam and politics and emphasizes Islam's preeminence in shaping its political activity; (b) complies with Shari'a and Islam's all-encompassing potential, and promotes foreign ideas and values following contextualization in Islamic terms; (c) believes in democratic institutions, a democratic form of government, and the importance of a robust civil society; (d) opposes extremism and distances itself from extremist, fundamentalist organizations such as Al-Qaeda; (e) supports Hamas's political aspirations and support for Palestinian people in Palestine, but rejects the former's association with terrorism; (f) supports violence only when the context demands, but believes in an altogether non-violent jihad; (g) criticizes and believes in standing up against the authoritarian, secular regime of Hosni Mubarak, which suppresses and demonizes the Egyptian MB; however, it also believes that Egyptian MB representatives in Parliament are capable of exercising more influence and agency, thereby reinforcing the need for the Egyptian MB as an organization to gain political legitimation; and (h) criticizes certain Western agents' alliance with dictatorial regimes, and questions these Western agents' true intent behind promotion of human rights, democracy, reform, and civil society in Egypt; at the same time, the Egyptian MB advances the claim that Western agents should not be seen as a monolith, and it is possible and necessary for Western agents to make efforts to come closer to the Egyptian MB and vice versa so that misconceptions and prejudices are lessened.

Although these issues are made prominent in the Egyptian MB rhetoric and detail

some significant beliefs and values held by the Egyptian MB, they are not devoid of

ambiguities and dialectical tensions: (a) how does the Egyptian MB ensure a functional

enmeshment of Islam and the inherently secular ideal of democracy? (b) how does the

Egyptian MB contextualize the Western concept of democracy in Islamic terms? (c) if Islam

is all-encompassing, and the Egyptian MB advocates Shari'a, how does it uphold the rights

of other religious groups and individuals? (d) what are the specific axes of difference, other

than extremism, that separate the Egyptian MB from Al-Qaeda? (e) how does the Egyptian

MB maintain the balance between espousing Hamas, but not the latter's support for

terrorism? (f) what are the contexts in which the Egyptian MB legitimizes the use of

violence? (g) how does it define non-violent jihad, and how is the Egyptian MB's

conceptualization of jihad separate from Al-Qaeda and other extremist, fundamentalist

organizations? (h) if the Egyptian MB gains political legitimation, with its present emphasis

on Islam and Shari'a, how can it ensure not turning Egypt into a theocracy[39] instead of a

democracy? and (i) if the Egyptian MB, as stated in its rhetoric, opposes foreign interference

in its workings, what is the nature of alliance it seeks from Western agents, or role it

envisions for the latter to play vis-à-vis Egypt?

These dialectics and ambiguities call into question the apparent ingenuity of many of

the Egyptian MB's beliefs and positionings as manifest in its rhetoric in Ikhwanweb. And

this in turn brings this discussion back to the question of the Egyptian MB's tactical versus

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[39] A form of government in which the state is ruled by clergy, or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1990). And most simplistically put, as Keong (2005) states, "the fundamental problem with every theocracy is that it is innately unfair. Not just unfair to those who do not follow the state religion, but also unfair to those who do not follow the state religion as it is understood and interpreted by the humans who run the state" (para. 4).

its strategic goals, that is, its short-term maneuvers for immediate gain versus its long-term

goals. To elaborate with an instance, one of the debates about the Egyptian MB that arises

consequent to these dialectics and ambiguities is whether or not its participation in

democratic processes and support for human rights is simply a tactic to gain short-term

political advantage, or is it part of the Egyptian MB's long-term vision of its role in society;

does it participate in democratic processes to make inroads into the political structure to

thereafter turn the Egyptian society into a theocratic one, or is its long-term vision of society

a democratic one?

To comment on this quandary and to identify the kernel of the Egyptian MB's

worldview, the implications of the following must be taken into consideration: the position of

the Egyptian MB as a counterpublic; the use of its English-language website—Ikhwanweb—

as a communicative platform whose intended and openly avowed audience is the *West*; and

the hugely confounding and controversial debate surrounding the place Islam should occupy

vis-à-vis politics, and the potential democratic institutions hold in Muslim societies. These

provide the overall context apropos which the Egyptian Brotherhood's worldview should be

interpreted, and its tactical moves and strategic goals can be envisioned.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the literature on counterpublic

communication has focused extensively on the goal and purpose of it. Much has been

written, and some of the predominant purposes of counterpublic communication have been

distilled to be the expression of opposition, the attainment of consensus, and the expression

of difference as a resource for public deliberation. Analysis of the Egyptian MB's rhetoric

shows that there is yet another consequential goal and purpose to counterpublic

communication—the expression of dialectical contradictions by counterpublics to evade

commitment and complete disclosure vis-à-vis wider publics, so as to keep the counterpublic's true intent and positionings ambiguous and obscure.

To elaborate, it must be kept in mind that counterpublics' relationship with wider publics is often marred by distrust consequent to experiences of suppression and marginalization experienced by the former. In the case of the Egyptian MB, it neither trusts the Hosni Mubarak regime for the latter's dictatorial maneuvers and hostility towards the Egyptian MB, nor does it completely rely on Western agents due to their support of authoritarian regimes. As Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003) state:

> Distrust is the confident expectation that another individual's motives, intentions, and behaviors are sinister and harmful to one's own interests….this often entails a sense of fear and anticipation of discomfort or danger. Distrust naturally prompts us to take steps that reduce our vulnerability in an attempt to protect our interests. (para. 1)

In anticipation of danger, to ensure survival in an atmosphere of hostility and distrust, to reduce its vulnerability, and to protect its own interests, the Egyptian MB chooses to remain ambiguous, contradictory, and non-committal in many of its stances. This aspect, thus, brings to light one of the key elements characterizing the Egyptian MB ideology—an inherent absence of *trust*.

Also, related to the issue of trust is the implication of online communication by counterpublics. Literature abounds on how repressive governments can control flow of information and curb freedom of expression. Although the Internet is considered to have emancipatory potential and fewer constraints than traditional mass media, content on the Internet can be readily available to a counterpublic's intended audience and an oppressive regime alike. In such a scenario, rhetoric of dialectical contradictions evades total disclosure

of any stance or belief as aforementioned; in the absence of forthright stances and commitments it becomes difficult for repressive regimes to persecute counterpublics. This particular concern associated with the Egyptian MB's cyber communication points to the relevance of *caution*, another key element of its ideology in Ikhwanweb.

A further issue of significant import is the implication of the *West* as the intended audience of Ikhwanweb. This naturally connotes that the Egyptian MB's rhetoric and communication strategies in Ikhwanweb are motivated by what it intends to achieve vis-à-vis its audience. The rhetoric displays that the Egyptian MB criticizes certain Western agents' act of supporting authoritarian regimes and questions whether they truly intend to promote democratic institutions in Egypt. At the same time, the rhetoric emphasizes the importance of not viewing the *West* as a monolith, the need to promote understanding between Western agents and the Egyptian MB, and the rhetoric manifests support for human rights, a strong civil society, and democratic ideals—values that are predominantly associated with Western societies. Thus, I contend that the Egyptian MB rhetoric demonstrates the need to be *valued* by Western agents, which constitutes another key element of its ideology. *Value* entails the Egyptian MB's need to be respected irrespective of voicing differences and discontent, and *value* demands Western agents to be honest and forthright and make efforts to counter prejudices and reduce misconceptions.

