

The Fourth Ordeal

A History of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt (1973 – 2013)

Victor J. Willi



History Faculty, University of Oxford

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Declaration

I have read and understood the General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Oxford, as well as the leaflet on plagiarism. I declare that all the material presented for examination is my own work and has not been written for me, in whole or in part, by any other person. I also undertake that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another author has been duly acknowledged.



Victor J. Willi
Oxford, 9 October 2015

Acknowledgments

The last four years have surely been the most adventurous in my life. They brought me into the midst of a revolution to come back with an incredible research topic, a marriage with a beautiful woman, and this dissertation.

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My deepest gratitude and appreciation goes to my wife, Mai, for her unconditional love, support, and spiritual coaching. This thesis is dedicated to her. I am also indebted to my parents Ulrich and Ruth. Five years ago, when I was asking myself what to do with my life, my parents motivated me to do go for the PhD, as I had been talking about wanting to do one since many years. When I raised the numerous practical concerns connected with such an enterprise, they insisted that I should not worry about money, and that the “logistical” details would arrange themselves automatically once the “existential” questions were settled. At the time, I did not understand what they meant, but today it makes very much sense.

Oxford, 9 October 2015

Short Abstract

This thesis is an internal organisational history of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt between 1973 and 2013. Based on memoirs of Brotherhood leaders, as well as oral history interviews conducted in 2012 and 2013 with different rank-and-file members and dissidents, the thesis situates the life trajectories and personal experiences of these individuals within a larger national and international context. The purpose is to provide a historical account that is able to explain the reasons for the Brotherhood's cataclysmic failure of the summer of 2013.

In accounting for the fall, my key argument centres on the internal rivalry between two political factions representing different "schools of thought", or visions, about the *kind of organisation* the Brotherhood was supposed to be. Representatives of the respective coalitions competed against each other over hegemony and organisational resources, basing their claims on contrasting intellectual traditions, political cultures and organisational values that had co-existed, sometimes uncomfortably, within the ranks of the Society since the times of Hasan al-Banna. The adherents of the "Qutbist" school of thought put forward the idea of a closed, pyramid-shaped and exclusive organisation, while those closer to 'Omar al-Tilmisani's model aspired to a reformed Society that was open to outsiders, and where internal progression was based on meritocracy, transparency and some form of democracy. I argue that it is through the holistic analysis of the complex dynamics between internal organisational politics, the use of ideology, and the personal experiences of key organisational members, that we are best able to grasp the Brotherhood's failed experience in governance in 2013.

Long Abstract

This thesis is an organisational history of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt between 1973 and 2013. It traces the personal life trajectories of key members across the internal hierarchy, in an effort to show the evolution of the Brotherhood as a political organisation during this forty-year period. By focusing on the complex and mutually reinforcing dynamics of ideology, internal organisational politics, and the individual experiences of key Brotherhood actors who have shaped this history, the thesis will show how the interaction between these elements can help us understand the Society's failure in the summer of 2013 – “the fourth ordeal” (*al-miḥna al-rāba'*) in the Brotherhood's history. The objective is to provide a coherent historical narrative that accommodates the macro-historical level of national and international politics, the institutional level of internal organisational politics and ideology, as well as the micro-historical level of the life-stories of the actors that have shaped the Brotherhood's history during the forty-year period.

In explaining the reasons for the Brotherhood's fall, my argument focuses on the internal struggle between two political coalitions, which competed with each other over hegemony and power. These coalitions represented different schools of thought about organisational design, and were grouped around the figures of 'Omar al-Tilmisani, the Society's third General Guide, and the illustrious Islamist intellectual Sayyid Qutb. It is argued that these schools of thought did not distinguish themselves primarily in terms of religious doctrine, but rather in terms of their practical implications on internal organisation, structure, management and decision making. Representatives of each side had different ideas over the *kind of organisation* the Brotherhood was supposed to be, justifying strategic goals and political priorities by shaping the Brotherhood's ideology in a way that suited their specific worldviews and interests. The representatives of these competing “organisational visions” were individuals who were pitted against each other in personal and oftentimes acrimonious conflicts over the control of key administrative positions and financial resources. By focusing on the individual life trajectories of the main actors representing the different schools of thought, I hope to show how the preference for one organisational vision over the other depended to large extent on the personal historical experiences of its main actors.

The adherents of the Tilmisani school of thought – sometimes called the “reformists” (*iṣlāḥiyyūn*) in Egyptian and Western academic jargon – consisted to a large extent of former organisers of the Jama'at Islamiyya, a broad student movement that emerged on Egyptian university campuses in the early seventies in the context of the “Islamic Awakening”. These young activists were recruited into the Brotherhood by 'Omar al-Tilmisani, who became the

Murshid in 1973 and whose vision was that of an open organisation that welcomed everybody who was willing and able to work for the implementation of the “Islamic project” (*al-mashrū‘ al-islāmī*). The “Qutbists” (*quṭbiyūn*), on the other hand, consisted of people who were brought up according to the educational curriculum of the Special Apparatus (*nizām khāṣṣ*), a paramilitary unit that was responsible for a number of armed attacks inside Egypt during the late 1940s. After the Brotherhood’s “second founding” (*al-ta’sīs al-thānī*), the quasi-militaristic spirit of the Special Apparatus lived on as a sub-culture within the ranks of the Brotherhood. The members of this inner circle conceived of themselves of an elite vanguard (*ṭalī’a*) of faithful and highly committed Brothers, who controlled an organisation (*tanẓīm*) characterised by a high degree of internal unity, effectiveness and top-down decision making and where the rank and file was condoned to follow the orders of the leaders according to the principle of “listening and obedience” (*sam’a wa ṭā’a*). The organisational design conceived by this vanguard leadership differed markedly from the open, meritocratic and democratic values of the generations of the Tilmisaniens. It is this difference in organisational vision that is at the heart of our analysis.

The thesis traces this internal conflict between members of the respective coalitions to show the trend of growing internal polarisation over the forty-year period. During the Guidance Office elections of late 2009 and early 2010, the internal tension culminated in a clash among the top leadership, resulting in the ousting of ‘Abd al-Mon‘im Abu al-Futuh and Mohammed Habib, and the isolation of ‘Issam al-‘Arian and other former student organisers from key administrative positions. Having lost the most talented politicians who may have had the necessary know-how, skills and experiences to govern a state as old and complex as Egypt, the Brotherhood was left with a clannish group of devotees at its top – people who were captured in a parochial and schizophrenic state of mind, deeply distrustful of outsiders as well as of other Brotherhood members who were not part of their inner circle. It was this inward-focused mind-set, reflected in corresponding administrative procedures and a distinct organisational culture, which ultimately explains the political incompetence of the Brotherhood leadership after the Revolution of 2011. The inability of the Muslim Brotherhood to connect to wider Egyptian society became evident in the amount of bad decisions that were the hallmark of the Morsi presidency, and the cataclysmic failure of the Brotherhood after only one year in power. By focusing on the individual life trajectories and personal experiences of the leaders representing these organisational visions, how they employed ideology and emotion as a weapon to justify its policies, and how these factors shaped the Brotherhood’s internal organisational decision making in 2012 and 2013, I hope to provide a novel reading of the recent history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The narrative is based on over forty interviews with leaders, rank-and-file members and dissidents of the Muslim Brotherhood, conducted during a fieldtrip to Cairo and Alexandria in 2012 and 2013. Interviews were frequently conducted in the streets, in coffee shops and in mosques, as well as during sit-ins and protest marches, bringing forward the high degree of emotionality that characterised this unique period of Egyptian history. In addition to these primary interviews, I conducted dozens of interviews with other actors, such as revolutionary activists, journalists, academics, public figures, religious scholars, former secret service agents, as well as a large range of ordinary Egyptians whom I met during my research trip. Oral history and ethnographic methods were used to be able to get to the kinds of narratives, personal life-stories and experiences of different organisational members. In addition, I collected a large amount of written sources, such as memoirs and biographies of senior Brotherhood figures, the complete selection of the *al-Da'wa* magazines and other educational material published by the Brotherhood, as well as newspapers and leaflets that were distributed during protests, marches and sit-ins. All this material, as well as a large amount of pictures and videos shot during my fieldwork in Egypt, is available on my website at www.victorjwilli.com. The thesis arranges the various narratives in the broader framework of Egyptian national history and the international history of the Middle East, with the goal of providing a diversified, fragmented and multi-varied picture of the Brotherhood's internal organisational history.

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Note on Transliteration and Sources

This thesis uses the IJMES transliteration system. Familiar expressions of Arabic origin whose meaning is known in English (e.g. jihad, hijab) are spelled without diacritics and not italicised. Less familiar Arabic expressions, as well as words for which there is no English equivalent, are fully transliterated and rendered in italics. These words are reflected in the glossary on page 7.

Familiar names (e.g. Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mohammed Morsi) are given in simplified English version. Less familiar names, as well as institutions, localities, names of movements and political parties are spelled in simplified version, without diacritics but including the marks for *‘ayn* and *ḥamza* (e.g. Mahdi ‘Akif, Jama‘at Islamiyya, Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya). Names of people widely known in English are given according to their preferred spelling (e.g. Khaled Said). Arabic names containing an article, when shortened to the surname, are provided without the article (e.g. Banna for Hasan al-Banna) in order to make them consistent with more familiar names (e.g. Nasser).

Arabic books titles, articles and other sources cited in the main text are italicised and given in simple transliteration. In the bibliography and the footnotes, the titles of Arabic sources are given in their fully transliterated form, while the names of authors and publishing houses are given in their simplified form (i.e. including the marks for *‘ayn* and *ḥamza*). Translated direct speech such as cited sources are spelled in a more colloquial form in English (i.e. “don’t” instead of “do not”).

The names of Brotherhood rank-and-file members interviewed for this thesis, as well as those of revolutionary activists, are anonymised. Those informants are provided only with an arbitrary first name in the bibliography, distinguishing them from well-known Brotherhood members and other public figures, who are indicated with their full names.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AKP	Justice and Development Party
AUC	American University in Cairo
ETUF	Egyptian Trade Union Federation
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MP	Member of Parliament
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
QIA	Qatar Investment Authority
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zones
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
SCC	Supreme Constitutional Court
YCR	Youth Revolution Coalition

Glossary of Technical Terms

<i>akh ‘āmil</i>	an active Brother, i.e. a full member of the Brotherhood (the final stage of membership)
<i>‘ālim, pl. ‘ulāma’</i>	religious cleric
<i>bay‘a</i>	the oath of loyalty sworn to the General Guide
<i>da‘wa</i>	the call towards Islam, i.e. preaching with the goal of educating people about the nature of “true Islam”
<i>fikra</i>	idea or ideology
<i>fulūl</i>	the remnants of the Mubarak regime
<i>hadīth</i>	the collection of reports or accounts purporting to quote what the Prophet said verbatim on any matter
<i>ḥukumiyyat Allah</i>	the sovereignty of God, as opposed to <i>jāhiliyya</i> (ignorance)
<i>infītaḥ</i>	the opening of the Egyptian economy, initiated by Sadat in 1974
<i>al-mashrū‘ al-islāmī</i>	the Islamic project, i.e. the Brotherhood’s long-term strategic plan to reach “global guidance” of Islam
<i>ighṭiyāl al-ma‘nawī</i>	moral assassination, i.e. a form of denunciation of perceived enemies and dissidents
<i>iṣlāḥiyyūn</i>	the reformists, i.e. the group of former student organisers who followed ‘Omar al-Tilmisani’s reform-oriented approach
<i>jāhiliyya; jāhilī</i>	the age of ignorance, as opposed to the period of governance of God’s law (<i>ḥukumiyyat Allah</i>); ignorant
<i>khartūsh</i>	shotgun pellets
<i>al-khilāfa</i>	the caliphate, a term used by Brotherhood members to describe their ideal form of government
<i>khittat al-tamkīn</i>	empowerment plan
<i>madhhab, pl. madhāhib</i>	one of the four legal schools of Sunni Islam
<i>majlis al-shūra al-‘amm</i>	the General Consultative Council of the Brotherhood
<i>maktab al-idārī</i>	the Administrative Office
<i>maktab al-irshād al-‘amm</i>	the General Guidance Office of the Brotherhood
<i>manhaj</i>	the methodology or curriculum of the Brotherhood
<i>miḥna</i>	an ordeal, i.e. a period of persecution, imprisonment and exile
<i>milūniyya</i>	a million man’s march

<i>muḥibb</i>	a fan or sympathiser with the Brotherhood's cause (first pre-membership stage)
<i>mukhabarrāt</i>	the secret service apparatus
<i>munazim</i>	an organiser (the second stage of membership)
<i>munshaqqīn</i>	the dissidents, i.e. people who have left the ranks of the Brotherhood
<i>muntasib</i>	an associate (the first stage of membership)
<i>al-murshid al-‘amm</i>	the General Guide of the Brotherhood
<i>mu‘āyid</i>	a supporter (second pre-membership stage)
<i>mu‘taṣamīn</i>	those staging a an <i>i‘tiṣām</i> , i.e. a sit-in
<i>nahḍa</i>	the (Islamic) renaissance or revival
<i>naqīb</i>	a captain of a family (<i>usra</i>)
<i>niqāb</i>	the full body cover worn by conservative Muslim women
<i>al-nizām al-khāṣṣ</i>	the Special Apparatus, a para-military unit of the Brotherhood formally abolished in 1951
<i>quṭbiyūn</i>	the Qutbists, i.e. the group of adherents of the Qutbist organisational vision
<i>raḥīl awwal</i>	the first cohort of the Muslim Brotherhood, i.e. those educated by Hasan al-Banna personally
<i>sam‘a wa ṭā‘a</i>	listening and obedience
<i>al-sahwa al-Islamiyya</i>	the Islamic Awakening
<i>shu‘āba</i>	the branch, i.e. the smallest administrative unit of the Brotherhood
<i>shurā</i>	the principle of consultation
<i>takfīr; takfīrī</i>	the practice of declaring fellow Muslims apostates, thereby implicitly condoning their killing
<i>tanẓīm; tanẓīmī</i>	organisation; pertaining to the organisation
<i>ṭalī‘a</i>	the vanguard. i.e. a group of Brothers who are particularly committed to implementing the Islamic project
<i>tarbiyya</i>	the upbringing of Brotherhood members according to the curriculum of the Brotherhood
<i>al-ta’sīs al-thānī</i>	the Brotherhood's second founding in the early seventies
<i>umma</i>	the community of Muslim believers
<i>ustādhiyyat al-‘ālam</i>	the global guidance of Islam
<i>‘umra</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca, known as the “minor Hajj”

usra

the family, i.e. the smallest educational unit of the Brotherhood

zakāt

the practice of almsgiving

Maps

Egypt



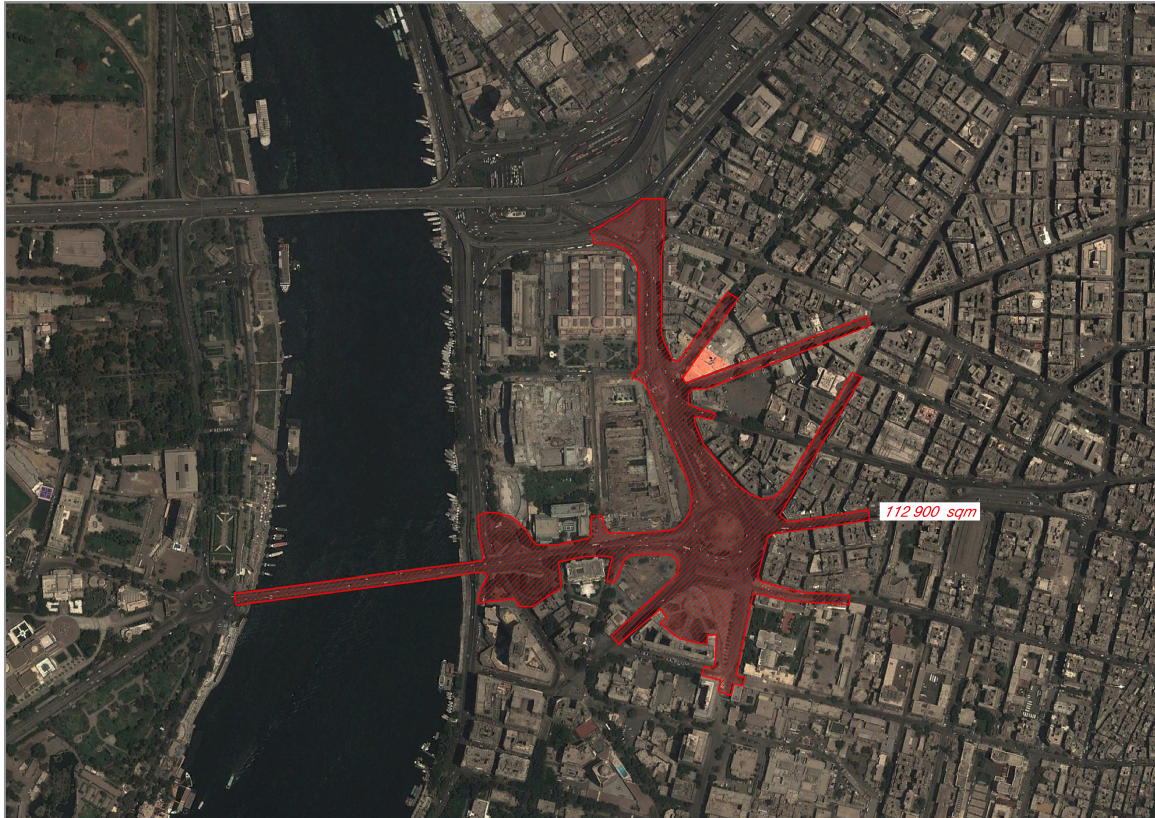
Excerpt from North Africa map. Source: National Geographic

