

Islamic Political Communication Online: An Analysis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's official English websites

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The important role of the Internet in the context of the Arab Spring uprisings has reinvigorated scholarly interest in the potential of ICTs to shape and intervene in political transition processes. The bulk of political communications literature produced in the aftermath of the Arab Spring focuses on the function of the Internet as catalyst of the popular protests that toppled the authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Tunisia. By contrast, little attention has been paid so far on how the Muslim social movements and the faith-based political parties that emerged as winners in the post-revolution elections are using the Internet for political communication. To close this gap, this paper provides a content analysis of the official English websites of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), over the week leading up to the Egyptian constitutional referendum of 15th December 2012.

1. Introduction: Political Parties, Social Movements and Political Communication Online

Since its commercialization and popularization in the early 1990s, the Internet has become incorporated into virtually every aspect of modern societies, including their political and social organization. It has come to be a popularly shared conviction that Internet based information and communication technologies (ICT) have the potential to act as accelerants of political and social change and will be highly critical for nations in their strive for freedom and democracy (Clinton 2011; Gore 1994).

The important role of the Internet in the context of the Arab Spring uprisings further reinvigorated scholarly interest in the potential of ICTs to shape and intervene in processes of political transition. However, the bulk of political communications literature produced in the aftermath of the Arab Spring is lopsided in its concentration on the Internet as a catalyst of popular protest movements that were essentially driven by secular forces (Kuebler 2011; Lotan et al. 2011; Marzouki et al. 2012;). By contrast, little attention has been paid so far on how the Muslim social movements and the faith-based political parties that emerged as winners in the post-revolution elections are using the Internet for political communication.

In an attempt towards bridging this gap, this paper analyses how Egypt's central political-religious actors, the Islamic social movement *Muslim Brotherhood* (MB) and its political arm the *Freedom and Justice Party* (FJP) use the Internet for political communication.

Communication between leaders and citizens is a necessary condition for political systems to function effectively. On the one hand, citizens need to be informed about the political alternatives represented by different political parties in order form an opinion and make a decision when going to the polls to vote. On the other hand, actors in government need to be informed about the demands and concerns of those they are supposed to govern. In representative democracies communication between government and citizens is mediated by political parties. Parties can thus themselves be conceived as "a means of communication" (Sartori 1976, p. 29). Traditionally, citizens and parties are linked by three primary channels of communication: (1) Personal interactions within parties – including informal face-to-face conversations with friends, party members and activists; (2) traditional campaign rallies, and (3) grassroots local party meetings. In modern election campaigns, these channels of communication have been increasingly

supplemented by the traditional mass media, including the printed press as well as radio and television broadcasting (Norris 2003, 2005). Since the advent of the Internet, the role of mass media in connecting citizens and parties has in turn been supplemented by new digital ICT. Scientific studies analyzing the way in which parties and candidates use the Internet have proliferated as its usage has spread (Bennett and Iyengar 2008; Gibson, Ward, and Lusoli 2002; Gibson, Nixon, and Ward 2003; Gibson and Ward 1998). However, many of these studies come to the – somewhat sobering – conclusion that most parties fail to realize the Internet's potential for interactive communication with their constituents and members at the base. It is frequently criticized that most parties' Web presence is immature and apparently devoid of a strategic purpose other than appearing up-to-date. Party websites are often primarily used as tools of unilateral top-down communication (Gibson and Ward 2000; Welp and Marzucca 2014). This criticism notwithstanding, it appears that, at least in Europe, the existence of party websites has strengthened communication pluralism by increasing the available amount of information on minor and fringe parties, thus giving them more voice and visibility (Norris 2003, 2005).

Although parties are key in aggregating citizen interests and communicating them to governments, they are not the only organizations that engage in political communication. Several studies indicate that the ability of tech savvy social movements to leverage internet communication technologies has profoundly changed the dynamics between movements and political parties in the 21st century and that loosely organized ad hoc protest groups are the most likely beneficiaries of new ICT (Bimber 1998; Bonchek 1995; Rohlinger, Bunnage, and Klein 2012).

