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The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan:

The Internal Disturbance in the Light
of Generation Gap and Overcoming the
Regulatory Framework

Mohammad Alameen Assaf

Trajectory Paper

21.June.2022

The expansion of the committed space outside the regulated frameworks cannot be considered the only case in the context of the dissolution of the regulatory state at the expense of the unregulated space. The party and political spaces that are framed and organized in general today have become less attractive than in the past, and their ability to retain active youth within them has become weaker. This comes at a time when the political situation in the country bears a great responsibility in terms of reluctance to engage in organized political action, and the accumulation of perceptions that have been proven by the approach of the authorities throughout the Arab world towards political action, along with the orientation of societies and institutions in the world to a context that today is described as fluidity, far from solidity at all social, economic and political levels. However, it is not possible to dismiss the responsibility of political organizations from this state of reluctance, as today they are very far from the reality of youth and societies in general, in the context of material and intellectual tools, and in the context of discourse and ambitions.

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The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan: The Internal Disturbance in the Light of Generation Gap and Overcoming the Regulatory Framework

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First: The party, the Brotherhood, and the reversal of mainstream

The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Jordan in 1946. The founder and General Observer at the time was Abdul Latif Abu Qura, followed by Muhammad Abdul Rahman Khalifa for 40 years and Abdul Majeed Al-Thunaibat for 12 years. In 2006, Salem Al-Falahat was chosen to be the General Observer of the Brotherhood and remained in the position until 2008, followed by Hammam Saeed until 2016. After this, the temporary committee took over the organization's management.

The Islamic Action Front Party (IAF), the group's political arm, was founded at the end of Muhammad Abdul Rahman Khalifa's term. The establishment phase was led by Ahmed Qutaish Al-Azaydah. Dr. Ishaq Al-Farhan became the Secretary-General after the party was established and he was followed consecutively by Dr. Abdullatif Arabiyat, Mr. Hamza Mansour, Mr. Zaki Bani Rashid, Dr. Ishaq Al-Farhan and Hamza Mansour, whose term ended in 2014. Mansour was succeeded by Muhammad Awad Al-Zyoud. After Zyoud's passing, Murad Al-Adayleh took over and remains in the position to date.

This quick overview of the history of the Brotherhood's leadership in Jordan showcases the changes within the movement. The movement's leadership – both the party and the brotherhood – was in the hands of the left wing until 2008. However, this period was

still characterized by mixed decision-making. It intensified in the aftermath of the peace agreement, the dissolution of the 1989 House of Parliament, and the revision of the election law to the “one-man one-vote” system, which the Muslim Brotherhood considered a revocation of their previous agreement with the state.

This created fertile ground for new opportunities and growing popularity for a conservative and hardline stream within the Brotherhood. The confrontation between the two streams reached a level whereby it was evident in the election of the Executive Office in 2002. The confrontation then further erupted within the organization.

In 2008, the vote to dissolve the Shura Council and the Executive Office led to the removal of Salem Al-Falahat⁽¹⁾ from his position. New elections were held in which Salem Al-Falahat competed with Dr. Hammam Saeed and lost.⁽²⁾

The Executive Office previously headed by Salem al-Falahat was dissolved, and the movement started to shift completely towards the leadership of the right-wing, the so-called “hawks”. This shift continued over the next 6 years until 2014, when the left-wing “doves” withdrew from leadership, allowing the right-wing to completely control the movement on both fronts: the party and the Brotherhood.⁽³⁾

(1) Dr. Muhammad Abu Rumman, *The Islamic Solution in Jordan*, 121.

(2) Dr. Abdullah Faraj Allah, Arabic 21.

(3) Dr. Abdullah Faraj Allah, Arabic 21.

The idea of establishing a party was a pragmatic one, emerging after the state opened the gate to political action following a closure that lasted nearly three decades. The Brotherhood decided to respond to the state's decision positively through an institutional development that brought about the "Islamic Action Front Party." Such a pragmatic idea was not driven by the right-wing elements in the organization, and there was tacit and at times explicit opposition to the idea of establishing the party. The opposition reached the point of prohibiting political work through parties and contesting elections amongst some of its leaders. This led to the party being exclusively the domain of the left-wing elements for several decades, reflected in the successive left-wing leaders until 2014 in spite of attempts by the right to gain control.

This had significant implications. Due to the influence of the right on the organization's base, registration for the party membership was weak. Additionally, there were many brothers who did not belong to the right-wing who still decided not to engage in this battle. This was a precaution against being categorized and an attempt to remain neutral to preserve the Brotherhood, prevent the escalation of conflict, and avoid dividing the movement vertically.

The right attempted to limit the role of the party since its establishment so long as it was outside its sphere of influence. The left and center did not move towards the broad

mobilization of the party, preferring not to enter an open confrontation with the hawks over the movement's institutions. It also saw a clear setback in its role within the organization after the peace treaty. This reinforced its position of non-escalation as a precaution against provoking the right and mobilizing, which would lead to the loss of the party. This was eventually seen as actually possible.

After the Arab Spring, the disagreement amongst the movement's leaders in Jordan over the way in which to deal with the state's proposals to settle the Herak in 2011, and the failure of the right-wing leadership to reach an understanding with the state, the divisions within the organization intensified. At this point, internal initiatives⁽⁴⁾ began to call for correcting the movement's path and its political behavior, setting its priorities, and clearly defining its project.