Finally, on the discourse of Islam and democracy, the dialectical contradictions surrounding the Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetoric on the role Islam must play vis-à-vis secular democratic ideals and institutions are characteristic of the inherent incertitude facing Islamic organizations keen for political legitimation. In addition, violence and intolerance perpetrated by Islamic extremist organizations, and the resultant reductionist perceptions and prejudicial

stances towards Islam further complicate the task of moderate Islamists. In its wake to find the balance between its Islamic ethos and adapting to democratic ideals, the Egyptian MB's rhetoric clearly portrays a sense of confusion and flux that accompanies any move towards *transition*. In other words, the Egyptian MB rhetoric portrays the fundamental tension it is experiencing in its attempt to transition into an Islamic organization that has democratic aspirations.

In sum, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's worldview manifests four key elements: (a) *distrust* towards the Egyptian regime and certain Western agents; (b) the need to be *valued* by Western agents; (c) the importance of exercising *caution* in its cyber communication; and finally (d) the tension and flux resulting from its endeavor to *transition* into an organization that has contextualized democratic ideals in an Islamic idiom. This worldview is concomitant to the Egyptian MB's role as an Islamic counterpublic that uses cyber communication for political legitimation and works within an authoritarian framework supported by Western agents. Thus, it is only apt that the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as reflected in its English-language cyber rhetoric is termed *Counterpublic Cyber Islamism*. Furthermore, this worldview reinforces the Egyptian MB's long-term democratic vision of society, as opposed to short-term maneuvers with the sole objective of gaining political preeminence and power devoid of democratic intentions. At this point it becomes expedient to highlight the predominant rhetorical strategies providing support for the dialectical contradictions forming the basis of the Egyptian MB worldview.

The Rhetorical Moves

Throughout the Egyptian MB rhetoric, three predominant rhetorical moves are discerned: (a) the show of *support*; (b) the portrayal of *opposition*; and (c) the display of

contradiction. Within each of these three broader rhetorical patterns, certain prominent rhetorical tactics/devices feature, such as, consubstantiation, resource sharing, negative other-presentation, testimony, epithet, and ambiguity. Not all of these tactics are used within each of the broader rhetorical moves; thus, the prominent tactics within each move are illustrated.

The rhetoric of support. In the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Brotherhood, support is exhibited through consubstantiation, resource sharing, testimony, and epithet. Without being specific to any one of the three sections analyzed, the show of support, in different degrees and intensities, is manifest across all three sections; for Hamas in *MB versus Al-Qaeda* and *MB and the West*, for Western agents to a certain degree in *MB and the West*, and for students, the Egyptian people, and Copts in *Parliament*. I elaborate on the four aforementioned rhetorical tactics that entail the overarching rhetoric of support.

First, the Egyptian MB shows support for Hamas by focusing on the substances that unite them; in other words, *consubstantiation*. Specifically, several areas of shared substance include the following: unity over the cause of the Palestinian people, over the oppositional attitude towards Al-Qaeda, and over the common idea that violence is context specific. Examples of this consubstantiation are the following: "Abu Marzouk [a senior Hamas leader] confirmed that Hamas…seeking liberation for the Palestinian people" and the Egyptian MB's use of the qualifier "legitimate" to describe Palestinian peoples' resistance in "legitimate resistance carried out by the Palestinian people;" "Hamas ideology is miles away from the ideology of Al-Qaeda" and "our [MB] ideology is not the same as Al-Qaeda's;" and "our [Hamas] weapons are only directed towards the occupation" and "Morsi [*sic*] [a senior MB leader] pointed out that the violent incidents allegedly committed by the MB, are separate and individual incidents."

The Egyptian MB also shows consubstantiality with certain Western agents by uniting through an oppositional attitude towards terrorism, seen in "the West does not support terrorism" and "Muslim Brotherhood supports Hamas although it is a terrorist organization." In addition, consubstantiation with Egyptian students is featured in the unity over use of sit-ins as instrument of protest; exemplars in the rhetoric are "a sit-in they [students] staged in protest at the situations that the universities are witnessing" and "MB MPs held a sit-in in the Egyptian parliament."

The strategy of *resource sharing* basically entails the Egyptian MB's show of support for an entity by allowing it to share the resources the former possesses; a key instance is the sharing of Ikhwanweb as a forum for expression. Among other instances, throughout the Egyptian MB rhetoric the presence of Hamas associates as active agents using Ikhwanweb, as a forum for expression of their ideas, goals, and practices is conspicuous. An example is "Hamdan, a Hamas leader and representative in Lebanon said to Ikhwanweb that Al-Zawahiri's statements and criticism to Hamas movement will never have any impact," wherein Hamas's opposition with Al-Zawahiri, and by extension, Al-Qaeda is expressed by a Hamas leader through Ikhwanweb.

On the issue of *testimony*, or evidence in support of a fact or assertion, the Egyptian MB rhetoric uses prominent individuals to testify for the Egyptian MB claims and assertions. Examples of testimonials of support are "Hamdan [a senior Hamas leader] confirmed that Hamas rejects Al-Qaeda" and "Morsi [*sic*] [a senior MB leader] pointed out that peaceful change does not happen overnight." Herein, senior leaders of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood are testifying, and in the process adding credibility and strength to the claims of opposition towards Al-Qaeda and support for peaceful change.

Finally, *epithets* are adjectives or descriptive phrases expressing a quality characteristic of a person, a thing, or a phenomenon. In the Egyptian Brotherhood rhetoric numerous epithets are used for qualifying individuals, groups, actions, beliefs, insinuating support for them. Some instances can be: "MB representatives are credible," "righteous Shari'a," and "moderate Islamic movement." In the use of the epithets "credible," "righteous," and "moderate," a positive stance towards MB representatives, Shari'a, and Islamic movement, respectively, is decried.

The rhetoric of opposition. Opposition, viewed as resistance, contrast, or dissent, is primarily exhibited through negative other-presentation, testimonials, and epithets. This rhetorical move is featured across all three sections analyzed for this study; in the portrayal of stance towards Israel and the Zionists in *MB versus Al-Qaeda*, stance towards Western agents' support for authoritarian regimes in *MB and the West*, and the stance towards the Egyptian regime in *Parliament*.

Focusing on specific rhetorical tactics, Van Dijk's (1998) "ideological square" (p. 267) (elaborated in Chapter 4) includes *negative other-presentation* as an instance of rhetors making selections to portray an out-group entity in a negative manner. It must be reiterated that negative other-presentation is significant to the larger contextual strategy of positive self-presentation. Instances of negative other-presentation are numerous in the Egyptian MB rhetoric—associating Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri with negative actions and intent, portraying Western agents as supporters of authoritarian regimes, qualifying the Egyptian regime as dictatorial, and Zionists as sly, are exemplars. A few examples of negative other-presentation in the rhetoric are: "Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak conveniently use the Brotherhood as an excuse to prevent serious reform," "Egyptian regime turned the political competition into

a security manhunt," "infighting that serves only the Zionist enemy," and "[the Zionist enemy] seeks to lead slyly and maliciously the Palestinian people." Thus also, by implication the Egyptian MB is *self-presenting* as an organization that: dissociates itself from Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri and from negative actions and intent; opposes authoritarian, dictatorial regimes and Western agents' alliance with the same; and does not condone malicious acts such as the kind practiced by Zionists.