2. Online political communication in majority Muslim countries

In most of the world's majority Muslim countries individuals with regular Internet access constitute a minority, albeit a politically significant one. They tend to be younger, better educated and live in urban areas, and they tend to be among the most politically active citizens (Howard et al. 2011). The Internet nowadays is the primary source through which young people in these countries form their political identities, attitudes, and behaviors (Howard 2010). So the addressees that social movement organizations (SMO) can target online are likely to be potential supporters of their civic agenda. A number of Islamic SMO have made Internet media integral to their communication strategy, mainly to propagate their worldview, but also to network and obtain funding (Bunt 2003).

This is especially relevant considering the socio-demographic profile of these countries. In the Middle East – North Africa (MENA) region, which has the highest percentage of Muslim-majority countries (Pew Research Center 2009), the population growth is such that youth under the age of 24 constitute up to 65% of the population.

It is important to note, though, that the flourishing of digital Islamic culture and networks was not driven by socio-demographic factors alone. It is also rooted in the region's political culture and the nature of its media landscapes. As many regimes in the Middle East continued to rely on political exclusion and repression to maintain their power, citizens were forced to organize through informal networks and build collective identities through these networks. (Singerman 2004). The ownership structure of newspaper, radio and television stations continued to be centralized, with a few political parties and private corporations producing most of the broadcast media. In authoritarian countries, media outlets were heavily regulated by the state. In this context, the Internet emancipated civil society from media production systems that were almost entirely controlled by the state (Howard 2010; Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M Hussain 2010; Lynch 2006, 2012).

Regarding the communication strategies of Islamic faith based parties and SMO the Internet as an alternative sphere for public discourse gained particular relevance under the secular authoritarian regimes of Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Iraq. Where religious parties were banned from participating openly in elections, they often adopted other organizational forms and organized their political opposition online, from outside the country (Howard 2010).

The media and communication experience of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) goes back nearly seven decades and has included magazines, newsletters, radio broadcast but also face-to-face proselytizing in mosques and cultural centers (Hamza 2009; Munson 2001). Since its foundation, the MB has been involved almost continuously in conflicts of varying intensity with the country's political authorities (ISS 2011) and the group's communication strategy has evolved in close relation to the different relations it maintained with Egypt's governing elites during different periods (for a more detailed account see the historical overview of media experiences and communication strategies of the MB by A. Breuer in this issue).

3. The Muslim Brotherhood's Use of the Web in the wake of Egypt's Constitutional Referendum of December 2012: An analysis of Ikhwanweb.com and Fjponline.com

The period under analysis was the week in the wake of the constitutional referendum held in December 2012 in which voters were asked whether they approved of the draft constitution passed by the Constituent Assembly in November 2012. During this period given that the political atmosphere in Egypt in the run-up to the referendum was particularly tense and polarized. The country saw a series of street protests and violent clashes between supporters and opponents of the Muslim Brotherhood after President Morsi granted himself sweeping powers to push the new constitution through the Assembly which was dominated by Islamist forces. Liberal opponents argued that the constitution did not grant sufficient minority rights. There was particularly bitter disagreement about the role of Islam and the position of the military. However, the Brotherhood leaders dismissed such criticism as a minority view and was confident of winning a majority of votes in the referendum.

Against this background, this paper seeks to answer the following question:

Q1: To what extent did the Muslim Brotherhood use the web to engage in primary functions of political communication?

Q2: To what extent did the Muslim Brotherhood exploit the potential of the Internet for collective action?

3.1 Methodology

To answer these questions, we performed a daily download of *Ikhwanweb*, the official English website of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and *FJPonline*, the English website of the Brotherhood's political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) over the period from 8 to 13 December 2012.

To analyze the websites' content we used feature analysis, a methodology based on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. It is assumed that political parties and social movements perform a given set of categorizable political functions. Each category is composed of sub-categories that translate into features whose presence or absence can be observed on a website. Websites receive points for the presence of each feature, the sum of which indicates the score the site achieves on each category. The typology used for the purpose of this paper

represents a combined adapted version of the typologies used by Ben Moussa 2011, Stein 2009, and Gibson et.al. 2003. It is composed of five functions considered as most salient in the political communication of SMOs and political parties:

- Providing information
- Fundraising and resource generation
- Mobilizing collective action and campaigning
- Promoting interaction and dialogue
- Internal and external networking