Cairo



Four major sites of protest in the summer of 2013. *Source: Google Earth*

Protest Sites



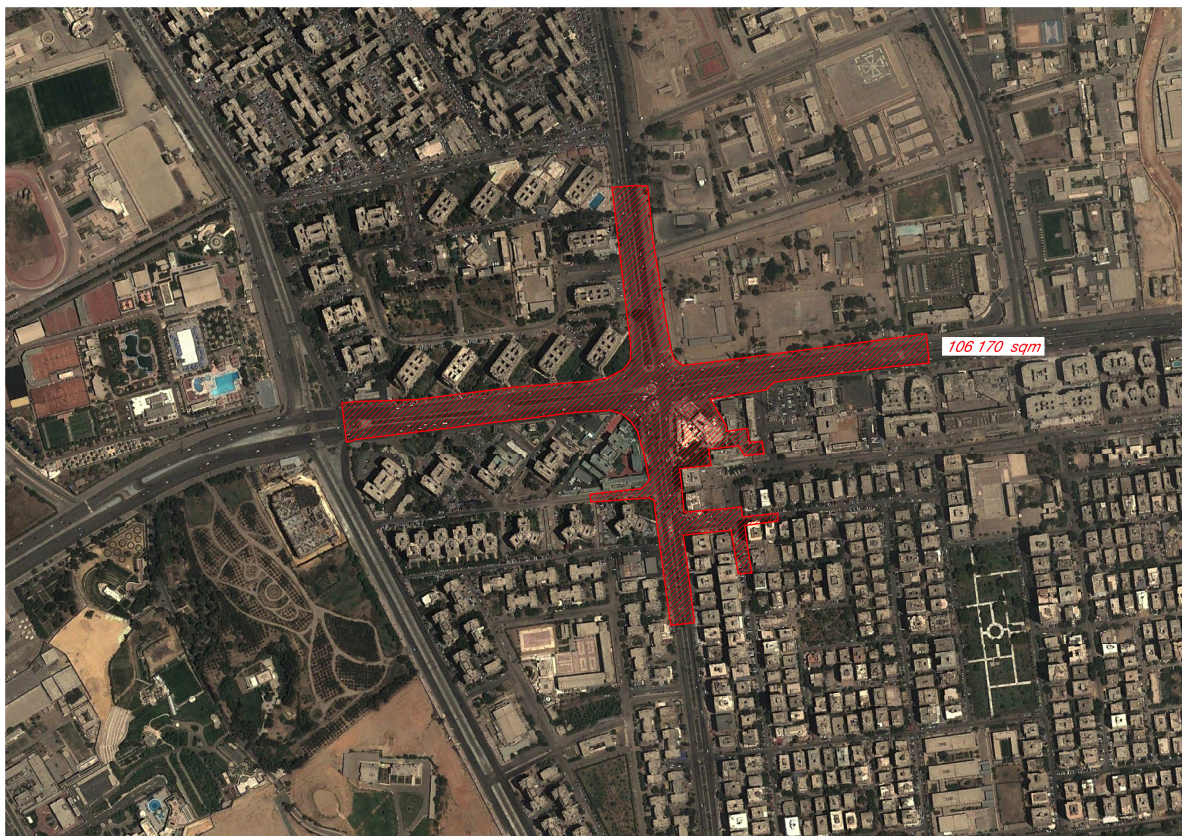
Above Tahrir Square (112,900 sqm) | **Below** Ittihadiyya (67,320 sqm)¹



¹ I thank Darius Karácsony for these maps and measurements.



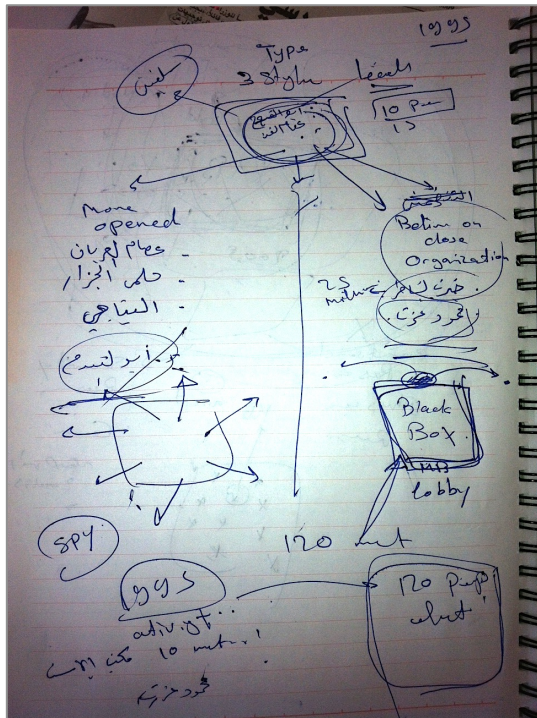
Above Cairo University (63,310 sqm) | **Below** Raba'a al-'Adawiyya (106,170 sqm)



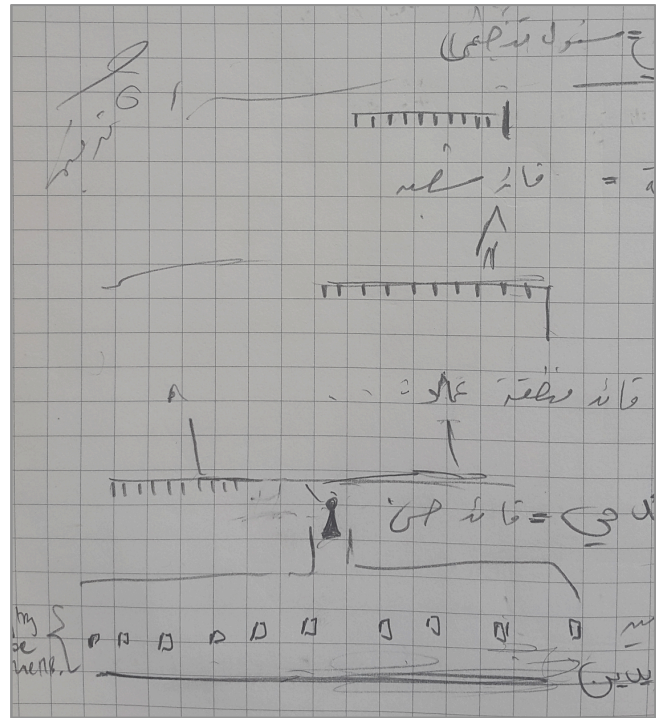
Figures

Figure 1: Drawings of the Tanẓīm by Rank-and-File Members

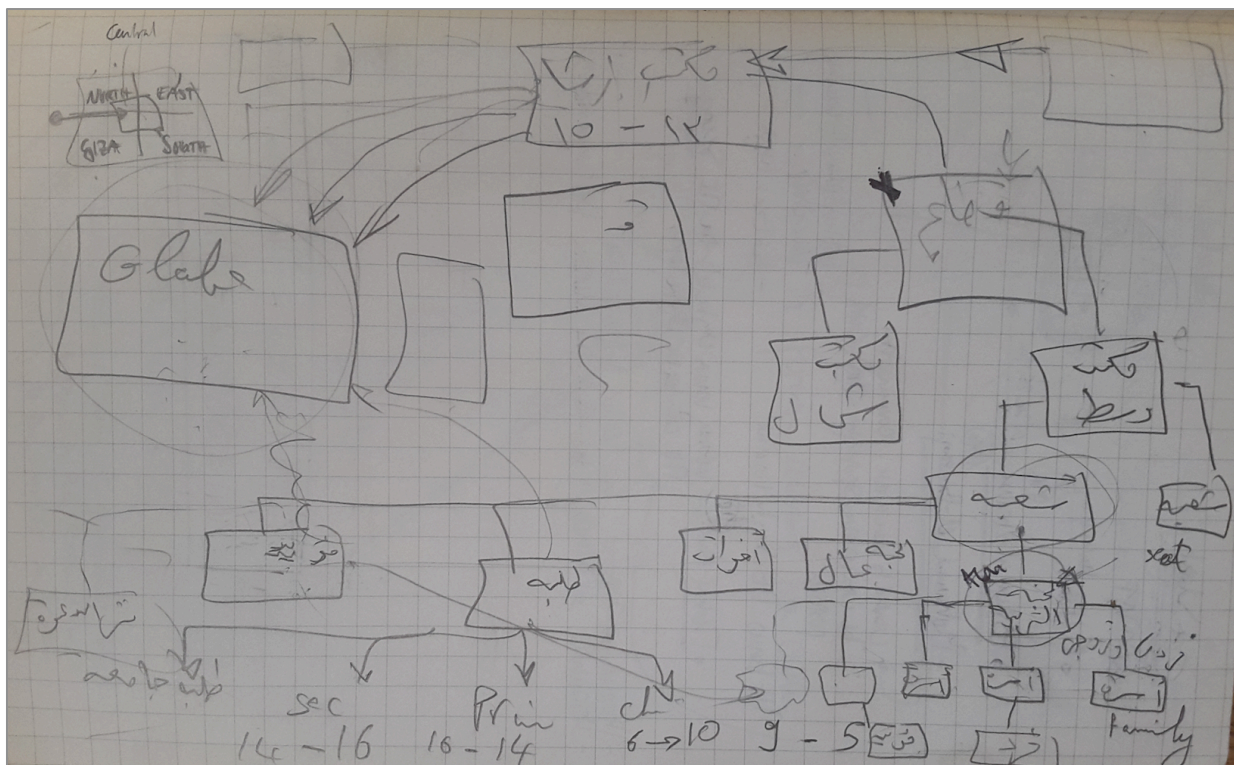
Depictions from different informants on the internal organisational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood.



A. Mohammed. 6th of October City, 26 July 2013.



B. Hasan. Cairo, 3 March 2013.



C. (13). Cairo, 30 January 2012.

Figure 2: Organisational Chart of the Muslim Brotherhood

Organisational chart of the Muslim Brotherhood according to the General Statutes of 1982, as well as according to personal interviews.

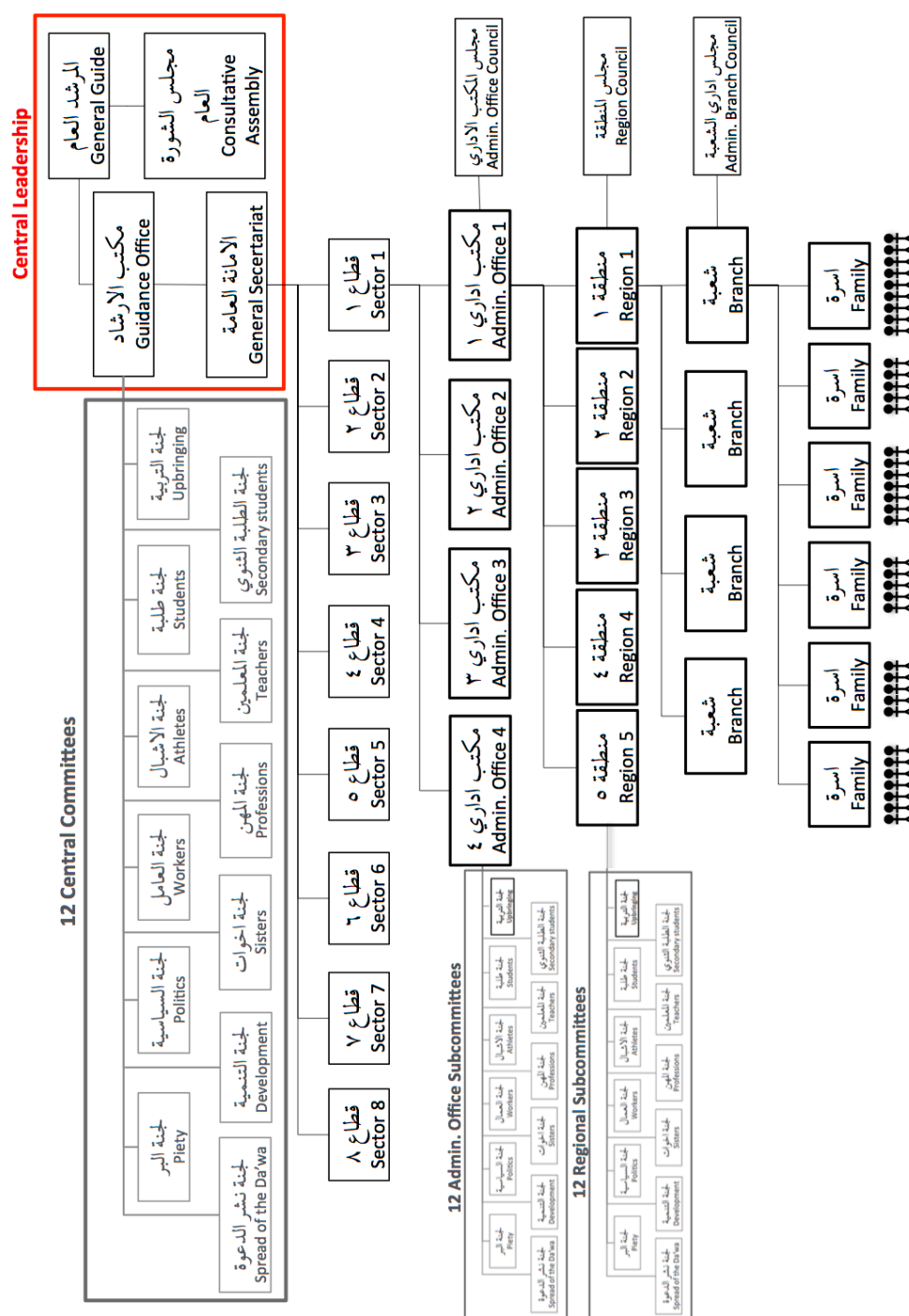


Figure 3: Mobilisation: Text Message to Muslim Brotherhood Base

This message was sent on 29 November 2011, on the eve before the People's Assembly elections, by a high-ranking Guidance Office member to a mid-ranking member in Alexandria. The purpose was to motivate the base to go out and vote in large numbers.

الاخوة و الاخوات المستمرون في الرباط
...ساعات قليلة و لكن كبيرة و عظيمة في
الميزان فالمرابط لا يعرف الفتور بل
يقظته دائمة و يزداد نشاطه كلما استعشر
عظيم المهمة و ثقل المسؤولية فنحن في
حاجة الى دعا يصعد و عمل يرفع فلتزدادوا
صلة بالناس يفتح الله لكم القلوب
والدكم / ج.ي. بلغ الاسر
م. ٩:٠٧ ٢٩/١١/٢٠١١

Brothers and sisters, you who continue in your bond.
The hours are few, many and mighty in the balance (of
life). The one who is aware doesn't know any laxity.
Instead, he will always be active and increase his
activity in order to accomplish his marvellous task and
the weight of responsibility. We need to call for striving,
and work to elevate and increase the prayer of the
people so that God opens your hearts.

