The Role of Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egypt's Political Dynamics Post-Arab Spring: An Analysis through David Easton's Political System Framework

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Article Info:	Abstract:
	Purpose: This study analyzes the influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin on Egypt's political dynamics after the Arab Spring, using David Easton's political system framework. The Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, ignited widespread revolutions across Arab nations, including Egypt, with aspirations for more democratic governance. Ikhwanul Muslimin emerged victorious in Egypt's 2012 elections, with Mohamed Morsi becoming president. However, the movement faced significant setbacks after the 2013 military coup led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, which resulted in widespread repression and arrests of its members.
	Methodology: This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach and case study method to explore the role and influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egypt's political processes and the challenges they faced in this context.
Corresponding Author: Rachmat Indra Wiyana **Email:** rachmatindrawiyana07@gmail.com	**Findings:** The study reveals that government policies towards Ikhwanul Muslimin have significantly impacted Egypt's political stability, human rights, and civil liberties. It sheds light on the broader challenges faced by Islamist movements in navigating modern political systems
Paper Type: Research Paper 	**Implication:** The findings provide critical insights into the dynamics of Islamist movements within transitional political contexts, offering valuable perspectives on their role, limitations, and the broader implications for political stability and governance in the Middle East.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, is often regarded as a major revolutionary movement aimed at bringing political, social, and economic change to the Arab world. This optimism was rooted in parallels with the revolutions that occurred in 18th-century Europe, such as the French Revolution, which successfully ushered in structural transformations and significant advancements in various aspects of society. However, in reality, the Arab Spring left a trail of setbacks in many of the countries involved. One notable example Is Egypt, which, after successfully overthrowing Hosni Mubarak's regime, became ensnared in political instability, economic decline, and social fragmentation (Maurel, 2018).

The Arab Spring refers to a series of significant revolutions that swept across Arab countries, beginning in late 2010. The movement started in Tunisia and spread rapidly to other nations, including Egypt. The Arab Spring, as a massive protest movement, was driven by issues such as widespread corruption, nepotism, authoritarian leadership, economic crises, and dissatisfaction with undemocratic electoral processes (Yousef, 2013). The movement ignited a wave of hope among Arab societies for a transition toward democracy. In Egypt, these aspirations materialized in 2012 with the country's first-ever direct presidential elections. It followed decades of

authoritarian rule that ended after the resignation of Hosni Mubarak, transitioning power temporarily to the military before the elections (Maryam, 2014).

In this new democratic era, Mohamed Morsi, a prominent figure of Ikhwanul Muslimin, emerged victorious, marking a historic moment where an Islamist movement attained power democratically. However, the optimism surrounding this shift was short-lived. By 2013, Morsi was deposed by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in a military coup, citing political instability, worsening economic conditions, and fears over the growing dominance of Ikhwanul Muslimin (Al-Amin, 2016). Following the coup, el-Sisi's regime implemented harsh repressive measures against Ikhwanul Muslimin, including mass arrests, organizational bans, and labeling the group as a terrorist entity. These actions significantly diminished the influence and operational capacity of Ikhwanul Muslimin within Egyptian politics and society (Samuel, 2009).

From a political science perspective, Ikhwanul Muslimin plays a critical role in understanding the dynamics of democratization and authoritarianism in Egypt. As an Islamist organization, it was not only instrumental during the Arab Spring but also became a key player in shaping the post-revolution political landscape (Hassan, 2017). However, the resurgence of authoritarian rule under el-Sisi raises important questions about the future of political participation, human rights, and civil liberties in Egypt (Leslie, 2013).

This study seeks to analyze the influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin on Egypt's political dynamics post-Arab Spring, specifically during and after Mohamed Morsi's presidency. Using David Easton's political system theory, the research will explore how Ikhwanul Muslimin influenced political demands, garnered support, and shaped policy within the evolving Egyptian political system. Furthermore, the study will examine how el-Sisi's government's policies toward Ikhwanul Muslimin have affected political stability, human rights, and public participation in Egypt (Marie, 2017).

By employing a theoretical and practical lens, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Islamist organizations navigate the challenges of democratization and repression in modern political systems. Moreover, it offers insights into the broader implications of authoritarian measures on public engagement and rights, serving as a resource for policymakers, academics, and observers of international politics (Min et al., 2008).

METHODS

This study will employ a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method to analyze the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood on Egypt's political dynamics post-Arab Spring. The framework of analysis will be based on David Easton's political system theory, which identifies inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback within Egypt's political system. A qualitative approach is chosen as the study aims to delve into the complex and dynamic political phenomena, particularly the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's post-Arab Spring political context (Dhewi, 2023). This approach allows the researcher to explore in-depth the impact of political actors on the political system and how regime changes have affected the position and influence of these actors. The study adopts a case study method, focusing on a specific political event: Egypt's political dynamics following the Arab Spring. This method enables an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing the role and impact of the Muslim Brotherhood within the political landscape.