The right wing initially viewed these initiatives with irritation, eventually considering them as either treacherous elements in cooperation with elements outside the organization with the objective of dividing it or as elements seeking their own personal interests. This turned the dispute into a direct conflict that resulted in mass resignations and internal trials, leading to the dismissal and freezing⁽⁵⁾ of memberships.

(4) Dr. Muhammad Abu Rumman, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, The Muslim Brotherhood Crisis in Jordan the end of the circular conflict and the beginning of political flotation.

(5) "Jordan's Brotherhood Heads Towards Separating the Leaders of Zamzam, Al Jazeera, 1/12/2013."

This concluded in judicial disputes that led to the suspension of the organization's work and its designation as illegal⁽⁶⁾. Legal problems led to the organization's loss of some of its headquarters in favor of the licensed group⁽⁷⁾, such as the headquarters in Karak and Aqaba, and the closure of others such as the main headquarters in Amman in addition to other issues like its inability to renew its contracts for rented headquarters due to the lack of legal status⁽⁸⁾.

At this point, the group's leadership, with the right wing at the forefront, decided to transfer its work to its remaining legal institution, the "party." In the battle over the party's leadership, its representative Muhammad Awad Al-Zayoud won. The organizational authority in the group asked some of its bases to join the party, which occurred with a noticeable increase in the number of party members during the period from 2014 to 2017 and beyond. Internal estimates say that party membership reached around 5,000 members, while there were only around 1,000 members before 2013⁽⁹⁾. This increase did not reflect

a genuine expansion of the party's or the movement's bases, since it came only from bases specific to the right within the group in an attempt to win the elections within the party⁽¹⁰⁾. However, this led to a decrease in the number of independents—not affiliated with the Brotherhood—within the party in addition to an increase in the party's activities at the expense of the group, reflected in the referencing of the elections and the parliamentary bloc as 'The Islamic Action Front Party's bloc', whereas it was common in the past to refer to the Islamic Action Front). At that time, the party led participation in all the parliamentary and professional associations' elections, and it was the main player in managing the political scene from the Arab Spring to date.

The right-wing did not neglect working within the organization, but their activities and focus on the party changed, which reduced its previously tight grip over the group with time, although it still remains present in directing major decisions for the group and the party.

During the years that followed the divisions, the Brotherhood led by the hawks faced a number of key battles that later affected the actions of its internal streams and would impact the Brotherhood's external and internal conditions generally.

(6) "400 resignations from the Islamic Action Front party in Jordan, Al Jazeera, December 31, 2015."

(7) It is an association called the "Muslim Brotherhood Association" founded by a group of Brotherhood leaders who left the organization under the leadership of the former General Comptroller Abdul Majeed Al-Thneibat after the internal dispute in the group. See: "Licensing the Muslim Brotherhood as a Political Association, Al-Rai, March 4, 2015."

(8) Al-Rai newspaper, "Closing the General Center of the Illegal Brotherhood Association," April 13, 2016.

(9) An interview with a leader in the Islamic Action Front who refused to reveal himself 27-1-2022.

(10) Dr. Abdullah Farag Allah.

- Practical Steps:

1- Parliamentary Elections 2016.

The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the parliamentary elections in 2016 under the name “National Reform Alliance” with 122 candidates distributed across 22 lists, 15 of which won. The Brotherhood won around 180,000 votes in the elections from a total of 4.1 million eligible voters and 1.5 million who cast their votes. The Brotherhood thus gained 4.3% of the votes of eligible voters and 10.6% of the total votes⁽¹¹⁾. This is mainly attributed to the electoral law that offered the opportunity for party representation through open proportional lists with no electoral threshold with a screening mechanism that increased fragmentation of representation based on lists. However, despite the difficult electoral battle that the Brotherhood faced under the electoral law and the internal conditions at the time, which cannot be described entirely as a failure, criticisms were directed towards the Brotherhood for its management of the elections, especially for its assessment of its chances of success and the number of candidates fielded, which showed the group as have lost in proportion to the number of winning candidates.

(11) Shaker Jarrar, Duaa Ali, 7iber, The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan Six Decades of Parliamentary Elections, Wednesday, April 18, 2018.

2- Engineers Syndicate Elections 2018.

Nearly a quarter of a century after the Brotherhood took control of the Engineers Syndicate, the organization participated in the Engineers Syndicate elections of 2018 and won at the branch level but lost in the Syndicate Council elections by 1,000 votes to the ‘Nomou’ list that was competing with the Brotherhood⁽¹²⁾. The Brotherhood attributed their loss to the interference of the state institutions in the elections in favor of other currents.

3- Teachers Syndicate Election 2019, strike, and syndicate dissolving.

The Brotherhood participated in the Teachers Syndicate elections of 2019 after winning with a majority in two out of the three previous elections. The Brotherhood lost their usual majority in the elections, and some assessments predicted that they would lose the position of the head of the syndicate as well. However, a network of alliances, key of which were between angry Herak elements and the Brotherhood, allowed them to win the Syndicate’s⁽¹³⁾ council after an understanding over a conciliatory figure for the position of head, Dr. Ahmed Al-Hajaya.⁽¹⁴⁾

(12) “A quarter of a century later... Jordan's brothers lose the teachers' union, Al Jazeera Net, 5-7-2018”.