Table 1: Web features of political communication functions

CATEGORY					
WEB - FEATURES	Description of SMO / Party values & ideology	Project or campaign news	Post comment function	Links to national parties	Allows members to join online or offline (print form)
	Description of Party / Organization structure	Online petitions	Online Polls and surveys	Links to foreign parties	Membership fees or party dues
	Description of SMO objectives / Party platform & policies	Plans international actions	Chat room / participatory forum	Links to national SMOs / NGOs	Advertising
	Leadership speeches and self-published articles	Plans national actions	Social Media Widget (share content online)	Links to international SMOs / NGOs	Sells Merchandise
	FAQs	Plans local actions	Leadership Profile (SMO members / Party candidates)	Links to sub-organizational groups / regional party branches	Volunteer sign-up

In a second step we subjected the category “providing information” to closer scrutiny applying frame analysis. In social theory, a *frame* is understood as a set of interpretative frameworks, that individuals rely on to understand their social reality (Bateson 1972). Following Gamson (1992), we distinguished between three principal types of collective action frames: (1) injustice frames, (2) identity frames, and (3) agency frames. The injustice frame refers to ideas and symbols that trigger moral indignation by illustrating how significant a specific problem is and what the movement can do to alleviate it. The identity frame refers to the process of defining of a collective “we” in opposition to some “others” who are the target of collective action. The central characteristic of this frame is the construction of a solidary in-group identity built around the organization. Finally, the agency frame refers to the process of creating awareness that it is possible to alter the social status quo or policies through collective action.

3.2 Feature Analysis

In essence, the analysis of web-features on *ikhwanweb.com*, the official English website of the Muslim Brotherhood, and *fjponline.com*, the English website of the Brotherhood's political arm the Freedom and Justice Party, reveals that these web presences mainly serve the functions of providing information and of fostering interaction and dialogue with users. Both websites also engage in making linkages and efforts to mobilize collective action, although to a very moderate degree. However, activity in the category of fundraising and resource generation is uniformly lacking.

As can be seen from table 2, *ikhwanweb.com* scores slightly higher than *fjponline.com* in the category providing information.

Table 2: Providing Information

	ikhwanweb.com	fjponline.-com
Providing Information		
Description of SMO / Party history	1	0
Description of SMO / Party values & ideology	1	1
Description of Party / Organization structure	1	0
Description of SMO objectives / Party platform & policies	1	1
Leadership speeches and self-published articles	1	1
FAQs	0	1
Total	5	4

This difference is much more pronounced when looking at the actual quantity (and quality) of text that is provided under the different sub-categories of this dimension. The history of the MB as a social movement, for example is addressed by a variety of articles that range from the biographies of both living and deceased leaders of the movement, over an analysis of the evolution of the organization's media discourse¹, to a detailed "*History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*", which alone accounts for 10.256 words². The FJP, in turn, only briefly informs about its launch as the political arm of the MB following the 2011 revolution in its FAQ section, in a 159 word paragraph under the header "*where were you before the revolution?*". Mention of the organization's position and concrete demands concerning the new constitution was scarce and cursory on both websites. On *Fjponline.com*, for example, only a brief paragraph of 341 words included in the party's founding statement outlines its demand for a constitution that respects the principles of social equity, pluralism, and freedom of expression, belief and worship while at the same time stressing the importance of the principles of Sharia to be considered as the main source of legislation in Egypt.

¹Muslim Brotherhood's Media, from the Missionary to the Political discourse. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=20546>

²<http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=799>

Table 3: Action and Mobilization

	ikhwanweb.com	fjponline.-com
Action & Mobilization		
Event calendar	0	0
Project or campaign news	0	0
Online petitions	0	0
Plans / calls for international actions	0	0
Plans / calls for national actions	1	1
Plans / calls for local actions	0	0
Total	1	1