Testimonials and *epithets*, defined earlier, are used by the Egyptian MB to show opposition towards ideas, entities, and actions. Some examples for testimonies are, "Dr. Mohamed Habib, First Deputy Leader of the MB, added that there are no prospects of any dialogue with US" and "Al-Sameraie [a senior member of the Iraqi political system] pointed out that Al-Qaeda network in Iraq has a foreign agenda." In the first example, Habib testifies to the Egyptian MB's stance towards dialogue with the US; and in the second, Al-Samaraie testifies to the negative intent of Al-Qaeda, that of having a foreign agenda. Both are instances of prominent individuals testifying for the Egyptian MB to strengthen the latter's claims of opposition—towards dialogue with the US, and Al-Qaeda's holding a "foreign agenda."

Instances of use of epithets for qualifying individuals, groups, actions, and beliefs, insinuating opposition, are numerous in the Egyptian MB rhetoric; "repelling violence," "the Zionist enemy," and "Zionists…lead slyly and maliciously" are some examples. In the use of the epithets "repelling," "enemy," and "slyly and maliciously" a negative stance towards violence, and Zionists, respectively, is manifest.

The rhetoric of contradiction. The key rhetorical tool used to manifest contradiction is ambiguity, specifically, theoretical ambiguity. In turn, four predominant rhetorical devices

entail theoretical ambiguity—action over substance, generalization, implication, and antithesis. Jasper and Young (2007) define theoretical ambiguity as "fuzzy theoretical and causal arguments, which rely on audiences' unstated assumptions and understandings to fill them in" (p. 273). Using this as foundation, I define *theoretical ambiguity* manifest in the Egyptian MB rhetoric as *fuzzy* theoretical expressions of alliances, values, and goals through the use of action over substance, generalizations, implications, and antitheses, which rely on the audiences' subjective interpretation of these unstated assumptions and understandings to fill them (the audience) in.

To elaborate on the rhetorical devices, for *action over substance* the Egyptian MB explicitly emphasizes positive or negative, in other words, nuanced *actions*—support, reject, allow, confirm, condemn—to manifest its stance towards an idea or entity such as violence, jihad, the Al-Qaeda worldview, Islam, and democracy. Yet, the *substantive* explanations for what violence entails, what specifically separates the Al-Qaeda worldview from the Egyptian MB worldview, how Islam and democracy can (or cannot) co-exist, etc., remain vague and flimsy, thus manifesting ambiguity. In the following four statements—"what kind of jihad has the Al-Qaeda network claimed to have done?" "jihad movement will emerge again but in a peaceful method," "jihad will not be used as a counterforce against the Muslim Brotherhood," and "any way other than the method of jihad will only lead to loss and failure"—several actions are associated with jihad, and each of these statements presents jihad in either a positive or negative way. Nevertheless, none of these statements manifest a comprehensive and clear description of how the Egyptian MB defines jihad, that is, the substance of jihad as perceived and practised by the Egyptian MB.

Ambiguity is also manifest in numerous *generalizations*, or presence of less-specific criteria, in the Egyptian MB rhetoric. One predominant instance is the use of generalized *agents*, such as "the West," "Islamic groups/movements," "We" (people in general), "Muslims," "fringe extremist elements," and "national and political powers." The use of generalizations precludes comprehension of diverse viewpoints and stances, as well as context-specific understandings; this adds to the ambiguity characteristic of much of the Egyptian MB rhetoric. Two further instances of ambiguity caused as a result of generalizations are: "Islamists will not impose their beliefs"—is this true of all Islamists?; and "Muslims do not accept to deeply discuss the Qur'an"—is this true of all Muslims?

Implication, or stating something non-explicitly, is yet another rhetorical tactic that leads to ambiguity and multiple interpretations. For example, the Egyptian MB's implication of an Islamist identity and never a direct mention of it, and its implication of what violence entails for the Egyptian MB rather than a concrete description and avowal, lead to ambiguous interpretations of the Egyptian MB's stance towards Islam, and violence, respectively.

The final rhetorical device is antithesis, or "juxtaposition of contradictory ideas in balanced phrases" (Nordquist, 2011, para. 1). A classic instance of the use of antithesis in the Egyptian MB rhetoric is in the statement "Muslim Brotherhood supports Hamas although it is a terrorist organization." The use of the action verb "supports" shows clear agreement for Hamas; at the same time "although" in "although it is a terrorist organization" insinuates distancing from Hamas on the issue of terrorism. This antithetical presentation of stances creates ambiguity and complicates understanding of the nature of support the Egyptian MB has towards Hamas.

Summary and Answers to RQs 1 & 2

RQ1: What is the ideology manifest in the English-language rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in www.ikhwanweb.com?

Four major dialectical tensions, namely, openness and closedness, autonomy and connectedness, equality and inequality, and possession and deficiency inherent in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's English-language rhetoric in Ikhwanweb bring forth four fundamental dimensions that form its worldview. These are: (a) the *absence of trust* towards the Egyptian regime and certain Western agents; (b) the need to be *valued* by Western agents; (c) the importance of exercising *caution* in its online communications; and finally (d) the flux resulting from its efforts to *transition* into an organization that has successfully balanced its Islamic ideals with its democratic aspirations. This worldview is termed *Counterpublic Cyber Islamism*, and is shaped and influenced by: (a) the Egyptian MB's role as an Islamic counterpublic functioning within an authoritarian environment patronized by certain Western agents; and (b) the Egyptian MB's use of its English-language website as a counterpublic sphere to attain political legitimation.

RQ2: What rhetorical strategies provide support for this ideology?

Three rhetorical paradigms, the show of support, the portrayal of opposition, and the display of contradiction, and specific rhetorical tactics within these paradigms such as consubstantiation, resource sharing, negative other-presentation, testimony, epithet, and theoretical ambiguity feature predominantly in the Egyptian MB rhetoric. Support is exhibited through consubstantiation, resource sharing, testimony, and epithet, and in different degrees and intensities is manifest across all three sections. Opposition is primarily exhibited through negative other-presentation, and testimonials. This rhetorical move is also featured

across all three sections analyzed for this study. The key rhetorical tool used to manifest contradiction is theoretical ambiguity. Theoretical ambiguity, in turn, entails four rhetorical devices—action over substance, generalization, implication, and antithesis.

Thus, in this chapter I answered RQs 1 and 2. In the forthcoming and final chapter of this study, I include a discussion on the implications of the Counterpublic Cyber Islamist worldview and rhetorical strategies supporting it on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's online counterpublic dynamics. I also comment on the ramifications that Counterpublic Cyber Islamism might hold for Western thinking and praxis towards Islam and politics, the potential the Internet might (or might not) have for counterpublics in the context of the Middle East, and the role of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the global civil sphere. All these discussions are included within the scaffolding of the consistencies with and extensions to existing literature, and the theoretical and practical contributions of the findings of this study. I conclude this project by outlining the challenges that marked it, and by making some heuristic suggestions and future recommendations for research.