(13) “The Kingdom, Al-Tawafuq Bloc Reaps the Positions of Captain and Vice-Captain, 4/13-2019”.

(14) Dr. Ahmad Al-Hajaya, a teacher and educational supervisor in the Jordanian Ministry of Education, won the position of Teachers Syndicate as a representative of the independent movement in the fourth session. Al-Hajaya was known for clear political positions and with his Islamic background during his studies, but he did not belong to any of the political currents and had sharp positions against the Brotherhood within the union before the 2019 elections.

The Syndicate led by Al-Hajaya threatened to start a teachers' strike at the beginning of the school year in an attempt to pave the way for negotiations over the teachers' allowances that the government had not granted.

Al-Hajaya died before the start of the strike, so the deputy head Nasser Al-Nawasra from the Brotherhood led the affairs of the Syndicate and the strike, which lasted for an entire month before ending in a settlement between the government and the Syndicate.

However, this strike and the way in which it was managed by the Brotherhood was considered by state institutions as an attempt by the Brotherhood to defy politics and twist the arm of the state through the Teachers Syndicate. This led to the arrest of the Syndicate's council in 2020⁽¹⁵⁾ and then to its complete dissolution at the end of the year⁽¹⁶⁾. Political and civil forces opposed this decision and held the state and the Brotherhood responsible for the events. They described the scene as a failure to manage the issue, leading to the loss of a national gain. At this time, many parties and activists indicated that this would not have happened if Al-Hajaya was still at the head of the Syndicate since he would not have allowed the problem to worsen to this degree.

(15) "Jordan... Arresting members of the Teachers Syndicate Council for a week," Anadolu Agency, 25.07.2020.

(16) "Jordan... Dissolution of the Teachers Syndicate and Imprisonment for a Year for its Council Members," Anadolu Agency, December 31, 2020.

4- Parliamentary elections in 2020

The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the parliamentary elections in 2022 with about 80 candidates. Ten candidates won but two deputies withdrew from the bloc, meaning that the Brotherhood group in the parliament became only 8 deputies out of 80 candidates. In other words, they lost half of the seats that they won in the parliament in 2016.⁽¹⁷⁾

5- Engineers Syndicate elections 2022

For the second time, after the Brotherhood lost the Engineers Syndicate elections in 2018 at the level of the Syndicate Council, it lost the 2022 Engineers Syndicate elections. This time however, it lost at both levels, first at the branch level and then by withdrawing from the council elections, completely losing its presence⁽¹⁸⁾ in the Syndicate's leadership at a time when the influence of the authorities was extensive over the elections, and there was a clear absence of the Brotherhood's regular bases in the voting.

Despite the Brotherhood's victory in the Lawyers Syndicate and the parties reaching a consensus on the leadership of the Doctors Syndicate, the phase led by the right-wing was characterized by a decline in the Brotherhood's presence in parliament and in the syndicates. It was also a phase in

(17) "Al-Armouti, Head of the Islah Bloc, Al-Ghad, 17.11.2020."

(18) "The Islamic Current Withdraws from the Jordanian Engineers Association Council Elections, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, February 19, 2022."

which the presence of state authorities in the Brotherhood's management was apparent and not hidden from anyone. The development and the expansion of this state intervention came as a response to the positions of the right-wing within the Brotherhood from the time of the Arab Spring to the tensions in the Teachers' Syndicate issue, increasing hostility with state institutions to the point of no return and destroying trust between the Brotherhood and the political system in Jordan.

The sum of these accumulated events in the memory of the Brotherhood's bases – which were deemed as evidence of weakness in the organization's performance and of a decline that appeared in the form of a series of successive losses, and even as reasons were presented to the organization to reduce its responsibility, such as security intervention and the mobilization against the movement in various elections, though no one completely absolved the organization from the failure to manage crucial files such as these – caused great pressure on the right-wing leadership and reduced its shares within the organization. This led to re-reading of the scene by some by linking this decline to the purging of the organization from a group of active political elements during the period of internal disagreement. This additionally led to a process of accelerated criticism of the mentality of increasing tensions in managing the entire phase. This provided an opportunity once again for the centrist current and the so-called “wise men”, which had always been a

proponent of de-escalation and that seek to bring together the views of the right and the left – doves and hawks – to work on representing the organization (the group) well, gathering the bases around it. It is led today by Hamza Mansour and Jamil Abu Bakr in cooperation with the General Observer Abdul Hamid Al-Thneibat. At the same time, the party is led by its Secretary-General, Murad Al-Adayleh, Ahmed Al-Zarkan, and the party's secretary, Thabet Assaf, who are currently the most important right-wing leaders, and who are even described as being on the right of the right-wing, who migrated from the group to the party and managed the previous phase.

Through this picture, it is clear that the positioning of the streams within the movement has changed. The right, which led the movement in both its parts – the party and the group – lost its presence within the group and its progress in the party institution, which has been far from its interest and priorities historically since its establishment, allowing the more moderate stream to return to leadership after more than a decade of the right-wing being at the helm.