X.Y. 29/11/2011 9:07

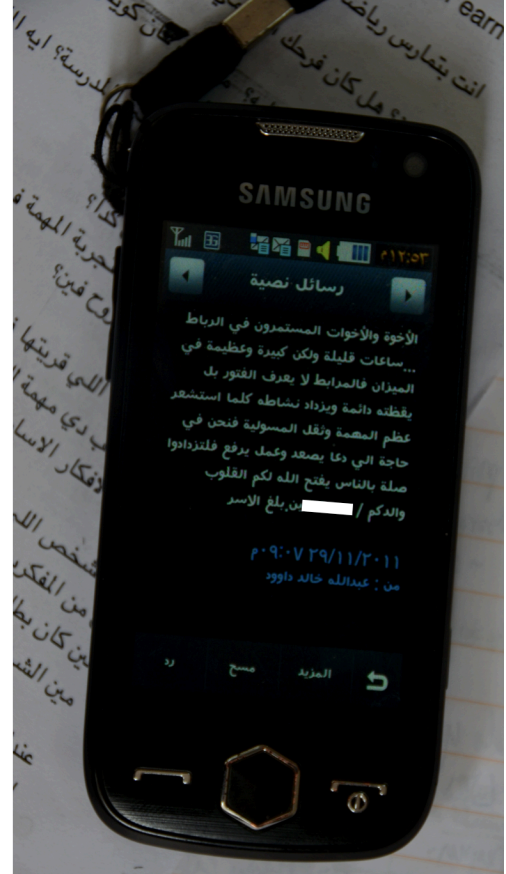
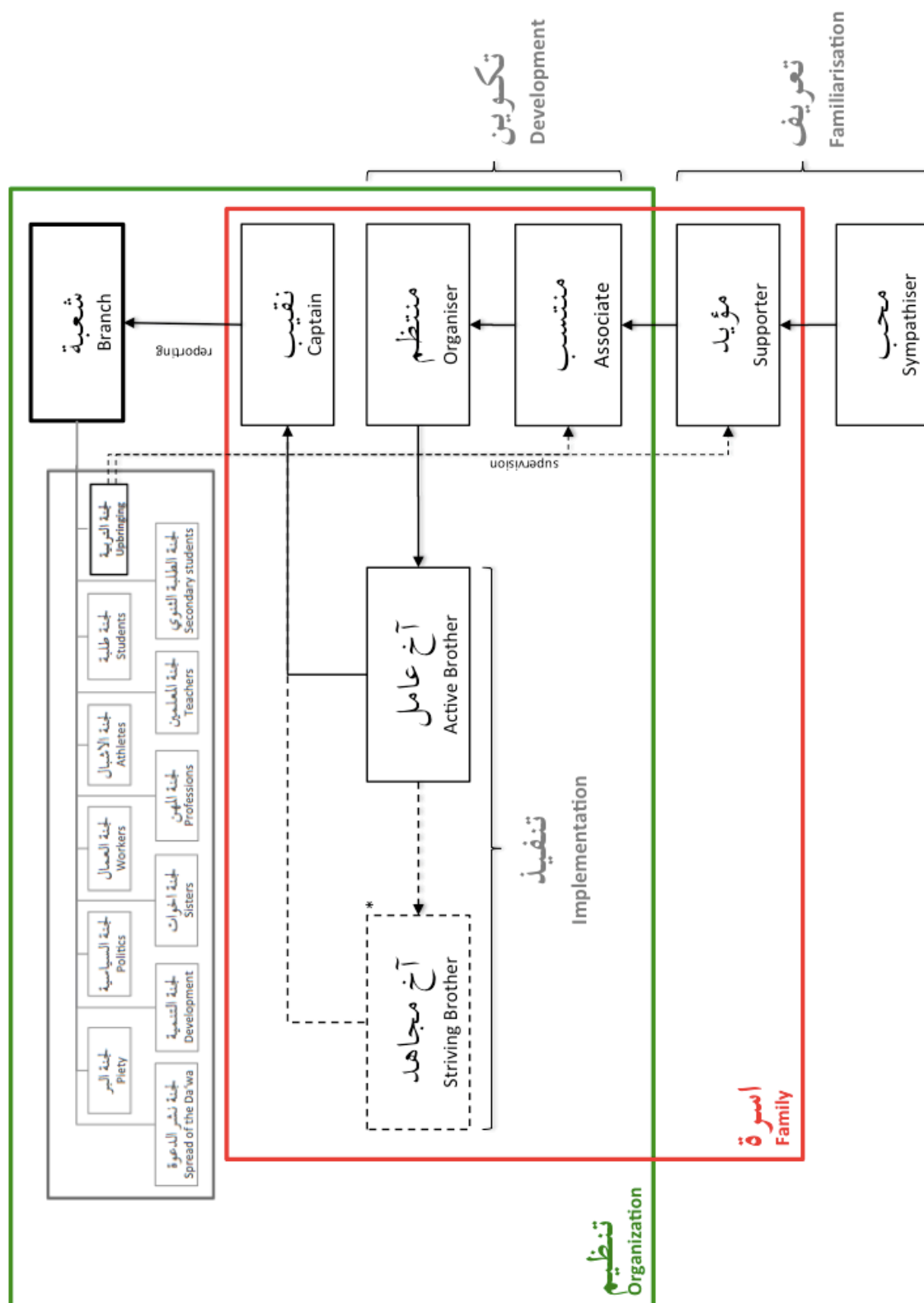


Figure 4: Recruitment and Promotion in the Usra

This chart explains recruitment and indoctrination in the family (*usra*), the smallest educational unit of the Brotherhood.



* formally abolished in the Statutes of 1951

Figure 5: Progression in the Brotherhood

Depiction of progression of individuals according to the different categories of membership, with a simultaneous process of familiarisation with the Society's ideology and inner core (sometimes called the "Special Apparatus" by outsiders).

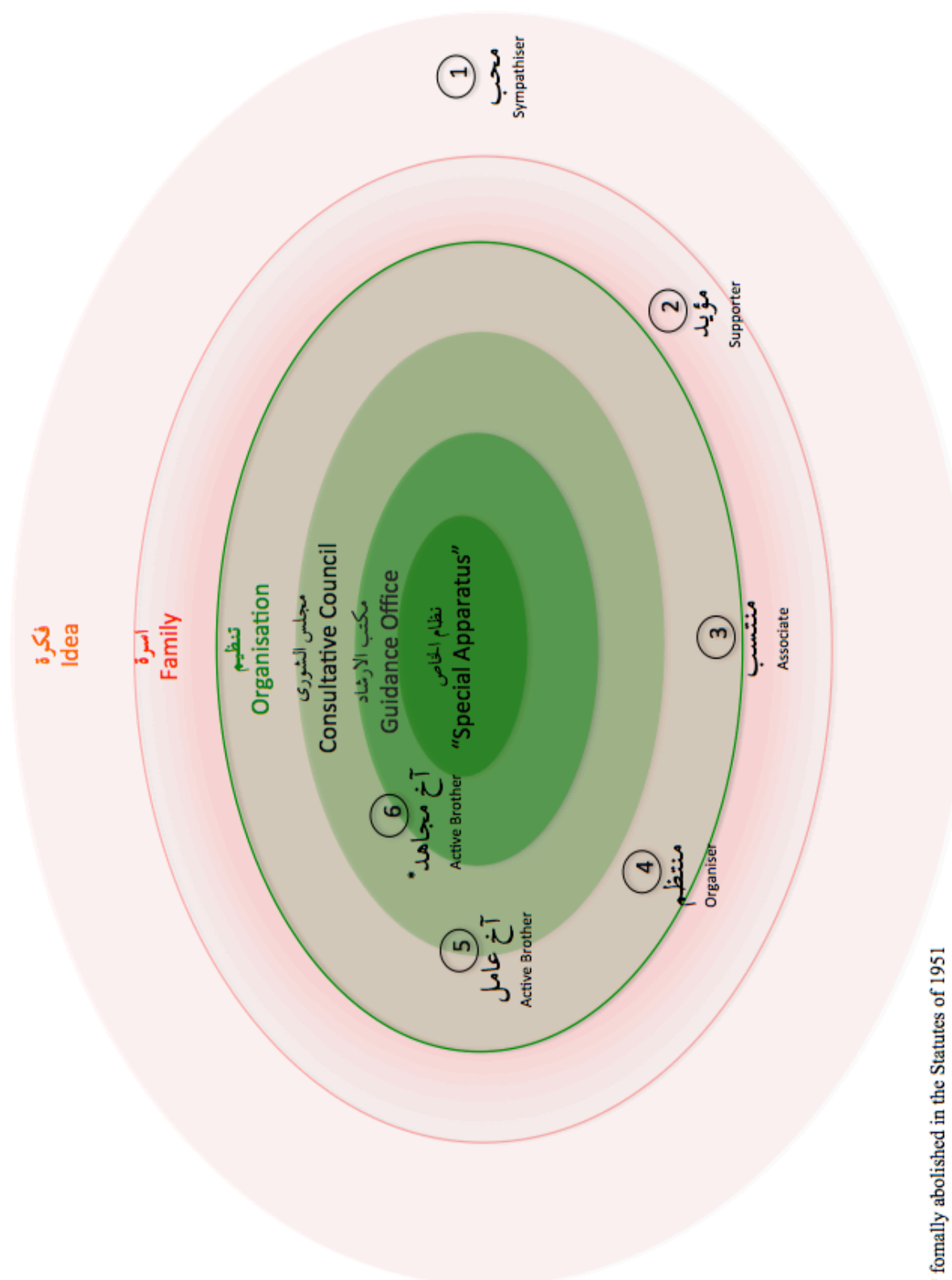


Figure 6: The Seven-Step Blueprint for Islamic Reform

Illustration of the Brotherhood's "political theory", according to Hasan al-Banna's *Letter on Teachings*.

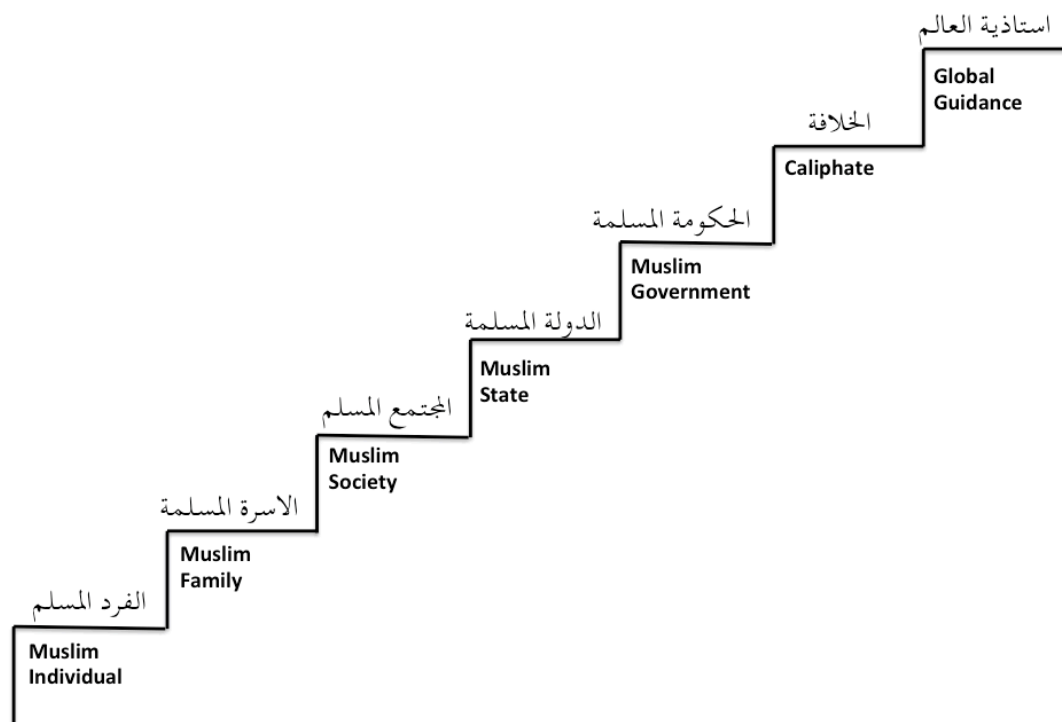


Figure 7: Logo of the Muslim Brotherhood

The Brotherhood's logo with the text of sura 8:60, whose first two words are emblazoned on it.

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of God and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom God knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of God will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.”

Sura 8:60



وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ
تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا
نَعْلَمُونَهُمْ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ
إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَظْلَمُونَ

سورة الأنفال



Figure 8: The Ten Pillars of the Brotherhood's Ideology

Representation of the ten “pillars of the oath” (*arkān al-bay‘a*) that define the Brotherhood’s basic values system, as defined in Hasan al-Banna’s *Letter on Teachings*.

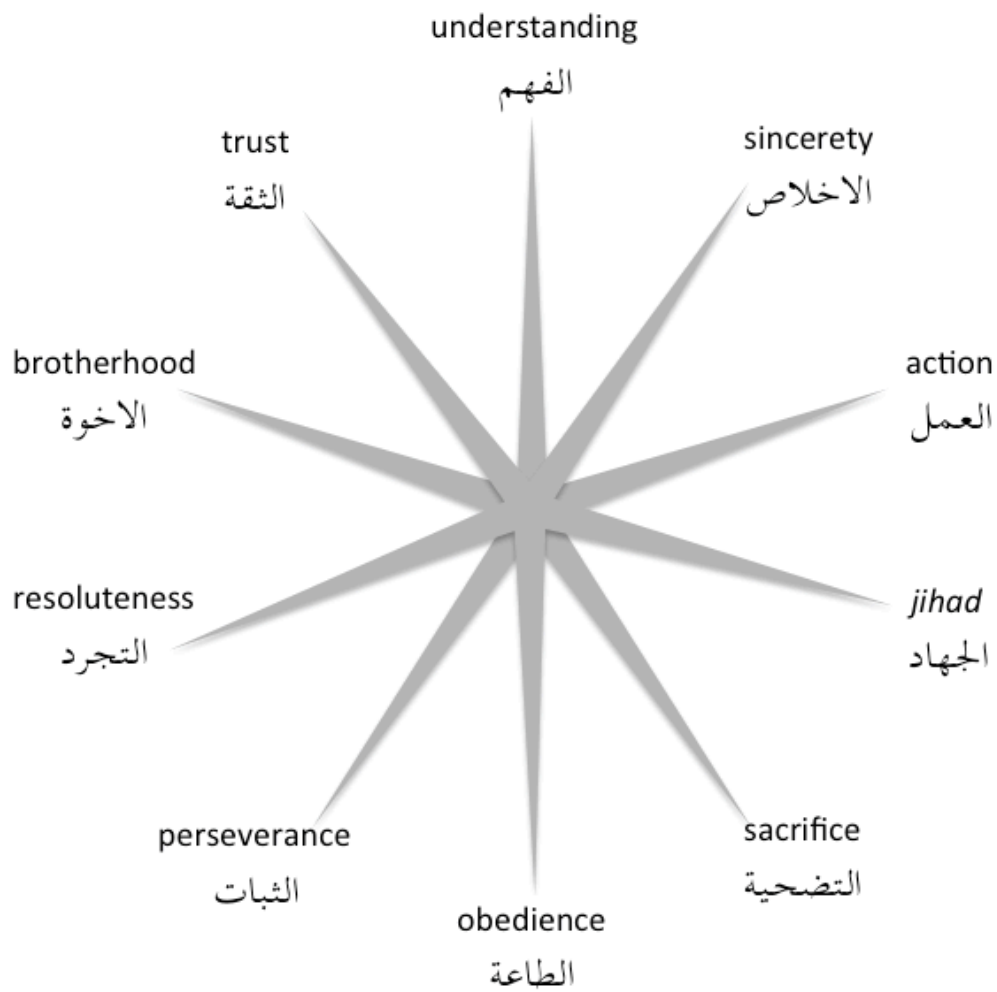
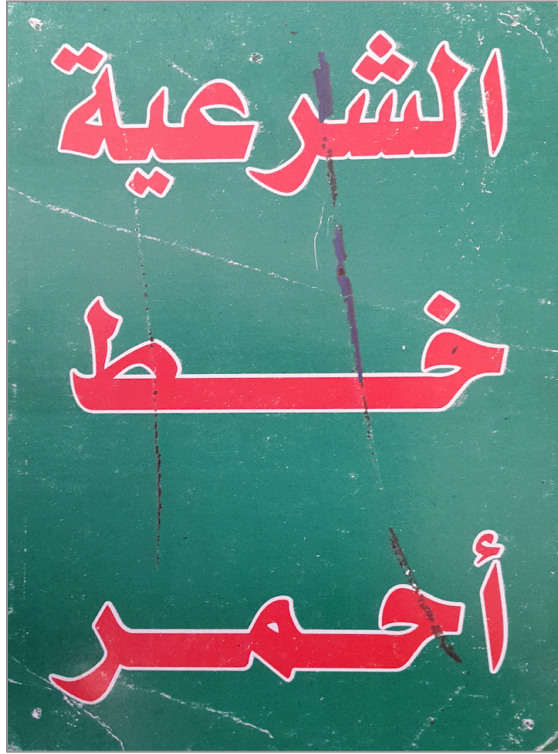


Figure 9: Some Memorabilia from 30 June 2013.

Collection of items from the pro-Morsi (A, C and D) and anti-Morsi (B) demonstrations in 2013.



A. "Legitimacy is a red line".



B. "Red card for Mohammed Morsi. Leave".



C. "There is no alternative to legitimacy".



D. Symbol of the anti-coup movement.

Figure 10: The Brotherhood's Headquarters: Before and After



Above June 28 2013, late afternoon | **Below** June 30 2013, early morning



Figure 11: The Brotherhood's Founder Hasan al-Banna



*O you who have believed, obey God and obey the Messenger
and those in authority among you.*

– Quran, 4:59²

*Our Lord, indeed, we obeyed our masters and our dignitaries,
and they led us astray from the [right] way.
Our Lord, give them double the punishment
and curse them with a great curse.*

– Quran, 33:67-8³

PROLOGUE

On 3 July 2013, the Egyptian Armed Forces ousted Dr. Mohammed Morsi from power. The sixty-two year old civil engineer had risen from humble provincial origins to win the presidency of the Arab world's most populous nation one year before. Morsi's victory represented the culmination of Egypt's first free election since the foundation of the Republic in 1952. Now, his time was over. The crackdown that would follow during the coming months was the most dramatic setback in the history of the Society of the Muslim Brothers.

The bloody showdown had been building up weeks before. In mid-June, large crowds of Morsi's supporters started to gather at two main localities in Cairo: on Nahda Square in front of Cairo University in Giza, and at the iconic Raba'a al-'Adawiyya mosque in Nasr City. On 28 June, a group of women at Raba'a powerfully expressed how they felt:

Ishad, ishad yā Allah, shar'ak qawī ill'ihnā ikhtārna – Witness, witness O God, we're choosing your strong law.