This research will exclusively utilize secondary data. Secondary data will be gathered through literature reviews, including books, scholarly journals, news articles, research reports, and official documents relevant to the topic. These sources will provide comprehensive insights into Egypt's political events, government policies, and international reactions to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood. David Easton's Political System Theory will serve as the primary analytical framework to examine how the Muslim Brotherhood has shaped Egypt's political dynamics. Through this theory, the researcher will analyze the relationships between political actors, government policies, and Egypt's socio-economic conditions in the aftermath of the Arab Spring (Joseph, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. History and meaning of the Ikhwanul Muslim.

The Ikhwanul Muslimin was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 with the aim of promoting Islamic values, Islamic Law, Shariah and fundamental principles. It stands as the largest and oldest organization in Egypt, as well as a significant Islamic movement that has expanded beyond Egypt over time. Initially, the Ikhwanul Muslimin focused on education, social reform, and charitable activities. However, as time passed, it began to engage more deeply in political affairs. One of the pivotal moments in the Ikhwanul Muslimin's history was its involvement in resistance against British colonialism in Egypt and its participation in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Ikhwanul Muslimin has often been regarded as both a significant force and a perceived threat, particularly due to its critical stance against Egypt's authoritarian governments. Its role has been consistently prominent and responsive to the political and social dynamics in Egypt (Aziz, 2019).

The Ikhwanul Muslimin (Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) was established by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 as a socio-religious and political movement aimed at restoring Islam as the foundation of societal and governmental life. Initially, the organization focused on education and social reform by establishing schools, hospitals, and other social institutions. Hassan al-Banna viewed modernization and colonialism as threats to Islamic values and sought an Islamic revival as a counter to the growing influence of the West in the Arab world. Over the decades, the Ikhwanul Muslimin evolved into an increasingly influential organization in Egypt, not only in social and educational spheres but also in politics. By the 1940s, the Ikhwanul Muslimin had become more politically active, openly opposing Egypt's monarchical regime and British presence. However, its political influence led to government repression, particularly following its involvement in protests and political violence in the late 1940s. In 1949, the founder of the Ikhwanul Muslimin, Hassan al-Banna, was assassinated by government agents in an effort to suppress the movement (Anthony,1993).

In the 1950s, tensions escalated between the Ikhwanul Muslimin and the Egyptian government following the 1952 revolution led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Initially, the Ikhwanul Muslimin supported the revolution that overthrew the monarchy, but their relationship with Nasser's regime deteriorated when they demanded a greater role in governance. In 1954, Nasser launched a harsh crackdown on the Ikhwanul Muslimin after an alleged assassination attempt against him by the group. Many members were arrested, imprisoned, or exiled, and the organization was officially banned. Despite political suppression, the Ikhwanul Muslimin maintained strong social networks in Egypt during the authoritarian regimes of Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosni Mubarak. Under Sadat's rule, there was some relaxation of restrictions, allowing the Ikhwan to re-engage in social and political life, albeit without official recognition. During this period, the organization focused on social and religious activities, strengthening its educational and welfare networks and gaining significant popularity among the Egyptian populace (Elisa, 2021).

After the Arab Spring in 2011, the Ikhwanul Muslimin re-emerged as a dominant political force in Egypt, founding the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). They secured a majority of seats in parliamentary elections, and Mohamed Morsi, a candidate from the Ikhwanul Muslimin, became Egypt's first democratically elected president in 2012. However, Morsi's leadership was short-lived. In 2013, the military ousted him under General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and the Ikhwanul Muslimin faced renewed and severe repression. The el-Sisi regime banned the organization, declared it a terrorist group, and arrested thousands of its members. To this day, the Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egypt remains under heavy pressure, with its existence continually challenged by the government (Khalid et al., 2021).

B. The Role of Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egypt's Political Dynamics.

During the regime of Hosni Mubarak, Ikhwanul Muslimin frequently faced repression and was perceived as a potential threat to his authority. Mubarak responded by periodically intensifying pressure on the

organization, conducting mass arrests of its members, and restricting their political activities. Despite these constraints, Ikhwanul Muslimin played a significant role in building robust social networks, particularly through the provision of healthcare, education, and charitable services. In the face of the Mubarak regime's failure to deliver adequate basic services, the organization effectively filled the void, garnering substantial support from impoverished communities. While continuing to demand political reform and greater freedoms, Ikhwanul Muslimin adopted a cautious and nonviolent approach, favoring democratic means to achieve power despite the state's oppressive measures (Amin, 2011).