Among the key drivers behind the scenes within the Islamic movement were that the organization was forced to reproduce itself within the available legal contexts and pathways after the group was designated an illegal and unlicensed entity. However, one of the most important drivers leading the right-wing to move from the group to the party is

the response to the political situation in the country that led political parties -especially after the Arab Spring- to attain greater sizes than before and defined the party as the main political tool in dealing with reality. Therefore, the right's push towards the party came to control the real space of political activity, which can remain a guarantor for the right to maintain its political leadership and interests in managing the organization after it had been in the group's management for a long time, when parties generally did not constitute an effective tool in the political work in the country.

Second: Modern Spaces in the Face of the Declining Organizational Status: The Brotherhood and the Diversity of the Committed Space

Since the army's intervention in Egypt in 2013; the official Arab system exhibited ferocity in combatting the Brotherhood's tide, and the efforts of states' agencies combined to infiltrate the various spaces to first mobilize against the Brotherhood and then to mobilize against the Arab Spring and the revolutionary situation more generally in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and then Libya. A series of losses reduced the shares of the Islamists led by the Brotherhood to below zero (an unexpected decline), and it was still considered to be the point of contention with the political Islam movements (the Palestinian resistance movements, including Hamas, as an extension of the Brotherhood).

The decline from 2013 to 2021 resulted in reduced confidence amongst large segments of young people within the organized Islamic sphere led by the Brotherhood and their political arms. However, the group of elites and the bases that lost trust in the organization did not withdraw in their majority from the unorganized committed Islamic space but rather reshaped themselves in more modern and flexible frameworks within the public space in multiple forms. Two political parties emerged from the Brotherhood in Jordan: The National Coalition Party⁽¹⁹⁾ (and formerly Zamzam⁽²⁰⁾, before it united under the new framework with the Centre Party in 2022) and Partnership and Salvation⁽²¹⁾. The latter's leaders described it in its first stage as not being a breakaway movement against the Brotherhood, saying that it was not against it, but others suggested that the party may be a new Brotherhood party without the organizational power and described it as a means of diversifying fronts.⁽²²⁾ despite the

(19) The National Coalition, which is the new umbrella that brings together the National Congress Party and the Islamic Wasat Party within a single party front, which was established in 2022. See "The Merger of the Zamzam Party and the Islamic Wasat Party Under the Name of the National Coalition, Petra Jordan News Agency, 12.3.2022".

(20) At its beginning, Zamzam was an initiative under the name of the Jordanian Binaa Gathering, launched by a group of Brotherhood leaders headed by Erhil Gharaibeh and Nabil Al-Kofhi. 24.6.2013.

(21) Partnership and Salvation was in its beginning an internal initiative within the Muslim Brotherhood before it separated from the organization with a group of leaders headed by Salem Al-Falahat and Dr. Abdul Hamid Al-Qudah and turns into an independent political party with several sects, see "A new party emerges from the Brotherhood's splits, Al-Jazeera, 26.10.2016."

(22) Dr. Abdullah Faraj Allah, Al Jazeera Blogs, The New Brotherhood Party, 1.9.2018.

differences between them, and even as it is not possible to definitively judge their experience as it is still in the formative phase, it comes within the framework of the so-called “post-political Islam”, which according to the definition is characterized as more pragmatic than political Islam, regardless of the ability of these parties to keep pace.

As for the intellectual and advocacy work, groups that deviated from the organizational frameworks of the group expanded to form youth groups and other groups in different areas. These groups -which found staying within the organization impractical and useless given its performance and the general conditions during the stage, remained in the “committed” space, whether through organized frameworks such as associations or currents, cultural and intellectual forums, or informal frameworks such as youth meetings based on personal relationships and friendships. These did not stop working, moving, and expanding but can be described as turning into a more effective and transitory socio-cultural phenomenon outside restrictive organizational frameworks and becoming more prevalent even though their features are less prominent.

Additionally, their cultural and intellectual content expanded significantly outside the organization when the knowledge base and the main cultural tributary were no longer only the organization’s literature and what was related to it but rather began to expand

to Arab and Western cultural content that members of Islamic organizations had never previously had contact with. This led to a wide re-education movement that no organized frameworks could curb or limit.

This phenomenon also has opinion leaders who are at the forefront of social networking sites and present a more flexible and developed image of the social and political actor who is committed and not bound by the laws of organizations. Among these actors is a group of people who have followers ranging from tens of thousands to millions of individuals.

These groups, which had a clear presence in the street as seen in the organization of the 4th circle Herak in 2018⁽²³⁾ - despite its specificity and the presence of many important factors in its analysis and study – are far away from the organized political situation. These groups display content with a deep, high, and simplified culture that can spread and keep pace with the real world in a way that makes the content highly desirable and circulating, which expands this space and increases the desire of young people, in particular, to view it and turn into a part of it.

(23) It is a popular movement that was launched in Jordan in 2018 to protest the income tax law imposed by the government of Hani Al-Mulki at that time, and the movement expanded, and its demands expanded to bring down the government. The movement ended with the resignation of Hani Al-Mulqi's government and the assignment of Omar Al-Razzaz to head the government.