Yalli bitis'al ihnā mīn, ihnā sha'ab khamisa wa'ashrīn – You, who asks: who are we? We're the youth of the twenty-fifth.

Li-shara'iyya mu'ayyidīn, wa yā Mursī mikammilīn – The Sharia we support, and with Morsi we will continue our march.

² This is the most often quoted verse by Islamists to support their claim of Islam containing a political theory.

³ Sura 33:67-8 was depicted as a graffito on a wall at Mohammed Mahmoud Street in late 2012. See Online Archive. "Graffito at Mohammed Mahmud Street." Accessed 5 October 2015.

www.victorjwilli.com/research/street-art/

Lissa kamān saba‘a sinīn, thawra, thawra ḥattā al-naṣr, thawra fī kull al-shawār‘a Maṣr – There are still seven years left, revolution, revolution ‘till victory, revolution in all the streets of Egypt.
Ṣaḥī al-khalq wa ḥizz al-kawn, Maṣr baladnā mish hathūn – Get up, people, and shake the universe, Egypt, our country, will not be lost.
Yā ḥurriyya insāniyya, Maṣr ḥatīfḍal Islamiyya – O freedom, O humanity, Egypt will stay Islamic.
*Olé, olé, olé, olé! Mursī, Mursī, Mursī, Mursī!*⁴

On 1 July, a day before the army started surrounding the sit-in, the protests in Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya had grown into impressive crowds of tens of thousands of people. The atmosphere was tense, with participants in this spectacle gripped in a sense of determination, jubilation and anxious anticipation. MCs whipped the demonstrators up with slogans throughout the night:

Iqtil wāḥid, iqtil miya, mish hansībha li‘l-ḥaramiyya! – Kill one, kill one hundred, we will not leave Egypt to the thieves!
Qūl ma‘āya, yallā qūl, mish hansībha li‘l-fulūl! – Say with me, come on say: we’re not going to leave [Egypt] to the Fulul!
Mish hansībha li‘l-ḥaramiyya, mish hansībha li‘l-baltagiyya! – We’re not going to leave it to the thieves, we’re not going to leave it to the thugs!
Qūl ma‘āya, yā sha‘ab qūl, mish hansībha li‘l-fulūl! – Say with me, O people say: we’re not going to leave it to the Fulul!⁵

At one point, the loudspeakers positioned on makeshift stages started to play patriotic tunes from the 1973 October war. The crowds burst into ecstatic singing and dancing. It was a bizarre spectacle, especially in light of the events that would unfold during the coming days and weeks. But here they were, the rank and file of the Muslim Brotherhood. Nothing could shake their belief in the righteousness of their cause. It was for them, they believed, to defend the legitimacy of their president, carry the Egyptian revolution forward, and establish God’s law on earth. This was the defining moment that had been ordained in the holy Quran, where God had warned the faithful:

⁴ Online Archive. “28 June 2013 – Rabia Al Adawiyya – Women’s Protest.” Accessed 4 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/28-june-2013-rabia-al-adawiyya-womens-protest/

⁵ Online Archive. “30 June 2013 – Rabia Al-Adawiyya – Jubilant Crowds at Night.” *Victor J. Willi*. Accessed 4 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/30-june-2013-rabia-al-adawiyya-jubilant-crowds-at-night/. The term *fulūl* came up during the 2011 Revolution and refers to the corrupt “remnants” of Mubarak’s regime. The noun is an active participle of *falla* (“run away”, “flee”), hence *fulūl* as “the defeated”, “scattered”.

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war, by which you may terrify the enemy of God [...] Whatever you spend in the cause of God will be fully repaid to you. You will not be wronged.⁶

Two days before, the minister of defence and the commander of the Armed Forces, ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, had demanded that the president should leave office within forty-eight hours. Otherwise, the army would be compelled to intervene and declare a “road map” to outline Egypt’s political future. Morsi had appointed the enigmatic head of the military intelligence ten months before in what was regarded at the time as an assertion of presidential prerogatives over the powerful Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). But now, the fortunes had changed. The general told the president to wrap up and leave, or else...

But the president would not budge, despite the fact that hundreds and thousands of Egyptians had taken to the streets and squares in towns and cities across Egypt on 30 June in an impressive mass demonstration.⁷ In a nocturnal television address on 2 July, a defiant and jabbering Dr. Morsi refused to comply with the military’s ultimatum. Many who watched the speech were baffled and amazed by this obvious political suicide.⁸ When the deadline expired, the army took over public places and state institutions in a slick military manoeuvre.⁹ Security personnel arrested members of the Brotherhood’s top brass, including Freedom and Justice Party head Sa’d al-Katatni. Rumours spread that Morsi had been arrested and held incommunicado. The Society issued a statement on their Arabic-language website Ikhwanonline:

We categorically reject the military coup (*inqilāb ‘askarī*) that took place against the elected president and the will of the nation. We reject participation in any action with the usurping power, and the violence used against peaceful demonstrators.¹⁰

⁶ Quran, 8:60. The first two words of this sura, *wa a ‘idū* (“and prepare”), are emblazoned on the official logo of the Brotherhood. See Figure 7.

⁷ Online Archive. “30 June 2013 – Tahrir – Talateen Sitta.” Accessed 4 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/30-june-2013-tahrir-talateen-sitta/. The issue of the size of these protests was strongly debated in the media, with sympathisers of each side either downplaying or inflating the number of protesters. In a yet unpublished study, Neil Ketchley compared national turnouts in demonstrations and found that there were significant disparities in the overall sizes of demonstrations.

⁸ Egypt’s famed political humour was immortalised in this carnival (*mahrajānāt*) video: DJ Ahmed No’mān. “Mahrajān al-Shara’iyya Dī Jay Muḥammad Mursī” (Legitimacy Festival with DJ Mohammed Morsi). *Youtube*, 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQppPxQ_tc8

⁹ Online Archive. “July 3 Cairo University – Army & Police Deployment.” Accessed 4 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/3-july-2013-cairo-university-army-police-deployment/

¹⁰ The Arabic version of the text was originally published on www.ikhwanonline.com. A copy of the statement can found here: www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=111940752227390&story_fbid=484431168311678 (accessed 9 March 2014).

Over the coming weeks, violent street battles erupted in various towns and cities across Egypt. It is difficult to give a clear picture of the confusing string of events unravelling during these days. The core of Morsi's support base consisted largely of active Brotherhood members, but also included sympathisers of one of the other dozen Islamist movements, parties and alliances that had mushroomed since 2011. Morsi's opponents consisted of members of the various revolutionary youth groups that had formed the avant-garde of the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Ultras from the Ahli and Zamalek football clubs, as well as a large majority of politically unaffiliated Egyptians.¹¹ They were supported by civilian elements from Egypt's security apparatus, which reappeared on Egypt's streets after a year of absence.¹² Arms appeared everywhere and were employed on numerous occasions, with pro-Morsi and anti-Morsi groups using Molotov cocktails, shotgun pellets (*khartūsh*) and probably live bullets.¹³ More than forty people died and over 1,400 were wounded in one day.¹⁴ On 5 July, Mohammed Badi' defended the legitimacy of the president in an inciting speech from the stage in front of the Raba'a al-Adawiyya mosque, with military planes flying above the heads of the crowds:

Oh men, women and young people of Egypt. You were with each other in one revolution. You lived side by side with each other. And you defeated the British Occupation and the Zionists together. And your Brothers, your Muslim Brothers, spent decades in jails and prisons. You Egyptian people are the ones who defeated the unjust ruler. You are a very powerful people. You must keep holding on to your revolution. Don't let your revolution be wasted. No right will be lost for him who demands [this right]. I am not a guilty man, this was a fake accusation. I am from the revolution. We're free, we're revolutionaries, and we will keep up our march.¹⁵

¹¹ "Ultras" refers to Egyptian football fans, especially from the Cairene al-Ahli club. They underwent a growing politisation since the 2011 revolution and by the time of Morsi's overthrow were internally split, with some supporting Morsi and others opposing him. For a discussion on the role of the Ultras in the protest movement, see el-Zatmah, Shawki. "From Terso into Ultras: The 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the Radicalisation of the Soccer's Ultra-Fans." *Soccer & Society* 13, no. 5 (2012). Also, see the highly interesting study by Rommel, Carl. *Revolution, Play and Feeling. Assembling Emotionality, national Subjectivity and Football in Cairo, 1990-2013*. SOAS, University of London. PhD Dissertation, submitted in September 2015.

¹² "Civilians Fighting on the Sides of the State Security, 2013." *Youtube*. Accessed 15 March 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=chk5-OFdhY&feature=youtu.be

¹³ "al-Ikhwān yustakhdimūn al-Khartūsh wa'l-Aslaḥa al-nāriyya fī Ishtibākāt Sīdī Jābir" (The Brotherhood Uses Khartosh Guns and Live Weapons in Sidi Gaber Clashes), *Youtube*, 28 June 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko3ovWp37ws&feature=youtu.be

¹⁴ "al-Islāmiyyīn yarmūn bi'l-Atfāl min al-Irtifā' Tābiqīn" (Islamists Throw Opponents Off Building Roof in Alexandria, Egypt, 2013.) *Youtube*. 6 July 2013. Accessed 20 September 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypmOI-xMCnc

¹⁵ "20 injured in Damietta, Egypt still restive after month of bloodshed." *Egypt Independent*, 5 August 2013. Accessed 11 March 2014. www.egyptindependent.com/news/20-injured-damietta-egypt-still-restive-after-month-bloodshed

¹⁵ Badi', Mohammed. "Kalima al-Murshid al-āmm li-Jamā'a al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn Muḥammad Badī' min Munaṣṣa Rāba'a al-Adawiyya" (Speech of the General Guide of the Society of Muslim Brothers Mohammed Badi' from the Stage of Raba'a al-Adawiyya). *Youtube*. 5 July 2013. Accessed 17 March 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dFarB0CGRo&feature=youtu.be

The crowds emphatically responded: “*Thuwwār, aḥrār, hankammil al-mishwār!* – We’re revolutionaries, we’re free, we’ll continue on our way!”

Three days later, the army and the Central Security Forces brutally clamped down on a group of Morsi supporters who organised morning prayers in front of the Republican Guards Club at Salah Salem Street.¹⁶ As the violence spread, state agencies tightened the net around the Brotherhood. Arrest warrants and travel bans were issued for hundreds of top lieutenants, including the General Guide Mohammed Badi‘ and his deputies Khairat al-Shatir, Rashid al-Bayumi, as well as the former Guide Mahdi ‘Akif.¹⁷ Islamist news channels were taken off the air. News emerged that the Brotherhood’s International Organisation had convened major Islamist representatives during an emergency meeting in Istanbul.¹⁸ A few days later, Sisi suspended the constitution, appointed a caretaker government and called for elections. President Obama announced a review of the \$1.55 billion aid package delivered to Egypt annually.¹⁹ By now, the country was gripped in a fever of hyper-nationalist euphoria. On 26 July, hundreds and thousands of Egyptians came out to grant Sisi a “mandate to confront possible violence and terrorism”.²⁰ The FJP mouthpiece *al-Hurriyya wa’l-‘Adala* countered: “30 million Egyptians gathered at the [Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya] mosque ‘against the coup’.”²¹ On 14 August 2013, following a tense Ramadan during which the Brotherhood rank-and-file members held out at Nahda Square and Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya, the Armed Forces launched a joint operation with the Central Security Forces in what was the final crackdown on the

¹⁶ Owen, Paul and McCarthy, Tom. “Egypt: 51 Morsi Supporters Killed in Shooting at Republican Guard Compound – as It Happened.” *The Guardian*, 8 July 2013. Accessed 11 March 2014. www.theguardian.com/world/middle-east-live/2013/jul/08/egypt-34-killed-in-shooting-at-compound-where-morsi-is-being-held-live-coverage; “Bidāya Majzara al-Ḥaras al-Jumhūrī” (Beginning of the Massacre at the Republican Guards). *Youtube*. 8 July 2013. Accessed 11 March 2014.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyrWldXY3BU&feature=youtu.be_gdata_player. Also see el-Helbawy, Mirna. *Twitter*, 8 July 2013. Accessed 10 March 2014. twitter.com/Mirna_elhelbawi

¹⁷ “Arrest of Muslim Brotherhood Members and Supporters.” *Amnesty International Publications*, July 2013.

¹⁸ “Mu‘tamar ‘al-Jamā‘a’ fī Turkīā yuqarr bi’-‘Uzla al-Ikhwān wa Inhiyār Sha‘abīatihim fī Maṣr” (A Conference of the Society in Turkey Concludes the Deposal of the Brotherhood and the Collapse of Its Popularity in Egypt). *al-Riyadh*. Accessed 24 January 2014. www.alriyadh.com/2013/08/27/article862752.html

¹⁹ “Statement by President Barack Obama on Egypt | The White House.” 3 July 2013. Accessed 9 March 2014. www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/03/statement-president-barack-obama-egypt. For an overview of U.S. military and economic assistance to Egypt, see Sharp, Jeremy. “Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations”. *Congressional Research Service*. January 10, 2014. Accessed 11 March 2014. www.fas.org/spp/crs/mideast/RL33003.pdf

²⁰ Sisi, ‘Abd al-Fattah. “Kalima al-Farīq al-Sīsī amām Tullāb Kullīatī al-Difā‘ al-Jawī wa’l-Baḥarī” (Speech of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi before Students at the Airforce and Naval Defence College). *Youtube*, 26 July 2013. Accessed 10 March 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktN1f62YEHU

²¹ *al-Hurriyya wa’l-‘Adala*, 1 August 2013.

Islamist encampments. This “great massacre” (*madhbaha kubra*) left a body count of over 1,000 deaths and many more wounded.²²

Meanwhile, the parallelogram of national and international forces realigned. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates pledged \$5 billion and \$3 billion respectively to the new government. Kuwait followed up with another \$4 billion “aid package”.²³ Egypt’s interim president issued a new constitutional declaration for the upcoming transitional period. The new regime proceeded to systematically dismantle whatever public presence remained of the Muslim Brotherhood. Over the coming weeks and months, the entire leadership and hundreds of second and third-tier cadres were arrested and charged with the incitement of violence, committing murder and threatening national security.²⁴ On 23 September, a court ordered the dissolution of the Brotherhood and the confiscation of all its assets. Three months later, after a deadly suicide attack on the police headquarters in Mansura, the government declared the Brotherhood a terrorist organisation. The movement was pushed back underground, where it had been for the greater part of its history.

* * * * *

²² “Bayān 63 bi’l-Madhbaha al-Kubra ithnā‘ Faḍḍ al-I’tisāmīn al-Rāba‘al-‘Adawiyya wa’l-Nahḍa” (Statement 63 Regarding the Great Massacre during the Dispersal of the Sit-ins of Raba’a and Nahda.” *Ikhwanonline*, 14 August 2013. Accessed 11 March 2014. www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.aspx?ArtID=159747&SecID=230

²³ “UAE Transferred \$3 Billion in Aid to Egypt, Saudi to Follow Shortly.” *Reuters*. 18 July 2013. Accessed 14 March 2014. www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/18/us-egypt-gulf-aid-idUSBRE96H0ZE20130718. See also Cole, Juan. “A New Arab Cold War: Saudi Arabia Pressures Qatar on Muslim Brotherhood, American Think Tanks.” *Informed Comment*. Accessed 23 April 2014. www.juancole.com/2014/03/pressures-brotherhood-american.html. For the Saudi involvement in the military coup in Egypt, see Hearst, David. “Saudi’s Internal Power Struggle Sends Ripples across International Borders.” *The Guardian*. Accessed February 9, 2015. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/21/saudi-power-struggles-egypt

²⁴ “Arrest of Muslim Brotherhood Members and Supporters”. *Amnesty International Publications*, July 2013. Accessed 15 March 2014. www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE12/035/2013/en/5b0928c3-791a-4cf3-8781-7e1b91b92309/mde120352013en.pdf

INTRODUCTION

Research Question

This thesis examines the history of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt from 1973 up to the summer of 2013. The main focus is to look at the complex and mutually reinforcing dynamics of ideology, internal organisational politics, and the individual experiences of key Brotherhood actors, in an effort to show how the interaction between these elements can help us understand the Society's failure in the summer of 2013. While the history of the Brotherhood as an organisation stands at the centre of our analysis, the thesis will situate this story within the broader context of both Egyptian national history, as well as the international relations of the Middle East and North Africa. The objective is to provide a coherent narrative that accommodates the macro-historical level of national and international politics, the institutional level of internal organisational politics and ideology, as well as the micro-historical level of the life-stories of the key actors that have shaped the Brotherhood's history.

I first conceived of this project at the end of 2010. My original idea was to better understand the movement's social base. While the Brotherhood at the time was widely seen as the most influential Islamist movement, a comprehensive narrative of its recent history was missing. Instead, there existed an entire web of mysteries and conspiracy theories that endowed discussions about the Brotherhood with a discursive tradition of its own.¹ A January 2010 article in *The Guardian* by Fawaz Gerges had exposed an internal coup within the Brotherhood's highest executive body, exposing a generational rift between an "old guard" and a "reformist camp" that was said to be more democratic.² At the same time, the Egyptian public debated the intentions of Hosni Mubarak to install hereditary rule in Egypt. To veterans like Roger Owen from Harvard University it was clear at that time that something was bubbling underground.³ Whatever the exact contours of the upcoming power struggle, the Brotherhood was likely to play a key role.