Web-features for the mobilization of collective action were largely absent from both websites during the period of observation. As illustrated in Table 3, neither *ikhwanweb.com* nor *fjponline.com* made use of the different technological possibilities that alternative online media offer to orchestrate or co-ordinate action that aims at specific political outcomes, such as event calendars or online petitions. Over the period of observation, the only call for concrete action at the national level was an official statement of the Muslim Brotherhood urging all Egyptians for “positive participation” (i.e. a Yes vote) in the forthcoming popular referendum, that was published on both *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com* on 12 December 2013. There is evidence though that the Muslim Brotherhood has used *ikhwanweb.com* for the mobilization of street protest on different occasions prior to the observation period, for example by means of a calls to the so called “million men marches”. Examples include a call to participate in a mass demonstration “in support of ‘Legitimacy and Sharia’” on 1st December 2012³ and a call to participate in a rally in support of national unity and “Palestinian cause” on 12th May 2011.⁴

Table 4: Interaction and Dialogue

	ikhwanweb.com	fjponline.-com
Interaction & Dialogue		
Organization Contact Information	1	1
Post comment function	1	1
Online Polls and surveys	1	1
Chat room / participatory forum	0	0
Social Media Widget (share content online)	1	1
Member or supporter profiles	0	0
Total	4	4

As can be seen from Table 4, both websites score relatively high in the category Interaction & Dialogue.

Social media platforms have to form an integral part of the organization’s media strategy and both *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com* make use of mini applications (widgets) that allow users to ‘like’ and share content on a variety of popular online networks including Facebook, Twitter,

³See: Muslim Brotherhood Statement Calling All Egyptians for Million-Man March and Rally Saturday in Tahrir. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30432>

⁴See: Friday’s ‘Million Man March’ Calls for National Unity <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28561&ref=search.php>

LinkedIn, Google, Digg, and StumbleUpon. *Ikhwanweb.com* demonstrates a higher degree of interactivity here in that it also enables user to directly express their opinion on content by using the Facebook comment plugin.

During the period of observation both websites carried out an online opinion poll, asking users whether or not they supported President Morsi’s decision to re-instate parliament. Both websites allow contacting the organization by providing an institutional e-mail address. In addition, information can be requested using an online query form. However, the functionality of this feature is questionable. To test its responsiveness, we sent enquiries via the online forms of both *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com*. During the period of observation no response was received from neither of the two websites.

Table 5: Vertical and Horizontal Linkages

	ikhwanweb.com	fjponline.com
Vertical & Horizontal Linkages		
Links to news media	1	1
Links to national parties	0	0
Links to foreign parties	0	0
Links to national SMOs / NGOs	0	0
Links to international SMOs / NGOs	1	0
Links to sub- and supra-organizational levels of SMO / party	1	0
Total	3	1

Both websites score moderately to low in the category Vertical & Horizontal Linkages. In terms of horizontal linkages, *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com* both have dedicated media sections with outgoing links to content produced by national and international television channels such as Alarabyia, AlJazeera, CNN, and Nile TV. Neither of the two sites links to other national parties, NGOs or SMOs. Interestingly, however, *ikhwanweb.com* has a dedicated section on “research and commentary” in which it provides unique external linkages to a number of research articles by international non-profit and research institutions.

The Brotherhood maintains a complex structure at the regional and local level - both as a party and SMO - and is linked worldwide to similar to Islamist groups that share its model of political activism combined with Islamic charity work, such as the Brotherhood’s chapter in Syria⁵, Jabhat al-‘Amal al-Islami in Jordan⁶, or the El Eslah Society in Bahrain⁷. However, in terms of making vertical linkages, the opportunity to use its websites as access gates to these sub- and supra-organizational structures is largely foregone.

⁵ikhwansyria.com

⁶<http://www.jabha.net/>

⁷http://www.aleslah.org/eslah_wp/

Table 6: Fundraising and resource generation

	ikhwanweb.com	fjponline.com
Fundraising & Resource Generation		
Solicits Donations	0	0
Allows members to join online or offline (print form)	0	0
Membership fees or party dues	0	0
Advertising	0	0
Sells Merchandise	0	0
Volunteer sign-up	0	0
Total	0	0

As can be seen from table 6, during the period of observation neither ikhwanweb.com nor fjponline.com made use of the numerous possibilities that alternative media offer to raise financial support or recruiting new members, personnel, or volunteers.

3.3 Frame Analysis

The result of the frames that *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com* employ in the provision of information mirrors the results of the feature analysis in so far as identity frames and injustice frames were predominant on both websites, whereas agency frames were scarcely used.