In 2021, with the escalation of tension in occupied Palestine starting with the issue of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and ending with the war launched by the resistance for the first time and the strengthening of its image as a proactive actor in the conflict with the occupation and the end of the battle in accordance with the conditions of the resistance, and with the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas being at the forefront,

the shares of the Islamic space rose again, but clearly this time the momentum was directed towards the committed, unorganized space, and the organized frameworks – the Brotherhood – were not able to take advantage of the situation to raise their shares as an organization. Rather, the balance was in favor of the wide public space, especially the part that is committed and highly educated and that carries a political depth that enables it to build clear political positions. This part has a clear stance against limiting freedoms, demands a real representation of society in decision-making, has more advanced ideas regarding national issues, and has a clear position with respect to the occupation and support for the resistance. They are committed, active, and educated youth groups that lead social media platforms and are present in the space in their personal capacity, including those who were organized and have been the largest beneficiary of the events from that period until now due to the experienced and flexible management of their positions and the surrounding public opinion.

It cannot be said that the public space in social networking sites is limited to this active category, but it can be said that it is the most harmonious group and the savviest in expression and in reaching society because of its unique and developed culture and tools. Despite this, one cannot state that the public space is restricted to those only. On the contrary, there are many actors on their left and right. It can be said that there are two main cases, namely Ahmed Al-Sayed⁽²⁴⁾ - the owner of the methodological construction project⁽²⁵⁾ - and Dr. Iyad Al-Qunaibi⁽²⁶⁾, who today constitute active and effective tributaries in expanding the committed space, regardless of their starkly different orientations. However,

(24) Ahmed bin Yousef Al-Sayed is a Saudi preacher from the city of Yanbu. He holds a bachelor's degree in Sharia with the first rank of honor from the Islamic University in Madinah. He offers a range of programs in which tens of thousands of young people are involved across many platforms and contribute to the formation of common values among a wide spectrum of them.

(25) The Systematic Building is a long-term, free, legal, scientific program that aims to overcome the knowledge diaspora among young people interested in learning. The program is completely free, the study period in it is four years divided into stages, and its first batch exceeded the first stage of it, which was about a year and a half. The founder of the program is Sheikh Ahmed El-Sayed, who is the owner of several programs such as: Facilitating the Sunnah, and the industry of the axes, which is concerned with the aspect of enhancing certainty, see "Tibyan Platform, Systematic Building".

(26) A Jordanian academic and preacher, born in Salmiya, Kuwait, a lecturer at the rank of a university professor in the field of pharmacology, currently working at the University of Jerash,[1] He is considered an influencer on social networking sites and is considered a public figure with a presence and followers in the millions. He has multiple advocacy and intellectual posts, whether articles, books, or videos, he is not officially affiliated with any Islamic organization, but some analysts describe him as being close to the Salafi-jihadi current, see: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCahYINszeMy_PHfYvgAOHg.

they reach a wide spectrum of young people and influence their knowledge structures and general orientations. As mentioned, despite their complete difference in terms of the type of interests, discourses, and orientations from the trend that is described earlier and despite their differences from each other as well, they all come within the framework of the committed public space that is redefining itself once again the organizational situation at a time when it is heading towards clear weakness.

This case, of course, serves other movements in the Arab world that moved within frameworks not affiliated with Islamic organizations, either breaking away from Islamic organizations or close to those who had defected from them, and used more modern, dynamic, and flexible means and were able to build a good network of relations for groups of actors who transcended the rigidity of the organizations to a state of harmonious effectiveness even without institutional regulation. These groups have benefited from various platforms that are consistent with their ideas and meet their aspirations for an advanced state of knowledge open to the world in a way that keeps pace with the real world. Examples of platforms that served many people in this regard are the so-called “Sharq Youth Diwan”⁽²⁷⁾, which was founded by Wadhah Khanfar⁽²⁸⁾ after his

organizations remained stuck with, such as the question of mingling and what is going on in its surroundings, which makes it a somewhat progressive space. It expanded beyond Jordan into Lebanon and Egypt recently⁽²⁹⁾.

Another example of committed youth activity outside the frameworks of parties and organizations is the emerging youth group that produced a discussion space called “My Companions.” This is an active space founded by a group of young women in which a series of cultural and social discussions take place, and it is a space that is slowly expanding. Despite this, it can be considered as evidence of the tendency of young people to transcend the binary of organization or inaction and isolation, along with the ability of young people to create their paths and produce their own spaces that express their aspirations.⁽³⁰⁾

Third: Brotherhood and the diversity of generations

Ideological organizations in general are used to monopolize the tributaries of cultural and intellectual knowledge for their members in an attempt to control the internal harmony within the organization, as well as to ensure allegiances and protect themselves from infiltration and interference. Despite the historical failure of the Brotherhood to protect

(27) See the official website of Al-Sharq Diwan: <https://youth.sharqforum.org/ar/al-sharq-diwan/>

(28) Former Director of Al Jazeera Network, and founder of Al Sharq Forum See: https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D8%AD_%D8%AE%D{6%D{1%D8%B1}

(29) An interview with one of the beneficiaries of the space 22.6.2022.