On 25 January 2011, two weeks after I sent my application to the Oxford History

¹ On one of my first trips to Cairo in April 2012, a flight attendant asked me about the purpose of my visit to Egypt. When I told him about my project, he asked whether it was true that the Brotherhood wanted to "blow up the pyramids", as the Taliban had done with the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan.

² Gerges, Fawaz. "The Muslim Brotherhood: New Leadership, Old Politics." *The Guardian*. 20 January 2010. Accessed 5 April 2015. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/jan/20/muslim-brotherhood-egypt

³ Owen, Roger. Conversation. Boston, 20 July 2010.

Faculty, a popular uprising of unprecedented proportions swept Mubarak out of power. Following the news from Geneva, it seemed to me that the Brotherhood quickly adapted itself within the complex mechanics of the Egyptian state.⁴ In November 2011, the Society's newly established political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), won 47.3 per cent of the seats in the People's Assembly. Together with its ideological rival, the Salafi al-Nur Party, the Islamists now commanded a two-thirds share in the distribution of legislative power. In response to these developments, I changed the scope of my research question towards understanding the Brotherhood's collective ideational frameworks and the narratives Brotherhood leaders and rank-and-file members would provide as historical explanations for their electoral success. My goal was to understand the "worldviews" of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the sense of *Weltanschauung*, which I defined at the time as the beliefs, ideas and perceptions of individual members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the way regional and global events have shaped these views since 1970. It was with this in mind that I travelled to Egypt in April 2012, three months before Morsi's historic opening address at Tahrir Square.⁵

The one and a half years of my fieldwork were marked by a high degree of volatility and uncertainty. During the transition, the established centres of power and the Islamist newcomers engaged in a growing struggle for supremacy, which was fought out both behind the curtains of state institutions, as well in the open in terms of protests and street politics. As the fortunes of the Brotherhood rose, its rank-and-file members were visibly proud of the achievements of their movement. This sense of vindication made it easier to find out details about the Brotherhood's internal organisation. Ethnographic methods allowed me to develop close relationships with a number of rank-and-file members in Cairo and Alexandria, mostly from lower middle-class status, who openly talked about internal structure, decision-making, electoral procedures and communication strategies. It was mainly because of one lower-ranking Brotherhood member that I was able to get privileged insight into the group's internal organisational culture. In addition to numerous oral testimonies from the rank-and-file membership, as well as from the movement's leaders and dissidents, I was able to collect a large quantity of written sources, such as memoirs as well as educational materials published by Brotherhood press organs. The totality of the data allowed me to go beyond a subjective oral history and towards a more systematic account of the movement's internal organisational

⁴ As it turned out, the Brotherhood was quite behind the curve, but tried to construct a narrative *ex post facto* that attempted to position the Society as the torchbearers of this revolution. See Chapter 5.

⁵ Morsi, Mohammed. "Khiṭāb al-Ra'īs Muḥammad Mursī fī Mīdān al-Taḥrīr" (Speech by Mohammed Morsi on Tahrir Square). *Youtube*, 29 June 2012. Accessed 7 August 2015.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWPVCUtpNWw&feature=youtube_gdata_player

evolution, based on the narratives of those who were in one way or another involved in this history.

By the spring of 2013, there were signs that competing popular and political forces were gearing up for a clash. With lanes in front of gas stations getting longer and Cairo in an increasingly chaotic situation, popular discontent could be felt everywhere. There was a widespread sense of frustration among the public and a growing popular rejection of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. At the beginning of May, a flyer of a campaign called Tamarrud (“rebel”) started to appear everywhere on the streets of Cairo.⁶ It listed a set of grievances and demanded that Morsi should call for new presidential elections. The grassroots campaign behind the initiative called on Egyptians to gather in large numbers on 30 June to force Morsi to resign.⁷ The subsequent chain of events – from the arrival of large crowds of Islamists in Nasr City and at Cairo University, the military coup on 3 July, the massacre of Brotherhood members in Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya mosque and the subsequent crackdown on the organisation and its members – forced me to reformulate my research question once again. Instead of ending my account with the elections of 2012, I extended it for one year, up to the fateful summer of 2013 when the Brotherhood’s honeymoon with power came to an abrupt halt.

While the summer of 2013 was a painful moment for the movement’s members, it provided me as a historian with a conclusive finishing date, making it possible to write a history with a beginning and a clear end. The developments of that summer also fit into a historical pattern that seemed to be typical for this movement, which since its foundation had fluctuated between the opposite poles of political and social success on the one hand, and persecution, imprisonment and exile on the other. Morsi’s inauguration as president on 24 June 2012 represented the movement’s greatest success. As shown in the numerous pronouncements of its leaders and its rank-and-file members, it was a turn of fortune the Brothers would not have imagined and which to them was a sign of divine intervention, lifting the Society one step closer towards its utopian goal: the re-institution of the Islamic caliphate and the “global guidance” of Islam. On the other hand, Morsi’s ouster by the military on 3 July 2013 and the subsequent crackdown was a dramatic reversal of fortunes that threw the Islamic project back many years. The two moments of 24 June 2012 and 3 July 2013 can be

⁶ This could be seen in the graffiti around Tahrir Square and the increasingly vicious claims in newspapers that aimed to vilify the Brotherhood and its leaders. Online Archive. “March 2012 – September 2013: Anti-Morsi & Anti-Brotherhood.” Accessed 7 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/march-2012-september-2013-anti-morsi-anti-brotherhood/

⁷ Online Archive. “30 June 2013 – Tahrir – Talateen Sitta.” Accessed 8 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/30-june-2013-tahrir-talateen-sitta/

seen as two historically closely situated but opposing polarities in the movement's collective experience. Whereas in 2010, when I first conceived of this project, the Brotherhood looked set to have a chance to play a major, if not the dominant role in Egyptian politics, within two and a half years the organisation won the People's Assembly and the Presidency, only to lose it all again one year later. While in 2010 the topic was just emerging, the Egyptian revolution had made it relevant, while the military coup of 2013 made it historical.

Key Findings

The key finding of this study was that there existed two different trends or coalitions within the Brotherhood's ranks, each having different ideas of the *kind of organisation* the Brotherhood was supposed to be. These trends were largely grouped around the organisational visions of two central figures: 'Omar al-Tilmisani, the third General Guide of the Brotherhood, and Sayyid Qutb, the illustrious intellectual and the spiritual mentor of the efforts to rebuild the Brotherhood in the sixties. During the course of the forty-year period recounted in this thesis, these two coalitions competed over organisational resources, as well as in terms of the meaning about the correct interpretation of the Brotherhood's central ideological texts. This internal competition became more accentuated towards the end of our period and escalated shortly before the Arab Spring during the internal Guidance Office elections at the end of 2009, resulting in the resignation of the General Guide Mahdi 'Akif. By the time of 25 January 2011, the Brotherhood was thus a deeply fragmented organisation, weakened by internal leadership clashes and unprepared for what was going to come during the transition and the period of governance from 2012 to 2013.

As the micro-historical accounts of key Brotherhood figures shows the preference for one organisational vision over the other depended to a large extent on the personal experiences and life trajectories of its main actors. Unpacking these life stories will help us make sense of why specific individuals adhered to the organisational visions represented by the respective coalitions. In the internal competition for hegemony over resources and meaning, the representatives of the different sides used ideology as a means to gain control of the central internal positions that were in charge of indoctrination of the rank-and-file membership. The Brotherhood's ideology was thus bent to confirm the respective political preferences and interests of the respective actors. Ideology stands in an intricate, complex and mutually reinforcing relationship with those aspects that define the Brotherhood as an organisation. I will argue that it is primarily through a holistic understanding of the interaction

of these elements, ideology, internal organisational politics and the individual experiences of its key actors, that we will best be able to grasp the story of the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Literature

Given the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the longest-established and most prominent Islamist groups in the Muslim world, the field of Western academic and popular literature that deals with the movement is quite broad, with virtually everyone writing on Middle East and Muslim politics having made some kind of reference to the group. In 1969, Richard P. Mitchell's *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* provided the first solid account of its early history, documenting events between 1928 and 1954. Mitchell pointed out in detail the relationship between the Brotherhood's secret military unit, known as the Special Apparatus (*al-nizām al-khāṣṣ*), and the Free Officers movement that toppled the monarchy in 1952.⁸ This relationship between the Brotherhood's inner circle and the army has crucially defined both the older and the recent history of the Society. As we will see, many of the men who previously formed the cadres of the Special Apparatus would play important roles in the Brotherhood's subsequent history.

Another historical account was *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt* by Brynjar Lia, who offered a more diversified analysis of the Brotherhood's social base, pointing out how the Brotherhood managed to relate religion "to the modern age and [to] all aspects of modern life".⁹ Besides these political histories, a number of biographies on the lives and ideas of the Brotherhood's first two General Guides, Hasan al-Banna and Hasan al-Hodeibi, were published.¹⁰ Other biographical studies were centred on Sayyid Qutb, whose manifesto *Milestones (Ma'ālim fi'l-Ṭarīq)* had a lasting impact on generations of Islamist activists.¹¹ Other authors like Oliver Carré have further tried to understand the movement's ideology by analysing its key texts.¹²

⁸ Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 193-4.

⁹ Lia, Brynjar. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: the Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998. Also see Harris, Christina Phelps. *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: the Role of the Muslim Brotherhood*. The Hague: Published for the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, Calif, by Mouton, 1964.

¹⁰ Krämer, Gudrun. *Hasan al-Banna*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2010; Zollner, Barbara. *The Muslim Brotherhood : Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology*. London: Routledge, 2009.

¹¹ Calvert, John. *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*. London: Hurst & Co, 2010; Khatab, Sayed. *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb : The Theory of Jahiliyyah*. London: Routledge, 2006.

¹² Carré, Olivier. *Les Frères musulmans: Egypte et Syrie, 1928-1982*. Paris: Gallimard, 1983.

Regarding the Society's recent history, the majority of scholarship has treated the movement as a subchapter of Egyptian national history.¹³ Mostly written by political scientists or political sociologists, these authors portrayed the Brotherhood as a coherent institutional player that acted and reacted to the manoeuvres of an authoritarian state.¹⁴ The majority of this work remained rooted within orientalist or neo-orientalist paradigms that analysed the Society (and Islamist movements in general) within the limits of the notion of "Islamic fundamentalism".¹⁵ This discourse originated as a reaction to events such as the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the "Marine barracks bombing" in Lebanon of October 1983. These events confronted planners in Western capitals with the new reality of a politicised version of Islam, which had an increasingly important impact on U.S. national security.¹⁶ Islam became a preferred topic for analysts and an emerging breed of "experts", who reverted to concepts such as "culture" or "civilisation" to explain political violence in the Arab world. A group of neoconservative scholars around Bernard Lewis of Princeton University saw fundamentalism as a quintessential consequence of Islam's "inherent disposition" towards violence. According to Lewis, "something in the religious culture of Islam" had given way to an "explosive mixture of rage and hatred" among Muslims, which was now directed against the United States as the "legitimate heir of European civilisation". Militant Islam was explained as a "historic reaction of an ancient rival against our [sic] Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both". The confrontation between Islam and Christianity amounted to nothing less than a "clash of civilisations".¹⁷

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the French social scientist Gilles Kepel ventured to solve the riddle of fundamentalism by turning to Islam's foundational texts. Kepel deserves credit for having challenged the notion of a broadly conceived "Islamic movement" that

¹³ Hinnebusch, Raymond. *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat : the Post-populist Development of an Authoritarian-modernising State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Baker, Raymond William. *Sadat and after: Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul*. London: Tauris, 1990; Springborg, Robert. *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order*. Boulder, Colo ; London: Westview, 1989.

¹⁴ Awadi, Hisham. *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: the Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. London ; New York: Tauris, 200; Pargeter, Alison. *The Muslim Brotherhood: from Opposition to Power*. London: Saqi, 2013. For a discussion, see Brown, Nathan. "Political Islam Becomes Less Political." *Social Science Research Council*. Accessed 15 March 2014. blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2014/03/11/political-islam-becomes-less-political/

¹⁵ The classical study is from Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. 1st edition. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

¹⁶ Ayubi, Nazih. "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 4 (1980).

¹⁷ Lewis, Bernard. "The Roots of Muslim Rage." *The Atlantic*, September 1990. The notion of the "clash of civilisations" was popularized in an essay by Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 12 August 2013. Accessed 13 March 2014. www.foreignaffairs.com/books/fabooks/the-clash-of-civilisations; Kedourie, Elie. "Political Terror in the Muslim World." *Encounter*, February 1987. Accessed 13 March 2014. www.unz.org/Pub/Encounter-1987feb-00012; Sivan, Emmanuel. *Radical Islam : Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1990. For a rebuttal of the "clash of civilisation" thesis see Said, Edward: "The Clash of Ignorance." *The Nation*. October 2001. www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance#

lumped together disparate groups, events and personalities into single conceptual categories, focusing instead on the particular national context of Egypt.¹⁸ But by basing his conclusions about the origins of Islamic extremism on textual sources, Kepel substituted a culturalist analysis for historical explanations.¹⁹ He interpreted the violent fringe inspired by Sayyid Qutb as the Brotherhood's true intellectual heritage, focusing on jihadi and *takfīrī* groups such as Shukri Mustafa's Takfir wa'l-Hijra and 'Abd al-Salam Faraj's Jama'at Islamiyya, rather than on what he called the "neo-Muslim Brethren". He concluded that opting for moderation had "failed to capture the spirit of the Society of Muslim Brethren of Hasan al-Banna's time" and thus misinterpreted the Society's continuity, both in terms of its intellectual history as well its organisational continuity.²⁰

Following the attacks of 11 September 2001, the conceptual categories of "Islam" and "terrorism" became increasingly correlated in the minds of academics, think-tankers, security professionals, strategic planners and policy makers. In the United States particularly, research on Islamist groups was virtually hijacked by a sprawling terror-literature industry.²¹ 9/11 also influenced research on the Muslim Brotherhood, polarising the American intellectual establishment into those who saw the Brotherhood as a force for evil versus those who saw them as a force for good. The former camp faced an easy task, for the Brotherhood provided them with plenty of mysterious concepts from which conclusions about its inherent wickedness could readily be drawn. The notion of the "caliphate" was invoked indiscriminately by Western "experts" to create an image of a "secretive global organisation" that shared the jihadists' agenda of achieving power by all means.²² But studies that propagated a "westwards expansion" of the Brotherhood adopted a superficial reading of the Islamist conceptual universe without doing justice to its social roots, historical legacy and organisational complexity.²³ Ideas such as that of the caliphate or of a "global organisation" expanding westwards only served to cater to age-old instincts of Islamophobia, thereby

¹⁸ Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: the Prophet and Pharaoh*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

¹⁹ See the discussion in Cole, Juan. "Muslim Religious Extremism in Egypt: A Historiographical Critique of Narratives" in Gershoni, Israel et al. *Middle East Historiographies: Narrating the Twentieth Century*. Seattle, Wash; London: University of Washington Press; 2006, pp. 262-287.

²⁰ Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, p. 128.

²¹ Some of the titles in this period include: Benjamin, Daniel. *The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War against America*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003; Scheuer, Michael and Hoffman, Bruce. *Through Our Enemy's Eyes*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2007; Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006; Gerges, Fawaz. *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*. 1st edition. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, 2006.

²² Rubin, Barry. *The Muslim Brotherhood: the Organisation and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement*. New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Vidino, Lorenzo. *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

²³ Johnson, Ian. *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA and the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

preventing a deeper understanding of the Society's ideology and internal organisational mechanics.

The group of fear-mongering scholars was opposed by a camp of liberal political scientists who advocated for "engagement" with the Brotherhood. This school of thought had its origins in the debates that took place among Muslim intellectuals in Egypt, which emerged in the late eighties and early nineties and concerned the role of Islam in the legal and institutional framework of the modern nation-state. Reformist-minded intellectuals like Mohammed al-Ghazzali put forward text-based claims whose aim was to reconcile Islam with democracy.²⁴ The arguments of these intellectuals were recycled in Western academe, with scholars now pointing to the "inherent propensity" of Islamist movements towards democratisation.²⁵ Notions such as "Islam's democratic essence" were promoted by John L. Esposito and led to a rehabilitation of the Brotherhood in the West.²⁶ In a 1999 study, Denis Sullivan portrayed the Brotherhood as a "civil society organisation" that acted as a democratic and pluralist element within the constraints of an authoritarian state.²⁷ His co-author Sana Abed-Kotob later argued that it was in the interest of regional stability for the U.S. government to adopt an "accommodationist" approach towards the Brotherhood in order to curb militant factions.²⁸ In a 2005 article entitled "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", Mona el-Ghobashy talked of an "organisational and ideological transformation", which presumably had set the Brotherhood on a "path towards moderation".²⁹ In a widely read *Foreign Affairs* article in 2007, Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke urged Western governments to engage with the Brotherhood.³⁰ This article was later

²⁴ In Egypt, a famous debate took place in the Cairo Book Fair of 1992, recounted in Flores, Alexander. "Secularism, Integralism and Political Islam: The Egyptian Debate" in Benin, Joel and Stork, Joe (editors). *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

²⁵ Esposito, John. *Islam and Democracy*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; Tibi, Bassam. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism : Political Islam and the New World Disorder*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1998; Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. "Is the Middle East Democratizing?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 2 (1999); Baker, Raymond W. "Invidious Comparisons: Realism, Postmodern Globalism, and Centrist Islamic Movements in Egypt" in Esposito, John. (editor) *Political Islam : Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* Boulder, Colo; London: Lynne Rienner, 1997; Baker, Raymond W. *Islam without Fear : Egypt and the New Islamists*. Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2003.