Chapter VII: The Way Things Stand

This study began by presenting the predicament of the Muslim Brotherhood—the attack it faces by agents of secular and democratic change such as Western agents who often view it as a radical, extremist movement, and at the same time condemnation from the end of agents of militant, radical jihad, for participating in elections and supporting democratic principles. In addition to this is the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's quandary with the Egyptian regime; namely, the Hosni Mubarak regime that suppresses it, defiles it, and challenges it. *Counterpublic Cyber Islamism* is a reflection and resultant of these external pushes and pulls the Muslim Brotherhood as a counterpublic to the wider publics—Western agents, militant fundamentalist organizations, and the Mubarak regime—has been experiencing in its struggle to succeed and sustain as a movement with both an Islamic and a democratic ethos.

In this chapter, as I further a discussion on the implications of Counterpublic Cyber Islamism I perform some tasks that bring this study to a meaningful completion. First, I discuss the research questions and how the findings of my analysis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's English-language rhetoric in Ikhwanweb find their niche in the academic literature. Second, I discuss the theoretical and research implications, as well as the practical implications of the findings. I end by presenting the limitations of this study, and the possibilities it opens up for future research.

Findings and Contributions to Literature

A rhetorical analysis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's contributions in Ikhwanweb, as featured in the three sections—*Muslim Brotherhood versus Al-Qaeda*, *Muslim Brotherhood and the West*, and *Parliament*—brought forth a worldview

characterized by dialectical contradictions; an ideology that, in the Egyptian Brotherhood's positioning of its identity, its allies and foes, its notion on how a society should work, the resources it sees available to it, and most importantly, in its conceptualization of the relationship between Islam and democracy, manifests endemic dialectical tensions. The four core tensions identified are the following: (a) *openness and closedness*, that is, the desire to be open and share information versus the desire to be private; (b) *autonomy and connectedness*, or the need to separate to maintain uniqueness versus the desire to have ties and connections with others; (c) *equality and inequality*, or the desire to be considered as equals versus the desire to develop levels of superiority; and (d) *possession and deficiency*, that is, the need to portray what *we* have versus the desire to manifest deficiency, or what *we* do not have.

These dialectical tensions point to four core elements that constitute the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's *Counterpublic Cyber Islamist* worldview. These are: (a) *distrust* towards the Hosni Mubarak regime and Western agents who aid and support authoritarian governments; (b) the need to be *valued*—to be respected, to be considered equals, to be understood without prejudices, to be acknowledged despite differences—by Western agents; (c) the significance of *caution* in its online communications; and finally (d) the flux resulting from its efforts at *transitioning* into an organization that has an Islamic ethos but nurtures democratic aspirations. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's worldview thus interpreted in this dissertation is *a* unique perspective on the dynamics resulting from the confluence of online Islamism and counterpublicity.

The dialectical contradictions are exhibited through three rhetorical paradigms, *the show of support*, *the portrayal of opposition*, and *the display of contradiction*. To be specific,

the show of support is manifest through the rhetorical tactics of *consubstantiation*, *resource sharing*, *testimonials*, and *epithet*. Consubstantiation is the rhetorical tactic of uniting two entities by focusing on the substance/s that connect them; resource sharing is the tactic wherein rhetors show support for an individual or group by allowing the latter to use its resources; testimony is evidence in support of a fact or assertion; and epithets are adjectives or descriptive phrases expressing a quality characteristic of a person, thing, or phenomenon.

The show of opposition is manifest through *negative other-presentation*, *testimonials*, and *epithet*; with testimony and epithets defined earlier, negative other-presentation entails an instance of rhetors making selections to portray an out-group entity in a negative manner and by implication portraying itself in a positive manner. Finally, the display of contradiction is expressed through *theoretical ambiguity*, or vague theoretical expressions of alliances, values, and goals by rhetors that rely on the audiences' subjective interpretation of these unstated assumptions to fill them (the audience) in. Theoretical ambiguity in turn includes *action over substance*, *generalization*, *implication*, and *antithesis*. Action over substance is the rhetorical tactic of presenting explicitly nuanced actions, but fuzzy substantive and context-based explanations to qualify the actions; generalizations include the use of less specific criteria to qualify an entity or phenomenon; implication is the rhetorical tactic of not stating something explicitly; and antithesis is the "juxtaposition of contradictory ideas in balanced phrases" (Nordquist, 2011, para. 1).

With these findings unearthed and interpreted from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric, it becomes expedient to consider their place within the existing literature on counterpublicity, and research that focuses on the role rhetoric and new media

play within the scaffolding of counterpublic communication. In that endeavor, I present the consistencies with existing literature, followed by the contributions that extend it.

The congruities. There are some significant issues around which the findings of this study find congruence with the existing literature on counterpublicity, counterpublic rhetoric, and Internet and counterpublicity. To begin with, the literature on counterpublics states that most definitions of counterpublic share three key features—oppositionality, constitution of a discursive arena, and the dialectic of retreat and engagement with other publics. The findings of my study show that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood functions like a true counterpublic on all three counts.

According to Brouwer (2006), oppositionality is characterized by a stance of "resistance, rejection, or dissent" (p. 197), and the communication of exclusion following marginalization by dominant, wider publics. The Muslim Brotherhood rhetoric depicts opposition towards all three groups it functions as a counterpublic to—militant fundamentalist organizations (predominantly Al-Qaeda in this study), Western agents, and the Egyptian regime. It also voices exclusion, for instance, the exclusion it experiences as a result of the Egyptian regime's suppressive acts and demonizing efforts against it; working within the framework of a dictatorial regime that banned it and propagates the Brotherhood's image as an extremist organization associated with violence, clearly diminishes the Egyptian Brotherhood's prospects during elections as well as its potential for a positive relationship with Western agents. The Egyptian Brotherhood exhibits this exclusion in the way it's rhetoric portrays the Egyptian regime and the vilifying maneuvers the regime undertakes that have cost the Egyptian MB a *good image* and an *unprejudiced understanding* of its goals and actions by the world.

Continuing on the matter of marginality and exclusions, from the point of view of the Internet, according to Castells (1996) one of the characteristics that makes the Internet unique is interactivity. Castells (1996) states that in "a society organized around mass media, the existence of messages that are outside the media is restricted to interpersonal networks, thus disappearing from the collective mind" (p. 336). The Internet can be considered as an electronic analogue of interpersonal networks, which allows interactivity and thus comes with the possibility to bring otherwise marginalized topics before the collective mind (Underwood, 2010). Also, the Internet is unique in that it provides open access. From the point of view of the Egyptian Brotherhood, an organization functioning in a dictatorial and authoritarian environment where mass media is mostly controlled, co-opted, or influenced by the Egyptian regime, Ikhwanweb, although not an interactive platform per se, provides the Egyptian Brotherhood an alternative forum. This alternative forum guarantees open access and a comparatively greater possibility for introducing marginal and counterdiscourses in the collective mind, than mass media can.

As regards the second feature of counterpublics, the constitution of a discursive arena entails the creation of *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991) through asynchronous communication by those communicating oppositional stances, over and above meeting together in physical spaces (Brouwer, 2006). A significant example of the creation of community through asynchronous communication is observable in the discourse and dynamics around Hamas manifest in Ikhwanweb. Through rhetorical devices, such as consubstantiation, resource sharing, and testimonials, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood shows support for Hamas. Through these rhetorical tactics it also creates a sense of an

imagined community with Hamas wherein both the Egyptian Brotherhood and Hamas express their oppositional stances towards Al-Qaeda and Israel.