(30) An interview with one of the activists in Ashabi Space 22.6.2022.

themselves from redirection, starting with the ideas of Sayyid Qutb and not limited to what was imposed on them by the powers of the region, and the ‘salafization’ of a large part of the organization and its infiltration by “Wahhabism” in the seventies, the organization remained strong in managing cases of individual expansion culturally and cognitively, and even at the level of relations. It framed them and held accountable those of “distorted” thought - as it was described – as well as the infiltrators and strangers to the organization and its ideas, and those with suspicious behaviors “inconsistent with the spirit of advocacy”. This led to a state of isolation when organizing from society to one degree or another, reaching the point of creating a clear individual, collective and even social identity that became easily distinguishable by the general members of society⁽³¹⁾.

The first cases of overcoming this state of isolation came with the start of the Arab Spring and the movement of Brotherhood youth within various youth groups from several trends and currents in the street, and their need to communicate with completely different streams and coordinate in order to organize the Herak in 2011. This produced a new generation in the Brotherhood that engages directly with all streams on the scene and stood on equal ground. This went against the Brotherhood’s previous thinking that

defined streams such as the left (especially the ‘qawmiyeen’) as streams that are far from them negatively to the extent that it can be described as hostility. This rapid change led to the development of the perceptions of a wide group of Brotherhood youth, the way they deal with reality, and the construction of modern political tools, the most important of which are tools for communication with others and building common ground, leading to joint efforts and cooperation. Social media tools - important among them Facebook- was considered in periods prior to the Arab Spring as a tool to penetrate and corrupt societies, and young people had been urged not to use it.

The development of this youth elite- at the head being what was internally called the “righteous six”⁽³²⁾- led to the first case of a clash resulting from the difference in the “political” generations and not the “age” generations. A group of political elites in the organization was able to keep pace with the achievements of the youth in the field of joint action in terms of expanding political horizons and thinking that builds political action. This group took on the work of launching a general youth conference in which elected representatives of active youth in the group participated to re-evaluate and develop the existing situation. At the same time, young groups remained

(31) Jassim Sultan, *The Crisis of Islamic Organizations, the Brotherhood as a Model*, Chapter One.

(32) It is a youth elite who was in the leadership of the student and youth movement work in the organization and who had extensive efforts to try to gather the internal class at one stage to the extent that, according to statements from leaders in the organization, they led initiatives and internal mediation more than once.

among the leadership elite that did not keep pace with this situation, most of which were from amongst the Hawks⁽³³⁾.

This situation continued in the organization and escalated to the point of trials, dismissal, and freezing led by the right-wing in the organization, especially in the post-Arab Spring period, with the diversity in opinions regarding the behavior of the organization and its handling of the Arab Spring in Jordan.

The state of dissatisfaction expanded, especially among the youth at the time, who noticed a weakness in political performance and rigidity in the position of the state and saw a missed opportunity to improve the democratic situation in the country. With the rise of failed internal initiatives such as “Zamzam” and “Partnership and Salvation”, which were met with rejection and turned into dissenting movements from the group, a wide spectrum of the young generation at the forefront of that period of the organization joined these new party initiatives, while others decided to leave the organization and stay outside the organized frameworks, and some decided to retire from public activity completely.

In the midst of these internal conditions, and with the pressures that the state exerted on the organization and those it was subjected to in the region generally, and as mentioned earlier, the organization’s ability to control

the internal situation had declined and was no longer the same as before. Moreover, the group, with all the dissenting movements that took place, tried to reduce the level of tension towards those who tried to expand the horizon of their activities outside the organization in different spaces, especially the youth among them. Although the accountability process did not stop, it was no longer the same as before, which opened a door for young people to expand into multiple spaces. Important among them was the expansion of student blocs to include non-Brothers and the creation of joint activities with different institutions. The most important thing that happened after the Herak experience and the intermingling across various spectrums was the arrival of a group of Brotherhood youth and other youth around them to the activities of various associations, civil society institutions, and international non-governmental organizations – NGO’s – after dealing with them was prohibited. This led to a completely different situation from which they were accustomed to, such as an inventory of spaces and their presence within the activities of the group, the party, associations, and Islamic schools controlled by the organization and which include active groups of the same environment, perceptions, and ideas, and even in terms of appearances and behaviors, leading to sitting in a space of multiple identities, ideas, trends and behaviors and appearances, a space that uses tools completely different from those that the organization used to use. Further, this space developed skills among large groups of Brotherhood youth that were not present in the internal spaces of the organization.

(33) An interview with one of the former active youth in the Islamic Action Front during the Arab Spring 21/5/2022.

The experiences of the Herak which ranged across a wide political and societal spectrum along with the experiences of entering various civic spaces had a series of effects on Brotherhood youth groups and those close to the Brotherhood:

The main effects of youth experiences during the post-Spring period:

