

# Middle East Politics Fall 2009

## Paper #1

### ***Due Tuesday October 6 in class***

Answer **all** of the following questions below in a 10-12 page paper. The paper should be double-spaced, in 12-point font, and should have page numbers. Do not write more than 12 pages, as I will stop reading at the end of the twelfth page. Your paper will lose 5 points per day that it is late UNLESS your dean contacts me to request that you receive an extension. Anything more than a very small number of spelling or grammatical errors will result in points being deducted from your final grade, so proofread carefully.

You need to submit **TWO** copies of your paper – one as an e-mail attachment to [vlangoehr@yahoo.com](mailto:vlangoehr@yahoo.com), and one hard copy. Your name should not appear anywhere on the paper EXCEPT on a title page which should be THE FINAL PAGE of the paper.

Many people argue that the regime of Hosni Mubarak is justified in doing anything it can to block the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (EMB) from taking power because Egyptian politics under an EMB regime would be even more authoritarian than they are now. Detractors claim that a Brotherhood regime would make religious law (*shar'ia*) the law of the land and that this would be incompatible with democracy and dangerous to the civil and political rights of women, of religious minorities such as Coptic Christians, and of Muslims who disagree with the Brotherhood's conservative interpretation of Islam. In this paper you will examine the activities, statements and the political programs of the EMB from the 1980s until the present in order to assess the validity of these arguments. You will also read arguments about the conditions under which, one author contends, participation in the Jordanian political system helped the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (JMB) become more fully committed to democracy, and arguments that continuing the current policy of repressing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood instead of allowing it full political participation might lead its members to resort to violence.

In 10-12 pages, write a memo to the new Obama administration which answers ALL of the following UNDERLINED questions, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

1) If the Muslim Brotherhood controlled Egypt, would Coptic Christians enjoy equal political rights, including the right to be elected to any political office?

2a) How does the Muslim Brotherhood view women's role in society? Give concrete examples. Does it believe women should, for example, work outside the home, run for political office, or dress in particular ways?

2b) Do any of the positions the EMB has taken on women cross the line from being a conservative preference which women who felt differently would be free to ignore to violating Freedom House requirements for democracy?

(An example of this “line” might be a hypothetical Christian conservative party in the U.S. whose members believed that mothers should not work while their children were young. If party leaders simply voiced that preference and tried to convince women to stay home and rear children, that would be a conservative preference that would not violate Freedom House requirements; if the party were to come to power and pass laws that prevented mothers of young children from working, then this would violate FH guidelines.)

**In this question and Q #3, make sure to cite specific FH requirements by listing their letter and number from the worksheet below and paraphrasing or quoting the relevant question. For example, if the Brotherhood had made the statement that Egypt already has too many Christian churches and no more should be built, this would suggest a violation of D2, which says that religious communities should be free to exercise their faith. You do not need to footnote the FH requirement information.**

3) If the Brotherhood came to power, are there any areas other than treatment of women and Copts where you think Brotherhood policies might violate Freedom House rules? How specifically?

4) In the reading on the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (JMB) for class, Jillian Schwedler argues that the participation of the JMB in elections across time deepened the movement’s commitment to achieving its goals through democratic politics. She supports her argument by closely examining the JMB’s practice of vigorously debating and then voting on issues within the movement to determine official JMB policies (as opposed to a single leader or small group making all decisions). While Schwedler doesn’t say this, others contend that a movement that functions as a democracy internally may be more likely to function democratically in the political system as a whole. Are decisions made in a democratic way within the EMB, and are differences of opinion within the movement well-tolerated?

5a) If there are important divisions within the movement on issues such as commitment to democracy, equality for women and non-Muslims, or other issues, would a freer Egypt with less repression of the EMB be likely to increase the power of the “more liberal” Brothers within the movement?

5b) Is there a danger that continued repression of the group by the Egyptian government could lead current and potential members to give up on the prospect of achieving their aims peacefully and turning to violence?

6) Before 2006, the Bush administration put some pressure on Mubarak to allow freer political competition, but it opposed increased power for Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Obama’s Cairo speech seemed to signal willingness to accept the electoral success of Muslim Brotherhood-like parties under certain conditions, but the Obama administration simultaneously seems to have abandoned the idea of putting any pressure on the Mubarak regime to democratize, making the prospect of a Muslim Brotherhood victory very remote. Given your arguments above, if the primary goal of the Obama administration was to increase democracy in Egypt, would you suggest that the administration put more pressure on the Mubarak government to democratize the political system, which would probably increase the political power of the Muslim Brotherhood? MAKE SURE TO EXPLICITLY CONSIDER THE FACT THAT THE MUBARAK REGIME ITSELF IS VERY AUTHORITARIAN – WOULD AN EMB REGIME,

## EVEN IF NOT PERFECTLY DEMOCRATIC, BE MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN THE MUBARAK REGIME?

**NOTE:** although in the “real world” this would be an important consideration, DO NOT include in your memo any consideration of the kind of foreign policy that the EMB might pursue if it were in power, as this is beyond the scope of our readings.