Finally, counterpublics entail a dialectic of inward and outward address as a response to the experience of exclusion (Brouwer, 2006; Felski, 1989; Fraser, 1992a). Specifically, Fraser (1992a) points at the publicist orientation that counterpublics often assume which reveals this dual character; she observes that they function both as spaces of withdrawal for regroupment, as well as training grounds for agitational activities that are directed towards wider publics. For both Fraser (1992a) and Felski (1989), the emancipatory potential of counterpublics emerges in this dialectical movement of withdrawal and reengagement with wider publics. In addition, the dialectic of inward and outward address "which foregrounds the status of relations between dominant and subordinate as one of mutual influence and the status of rhetorical structures and practices as contingent" (Brouwer, 2006, pp. 199-200), reveals that counterpublics communicate with the like-minded with an understanding that communication will be directed toward or constitute other wider publics.

Following in the vein of the above claim, in the context of this study the dialectic of inward and outward address can be identified in the following dynamics. The Egyptian Brotherhood's inward communication gets manifest in the creation of an imagined community wherein the Egyptian Brotherhood shares common oppositionality with Hamas, it shows support towards the Egyptian people, Copts, and Egyptian students, who also function within an authoritarian environment and fight for human rights, reforms, and equality, and in the Egyptian MB's show of support for the Palestinian people's legitimate resistance against Israeli occupation and their fight for democracy. As for its outward address, the nature of Ikhwanweb—an *English*-language *website*—guarantees that the

Egyptian MB's inward communications and positionings naturally get directed towards and constitute the English-speaking Western world, the Egyptian regime, and Al-Qaeda.

To elaborate, the emancipatory element in this dialectic, enhanced by the use of a website in English, rests in the ability of the Egyptian Brotherhood to use its inward communication for an outward positioning wherein: it presents itself with self-determination for the Western world; it acts as an opposition force against the Egyptian regime; and it separates itself from militant fundamentalists. To add to this, analysis of the Egyptian MB rhetoric unearths a worldview characterized by dialectical contradictions thus reinforcing the presence of dialectical dynamics in counterpublics' relationship with wider publics.

The issue of identity is yet another important concept existent in the counterpublic literature. Fraser (1992) suggests that subordinated social groups often "constitute alternative public . . . in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities…" (p.123). The Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetoric manifests no clear avowal of an Islamist identity, although this is one of the most commonly used terms in Western policy and academic circles to qualify the Egyptian Brotherhood; and this term often entails a negative connotation. This shows that the Egyptian Brotherhood uses Ikhwanweb to formulate an interpretation of its identity that is not predominant, and circulates counterdiscourses about the same. In addition, on the question of identity, Poster (2001) argues "Internet discourse constitutes the subject as the subject fashions himself or herself …" (p. 211). In other words, communication online requires linguistic acts of self-positioning (Poster, 1995). Thus, as aforementioned, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood uses

its cyber rhetoric for self-positioning as it makes the choice to steer clear from the term *Islamist*.

In addition, *inequalities* as explicit topics for debate is a necessary feature of counterpublicity (Asen & Brouwer, 2001; Fraser, 1992a); the contribution of inequalities is to articulate difference as a resource for public deliberation and discourse in the public sphere. As defined earlier in the study, difference, following Young (1997), is viewed as a resource necessary for discussion-based politics, the aim and objective of which is co-operation, reaching understanding, and doing justice. In the rhetoric of the Egyptian Brotherhood, several instances stand out as articulation of differences—the Egyptian Brotherhood presents its support for elections, thus articulating difference with Al-Qaeda; the Egyptian Brotherhood opposes Western agents' friendly stance with authoritarian regimes and questions their true intent behind reform and democracy promotion in Egypt; lastly, it expresses opposition towards the harassment the Hosni Mubarak regime metes out to voices against the Egyptian government. The expression of these differences becomes resources for public deliberation and discourse in the public sphere.

Solely from the standpoint of rhetoric, the rhetorical study of counterpublic spheres does not always focus on consensus, but the goal is often to understand "how counterpublics identify themselves" and "challenge the conventions of dominant discourse" (Doxtader, 2001, p. 66). The Egyptian MB's rhetoric clearly portrays that its goal is not to gain consensus—rather, the Egyptian MB uses its rhetoric to position and identify itself in its own terms, challenge the dominant discourse circulated by the Egyptian regime and several Western agents that portrays the Brotherhood in negative terms, and express differences that become resources for public deliberation.

Lastly, on the matter of Islam and the Internet, according to Eickelman and Anderson (1999) the Internet has created a public sphere where an increasing number of participants can take part in the discourse on Islam, giving rise to a cyber plurality that leads to fragmentation and recombination of a myriad of ideas, understandings, and experiences about Islamic thought and practice. Through its rhetoric in Ikhwanweb, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood contributes to the ongoing discourse on the potential and problems of establishing and maintaining a political system that is based on democratic ideals, and at the same time has an Islamic ethos, in other words, the Islam versus democracy discourse.

With this I conclude my discussion on the consistencies my findings share with the existing literature, namely, in the ways in which the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood acts like an apt counterpublic, and how it uses Ikhwanweb and its cyber rhetoric for self-positioning, to express differences that become resources for public deliberation and discourse in the public sphere, and to participate and contribute to the discourse on Islam and democracy. The following section details the additions to the existing literature this study makes.

Extensions to the existing literature. There are some significant directions in which this study extends the existing literature. First, the dialectic of inward and outward address, an important feature of counterpublicity, has been elaborated above; this study contributes to the counterpublic literature by extending the dynamics of counterpublic dialectics from solely an inward and outward mode of *address* (Brouwer, 2006) to the foundation and basis of an overall *worldview* that entails several core tensions manifesting in a counterpublic's identity positionings, relational positionings, idea of society and political views, and view of resources available or unavailable to it. In other words, the dialectical tensions are not just regularities endemic to most relationships which manifest in speech acts, but rather, the flux

reflects the profoundly complex social, political, and global contingencies the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is subjected to, and thus needs to adapt itself to for survival.

Second, in keeping with the fact that the basis of dialectical contradictions identified in the literature reviewed for this study is in interpersonal relational dynamics, the core contradictions consistent with previous research on relational dialectics were not adequate to conceptualize the endemic tensions manifest in the Egyptian MB's counterpublic rhetoric. Out of the four core contradictions identified in the Egyptian MB rhetoric, only the first three—openness and closedness, autonomy and connectedness, equality and inequality—are consistent with previous research on relational dialectics (Baxter, 1988; Cheney et al., 2011). The fourth core tension, possession and deficiency, is unique to the Egyptian MB rhetoric. This suggests that the nature of counterpublic relationships, being different from interpersonal relationships, introduces new and unique tensions and extends our understanding of relational dynamics beyond interpersonal particularities.