1. The ability to deal with wide-ranging political and social diversity, which would elevate the values of communication and participation in contrast to the values of estrangement and exclusion. It is also what led large groups of Brotherhood youth who remained in the organization or left it to feel a negative feeling towards all the elements of aggravation during the Arab Spring and beyond, whether they were inside or outside the organization. They believed that everything that had happened was not justified and that the cases of arbitrary dismissal, freezing, and exclusion were not examples of responsible political behavior. This led to putting the blame for all the previous losing battles on the elements of the aggravation that were unable to reach understandings and moved to the exclusion of each other and the dismantling of the organization, and the strong clash with the state in several stages. This would lead once again to reducing the shares of the right-wing, which still practiced the same exclusionary behavior within the party. The last of these manifestations was the freezing of the membership of the leader of the party, Zaki Bani Rashid, days before his candidacy to be the party's secretary-general, as a result of an opinion he had presented years ago at his personal account, a behavior that was not justified – at least according to the party's justifications – for many of the Brotherhood's youth and party. They also considered it a return to the era of escalation and aggravation.
2. A change in the stereotypes that have prevailed in the movement since the nineties. Stereotypes prevailed in the movement and continuously expressed as political heroism the extent of the clash with the state and its institutions and not dealing and with them. This developed in the new circumstance and the state of knowledge development and political awareness to renew its perceptions and define true efficiency as the ability to reach political understandings that preserve the gains and pave the way to active participation in decision-making and the strengthening of democracy. This is not intended to make concessions that are open to the conditions of the authority, but rather to reach understandings that lead to achieving political progress at the state level and to come up with an outcome in which the largest possible number of parties will win.

3- Development in the tools and skills of the Islamic youth: the Islamic youth, as a result of previous experiences, originally have high levels of mobility and skills in leading organized activities. When they enter the field of civil society institutions, their activities, and training, which are in various fields, they are unique in their array of tools of expression and modern political activity, such as advocacy campaigns, gaining support, preparing policy papers, and a better and broader understanding of the local and international legal and administrative systems, which strengthens their communication and engagement with the world and its political tools.

Fourth: The option to return between a closed horizon and a new horizon

After a decade had passed since the state of turmoil that the organization went through, and with all the structural changes mentioned above, especially with the decline in the right's shares and the decline of its discourse at the expense of the growth of participatory ideas that refuse to exacerbate tensions and try as much as possible to preserve the organization from total collapse, voices within the movement began asking for a review of previous decisions of dismissal, freezing, and exclusion, and voices from outside the organization began calling for the need to unite the ranks again, especially with the advent of a new political stage in the country, in which for the first time there will be seats

designated for political parties. This opened the horizon for political party activity again, even if it was pointed out that what the Royal Committee brought to modernize the political system⁽³⁴⁾ was insufficient. Despite the later constitutional amendments that took away from the powers of the executive government in favor of the National Security Council⁽³⁵⁾, the Brotherhood was part of the Royal Committee and agreed to its terms. Their current position, despite its harshness in Parliament in protest of some constitutional amendments, comes in the context of greater pragmatism than previous positions. This is due to two reasons: a change in the internal balance of power did not allow a sharp stance such as mobilizing in the street, and the movement was satisfied with expression through the statements of the party and its representatives in Parliament, and the organization has entered a state of weakness that does not allow it to get involved in other confrontations that could lead to other larger losses.

(34) It is a committee that was formed by a royal decree and whose mission was to draft a new election law and a new draft law for political parties, and to consider constitutional amendments that are legally related to the two laws and parliamentary work mechanisms. <https://tahdeeth.jo/Home/About>

(35) Al-Maaytah to CNN: The National Security Council's Coordinating Role and its Meetings Depending on Circumstance, Ministry of Political Affairs website, [https://www.moppa.gov.jo/AR/NewsDetails/%D8%A7%D-fileD8_B9%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A9_%D8%AF%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D8%B1_D8%B3_%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B7_A7%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%B3%D8%D8%A%D8%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%D8%Deb,A%Daughter.D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%D8%A7%D8%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D8%D8%B8%D8%B1](https://www.moppa.gov.jo/AR/NewsDetails/%D8%A7%D-fileD8_B9%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A9_%D8%AF%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D8%B1_D8%B3_%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B7_A7%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%B3%D8%D8%A%D8%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%A%D8%D8%Deb,A%Daughter.D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%D8%A7%D8%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D8%D8%B8%D8%B1)

With the existence of this reality, and the fact that the horizon remains closed to leadership groups and youth groups that left the Brotherhood or were separated from it, they neither found a new project through which to express themselves nor did they drop their previous political identity. Rather, it found that not all possible projects are capable of redefining themselves in front of society and the state. This led them to move towards returning to the organization again and trying to move from within again.

Sources from within the group say that several meetings were held by a group of active leaders within the organization to talk about the importance of restoring the internal ranks and dealing with the stage in a different way, which the right-wing movement monitored quickly and tried to combat early on, rejecting the idea of the return of those who left since they do not fit the organization or its ideas.

Despite the early efforts led by the current to stop passing this idea to the minds of the leaders of the first row of sages, or to the bases within the group, the discourse started to resonate within the organization at the beginning of 2021 and continued for nearly a year as it spread throughout the organization until it became seen as valuable, which allowed it to spread outside as well.

This discourse corresponded with discourse from outside the organization that had been building for a long time, which at its core implies that leaving the organization and handing over the leadership of the stage to the

hawkish leaders was a huge mistake that cost the organization and the Jordanian popular movement striving for democracy heavy losses and that it is necessary to return to the organization and move from within again.