On ikhwanweb.com, information on the history of the Muslim Brotherhood is available in the section “MB History and Literature. Here, identity frames are often intertwined with injustice frames. In fact, a significant part of the textual items found in this section deal with the victimhood the MB and individual members of the group have been subject to.

Several texts in this section recount the lives of prominent MB members as well as internationally renowned Muslim leaders. On the one hand, these items highlight the achievements of historical leaders of the Brotherhood in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. On the other hand they also represent an opportunity to reflect on the history of the movement, its distinctions and the hardships it has been facing since its establishment and which run parallel to the lives of its leaders.

The values and ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood are maybe most explicitly stated in a subsection of Ikhwanweb’s “MB History and Literature” section, entitled “The Principles of The Muslim Brotherhood”. Identity frames are predominant in this section and Islam is represented as the overarching principle to which all aspects of the lives of Egyptian Muslims are subordinate. :

“Ever since the Egyptian people in its majority [...] embraced Islam [...], Islam has fully and totally arranged the life and all activities of those peoples. [...] the Glorious Quran and the Sunnah which [...] have become the sole reference point for everything relating to the ordering of the life of the Muslim family, individual, and community as well as the Muslim State all economic, social, political, cultural, educational, and also legislative and Judiciary activities.”

Derived from the superiority of Islam as overarching principle is the demand for the “introduction of the Islamic Shari`ah as the basis controlling the affairs of state and society”.

The Brotherhood's position on the role of women features particularly prominently on *fjponline.com*, where several textual items stress the FJP's efforts to enshrine gender equity into the new constitution.

One particularly prominent function of identity frames related to MB values is the construction of a collective in-group identity that is juxtaposed with the identity of "others" that do not share the group's ideology. The article "*Muslim Brotherhood Initiatives For Reform in Egypt*", published in Ikhwanweb's "MB literature and history" section, provides an illustrative case in point. The text emphasizes the detrimental effects of Westernization on Egyptian society and the need to protect the individual citizen from exposure to un-Islamic content, so as to avoid the risk of spiritual and moral erosion.

At the same time, in constructing its group identity and distinguishing it from the identity of "others" the Brotherhood also decidedly distances itself from groups that subscribe to radical or fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. Over the period of observation *fjponline.com* published several textual items that stressed the party's intention to construct a political order that meets the demands of all factions of the Egyptian society, especially the Coptic minority. In constructing its identity the FJP also takes great care to distance itself from violent forms of collective action. Acts of violence are generally attributed to unspecified outsiders, for example "*corrupt regime hangovers*" or "*so-called opposition thugs or mercenaries*"⁸, though sometimes also more directly to those opposing the Brotherhood's leadership, as for instance in a public MB statement of 8 December, which neatly demarcates the boundaries between peaceful Brotherhood adherents and violent opponents of President Morsi:

*"As the anti-Morsi camp persist in desperate and merciless violence and mayhem, and the Muslim Brotherhood's martyrs mount up to 9 so far in defense of legitimacy, Brotherhood Chairman Badie calls for restraint and peaceful demonstration".*⁹

During the period of observation, textual items belonging to the sub-category "Leadership speeches & self-published articles" accounted for the majority of information provided on *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com*. A significant part of the textual items published in this sub-category deals with the victimhood of the MB as an organization or of individuals supportive of the movement's objectives.

One illustrative point in case is an official FJP statement issued in reaction to violent clashes between opponents and supporters of President Morsi in front of the presidential palace on 11 December, which states that:

*"our [pro-Morsi] demonstration remained peaceful for three hours, until counter-demonstrations arrived, including opposition groups infiltrated by professional violent criminals paid by former regime figures. Those thugs brutally attacked peaceful demonstrator [...] killing six Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) youth"*¹⁰

Compared to injustice and identity frames, agency frames are rare on *ikhwanweb.com* and *fjponline.com*. During the period of observation the only concrete attempt to mobilize collective

⁸Egypt Muslim Brotherhood Martyrs, Patriotic Youth Defending Democratic Transformation <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30478&ref=search.php>

⁹Muslim Brotherhood Statement on December 8 Denounces Anti-Morsi Violence and Vandalism: <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30471&ref=search.php>

¹⁰Freedom and Justice Party Statement on Violent Clashes Outside Itehadia Presidential Palace. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30462>

action consisted in a statement by Gamal Heshmat, a member of the FJP's National Committee, in which he summons all Egyptian citizens to participate in the referendum vote, emphasizing that: *"Voting 'Yes' for the constitution will help achieve the Democratic transformation we all long for"*.