Pre-Arab Spring Dynamics. Egypt remained under authoritarian rule for nearly three decades under Mubarak, who maintained stability through tight control over the opposition, emergency laws, and the repression of groups such as Ikhwanul Muslimin. While politically stable, the country faced systemic corruption, nepotism, poverty, and widening economic disparities, particularly among its youth. These conditions exacerbated the divide between a wealthy elite and the majority poor, intensifying social discontent. Speculation about Mubarak's intention to transfer power to his son further fueled dissatisfaction. Entering the Arab Spring, Ikhwanul Muslimin assumed a strategic yet subdued role in the unfolding unrest. Although ordinary citizens drove the broader movement, the organization actively supported protests and mobilized its supporters to participate in mass demonstrations while maintaining a discreet stance to preserve political caution. Ikhwanul Muslimin also played a crucial role in maintaining order on the ground during protests (Trius et al., 2023). The prolonged demonstrations and mounting international pressure ultimately led to Mubarak's resignation on February 11, 2011, marking the end of his regime and the beginning of an uncertain political transition under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (Elhadad & Amirah, 2021).

Ikhwanul Muslimin During Egypt's Transitional Period. Following Mubarak's ouster, Ikhwanul Muslimin emerged as a central player in Egypt's political transition under SCAF's interim leadership. The organization swiftly established the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) as a political vehicle to participate in the promised parliamentary elections. During this period, Ikhwanul Muslimin maintained a cautious relationship with SCAF, aiming to leverage the transitional phase to gain political legitimacy. In the late 2011 to early 2012 parliamentary elections, FJP achieved a decisive victory, securing the majority of seats—a testament to the enduring influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin among the Egyptian populace despite decades of repression under Mubarak. The organization also actively participated in drafting Egypt's new constitution, seeking to shape the political agenda in alignment with its Islamic principles. However, this process faced criticism from secular and liberal groups, who accused Ikhwanul Muslimin of excessive dominance and a lack of inclusivity. Despite the election of Mohamed Morsi as Egypt's first democratically elected president in 2012, relations between Ikhwanul Muslimin and SCAF deteriorated amid rising concerns within the military over the growing political dominance of Islamists. This tension culminated in a military coup in 2013, which ousted Morsi and ended the brief democratic experiment under Ikhwanul Muslimin's leadership (Reudzan & Atawna, 2020).

The Post-Morsi Era Under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Following Morsi's removal, Egypt reverted to military rule under the authoritarian regime of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. During this period, Ikhwanul Muslimin faced intense repression, with many of its members arrested, its activities curtailed, and the organization itself banned. Despite these challenges, Ikhwanul Muslimin persisted in its efforts, continuing its struggle through activism and social mobilization, even as many demonstrations were met with violent crackdowns. The organization sought to garner international support by highlighting human rights violations in Egypt and remained committed to social and educational initiatives to sustain solidarity among its members. El-Sisi's regime, initially envisioned as a transitional government, entrenched itself as a long-term authority, with El-Sisi being re-elected and extending his rule to the present. Under his leadership, Egypt faces significant challenges, including restrictions on civil liberties, human rights abuses, and persistent socio-economic issues. Despite the ongoing repression, Ikhwanul Muslimin has adapted its strategies, focusing on social and educational efforts, leveraging media and social platforms, and reorganizing its membership to sustain its relevance. Internationally, the organization continues to raise awareness

of human rights concerns in Egypt while reflecting on its evolving role as a prominent opposition force against the el-Sisi regime. The Ikhwanul Muslimin's enduring resilience amidst political repression highlights its ability to navigate the complexities of Egypt's political landscape while maintaining its foundational principles and societal influence (Amr Adly, 2021).

C. The Influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin on the Social Dynamics of Egyptian Society

Ikhwanul Muslimin, founded in 1928, has been instrumental in shaping the social and political landscape of Egypt. Arising in response to the challenges faced by the Muslim world, particularly European colonialism that threatened Arab identity and sovereignty, Ikhwanul Muslimin extended its mission beyond spiritual concerns to address the social and economic conditions of the population. One of its most significant contributions was in the social domain, where Ikhwanul Muslimin established various philanthropic institutions, including hospitals, orphanages, and schools, aimed at supporting marginalized communities, especially the lower-middle class (Jenerio et al., 2024). Through these extensive networks, the organization not only provided critical services but also strengthened social cohesion within society. Ikhwanul Muslimin's contributions to education were equally profound, as they emphasized moral Islamic values and the importance of altruism. Their efforts in educating the masses instilled a sense of empowerment and community solidarity, particularly among the impoverished segments of society.