Finally, literature on counterpublic *communication* has focused extensively on the predominant purposes of counterpublic communication, which have been the expression of opposition (Felski, 1989), the attainment of consensus (Asen & Brouwer, 2001), and the expression of difference as a resource for public deliberation (Fraser, 1992). This study adds another purpose and goal to counterpublic communication—the expression of dialectical contradictions by counterpublics to evade commitment and complete disclosure vis-à-vis wider publics. The inability to trust wider publics as a result of the history of suppression and marginalization and the need to be cautious in using online modes of communication to safeguard itself from hostile repercussions, make communication of counterpublics—that function within authoritarian frameworks and use online communication to voice their

concerns and criticisms—ambiguous. This ensures their sustenance and success. In the following section I discuss the theoretical and research implications, and the practical implications of the findings of this study.

Implications of Findings

It is important to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study; to situate it within the larger academic discourse, as well as find its significance for practice and policy. In this section I begin by elaborating on the research implications of the findings—on counterpublic studies, on the study of rhetoric, and Internet communication. Thereafter, I lay out the practical implications, in other words, how the findings of this study find significance for practice and policy.

Research implications for counterpublic studies. Addressing the issue of counterpublicity, in this study the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was positioned as a counterpublic to three wider publics—militant fundamentalist organizations, the West, and the Hosni Mubarak regime—and exploration of its counterpublic dynamics with each of these wider publics was one of the objectives of this analysis. The Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetorical positionings and stances towards each of these wider publics emphasized some inclinations and patterns; these inclinations and patterns hold significance.

On the relationship with militant fundamentalist organizations, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric shows opposition towards Al-Qaeda, shows support for democratic ideals and human rights, and rejects extremism. In the process it reinforces its criticism against Al-Qaeda, and positions itself as a movement that is stepping away from the path of violent jihad and imbibing moderate, peaceful means to gain political legitimation, as well as showing its support for democratic ideals. At the same time, Hamas, which is viewed as a

militant organization by Western agents and professed to be a *terrorist* organization by the Muslim Brotherhood in its rhetoric, is also shown strong support. Thus, the counterpublic dynamic noticed herein reveals that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood does not base its support or opposition solely on differences in action and ideology, but also on shared histories and strategic goals.

In other words, although both Hamas and Al-Qaeda are considered radical and militant in their action and ideology, the Egyptian MB chooses to show support for one and not the other. It must be considered that Hamas is supposedly the Muslim Brotherhood's arm in Palestine, and despite being militant, it participates in elections and is a significant component of Palestinian politics, none of which can be attributed to Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, because of the nature of its political ethos, Hamas perhaps holds more credibility for Western agents than Al-Qaeda, which post-9/11 has been explicitly marked as the *antagonist*.

The implication this observation has for research is that, when the dynamics of the relationship between counterpublics and wider publics is studied, the problem of exclusion, marginalization, and oppression should not be the only factors scholars should consider. Depending on context the importance of history, political motives, and international and global repercussions become indispensable to understanding the nuances and the diverse and complex dynamics that characterize counterpublics' relationship with wider publics.

As regards Western agents, the Egyptian Brotherhood's rhetoric shows support and the desire to cooperate with Western agents in some instances, whereas in some other contexts the MB rhetoric portrays discontent, dissociation, and advisory maneuvers. This constitutes one of the major dialectical tensions discussed—equality and inequality—and also forms the foundation for the two key elements—trust and value—of Counterpublic

Cyber Islamism. This implies the need for counterpublics to not base their communication only on stances of agreement and consensus, but also of difference and opposition with the rationale that success for counterpublics can also be rooted in the show of assertion and exercise of agency.

The counterpublic dynamics exhibited in relationship to the Egyptian regime also make an important contribution. As an Islamic organization functioning outside the Egyptian Parliament, the Egyptian MB is seen to have compromised agency. However, as members of the Egyptian Parliament, the Egyptian MB representatives are seen to be active and influential. The implication of this on counterpublic studies is that counterpublics might find avenues and fissures within a system dominated by wider publics through which they can exercise agency. Thus, for scholars studying counterpublicity, it becomes important to identify these fissures and avenues and study counterpublic dynamics therein, rather than always looking at counterpublics as monolithic groups placed against wider publics. In other words, as monoliths counterpublics might appear as groups lacking agency, which can become a faulty premise to start evaluating counterpublicity; it is in finding the moments and places where counterpublics vacillate between holding agency and having none, that a richer and nuanced understanding of counterpublic's relationship with wider publics can be attained.

Research implications for rhetorical studies. For the implications of this study on rhetoric, three predominant rhetorical moves, that of support, opposition, and contradiction come forth, each of which are manifest through rhetorical devices such as consubstantiation, negative other-presentation, theoretical ambiguity, etc. The overall worldview that is brought forth by the rhetoric is one that has its basis in dialectical contradictions. Some significant

questions arise vis-à-vis these findings: are these dialectical tensions a consequence of the inherent psychological pushes and pulls that characterize relationships?; or in the context of counterpublics, specifically a counterpublic like the Egyptian MB that functions within complex social, political, historical, and global circumstances, portrayal of these dialectical tensions is strategic?; or is it a combination of both?; can the study of rhetoric respond to this dilemma?; finally, does a rhetorical study that looks at actions to interpret the symbolic dramas, which in turn help interpret the ideology and worldview of a counterpublic, truly capture the complexities of a counterpublic's relational dynamics with wider publics?

I claim that a study of this nature can identify the essence of a counterpublic's worldview; thus, this dissertation has been successful in unearthing the core elements that constitute the worldview of Counterpublic Cyber Islamism exhibited by the Egyptian Brotherhood. This is a worldview that in counterpublic relationships and corresponding communicative dynamics manifests distrust, caution, the need to be valued, and a state of transition. In identifying these elemental components of the Egyptian Brotherhood's worldview, assumptions could also be made as regards its strategic intentions.

In addition, three more claims can be made. First, this analysis brought forth the use and importance of rhetorical tactics such as consubstantiation, negative other-presentation, theoretical ambiguity, resource sharing, testimonials, and epithets to portray dialectical contradictions in the Egyptian Brotherhood's counterpublic negotiations with three wider publics, in its English-language website. This is a contribution to rhetorical theory as it aids in understanding yet another practice of communication by counterpublics—presenting *dialectical contradictions* through *rhetorical devices* in an *online* forum of expression.

Second, this study also focuses on the rhetorical strategies used by a *unique* counterpublic—the Egyptian MB—which functions within a complex and distinctive set of circumstances. This becomes an instance of norm generation that can serve as a productive guideline for rhetoricians studying the dynamics of counterpublics who function within similar contextual frameworks as the Egyptian MB. Finally, the findings of this study have implications for society at large and moves beyond just the rhetorical event. That is, the implications of dialectical contradictions unearthed through rhetorical analysis are of significant import to the way the Western world may view and approach the Egyptian MB, its place in the Egyptian political scene, and its real-world relationships with wider publics. Thus, based on Foss (2004) and Gronbeck (1975), this study fulfills all the primary goals of rhetorical criticism; namely, appreciation of rhetorical structures and processes, generation of norms or productive guidelines, and advocacy.

Research implications for studies on Internet and counterpublicity. In addition to the dynamics of identity positioning, its emancipatory potential, and a forum for expression of difference and exclusion discussed earlier, few more significant implications of the use of Ikhwanweb need to be elaborated. First, Ikhwanweb has been used as a counterpublic sphere in this study, and the intended audience of this website is the *West*. This makes it obvious that the dynamics in Ikhwanweb are intended towards Western agents, but, as mentioned earlier, audiences beyond those intended also access this English-language website. Hence, although the Egyptian Brotherhood as a counterpublic performs its actions in Ikhwanweb for the Western audience, its actions have implications for other publics. Second, a website such as Ikhwanweb is not an interactive forum per se; thus it has its limitations on that front. However, due to the features of open access and being less constricted than traditional mass

media, specifically in the context of authoritarian environments, a website does provide a comparatively freer forum for counterpublic expression and positionings.