There is, however, evidence that the Brotherhood has repeatedly attempted to mobilize collective action on political outcomes, both national and international, through its web presences on previous occasions. One example is a call for *"a general boycott of Russian and Chinese goods by all Arab and Muslim peoples who stand with the Syrian people's demands for freedom and dignity"* published on Ikhwanweb on 6 February 2012, after China and Russia had vetoed an Arab and Western-backed UN resolution condemning the violent repression of opponents of the Assad regime.¹¹

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Our web-feature analysis of Ikhwanweb.com and Fjponline.com revealed that during the period of observation these web-presences only made limited use of the technological opportunities the Internet offers for the motivation, organization, and coordination of collective action. The main function of these sites resided in providing information and - to a more moderate degree - in fostering interaction and dialogue with users. The provision of information on these sites took place in a relatively static and top-down manner with official party and movement statements and leadership speeches accounting for the majority of information provided.

By contrast, features that facilitate other important functions of political communication such as the mobilization of collective action, fundraising, and the creation of human resources were largely absent from these sites. This absence may, however, be attributable to the fact that the English versions of the Brotherhood's websites cater to an international audience and diaspora communities residing abroad, rather than to users residing inside the country who would actually physically be able to render volunteer services or participate in events of collective action that are confined to the national territory, for example the participation in street protests.

The result of our frame analysis of information provided on Ikhwanweb and Fjponline largely mirrors the observations made in the web-feature analysis. The predominant type of frames employed on these sites were identity frames which serve the function of constructing in-group solidarity by defining a collective "we" that helps members or sympathizers a group to define their identity in opposition "others", i.e. outsiders of the group. These identity frames were frequently found to be intertwined with injustice frames whose function is to motivate collective action by triggering moral indignation.

In constructing its identity the Muslim Brotherhood represented itself on these sites as a modern pious organization that adheres to the moral principles and religious laws of Islam. At the same time the group emphasized that it subscribes to a moderate liberal interpretation of Islam and the principles of democratic pluralism, thus distancing itself from other Muslim organizations that embrace more fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, or Jihadist groups that consider violence and terrorism as legitimate resistance to the threat of Westernization and secularization. At the same time, strong emphasis was put on events of victimization of the Brotherhood or individuals within the organization. Group activities were frequently depicted as merely reactive to violence and aggression emanating from either unspecified outsiders or - more

¹¹Jordan Muslim Brotherhood: Russia and China Justify Al-Assad's Crimes in Syria, Must Be Boycottedl. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29640>

specifically – opponents of Mohammed Morsi as the legitimate and democratically elected head of state. Agency frames that serve the function to motivate the individual to undertake concrete action in order to alter the social and political status quo, were largely absent from these sites. Over the period of observation the only concrete attempt to mobilize collective action consisted in an official statement of the Brotherhood that encouraged Egyptians to approve of the draft Constitution in the referendum vote on 15th December. Again, it is important to bear in mind that this imbalance may be due to the fact these sites mainly target audiences outside Egypt.

Summing up, the features and frames employed on Ikhwanweb and Fjponline confirm that the main function, or basic mission, of these sites consists in conveying an image of the Brotherhood as a moderate and liberal religious force to Western audiences. Since the Egyptian revolution was primarily driven by the liberal-secular forces of society, the Muslim Brotherhood had no part in the revolutionary founding myth of the post-authoritarian Egyptian state. Through its websites, the Muslim Brotherhood tried to compensate for this deficit by legitimating their claims to authority primarily through the procedural democratic process of the presidential election. As confirmed by the more recent events, this strategy clearly failed: following a week of mass protests against the Brotherhood, the military leadership deposed Mohammed Morsi on 3 July 2013. In September 2013 On 23 September, a court ordered the group outlawed and its assets seized.

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