Additionally, Ikhwanul Muslimin played an active role in Egypt's struggle for independence from foreign colonial powers. By organizing demonstrations and conferences advocating for the expulsion of British forces, they demonstrated their commitment to nationalism and the sovereignty of the state. In doing so, their efforts extended beyond Egypt, aiming to promote the unity of Arab nations more broadly (Solava, 2021).

The political engagement of Ikhwanul Muslimin also constituted a crucial aspect of their influence. The organization participated in parliamentary processes and professional associations, integrating members from diverse societal sectors, including entrepreneurs, doctors, and engineers. Through this political activism, Ikhwanul Muslimin sought to establish itself as a significant political force in Egypt, advocating for issues concerning public welfare while striving to uphold Islamic principles in the political arena. Through its multifaceted activities, Ikhwanul Muslimin has left an indelible impact on Egyptian society. It has evolved into not only a religious organization but also a social and political movement that strives to reshape Egypt's identity and fight for the rights of its people. Consequently, the contributions of Ikhwanul Muslimin to the social, economic, and political dimensions of Egyptian society have profoundly influenced the country's social-political dynamics and driven transformative changes within its structure (Dang et al., 2018).

D. An Analysis of David Easton's Perspective on the Role and Influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egyptian Politics.

Ikhwanul Muslimin has emerged as one of the pivotal actors in the political dynamics of Egypt. As a social movement striving for transformation, it serves as a bridge between society and the prevailing political system, channeling societal demands and aspirations as inputs into the political framework. David Easton, a prominent political theorist, is renowned for his political systems model, which underscores the interactions among various components within a political system, namely input, process, output, and feedback. Applying Easton's framework, Ikhwanul Muslimin can be understood as a system functioning within the broader political environment of Egypt and the Arab world. Within Easton's theoretical construct, Ikhwanul Muslimin acts as a key provider of input into Egypt's political system. This input is expressed through their activities in religious outreach, education, and mass mobilization, advocating for social, political, and economic reforms rooted in Islamic principles. The processes within this system involve the interaction between Ikhwanul Muslimin and other political actors, including the government, political parties, and civil society organizations (Andrew, 2021).

As Ikhwanul Muslimin attempts to influence public policy and garner popular support, they encounter various challenges and responses from a government often characterized by repressive measures against the movement. It creates a complex dynamic within Egypt's political system. The output of these interactions can be observed in the policies produced, which may either align with or counter the agenda of Ikhwanul Muslimin. For

example, their success in securing seats in elections reflects the acceptance of their input within the system. In contrast, government actions to disband the organization or suppress its members indicate a negative output toward the movement. Feedback plays a crucial role in this dynamic. The public's reaction to the actions of both Ikhwanul Muslimin and the government shapes the movement's sustainability and strategy. If society endorses the agenda of Ikhwanul Muslimin, it gains greater legitimacy and strength. Conversely, societal rejection or alienation from their actions can lead to diminished support and political influence. Thus, through Easton's lens, the role and influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin in Egyptian politics can be understood as part of a systemic process involving inputs, interactions, and feedback loops that shape the outcomes of Egypt's political landscape. This analysis highlights the complexities of their role as a sociopolitical actor navigating the volatile dynamics of Egyptian governance and society (Henrick, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Ikhwanul Muslimin, established by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, has been a prominent movement in Egypt's socio-political history. Initially focusing on social reform and education, the organization became an influential force during the fight against British colonial rule. Despite decades of suppression by successive authoritarian regimes, Ikhwanul Muslimin built a strong grassroots network by providing social services to impoverished communities. This solid foundation allowed them to gain significant support following the fall of Mubarak's regime. After the revolution, Ikhwanul Muslimin entered Egypt's political arena through its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party. While they sought to implement their vision of governance, their rule was criticized for failing to address economic challenges and for alienating other political factions. The growing discontent led to mass protests against Morsi's government, further polarizing Egyptian society. These tensions ultimately provided the military with an opportunity to intervene and oust Morsi from power.

The military coup in 2013 marked the end of Egypt's brief democratic experiment and the beginning of a new era of authoritarian rule under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The government launched a severe crackdown on Ikhwanul Muslimin, labeling it as a terrorist organization and targeting its members and supporters. This repression effectively dismantled the group's political presence while consolidating the military's control over the state. The rise and fall of Ikhwanul Muslimin during Egypt's post-revolution period highlight the challenges of transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy. While they represented a significant force for change, their inability to build consensus and address the pressing needs of a fractured society ultimately undermined their position. The events in Egypt underscore the complexities of achieving sustainable democratic governance in a deeply divided and politically volatile environment.

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