Finally, apart from the oft-stated and most obvious tasks of expressing opposition and exclusion, manifesting support, and voicing difference that Ikhwanweb enables, some additional functions of Ikhwanweb vis-à-vis the Egyptian MB's counterpublic expressions need to be stated. To begin with, it acts as a forum for presenting information that might not always be nuanced. Also, the elemental feature of hypertext (elaborated in Chapter 2), and the ability to navigate between webpages, allows a counterpublic to present a huge amount of information and a diversity of viewpoints with ease. Most importantly, the online forum allows counterpublics to prioritize issues and place them in a way that brings forth the counterpublic's agenda. In other words, it aids in the agenda-setting function of the counterpublic—agenda-setting theory states that media have a large influence on audiences by their (the media) choice of what issues to consider major and what minor, and how much space to give them (Cohen, 1995). Two exemplars related to this study are: (a) the Egyptian Brotherhood's assigning certain issues and acts major position, and others minor; and (b) among the three sections of the website analyzed, placing more Egyptian MB contributions in some sections and less in others. All these additional functions and dynamics transpire through Ikhwanweb. Thus, for scholars studying the Internet as a forum for counterpublic expression, the counterpublic dynamics should be studied along the aforementioned lines as well. This completes the discussion around theoretical implications, and is followed by the practical implications of the findings of this study.

Practical implications for Western agents' monolithic treatment of the MB. This study began on the premise that the Muslim Brotherhood's image for many in the Western

world is that of a radical, extremist organization, unsupportive of democratic ideas and principles, an organization that holds an all-encompassing vision of Islam and advocates the primacy of Shari'a, the Islamic law, over the Rule of Law, and one that is against *the West*. In addition, the Brotherhood's ideology, objectives, and actions have been associated with ambiguity and inconsistencies. Leiken and Brooke (2007) describe the Brotherhood as "a collection of national Islamist groups with differing outlooks," (p. 108), and to address the ambiguity surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood I claimed that each national faction needs to be studied separately so that a contextual understanding of the MB's worldview and actions can be gained. This could minimize misunderstandings, clarify the ambiguities, and curtail a monolithic treatment of the group by Western agents. In that endeavor, I studied the Egyptian faction of the MB.

This study has made some stances clear. Rhetorical implications have been that the Egyptian Brotherhood is against extremism and terrorism, and it supports peace and moderation. Instances of support for democratic principles, such as participation in elections, are featured. An all-encompassing vision of Islam with emphasis on righteousness and the importance of Shari'a is seen, yet at the same time, support for modernization and religious tolerance are expressed. Finally, its stance towards Western agents is put in context as the Egyptian Brotherhood's grievances towards the former are asserted; sometimes gestures of cooperation and at others gestures of criticism and caution towards Western agents are portrayed.

Most importantly, the Counterpublic Cyber Islamist worldview depicting distrust, caution, the need to be valued, and a state of transition is brought to light. Typifying this worldview is an inherent tension and struggle: a struggle motivated by the Egyptian

Brotherhood's efforts to make the values of Islam and democracy work harmoniously together; a struggle emanating from the effort to separate itself from Islamic militant organizations that choose the path of extremism to create a world dominated by Islam; and finally, the struggle against the Hosni Mubarak regime that uses the discourse of extremism to taint the image of the Egyptian MB. In the face of these complex dynamics, the Egyptian Brotherhood's efforts at coping, surviving, and succeeding entail communicating some clear positionings, some ambiguities, and the hugely noteworthy suggestion that Western agents must make an effort to come closer to the Egyptian MB to get a contextual understanding of its goals and actions, rather than viewing the MB as a monolith.

Practical implications for the Egyptian MB's role in civil society. The findings of this study show that the Egyptian MB functions as a true counterpublic; albeit this is a rhetorical portrayal of its counterpublic potential through Ikhwanweb, its forum for counterpublic expression. Through its rhetoric, by showing support for human rights, popular choice, religious tolerance, democratic ideals, and peace, it expresses support for values central to a *civil society*. By using Ikhwanweb as its forum for counterpublic expression, the Egyptian MB voices experiences of exclusion and marginalization, communicates difference, negotiates, critiques, opposes, and shows association; in all these respects, the Egyptian MB exhibits actions innate to civil society actors and aligns itself with features inherent to a functioning and robust civil society. Thus, through its rhetoric, the Egyptian MB presents itself as an active and positive civil society force. This has important implications; by using Ikhwanweb, its English-language website, to manifest and carry out its civil society and counterpublic dynamics, the Egyptian MB presents itself as a promising and potential civil society actor to the Western world, worthy of cooperation with Western agents, worthy of

sustaining a significant position within the Egyptian civil sphere, and worthy of participating in and contributing to the global civil sphere.

Practical implications for Islamism. This study makes a unique contribution to the ongoing debate on the issue of compatibility between Islam and democracy; in other words, the place of Islam not only as a religion but also a political program, especially one with modern democratic principles. Based on the findings of this analysis I suggest that the debate on Islam and democracy within the discourse of Islamism, and the feasibility or lack thereof of Islam and modern institutions of democracy—participatory elections, popular choice, non-violent constitutional means, peaceful political reform—to be compatible, should turn to *post-Islamism.*

To elaborate, Bayat (2007) states that the Islam and democracy discourse has perhaps gotten stalled in the cycle of "The Perverse Charm of an Irrelevant Question" (contents page). He elaborates:

> As a point of departure I interrogate the infamous question of "whether Islam is compatible with democracy" by demonstrating that the realization of democratic ideals in Muslim societies has less to do with the "essence" of Islam than with the intellectual conviction and political capacity of Muslims. For it is individuals, groups, and movements who give meaning to "sacred" injunctions; the disposition of a faith, whether tolerant or repressive, democratic or authoritarian, is determined primarily by the attributes of the faithful. The question of democratic polity is then one of political struggle rather than religious scripture… (Preface).

He suggests that the right question is not whether Islam is compatible with democracy or not, but rather under what circumstances and in which ways Muslims can make them harmonious.

In that vein he transitions beyond Islamism to bring in the idea of post-Islamism. Bayat claims that:

> Post-Islamism represents both a condition and a project. It refers to political and social conditions where, following a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism are exhausted, even among its once-ardent supporters….Islamism becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but it does so at the cost of a qualitative shift….As a project, post-Islamism represents an endeavor to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scripture, and the future instead of the past. It strives to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity….[it] is expressed in acknowledging secular exigencies, in freedom from rigidity, in breaking down the monopoly of religious truth. (pp. 10-11)

Thus, Bayat (2007) proposes a form of coming together of Islamic values and values of modernity, which is neither anti-Islamic, nor un-Islamic, nor secular. Instead, the focus is on the ability of Islam to correspond to democratic ideals, which is primarily dependent on whether those who abide by the aforementioned perspectives and stances are able to establish their political hegemony in society. What one descries in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric is a moment of transition, an effort at rethinking and reforming its existent Islamist worldview.