²⁶ Voll, John and Esposito, John. "Islam's Democratic Essence." *Middle East Quarterly*, 1 September 1994. Accessed 15 March 2014. www.meforum.org/151/islams-democratic-essence

²⁷ Sullivan, Denis. *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society Vs the State*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner; London Eurospan, 1999. Also see the discussions in Gershoni et al. *Middle East Historiographies : Narrating the Twentieth Century*. Seattle, Wash; London: University of Washington Press, 2006.

²⁸ Abed-Kotob, Sana. "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 3 (1995).

²⁹ el-Ghobashy, Mona. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 3 (2005).

³⁰ Leiken, Robert and Brooke, Steven. "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood." *Foreign Affairs*, April 2007. Accessed 15 March 2014. www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62453/robert-s-leiken-and-steven-brooke/the-moderate-muslim-brotherhood

promoted by the Brotherhood's press office on their English-speaking website as quasi-authentic evidence for the movement's democratic proclivity. Notions of "democratisation" were entrenched in the mind of Western scholars to such a degree that in 2013, despite the growing evidence of the Brotherhood's authoritarian tendencies, it was still assumed that Egypt's democratic experiment would have succeeded if only it had not been reversed by the military.³¹

The recent emergence of the "Islamic State" (ISIL) has done little to bring clarification into this confused debate.³² Readings of Islamic fundamentalism, whether conceived as an inter-civilisational struggle, or as a violent (although legitimate) reaction to post-colonial authoritarianism, or as an apologetic account highlighting Islam's "democratic essence", continue to be haunted by the spectre of Orientalism, with different sides looking for an authentic Islam that conforms to their own preferences and values. The progressives around Esposito & Co. accuse the conservatives around Lewis & Co. of being ahistorical on the grounds that their arguments condemn Muslim societies to a situation where an implicit Islamic constitution provided a "blueprint" to the social and political order of Arab and Islamic societies.³³ But the progressives' own presumptions about Islam's alleged "democratic essence" were themselves ahistorical. By grounding their arguments on textual references rather than on empirically observable facts, scholars from different ideological inclinations continued to ignore the deeper socio-economic and political circumstances of individual Muslim communities and individuals, and the enormous diversity of opinion in the Muslim world about the meaning of Islam. Peter Mandaville rightly notes that the term "Islamic" presumes a discursive practice based on an abstract concept of an alleged "true" Islam.³⁴ An adequate understanding of Islamist movements should therefore refrain from being anchored in preconceived, textually based and abstract categories that are superimposed on individuals by elites and provide only limited insight into the actual functioning of Islamist organisations and the thinking of its members. In order to address this gap, this thesis will look at the diversity of debates about Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood from *within* the Brotherhood, in an effort to substitute and complement the macro-historical account of

³¹ Bayat, Asef. *Post-Islamism: the Changing Faces of Political Islam*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

³² In a recent article published in the Atlantic, Graeme Wood claimed "the Islamic State is Islamic. *Very* Islamic" (not my emphasis). See Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants." *The Atlantic*, March 2015. www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/

³³ These arguments referred to the hypothesis of Ernest Gellner, who considered Islam to be both a religion and a "blueprint of a social order": Gellner, Ernest. *Muslim Society*. 1st edition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

³⁴ See the discussion in Mandaville, Peter. *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 54-60.

Egyptian national history, and the political science approach of Brotherhood-specific institutional behaviour, with the multiple, crosscutting, disaggregated and incoherent interpretations provided by individual social actors.

A reaction to Orientalist interpretations came from scholars who adopted explanatory frameworks rooted in structuralism. Rather than focusing on the amorphous concept of “fundamentalism”, these scholars focused on the political, socio-economic and psychological dynamics underlying the rise of Islamist movements. They advanced an interpretative framework that was anchored within theories of collective behaviour and explained the “Islamic revival” by reference to specific economic, political, cultural and psychological grievances that were expressed through the idiom of religion.³⁵ Nazih Ayubi interpreted religious extremism as a product of unfavourable social conditions that lead to psychological alienation as a consequence of the breakdown of traditional solidarities and communal ties under the impact of urbanisation.³⁶ Saad Eddin Ibrahim established a correlation between socio-political unrest and Islamic activism by looking at the socio-economic profiles of individuals who joined Islamist groups. According to these scholars, it was less Islam *per se*, and rather Islam as an idiomatic expression of worldly grievances that was at the root of the growth of Islamist movements.³⁷

In the 1990s, a new generation of American social scientists started to critique grievance-based explanatory models on the grounds that they overemphasised socio-psychological arguments while giving little attention to the Islamist movements themselves.³⁸ These scholars drew on resource mobilisation theory, which held that social movements were rational, organized systems of collective action. Rather than irrational outbursts alleviating social distress, movements were structured through rational mechanisms of mobilisation, where informal networks nurture collective identities and provide informal organisation and contact. Building on this approach, social movement theory added the crucial insight that movements operated in a broader social milieu and context, thus creating a space between

³⁵ Burgat, François. *Face to Face with Political Islam*. London: IB Tauris, 2003; Fischer, Michael. “Islam and the Revolt of the Petit Bourgeoisie.” *Daedalus* 111, no. 1 (1982), pp. 101-25; Dekmejian, R. Hrair. “The Anatomy of the Islamic Revival: Legitimacy Crisis, Ethnic Conflict and the Search for Islamic Alternatives.” *Middle East Journal* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1980) and *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985.

³⁶ Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge, 1991; Ansari, Hamied. “The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 1 (1984).

³⁷ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. “The changing Face of Islamic Activism in Egypt” in *ibid. Egypt, Islam and Democracy: Twelve Critical Essays*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1996.

³⁸ Kurzman, Charles. “Conclusion: Social Movement Theory and Islamic Studies” in Wiktorowicz, Quintan, *Islamic Activism : a Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 290-1.

structural functionalist theory and rational-choice theory.³⁹ It considered factors such as political opportunity structures, mobilising structures and cultural framings to understand movements' successes and failures at mobilisation. Applying this theoretical approach to the study of Islamist movements, Quintan Wiktorowicz argued that the dynamics, processes, and organisation of social movements should be understood as elements of contention that transcend the specificity of Islam as a system of meaning and identity.⁴⁰

By focusing on social movements as the basic analytical category, these theorists understood Islamist movements as coherent and unified actors. In 2012, Carrie Rosefsky Wickham built on this tradition in her book *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. Wickham looked at internal ideological debates that put the camps of the “reformists” at odds with a traditionalist and conservative “old guard”. She argued that the rise of the Brotherhood was not a spontaneous occurrence, but a result of the mobilisation of resources on the part of an elite sector that framed Muslim grievances effectively and strategically.⁴¹ She explained the Brotherhood’s conflicts within the functionalist paradigm of “self-assertion” versus “self-restraint” in an effort to provide analytical categories to frame the Brotherhood’s political behaviour vis-à-vis the state. While providing important and nuanced insight and data into internal debates, her study limited itself to the analysis of discourses at the elite-level. But the Brotherhood cannot be confined to programmatic statements issued by the leadership. As was evident on different occasions during the presidency of Mohammed Morsi, it is the rank-and-file membership that has provided the Brotherhood with its crucial strength, and it is precisely this base that continues to be inadequately understood.

The most recent contribution to the field of “Ikhwanology” came from the Cambridge sociologist Hazem Kandil. In a book titled *Inside the Brotherhood*, Kandil explained the Society’s failure in 2013 by looking at its “unique ideology”. He was interested in understanding what the Brothers believe, how they think and how this is made coherent and credible for the Brothers themselves, thus offering valuable insight into processes of socialisation, indoctrination, brotherhood and belonging. Kandil aimed to show how ideology

³⁹ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald defined as the objective of social movement theory to examine political “opportunity structures”, “mobilizing structures” and “cultural framing processes”: McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, John and Zald, Mayer. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements : Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 3-6.

⁴⁰ Wiktorowicz, Quintan. *Islamic Activism : a Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004. Others applied social movement theory to Islamist activism in Egypt, for instance Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2002; Munson, Ziad. “Islamic Mobilisation: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood” in *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 487-510; al-Arian, Abdullah. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Egypt*. OUP USA Religion and Global Politics, 2014.

⁴¹ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 37.

“structures the thought and action” of the Brothers and how it can induce people to make certain political choices over others.⁴² His argument was centred on the notion of “religious determinism”, which was defined in analogy to Marxism: “In Hegelian and Marxist thought, when certain historical conditions materialize, change inevitably follows. Islamism maintains, quite similarly, that realizing certain religious conditions prompts historical change – specifically, that producing a godly community triggers a divinely ordained transformation of that community’s material situation”.⁴³ But while Marx presents us with a comprehensive economic and philosophical theory that is rooted in an analysis of class, social structure and capitalism, “religious determinism” seems to operate more in the discursive sphere and is, as such, closer to Hegel’s phenomenology rather than Marx’s materialism. While Kandil’s study is insightful, he seemed to take statements made by Brotherhood members at face value without critically questioning their underlying structural context.⁴⁴ As I will try to argue in this thesis, ideology is not simply a meta-historical phenomenon, but it is firmly rooted in social practice and institutional politics. An analysis of the role of ideology, and how it induces actors to take certain political decisions, needs to relate this concept more coherently to institutional and organisational structures. It is here where I hope that a narrative of the internal organisational history of the Muslim Brotherhood will be useful.

Methods and Sources

In order to understand the structural organisational factors that impacted the Brotherhood’s history, as well as the economic, political and social pressures that shaped its evolution, this study focuses on the personal experiences and stories of *key individuals* who were in some form affiliated with the movement during the forty-year period. This primary material was collected during an extended field work trip in April 2012 and October 2013, where I used a combination of oral history and ethnographic methods, including extended personal interviews and participant-observation, as well as through more conventional historical methods, such as the collection of written and online sources, including memoirs, prison-writings, magazines and publications issued by the Brotherhood, leaflets gathered during demonstrations and political rallies, newspapers and online sources. Further, I shot hundreds of videos and pictures of graffiti and street art, as well as of sit-ins, political rallies and protest

⁴² Foucault, Michel. *Power*. London: Allen Lane, 2000, p. 333.

⁴³ Kandil, Hazem. *Inside the Brotherhood*. 1st edition. Malden, MA: Polity, 2014, p. 85.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

marches. I had conversations with people from various socio-economic segments and politico-religious orientations and collected dozens of voice memos. All this material is available as an online appendix on www.victorjwilli.com, which forms an integral part of this thesis. The immediacy and rawness of these sources provide a glimpse into this unique period of Egyptian history.

Oral History

Given the fact that this thesis deals with contemporary events, oral history interviewing was the most readily available option. As scholars familiar with Egypt know, conducting research on contemporary topics is subject to numerous complexities, the main obstacle being the secretive attitude of the state. While the National Archives in Cairo are an important source for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is no available archival evidence that covers the recent period. The main documents used in this thesis were published memoirs and historical accounts of Brotherhood members as well as other printed materials. A rich source of content was the *al-Da'wa* magazine, as well as the various online outlets of the Brotherhood, especially the Arabic-language portal www.ikhwanonline.com and the English portal www.ikhwanweb.com.⁴⁵ Another source for written documents were the diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks, particularly those of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo that deal with the relations between the United States and the Brotherhood in the nineties, as well as the recently released Saudi cables.

Oral history has faced a fair amount of scepticism by classical historians who insist on the qualitative superiority of written sources. The primary argument against oral history centres on the dependency on memory and therefore its unreliability. Against this, oral historians have countered that the collection of documents usually follows states' agendas.⁴⁶ As Paul Thompson pointed out, the question was rather one of the necessity to corroborate testimonies through validation by other sources, checking them for internal consistency and accounting of potential biases.⁴⁷ If anything, they concluded, "all sources are suspect" and

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, Ikhwanonline was recently removed and replaced with a simpler version. The reason was to "publish official statements only with no controversial article[s]", as Abdullah al-Haddad, currently the head of the Brotherhood's press office in London, wrote to me in a Facebook message. Haddad claimed: "Articles that were posted on ikhwanonline didn't represent MB position whatsoever [sic]". Sections of the website have been archived by the AUC as part of the "Egypt Revolution and Politics" collection. See www.archive-it.org/explore?q=www.ikhwanonline.com

⁴⁶ Grele, Ronald. "Directions for Oral History in the United States" in Dunaway, David and Baum, Willa (editors). *Oral History: an Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Nashville, Tenn: American Association for State and Local History in cooperation with the Oral History Association, 1984, p. 63.

⁴⁷ Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past : Oral History*. 3rd edition. Oxford England; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 119.

information generated through oral history methods are of equal value to that obtained from written sources.⁴⁸ A sophisticated critique came from Roland Grele, who lamented that oral history was “a movement without aim”. He argued that oral historians were often poorly trained and too easily settled for journalistic standards, without being aware of the complexities involved in the interviewing process. He observed that social relations take place in systems of structures that, if recognized, could add an additional layer to our understanding of the underlying social and psychological relationships between the interviewer and his interlocutors. He also pointed out that interviewees often address a larger community in order to establish a broader cultural vision and cognitive structure, while the interviewee acts “as if his views of historical processes were a given reality in this world”.⁴⁹ As Althusser’s “symptomatic method” suggested, in order to uncover these “hidden levels of discourse” the task of the oral historian consisted of analysing the function of ideology and the way in which ideology structures the consciousness of the interviewee.⁵⁰

Besides oral history, this thesis also relies on ethnographic fieldwork.⁵¹ As we saw above, a large part of the existing literature tends to analyse the Brotherhood either from a leadership level, or in terms of looking at it as a coherent social movement. Against this top-down vision, oral history and ethnographic methods allowed me to collect micro-narratives of individual life-stories, thus adding a complementary and more fragmented angle to the narratives uttered by the elite. It allowed me to work down the idea of a monolithic and coherently structured movement and instead arrive at a more disaggregated level. Including textured and disaggregated narratives in the broader macro-historical account allowed me to take into account the perspectives of the “ordinary man on the street” – his individual motivations, hopes, desires and fears. I was focused on seeking out contact with individuals who usually are, in the words of the feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham, “hidden from history”.⁵² As Thompson observed: “Once the life experience of people of all kinds can be used as [...] raw material, a new dimension is given to history”.⁵³ These micro-narratives offer fascinating facets that challenge categories usually superimposed on “the subaltern”, and which are rarely useful to understand the motivations and behaviour of individual and social

⁴⁸ Taylor, Alan John. *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*. London: Folio Society, 1998, p. 569.

⁴⁹ Grele, Ronald. “Movement Without Aim” in Perks, Robert and Thomson, Alistair. *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 38-52.

⁵⁰ Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

⁵¹ Emerson, Robert. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. 2nd edition. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

⁵² Rowbotham, Sheila. *Hidden from History : 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It*. London: Pluto, 1973.

⁵³ Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past*, pp. 5-6.

actors operating in their every-day reality.⁵⁴ The view from below ultimately tells a richer story about both individual experience and social organisation. By looking at the Brotherhood from a bottom-up point of view, we are able to uncover the hidden levels of discourse that are usually concealed from public knowledge, while acquiring an understanding of the structural mechanics internal to an organisation, such as the relationship between the leadership and its constituency, or how different organisational parts relate to the movement's ideological agenda. Beatrice Webb observed almost a century ago:

It is almost axiomatic [...] that the mind of the subordinate in any organisation will yield richer deposits of fact than the mind of the principal. This is not merely because the subordinate is usually less on his guard, and less severely conventional in his outlook. The essential superiority lies in the circumstance that the working foreman, managing clerk or minor official is in continuous and intimate contact with the day-by-day activities of the organisation.⁵⁵

In 1996, Eric Hobsbawm wrote: “The twentieth century saw the common people enter history as actors in their own collective right”.⁵⁶ It may be added that in our current century of rapid technological innovation, the collapse of communication costs, the widespread availability of smart phones, and an ever-expanding flow of information, the nature of historical research is transforming as well. Oral history, and the collection of material posted online on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, offers an exciting opportunity of capturing and recording the experiences and stories of ordinary people. The Arab Spring of 2011 has underscored with great emphasis the importance of the “bottom of the pyramid” as demanding understanding.

Informants

While a substantial part of the analysis is based on textual sources, contacts with a broad variety of Brotherhood members was central in shaping the general narrative presented in this thesis. When I originally conceived of my project, I identified two main categories of informants: the leadership and the base. The leadership (*qiyāda*) I defined as members of one of the central executive bodies attached to the General Headquarters – mainly the Guidance

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the “subaltern”, see the famous essay from Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorti. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Communications and Culture. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988, pp. 66-111.