**Note that the paper readings demonstrate a wide variety of (sometimes explicitly contradictory) positions and actions taken by Brothers on the issues addressed above. For example, in trying to understand how a ruling EMB regime would approach women’s rights, we have several different kinds of evidence to consider, including a) how women lawyers were treated in the EMB-run Lawyers’ Syndicate in the 1990s; b) the interaction of journalist Mona al Tahawy with the General Guide; c) writings by various EMB leaders and thinkers who have influenced the movement; and d) the positions of the 2007 draft platform on women’s political role. You need to weigh all of this evidence to make your most educated guess as to what the EMB’s position on women in the future will be. The questions of how to weigh a) actions vs. statements, b) the question of whose statements carry more weight when different Brothers make different statements, and c) the question of whether different positions/actions over time represent an evolution of MB thinking in a more liberal direction are precisely those faced by scholars attempting to determine how democratic the Brotherhood would be, and you have to deal with it head on in this paper.**

**For full credit on any question it will not be sufficient to answer by just citing one or two examples– you need to have gathered all the key evidence and sifted through it and assessed potential contradictions to decide what *you* think the Brotherhood would be likely to do if it came to power. In doing so make sure to keep in mind the timing of various activities – i.e., if the more liberal statements or activities are the more recent ones, then perhaps we have evidence of the phenomenon that Schwedler describes: the EMB becoming more moderate as it participates in the political process. You should also pay close attention to which Brothers are making particular statements or doing particular activities: does there seem to be a systematic difference between some Brothers and others – like the MB Supreme Leader being more/less conservative than younger generations of Brothers? Are the people taking the more liberal positions people with a lot of power in the movement, or not?**

### **Readings**

All of these readings are either on ERes or at the noted web address. MAKE SURE TO ALSO CONSIDER INFORMATION FROM THE MB READINGS ON THE CLASS SYLLABUS – ESPECIALLY the Brown and Hawzawy article.

- “What Do Egypt’s Islamists Want? Moderate Islam and the Rise of Islamic Constitutionalism,” Bruce Rutherford, *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 2006, pp. 707-720 & 726-731 (ER)
- “The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers,” Mona al-Ghobashy, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2005, 373-375, 376-377, 380-391 (ER)

- “Labor Disunion,” Lee Keath, *Cairo Today*, June 1993 (ER)
- *Egypt After Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, and Democracy in the Arab World*, Bruce Rutherford, (Princeton University Press, 2008), 178-183
- “The Brotherhood’s Dilemma,” Marc Lynch, Crown Center for Middle East Studies Paper, January 2008  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB25.pdf>
- “In the Shadow of the Brothers: The Women of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,” Omayma Abdel-Latif, October 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=22347>
- *No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam*, Geneive Abdo, (Oxford, 2000), 71-74, 78-87, 89-90, 100-101 (ER)
- “Young Brothers in Cyberspace,” Marc Lynch, *Middle East Report*, Winter 2007, Excerpts (ER)
- “Time to Move On,” Dina Basiony, *Egypt Today*, May 2009  
<http://www.egypttoday.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=8487>
- “I Will Stand Up for the Muslim Brotherhood,” Mona El Tahawy, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, September 19, 2007 (ER)  
<http://www.forward.com/articles/11646/>
- “The Muslim Brotherhood Will Stand Up For All Egyptians,” Ibrahim al Houdaiby, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, September 26, 2007 (ER)  
<http://www.forward.com/articles/11704/>
- “The Muslim Brotherhood’s Internal Elections,” Khalil al-Anani, Brookings Institution, June 3, 2008  
[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0603\\_muslim\\_brotherhood\\_alanani.aspx?rssid=egypt](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0603_muslim_brotherhood_alanani.aspx?rssid=egypt)
- “Assessing the Muslim Brotherhood Firewall,” Abu Aardvark (Marc Lynch, George Washington University), May 13, 2008  
<http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/abuaardvark/2008/05/assessing-the-m.html>

## **FREEDOM HOUSE CRITERIA FOR DEMOCRACY**

### **Political Rights Checklist**

#### **A. Electoral Process**

1. Is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?
2. Are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair?

#### **B. Political Pluralism And Participation**

1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?
2. Is there a significant opposition vote and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?
3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?
4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

#### **C. Functioning Of Government**

1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?
2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?
3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

### **Civil Liberties Checklist**

#### **D. Freedom Of Expression And Belief**

1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression? (Note: In cases where the media are state-controlled but offer pluralistic points of view, the survey gives the system credit.)

2. Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?

3. Is there academic freedom and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?

4. Is there open and free private discussion?

### **E. Associational And Organizational Rights**

1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?

2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations? (Note: This includes civic organizations, interest groups, foundations, etc.)

3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

### **F. Rule Of Law**

1. Is there an independent judiciary?

2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?

3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?

4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

### **G. Personal Autonomy And Individual Rights**

1. Does the state control travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education?

2. Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?

3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?

4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