The new Counterpublic Cyber Islamist worldview captures and constitutes this transition, and represents the Egyptian Brotherhood's struggle to come to an understanding of the Islamist reformulation. For Western agents what this means is that the Egyptian Brotherhood must be seen through a new lens; one that is not prejudiced, one that does not prejudge, and one that tries to contextualize and understand.

In this section I presented the theoretical and practical implications of this study. Specifically, the research implications for counterpublic studies, rhetorical studies, and studies on Internet and counterpublicity, and the practical implications for Western agents' monolithic treatment of the MB, Egyptian MB's role in civil society, and Islamism. I now turn to the challenges this project encountered.

Challenges During the Journey

Every project is marked by challenges; in this section I will briefly outline some of the challenges this project faced. In the period of approximately three years it took this project to reach its completion, the Muslim Brotherhood's website underwent several modifications. A few months into the project's inception Ikhwanweb underwent a dramatic transformation on both design and substance fronts; consequently, some modifications needed to be made to this project's approach and conceptual framework.

Thereafter, Ikhwanweb goes through regular minor modifications, mostly in the positioning of its articles. For instance, at times entire sections from the website are deleted, and contents belonging to the section are placed under other headings, which can be reached only through the function of *article search*. That is, these changes are not declared or conspicuous, and only one familiar with the website can identify these and navigate his/her way through Ikhwanweb to find what is *lost*. Furthermore, after the January 2011 Revolution

in Egypt, the sections *MB and the West* and *Parliament* have been deleted, although the contents exist hidden within other webpages of the site. After choosing my articles for analysis from the three sections, I saved printed copies of all articles to work around this inconsistency.

Yet another challenge was the changing nature of politics in Egypt, and especially, the January 2011 Revolution, which led to the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak, brought the Muslim Brotherhood in the center stage of the political arena, and majorly affected the discourse within Egypt and internationally around politics, religion, and civil society in the region. This challenged the productive contingency of this dissertation vis-à-vis contemporary political and social change in Egypt and the region, and some time had to be devoted to raise the significance of this work.

Also, by placing the Egyptian Brotherhood as a counterpublic to three wider publics, I undertook a mammoth task. With a huge amount of data to analyze and interpret, several complex contexts informing this project, the changing nature of the website and the political scenario within Egypt and the region, and numerous rhetorical dynamics of counterpublicity to take into consideration, at times this study became extremely challenging, overwhelming, and unmanageable.

Finally, I have studied a website—Ikhwanweb—to explore, interpret, and understand counterpublic dynamics. However, websites, specifically the one in question, is not interactive; it does not allow a glimpse into the counterpublic dynamics that are manifest in fora such as social networking sites where the options of reciprocity and interactivity are high, and which contain potentially rich dynamics of counterpublicity. Nevertheless, this study focuses on the use of a website, which is an important forum for counterpublic

expression in repressive environments; specifically, how the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood uses its English-language website for counterpublic *expression* in an *authoritarian* environment—therein lies its significance. With the challenges and limitations stated, it becomes important to close this study by recommending some directions for future research on this terrain and topic.

Future Directions

I complete this study by presenting four recommendations for future research. First, in order to gain a multi-perspective understanding of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's counterpublic dynamics, varied approaches need to be taken. For instance, in this dissertation I have analyzed rhetoric present in three specific sections of Ikhwanweb, and chosen contributions made by the Egyptian MB as my artifact. However, the Egyptian MB states in Ikhwanweb that *other* views are also present in the website. I believe that despite being outside views the Egyptian Brotherhood's editorial and administrative policies have an impact on which *other* comments can be included in Ikhwanweb. Analysis of these views and voices can help explore the *multivocality* present in Ikhwanweb, which can bring forth interesting observations and insights.

Earlier in this chapter I introduced the concept of *agenda setting* and its implications to this study. Although that did not form the predominant focus of analysis, future research may benefit from looking into the agenda setting aspect of counterpublic communication, especially on online fora. This can potentially unearth some significant insights into the use of new media as a tool for agenda setting, and the consequences of such use, by counterpublics.

Yet another direction that future scholars can take is to study the Brotherhood's use of Facebook, Twitter, or other social networking or microblogging sites, in order to capture the counterpublic dynamics and negotiations present therein. Since these technologies have been dominant in providing the impetus for, as well as sustaining, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, it might be extremely important and contingent to understand how these new media and technologies are used for counterpublic negotiations.

Finally, the recent Egyptian Revolution has changed the political dynamics within the country dramatically. Consequently, the role and importance of the Egyptian Brotherhood has also changed. Now the Egyptian Brotherhood has perhaps taken on the role of the wider public in relation to religious minorities like Coptic Christians in Egypt and secular parties within the Egyptian political system. If the tables are turned, and the Egyptian Brotherhood becomes the wider public, how does its rhetorical dynamics and worldview (or do they) change, is an important point to ponder. What happens when counterpublics become the wider public? These are critical questions to consider.

Conclusion

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is a distinct counterpublic that holds a worldview unique to itself; thus, its counterpublic dynamics and its rhetorical acts are also idiosyncratic. Yet, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is also representative of several moderate Islamic organizations in the Middle East that are struggling to find a niche within the democratic discourse, as well as stay true to their Islamic sensibilities. These organizations are most often counterpublics enmeshed in complex relationships with such wider publics as the West, their respective secular, authoritarian governments, as well as extremist organizations responsible for demonizing *Islam*. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Counterpublic Cyber

Islamic worldview, though specific to it, nevertheless brings to light the quintessential dilemma that typify these moderate groups: how can organizations with inherent Islamic convictions be the harbinger of democratic realities in the Middle East?; how can they contextualize the core ideals of democracy in terms relevant to predominantly Muslim societies?; are their democratic aspirations and actions genuine, or are these short-term tactical maneuvers simply ways to find political predominance to establish Islamic theocracies?

Based on my analysis of its rhetoric in Ikhwanweb, I assert that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has genuine democratic intentions. Inherent in its Counterpublic Cyber Islamic worldview is a need for reform; the dialectical tensions, the mistrust, the desire to be valued, the need to be cautious, and the manifestation of flux, are all pointers to its struggle—to transition into an entity within the Egyptian society that can counter authoritarianism, promote human rights and peace, and support a form of government that maintains an Islamic spirit but follows democratic practices. It becomes important to view this struggle through a lens of understanding and trust, instead of suspicion.

Furthermore, the Egyptian Brotherhood uses Ikhwanweb as a counterpublic sphere and the English-language rhetoric therein to voice support as well as opposition, circulate counterdiscourses, express difference, and perform various rhetorical acts of self and other-positioning, with the ulterior aim to reach out to the Western world. Its objective is to apprise the Western world that Islamic organizations are not inherently extremist entities. The aim also is to expose and condemn authoritarian regimes, which despite being secular neither support democracy nor foster robust civil societies. In fact, the post-Mubarak Egypt of today requires Western agents to pay more attention to the rhetoric of the Egyptian Muslim

Brotherhood. This becomes imperative because Western agents can be potential allies,

supporting and assisting this Islamic organization to play its optimum role within Egypt, so

that all Egyptians can reach their *manifest destiny*—live as free citizens in a democratic

Egypt.

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