⁵⁵ Webb, Beatrice. *My Apprenticeship*. London: Longman, Green, 1926, p. 424.

⁵⁶ Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes : a History of the World, 1914-1991*. 1st Vintage Books edition. New York: Vintage Books, 1996, p. 582.

Office and the Consultative Council – as well the heads of administrative offices and individuals with leadership positions in the Freedom and Justice Party. Those members usually held university degrees and came from the professional classes. The base (*qā'ida*) consisted of individuals from middle- and lower middle class backgrounds. They could be divided into two sub-categories: formal members with positions at the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy, such as the branch and the family, who paid between seven to ten per cent of their income as membership contributions and headed educational and administrative units; and individuals not formally associated with the Brotherhood but who sympathised with its cause, serving as grassroots organisers and supporting the organisation with menial and logistical tasks (see Figure 1).

After a few weeks of fieldwork, I added a third category of informants to my sample. In the aftermath of the revolution of 25 January 2011, a group of dissidents (*munshaqqīn*) started to emerge – mostly university-educated Brothers who were frustrated with the “Machiavellian approach” adopted by their leaders.⁵⁷ They felt compelled to leave the Brotherhood, either voluntarily or because they were forced out through a tactic they called “moral assassination” (*ighṭiyāl al-ma'nawī*).⁵⁸ The accounts of these dissidents added another layer of contextualisation to the historical narrative produced by the leadership and the rank-and-file members, providing me with additional insights into the Society's internal politics, organisational culture and decision-making processes.

Access

Securing access to informants required a large amount of adaptability. Initially, I was reluctant to talk to strangers about my research, saying that my purpose of being in Egypt was to study Arabic. During the first two months, I tried to access rank-and-file members via facilitated introductions, but soon realised that this strategy yielded limited results. Once my Arabic started to improve, I began venturing more boldly into the streets and mosques of Cairo, making it a habit to talk to pretty much everyone who showed interest in my research. This serendipitous method produced far better results. I progressively built a network of acquaintances and brokers who put me in contact with Brotherhood supporters and members. One of the key informants of my research was (13), the captain of one of the families in Cairo's Darb al-Ahmar district. (13) was fifty-two years old, worked as an engineer at Cairo International Airport and was eager to show me the best side of the Brotherhood, inviting me

⁵⁷ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

⁵⁸ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012.

to numerous activities including weddings, Quran readings, trips to the countryside, football games and protest marches. I spent many hours sitting in his small apartment in Cairo's Sayyida Zaynab neighbourhood and met his wife and his four children. He introduced me to his friends, provided me with literature popular among the rank-and-file members and gave me a real insider look into the organisation's social base.⁵⁹ It is largely thanks to (13) that I was able to overcome my initial reluctance and started to engage on a more intimate level with the base members of the Brotherhood.

In September 2012, at a cocktail party at the Swiss Embassy in Cairo, I was fortunate to meet Sara Ramadan, a brilliant young journalist who works for al-Ahram newspaper. Sara became a crucial figure in the success of my project, facilitating many contacts to Brotherhood dissidents and leaders. A twenty-five year old Egyptian Muslim woman with an extraordinarily high degree of social and cultural awareness, Sara had a perfect complementary skillset to my own background and expertise. Together, we interviewed a large group of Brotherhood leaders and dissidents in Alexandria and Cairo. One of the key informants among the dissidents was Ahmed Ban, a researcher at the Nile Centre for Strategic Studies and an expert on political Islam in Egypt. Ahmed had himself been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood for twenty-two years but had left the movement in the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution. Because of his previous position in the Brotherhood's Political Committee, Ahmed possessed intricate insider knowledge of the inner workings of the organisation. He became a valuable asset in educating me on the Brotherhood's internal structure and decision-making processes, as well as on many of its social practices.

Overall, I collected forty-one interviews of one to several hours in length each: seven at the leadership level, ten among the dissident camp and twenty-four among the rank and file, including eleven group interviews. In addition, I collected about two dozen of additional interviews with Brotherhood base members and supporters during sit-ins, marches and demonstrations, and interviewed a number of key revolutionary activists of the 25 January 2011 revolution. Many of my informants I met several times. While formal interviews with leaders and dissidents were mostly held in office-like environments, conversations at the level of the rank-and-file members were frequently conducted in mosques, on street-corners and especially during sit-ins and political protest marches, where the atmosphere was often tense and emotionally charged.

⁵⁹ In addition to the writings of Banna and Qutb, widely-read books included 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud's *The Muslim Brotherhood: the Events made History*, the Brotherhood publications *Fī Rihāb al-Uṣūl al-'Ashrīn (In the Vastness of the Twenty Principles)* and *Mawāqif Tarabawiyya fī Ḍaw' Arkān al-Bay'a (Educational Situations in the Shadow of the Pillars of the Oath)*, as well as the anti-Semitic tract *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Research Environment

The timing for this research could not have more fortuitous. The revolutionary situation during the political transition led to a general absence of the State Security apparatus, creating an unusually open environment that allowed me to move around freely and ask whomever whatever question I wanted. For the first time in decades, Egyptians were able to voice their political opinions freely and without restriction. Over the course of almost two years, I talked to hundreds of cab drivers, newspaper salesmen and random acquaintances, having them explain to me the implications of the latest political twists and turns. Time and again, I found myself in a microbus or at a street corner suddenly embroiled in the midst of a tense discussion about whether the Brotherhood was good (*kwayis*) or bad (*wiḥsh*), which I had apparently caused simply by telling somebody about my research. Brotherhood members in particular, naturally secretive and fearful about outsiders, felt a tangible sense of pride during this period, making them willing and proud to talk to Western researchers about the secrets of their organisation's strength and the nature of their ideology.

The unique situation brought along its own set of challenges. A major problem I faced was the widespread proliferation of rumours and conspiracy theories. In some instances my informants provided not just sharply different interpretations of historical events, but disagreed about the very existence of historical facts. One of the most puzzling issues was that of the "Special Apparatus" (*al-niẓām al-khāṣṣ*). While most dissidents were adamant that there was a Special Apparatus currently operating within the Society, Brotherhood members strongly denied that it still existed. It was similar with the so-called "empowerment plan" (*khiṭṭat al-tamkīn*), a document that was claimed by the Egyptian media to outline a plot by the Society to take over state institutions. Brotherhood members insisted that the plan was a fabrication by State Security, while one dissident claimed that it was he who had drafted that plan (although he was not able to give me a copy of it).⁶⁰ I made a methodological choice not to dismiss rumours and conspiracy theories as naïve beliefs. Instead, I treated them along the lines of Anthony Giddens' "mutual knowledge", in the sense of authentic beliefs that are expressed in a narratological form.⁶¹ I understood rumours as the "social production of collective experiences in the absence of wide-scale social credibility".⁶² Over the period of my fieldwork I increasingly came to appreciate the importance of such serendipitously acquired information in my day-to-day research. The availability of contrarian narratives

⁶⁰ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

⁶¹ Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984, pp. 334-43.

⁶² Allen Feldman is quoted in Carpi, Estella. "Dealing with Reality and Falsehood in the Field." *Allegra*. Accessed 4 April 2015. allegralaboratory.net/dealing-with-reality-and-falsehood-in-the-field

turned out to be of great value, leading to a constant reconfiguration of my own assumptions. While always sceptical to the content of such pieces of information, the conditions of their production and circulation allowed me to accommodate them as part of the more textured and detailed historical narrative that I attempt to present in this thesis. In the words of Richard Mitchell, I assumed that “in so far as what men believe to be real, is real, my concern was not the validity of these beliefs, but only the fact of their existence”.⁶³

During June and July of 2013, I spent several weeks closely engaged with Brotherhood rank-and-file members at the Islamist sit-ins at Raba‘a al-‘Adwiyya and Nahda Square, spending time in their encampments and sharing food and sleeping space with them. The majority of these members and supporters came from the towns and villages of Upper Egypt and the Delta, enabling me to access supporters from the countryside in order to record their stories and opinions. When things started to turn ugly in the aftermath of Morsi’s ouster on 3 July, I continued my fieldwork for another two weeks until the situation had reached dramatic levels of violence. During these days, I was also seen with growing suspicion, bringing me into a few very uncomfortable (though never obviously dangerous) situations. Leaving Cairo, I was able to take with me the entirety of oral and written material I had collected during fifteen months of fieldwork. When I returned to Cairo the following September, I was arrested twice by the military police, indicating how dramatically the research environment had changed since I had started my work. The bookshops where I previously bought Brotherhood literature were either shut down or had changed their inventory. Nobody was willing anymore to admit any affiliation to the Brotherhood. During the two and a half years between the initial conception of my project to the wrapping up of my research, the Brotherhood had evolved from Egypt’s largest opposition to becoming the governing party, before being deposed and labelled a terrorist organisation.

⁶³ Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 209.

The Early History (1928-1966)

Our story of the Society of the Muslim Brothers needs to be seen in the context of its earlier history, which is set against the backdrop of both Arab nationalism and the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. The nationalist movement in the Arab world had started at the end of the 19th century, when local elites emphasised Arab cultural heritage in a literary revival known as *al-Nahḍa* (Renaissance).⁶⁴ In Egypt in 1919, it triggered a series of revolts in what Eugene Rogan called “the first real nationalist movement in Arab history”.⁶⁵ During the turbulent years of the “liberal experiment”, competition between the different political actors, represented by the King, the Wafd and the British Embassy in Cairo, became institutionalised in the political system, with independence becoming the major obsession of Egyptian elites.

In this general state of affairs fell the dissolution of the Caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in Turkey. In Cairo, this caused concern among the religious elites, for whom the Caliph had (at least in theory) represented political-spiritual continuity for centuries. As the idea of the *umma* replaced the notional universal sovereignty of the Caliphate, the ‘*ulamā*’ in Egypt were confronted with the question of how the Islamic community should govern itself. Among different answers, the one that was most convincing to some came from a charismatic young imam from the Delta village of Mahmudiyya, called Hasan al-Banna (see Figure 11). Speaking in crammed coffee houses and small mosques in the Canal zone city of Ismailiyya, where he worked as a school instructor, Banna quickly made a name for himself as a gifted orator and political organiser who was able to formulate a powerful critique of Egypt’s cultural, social and moral malaise. Sometime at the end of 1928 or the beginning of 1929, six workers of the British labour force asked him to be their leader. This was the founding act of the Society of the Muslim Brothers.⁶⁶

Banna articulated a vision of a resurgent Muslim *umma* that was centred on two primary themes. The first one was that of forging unity within the ranks of the Muslims and among the different religious schools (*madhāhib*), with the objective to work against internal political division while resisting British colonial encroachment. Preaching (*da‘wa*) became

⁶⁴ On the origins of Arab nationalism, see Antonius, George. *The Arab Awakening : The Story of the Arab National Movement*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938; Kedourie, Sylvia. *Arab Nationalism, an Anthology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962; Khalidi, Rashid. “Arab Nationalism: Historical Problems in the Literature.” *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 5 (1991); Gershoni, I. *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs : The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930*. Studies in Middle Eastern History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987; Khalidi, Rashid and Anderson, Lisa et al. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

⁶⁵ Rogan, Eugene. *The Arabs : a History*. London: Allen Lane, 2009, p. 166.

⁶⁶ Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 8.

his preferred method to bring the warring political factions together under the banner of Islam. “We believe that Islam is an all-embracing concept, which regulates every aspect of life, adjudicating on every one of its concerns and prescribing for it a solid and rigorous order,” he wrote in *Our Mission*. The Brotherhood “does not tolerate divided loyalty, since its very nature is that of total unity, and whoever is prepared to accept it will live through it as it lives through him”.⁶⁷ This “comprehensiveness” (*shumūliyya*) of Islam became a central element in the Brotherhood’s ideology.

The second theme was that of Islam as the only true basis of social organisation and individual good life. Banna was inspired by a vision of a revived caliphate that would combine all Muslims into a single political entity. Implementing the Sharia to him was the only viable method of governance and the only system that was able to guarantee social justice, economic wellbeing and political stability. The Brotherhood to him represented the incubator of this project, having as its mission to “guide humanity to the truth, leading mankind to good, and the illumination of the entire world with the light of Islam”.⁶⁸ Starting in 1939, Banna started to emphasise the political nature of the Muslim Brotherhood in a more explicit way: “The Brotherhood is a political group and its mission is a political one”.⁶⁹ Whereas during the first decade of its existence the Brotherhood’s efforts were spent almost exclusively on *da‘wa* activities, politics now became a central factor – and along with it the kind of internal disputes and power struggles that are typical for political organisations.

Over the coming years, the Brotherhood became an increasingly powerful player on Egypt’s political scene, developing the features of a sophisticated modern organisation that promoted values such as efficacy, spiritual prowess, discipline and obedience to the leadership. One of its central features was the Special Apparatus, whose origin dated back to 1935, when Banna introduced the membership category of the “striving brothers” (*Ikhwān mujāhidīn*).⁷⁰ In 1942, the Special Apparatus was fully formed, with roles delineating functions, hierarchical structures, chains of command, responsibilities as well as symbols, oaths and equipment. The Society’s statutes of 1945 reflected the existence of this specialised internal unit by formally separating the “special organisation” (*tanẓīm al-khaṣṣ*) from the “public organisation” (*tanẓīm al-‘āmm*). In the context of the war in Palestine, this unit grew

⁶⁷ al-Banna, Hasan. “Our Mission” in Wendell, Charles, *Five Tracts of Ḥasan al-Bannā’ (1906-1949) : a Selection from the Majmū‘at Rasā’il al-Imām al-Shahīd Ḥasan al-Bannā’*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, p. 44.

⁶⁸ al-Banna, Hasan. “Ilā aiy Shay’ nad‘ū al-Nās?” (To What Do We Invite Humanity?) in *Majmū‘at Rasā’il al-Imām al-Shahīd Ḥasan al-Bannā’ (Collection of Letters of the Martyred Imam Hasan al-Banna)*. Beirut: al-Sohoh, 2012, pp. 11-35.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See Figure 4.

into a more coherently organised, paramilitary structure that increasingly threatened Banna's goal of organisational unity.⁷¹ In 1948, the government allowed the Brotherhood to send battalions of Special Apparatus volunteers to al-'Arish in support of the Egyptian army that engaged the Zionist troops.⁷² The same year, Special Apparatus members carried out a number of armed attacks inside Egypt, including the assassination of the prime minister, Nuqrashi Pasha, and the prominent judge Ahmed al-Khazindar.⁷³ After a batch of secret documents had been discovered in a jeep owned by a Brotherhood member, the existence of the Special Apparatus became publically known for the first time. The proceedings of what became known as the "jeep trial" gave the government the arguments it needed to dissolve the Society on 6 December on the charge of having embarked "on a widespread terrorist activity".⁷⁴ This event became known as "the first ordeal" (*miḥna ūlā*) in the Brotherhood's historiography.⁷⁵ Hasan al-Banna was subsequently assassinated on 12 February 1949.

In July 1952, a group of Free Officers around Gamal Abdel Nasser and Mohammed Naguib overthrew the monarchy in an army coup.⁷⁶ Having collaborated with the army in preparation to the coup, the Society's leaders started to advocate more aggressively for the idea of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. After an alleged assassination attempt on the life of Nasser that became known as the "Manshiyya incident" in October 1954, Nasser's men went on to systematically split up the Brotherhood's ranks.⁷⁷ The Society's offices and branches were closed and over 4,000 Brothers were arrested. Those leaders who did not escape were condemned to hard labour sentences while six of the top leaders were sentenced to death. The crackdown of 1954, and the subsequent period of prison, persecution and exile, was remembered as the "second ordeal" (*miḥna thāniya*) in the collective consciousness of the Brotherhood.⁷⁸

⁷¹ Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 30.

⁷² The intricate connection between the Brotherhood and the army gave rise later to all sorts of rumours, of Sadat and Nasser being members of the Muslim Brotherhood. See for example (25). Interview. Alexandria, 3 January 2013.

⁷³ This fact was usually acknowledged among the Brothers as "mistakes": 'Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

⁷⁴ Mitchell. *The Society*, pp. 68 ff.

⁷⁵ 'Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

⁷⁶ Nasser's membership in the Brotherhood is acknowledged by several sources. Tilmisani, referring to Salah Shadi's biography, writes that Nasser's contacts with the Brotherhood dated back to September 1942, when he came back from Sudan and contacted 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sindi, through whom he pledged allegiance to the Murshid. See Shadi, Salah. *Ṣafahāt min al-tārīkh (Pages from History)*. Kuwait: Sharikat al-Shu'a', 1981; al-Tilmisani, *Memories*, p. 178.

⁷⁷ For a voice-over of the speech, see "Jamāl 'Abd al-Naṣir: Ḥādith al-Manshiyya" (Gamal Abdel Nasser: the Manshiyya Incident). Youtube, 26 October 1954. Accessed 20 September 2015.

⁷⁸ (13). Interview. Cairo, 16 September 2013.