This is what established a set of meetings at different levels to discuss the idea of returning to the group, meetings that had been preceded by positive indications of the return of some of those who had been dismissed or who had left the organization. Also, there was the presence of discussions, including several activities and meetings of the group in some provinces, and the results of these discussions were satisfactory for those who wanted to return to the organization and those who wanted to unify the organization again⁽³⁶⁾. Recently, the freezing of the prominent leader, Zaki Bani Irsheid, before the elections, raised the same annoyance about the agitation and exclusion again, describing the situation as a stab in the side of the movement and deepening the rift in it. He described it as dishonest, opportunistic, and exploitative behavior. As the readings say, this behavior may lead to a new split in the party. Despite everything that is happening behind the scenes of the movement and the spaces close to it, no clear results have been disclosed for these movements, and no action has been taken based on them so far.

(36) An interview with a former leader in the organization, who is active in the group until now 19.6.2022.

At this time, once it was too late to nip this discourse in the bud, the movement moved to deal with this discourse, but in a more disciplined manner in an attempt to deny the accusation of aggravating itself, and in an attempt to be a key to the return of the returnees so that it would not be on the opposite side when they return. Several sources say that they have already been contacted by party leaders to return to the party and the group, which indicates that the return of several groups to the organization has become possible and that the right-wing leaders find themselves needing to bring back as many of them as possible to gain their support.

A crucial and fateful question regarding the organization remains, and it is the following:

To what extent has the Jordanian political system and the Muslim Brotherhood distanced themselves, considering the Brotherhood has been a major actor that interacted with the state and its institutions in agreement and disagreement for seven decades, and the relationship between them has never been completely severed? Can the current situation between the Brotherhood and the state be reversed by changing the organization's leadership to a moderate leadership capable of restoring bridges of trust between it and the institutions of the Jordanian state? Or has the relationship reached the point of no return and what happened between the two parties destroyed all chances of reconciling again? Although this clash has reached its

climax, what are the available options for the organization and its members to handle the next stage, and to express themselves again in a way that can transcend the public space?

Fifth: Summary and Conclusions

One of the most important results of this stage is the re-formation of the mainstreams of the movement in a new way. The mainstreams are no longer as they were before the right, left and center mainstreams - hawks, doves, wise men. They have ended up as a moderate stream, which is light in presence, and the right mainstream, which today separates itself into right and left sub-mainstreams within the movement.

A trend that is clearly accelerating, the more the Brotherhood's political horizon turns toward closure, and the more losses increase with it.

The aversion to the rules of the movement, especially the youth, also increases with it.

The expansion of the committed space outside the regulated frameworks cannot be considered the only case in the context of the dissolution of the regulatory state at the expense of the unregulated space. The party and political spaces that are framed and organized in general today have become less attractive than in the past, and their ability to retain active youth within them has become weaker. This comes at a time when the political situation in the country bears a great responsibility in terms

of reluctance to engage in organized political action, and the accumulation of perceptions that have been proven by the approach of the authorities throughout the Arab world towards political action, along with the orientation of societies and institutions in the world to a context that today is described as fluidity, far from solidity at all social, economic and political levels. However, it is not possible to dismiss the responsibility of political organizations from this state of reluctance, as today they are very far from the reality of youth and societies in general, in the context of material and intellectual tools, and in the context of discourse and ambitions.

One question becomes the most urgent now: is it sufficient nowadays for political movements in general, and the Islamic movement in particular, to reach an understanding with the Jordanian state and its institutions, and to rebuild the bridges of trust, in order to be able to return to attracting active youth in the public space? Or do the changes required today go beyond ending the crisis and healing the internal wounds and understanding the environment, and lean towards renewing the

interior at the level of identity, tools, and discourse? Also, is the organizational tool, partisan or otherwise, in its historical form, still feasible with the shape of the modern era in which we live today?

The political activity among the younger generation, and in many advanced societies, has shifted towards the network and away from the hierarchy in most of its structures. Rather, its structures have gone beyond their own bodies, as it was usual for political organizations and movements to extend outside their bodies in the form of access to societies and the formation of groups of supporters. However, it did not extend its internal structures to go beyond its organizational limits and become more open to the outside and clash with it.

All these changes put political movements in general in front of a decisive challenge to answer several questions that will be the true determinant of their survival or dissolution in history. In fact, the response to these developments will determine whether they pass on to the next stage.

About us?

Vision and Mission

Politics and Society Institute (PSI), is a Jordanian nonprofit policy and research organization established to advance practical research, innovative ideas and realistic solutions towards building a more prosperous Jordan and a stable region.

The Institute is an independent organization that aims to deepen the understanding of public policy and decision-making processes and to build a better knowledge platform of domestic and regional dynamics that will define our future.

The Institute advances its mission guided by values of rule of law, civil society, good governance and moderation. It provides an innovative, integrated and global approach to its analysis of complex trends and transformations with particular attention to youth dynamics. A Board of Trustees oversees and guides the Institute's plans and programs. The Executive President manages all its programs with the support of the PSI team and Associated Advisors.

The Institute aims to provide practical solutions, based on up to date studies and research in political, economic, security and social fields. The Institute hopes to define future trends for Jordan and the region through its analysis and projections, focusing on impact of accelerating transformations on the politics and societies of the Middle East.

PSI seeks to organize capacity-building programs for youth to enhance civil society and the rule of law, policymaking, participatory politics and good governance. By bringing together experts and thinkers from various disciplines and regions, the institute hopes to be able to build ideas and solutions through current and relevant research and integrated analysis that can help policy makers advance national interests and build a more stable region by effectively responding to complex challenges and rapid transformations.

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