In the sixties, a group of Brothers made efforts to rebuild the ranks of the Brotherhood. Operating in the shadows of illegality and under constant threat of detection by Nasser's security men, these cadres saw in Sayyid Qutb the ideal candidate to guide their efforts. Qutb's Islamist treatise *Milestones* had been published in 1964 and had a widespread impact on Islamist activists across Egypt. Qutb advised the Brothers to prepare for a *coup d'état* while insisting on the training of a vanguard of spiritually enlightened cadres to execute the plan. Once the Brotherhood had sufficiently prepared society, this vanguard could take steps to replace the secular government with an Islamic one.⁷⁹ When the authorities learned of these attempts, they cracked down fiercely on what was known as the Organisation '65 (*Tanzīm Khamsa wa Sittīn*) in the local press. In the summer of 1965, thousands of Brothers were rounded up and imprisoned, including the Brotherhood's second General Guide Hasan al-Hodeibi. One year later, on 29 August 1966, Sayyid Qutb and two other Brothers were hanged. The crackdown of that year was remembered as the "third ordeal" (*miḥna thālitha*) in the historical memory of the Brotherhood's rank-and-file.⁸⁰

A Story of Internal Political Conflict

As we saw in the discussion of the literature, the Muslim Brotherhood (and Islamist movements in general) are frequently studied through the theoretical prism of social movement theory, which tends to regard movements as largely coherent and unified social actors.⁸¹ This thesis hopes to complement this approach by offering insight into the internal life of the Brotherhood. By using oral history as a method, it is hoped that the record of micro-historical accounts of individual members will clarify our understanding about the Brotherhood's internal political organisation.⁸²

When looking at the history of the Society since the seventies, one of the most salient features was the prevalence of two different "trends" (*tayyārāt*) operating within the larger formalised structure. These trends were asserted both by the Egyptian media – which categorised them as "Qutbists" (*qutbiyyūn*) and "reformists" (*iṣlāḥiyyūn*) – and in the

⁷⁹ See the chapter "Martyrdom" in Calvert. *Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 229-71.

⁸⁰ (13). Interview. Cairo, 16 September 2013.

⁸¹ Goodwin, Jeff and Jasper, James. *The Social Movements Reader : Cases and Concepts*. 3rd edition. Chichester, West Sussex, UK ; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2015.

⁸² Davis, Gerald. *Social Movements and Organisation Theory*. Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 2-4.

Egyptian and Western scholarly literature.⁸³ Brotherhood members confirmed the existence of such internal groups, both among the senior leadership as well as on the level of the rank and file. One of the first interviews I conducted was with a young man from 6th of October City, who had been recruited into the first stage of membership but subsequently failed to qualify for advancement due to a lack of participation in Brotherhood activities. He explained these trends as follows: one group of Brothers was said to be “more open”, while the other group had the characteristics of a “black box” that “nobody knew anything about, not even the government or the secret service” (see Figure 1).⁸⁴ Gamal Heshmat, a member of the FJP and a parliamentarian in the 2011 People’s Assembly, equally observed that there are “two teams in the Brotherhood: those in charge of security and the others who are open and in contact with the people”.⁸⁵

While some Brotherhood members acknowledged the existence of internal groups, others categorically rejected these labels. When quizzed about these two trends, Mahdi ‘Akif became highly agitated:

These are lies, non-sense (*kalām farīgh*), coming from people who are sitting around, smoke hashish and come up with new expressions. There is nothing called ‘reformists’ or ‘Qutbists’. We all follow one method. Sayyid Qutb followed one method [...]. Who are the reformists? Abu al-Futuh and al-‘Arian? These are the most committed Brothers! Am I, Mohammed Mahdi ‘Akif, part of the reformists or the zealots (*al-mutashaddadīn*) [sic]? Me, I am the scale (*mīzān*) of the Muslim Brotherhood, and this is the real idea [...]. Take this from me: the main philosophy (*manhaj*) of Muhammad Mahdi ‘Akif is that the Brotherhood is like one single Islamic body (*hay’a islāmiyya*), in charge of a single project. [The Brotherhood is] in charge of an ideology (*fikra*), a message (*risāla*) and an organisation (*tanẓīm*).⁸⁶

Despite ‘Akif’s rejection of internal splits, the Brotherhood’s organisational history, like that of most political organisations, was profoundly shaped by internal political conflict. While this conflict was to a certain extent of ideological nature, we will think of the internal teams as political coalitions who pursued different strategic objectives and political interests. While the individuals who were part of the respective coalitions did distinguish themselves in terms of religious doctrine or social outlook, the focus here is on the respective ideas they had about internal organisation, management and decision making, and how representatives of either

⁸³ See Tammam, Husam. *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn : Sanawāt mā qabla al-Thawra*. Dar al-Shuruq, 2012. In Western scholarship, the “Qutbists” are often referred to as the “hard-liners”, the “old guard” or the “prison generation”. See for instance Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*.

⁸⁴ (19). Interview. Sixth of October City, 26 July 2012.

⁸⁵ Heshmat, Gamal. Interview. Cairo, 1 April 2013.

⁸⁶ ‘Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

side tried to mould ideology in a way that suited their personal preferences and political interests.

These two trends can to a large degree be explained through the historical experiences of the individuals representing them. The “reformist trend” (*tayyār iṣlāhī*) was pioneered by ‘Omar al-Tilmisani, the Society’s third General Guide, who believed that the best way to reach the Brotherhood’s objective of Islamic reform was by transforming the Society into an accepted and legitimate player of the Egyptian body politic. This, he thought, would best be accomplished by establishing a political party. Tilmisani’s followers were student organisers who had been active in the religious and political activities of “the Islamic Awakening” (*al-ṣaḥwa al-Islamiyya*) in the early seventies. The collective experience of these activists shaped an identity within the Brotherhood that regarded the Society as a marketplace for ideas and resources, where membership was open to everyone who wanted to participate in the Brotherhood’s reform project, and where internal progression was based on meritocratic principles and participatory governance.

The “Qutbists trend” (*tayyār quṭbī*) consisted of individuals whose life stories were connected to the underground activities of the Special Apparatus and the attempts at rebuilding the Brotherhood under Sayyid Qutb in the sixties. These men had spent many years in prison, where they were exposed to physical hardship and solitary confinement (*ḥabs infarādī*). The building of a strong and effective organisation to them fulfilled the crucial psychological function of self-preservation, and therefore survival. They prioritised “organisational work” (*‘aml tanẓīmī*), such as the strengthening of internal cohesion, discipline and strictly hierarchical decision-making, where a dedicated rank-and-file membership would implement the orders of the leadership without hesitation in order to defend the Society against the inevitable onslaughts of its enemies. The central principle of this control-and-command structure was captured in the notion of “listening and obedience” (*sam‘a wa ṭā‘a*).⁸⁷ In contrast to Tilmisani’s political and open approach, these individuals envisioned a Society exclusively focused on *da‘wa* activities. Politics to them was just another risk that could expose the Society to state aggression. In this thesis, we will look at the internal organisational history of the Brotherhood through the prism of these two factions and the specific subcultures to which they gave rise. Doing so, we will think of these teams as both political coalitions as well as “schools of thought”, each of which developed a distinctive identity and a distinctive vision of the *kind of organisation* the Brotherhood should be. Throughout the forty-year period of our story, the two trends were engaged in a growing

⁸⁷ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 61.

competition over the control of the organisation's formal units, as well as over meaning and identity. The formal rules governing the Brotherhood's internal organisation were bent or simply ignored at different times by those who were in control, thus shaping the legal structures in which the organisational life of the Brotherhood evolved.

When he observed that organisations incorporate a certain "structure of dominancy", Max Weber injected the critical concept of power into the study of social organisation.⁸⁸ Power can be understood as "A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do".⁸⁹ Accordingly, representatives of the different coalitions engaged in internal politics by using organisational, institutional and legal mechanisms to control resources and ensure political gain. The internal life of the Brotherhood can largely be seen through the prism of conflict and competition, where the diversity of interests of individual or collective actors was expressed in terms of personal animosities, power plays, insurgencies and organisational *coups d'états*.⁹⁰ In contrast to the monolithic view of organisations as integrated and holistic enterprises, this disaggregated view reveals a picture of an organisation governed by internal competition over organisational resources. Since the Brotherhood's key strategic resource was its base, this meant controlling the hearts and minds of its rank and file.

In this internal competition, representatives of the different coalitions had to legitimate their ideas, values and demands in front of the rank and file. Our analysis therefore has to include a sense of the ability of organisational stakeholders to persuade others to enact their realities and interests. Authority requires the consent of those being governed, as opposed to coercion, which functions through force. As Weber showed, authority is effective only to the extent that it is perceived as legitimate, either in a charismatic, bureaucratic-legal or traditional form, which provides it with the kind of social approval that is essential for stabilising power relations.⁹¹ In the context of an organisation, legitimacy lowers resistance to authority and thus prevents internal conflict.⁹² Seen from this angle, power becomes an intangible tool that can be leveraged to prevent conflict by shaping "perceptions, cognitions,

⁸⁸ See the discussion on structure and power in Clegg, Stewart and Hardy, Cynthia. *Studying Organisation : Theory & Method*. London ; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1999, p. 375.

⁸⁹ Dahl, Robert. "The Concept of Power." *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (1957), pp. 201–15.

Also, see the essay by Parsons, Talcott. "On the Concept of Political Power." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 3 (1963), pp. 232–62.

⁹⁰ Zald, Mayer and Berger, Michael. "Social Movements in Organisations: Coup d'Etat, Insurgency, and Mass Movements." *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1980), pp. 823–61. Also see Buchanan, David. *Power, Politics and Organisational Change : Winning the Turf Game*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE, 2008.

⁹¹ Weber, Max and Winckelmann, Johannes (editor). *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. 6th Revised Edition. Tübingen : J. C. B. Mohr, 1985, p. 474–87.

⁹² Blau, Peter. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: J. Wiley, 1964.

and preferences in such a way that [individuals] accept their role in the existing order of things”.⁹³

It may be useful to revert to Antonio Gramsci’s notion of “hegemony”, which describes an arrangement in the macro-historical context where dominant values are portrayed as the “general interest”, in accordance with the Marxian notion that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”.⁹⁴ As the members of the dominated class are unable to express and specify their interests, they consent to that rule while the dominant class obtains “spontaneous loyalty” from the masses by virtue of its intellectual prestige.⁹⁵ Applying this argument to the organisational context of the Brotherhood, members of the different coalitions engaged in a growing competition over organisational identity by advancing contrasting interpretations of the Society’s central ideological texts.⁹⁶ Rank-and-file members were made to consent to the basic values held by the governing elite, while those who were seeking to challenge these values found it hard to build the necessary alliances due to their apparently illegitimate actions.⁹⁷ In order to legitimise their actions, representatives of the different coalitions used ideology as a means to influence the behaviour of rank-and-file members.

In his landmark study *Ideologies and Political Theory*, Michael Freeden defined ideologies as “conceptual morphologies of political thought” in the sense of “detectable embodiments of the political beliefs of political actors”. Freeden showed that, by imposing some sort of structure on perception, ideology fulfils the important cognitive function to provide individuals with an interpretative framework through which meaning can be assigned and social understanding can be attained.⁹⁸ However, he understood ideologies not purely as discursive phenomena, but as political devices that act as systems of political thinking and provide orientation and legitimacy to political action.⁹⁹ He identified them as human “thought-behaviour” in the sense of empirically ascertainable expressions in spoken and written language. Besides their socially constructed superstructure, ideologies thus have a

⁹³ Lukes, Steven. *Power : a Radical View*. 2nd edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964, p. 64.

⁹⁵ Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International, 1971.

⁹⁶ Albert, S. and Whetten, David. “Organizational Identity” in Cummings, L.L., Staw, B.M. (editors). *Research in Organizational Behavior: An Annual Series of Analytical Essays and Critical Reviews*. Vol. 7. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985.

⁹⁷ Scully, Maureen A. and Douglas, W.E. Creed, “Subverting our Stories of Subversion” in Davis, Gerald F. *Social Movements and Organisation Theory*. Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 310-32.

⁹⁸ The connection between epistemic processes and ideology has also been established by studies in political neuroscience for example by David M Amodio, John Jost, Master, Sarah and Yee, Cindy. “Neurocognitive Correlates of Liberalism and Conservatism.” *Nature Neuroscience* 10, no. 10 (2007).

⁹⁹ Freeden, Michael. *Ideologies and Political Theory : A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 2-4.

functional or motivational substructure.¹⁰⁰ The former can be thought of in terms of “social representations” that guide political judgement, while the latter drive political preferences through constellations of social and psychological needs, goals and motives.¹⁰¹ It is hoped that this framework will help us to develop a deeper understanding for the internal organisational mechanisms governing the Brotherhood during forty years of history, and the way in which representatives of the different coalitions used ideology in order to justify their actions and political decisions in front of the rank and file. But before delving into the Brotherhood’s history since 1973, a few remarks on its internal organisation, as well as the specific content of its ideology, are required.

Organisation and Ideology

During his address to the fifth conference of the Muslim Brotherhood, held in Cairo in January 1939, Banna defined the Brotherhood as “a Salafī message” (*da‘wa salafīyya*), “a Sunni way” (*tarīqa sunniyya*), “a Sufī truth” (*haqīqa šūfiyya*), “a political body” (*wahī‘a siyāsiyya*), “an athletic group” (*jamā‘a riyādiyya*), “a cultural-educational union” (*rābi‘a ‘amaliyya thaqāfiyya*), “an economic company” (*sharika iqtisādiyya*) and “a social idea” (*fikra ijtimā‘iyya*).¹⁰² This brief definition encapsulates the multi-varied and complex nature of the Brotherhood’s organisational design, making it such a tricky subject of research. When explaining my confusion about the precise nature of the Brotherhood to its own members, most made a basic distinction between two conceptually distinct domains: that of an organisation (*tanzīm*), and an of an idea or ideology (*fikra*). Besides an institutionalised system based on organisational structures, vertical distribution of power and a top-down chain of command, my interlocutors revealed a strongly rationalistic and ideological argument as part of their self-conception.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Jost, John et al. “Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities.” *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60 (2009), pp. 307–37. Also see Jost, Federico. “Political Ideologies and their Social Psychological Functions” in Freedman, Michael and Stears, Marc. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 232–50.

¹⁰¹ Moscovici, Serge. “Notes towards a Description of Social Representations.” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 18, no. 3 (1988), pp. 211–50; Adorno observed that individuals gravitate to the kind of ideologies that appeal to them, given their own psychological needs, motives and desires. See Adorno, Theodor. *The Authoritarian Personality*. Studies in Prejudice. New York: Harper, 1950.

¹⁰² al-Banna, Hasan. “Risāla al-Mu‘tamar al-Khāmis” (Letter to the Fifth Conference) in *Collection of Letters*, p. 258–9.

¹⁰³ Weber, Max. *Economy and Society : An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1978, p. 214.

The Brotherhood as Organisation

The Brotherhood's formal structure was regulated in the general statutes of 1982,¹⁰⁴ the general by-laws of 1990¹⁰⁵ and the international by-laws of 1994,¹⁰⁶ including the revision of 2009 (see Figure 2). In accordance with our bottom-up approach, we will focus on analysis primarily on the Society's lower ranks, specifically the system of families (*nizām al-usar*), which is considered by members as the nucleus (*nawāh*) of the Brotherhood – “the highest and most standardised system in the world”.¹⁰⁷

The family system had an important symbolic value for organisational members. The very founding act of the Society, where according to the legend six men were seeking out Banna as their leader and pledged *bay'a* to him, was considered by rank-and-file members as the first family meeting in the Society's history.¹⁰⁸ As the smallest educational unit and the frontline of upbringing (*tarbiyya*), the family was at the centre of the Brotherhood's organisational design. Besides providing its members with important social and psychological functions, it acted as a mechanism for the recruitment of new Brothers. As educational quality was considered to be “the first thesis” (*iḥḍa āṭrūḥāt*) of the Society, formation and upbringing within the correct curriculum or method (*manhaj*) were of crucial importance.¹⁰⁹

The family was a purely educational unit with no administrative functions. Its main purpose was to produce a strong spirit among members, thus forming the backbone of the credo of ideological and organisational unity. Each family was composed of five, seven or nine individuals and was headed by a captain (*naqīb*, formally called *āmil*).¹¹⁰ The family was in charge of the cultivation of members through a three-staged process, which consisted of integration (*takāful*) of new members, familiarisation (*ta'aruf*) with the method and the teachings of the Brotherhood, and cooperation (*tafāhum*) among existing members, so that “everyone knows everything about his fellow Brother”. Organisational cohesion is ensured by creating “a strong bond in the heart of the family”, a circle of “love and affection” (*ḥubb wa 'utf*) as the glue that holds the organisation together.¹¹¹ The emphasis on sentiments was an

¹⁰⁴ “al-Nizām al-‘āmm li’l-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn 1982 m.” (The General Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1982 A.D.) in *Lawa’ih wa Qawānīn al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn: min Ta’asīs ḥatā al-Intishār (Statutes and By-Laws of the Muslim Brotherhood: From the Foundation to the Expansion)*. Centre for Historic Studies, Wikipedia of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanwiki), 2012, pp. 260-272.

¹⁰⁵ “al-Lā’iḥa al-‘āmma li’l-Jamā‘at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn ‘Ām 1990 m. wa’al-Mu‘adala ‘Ām 2009 m.” (The General By-Laws of the Society of the Muslim Brothers of 1990 A.D. and the Revision of 2009 A.D.) in *ibid.*, pp. 288-301.

¹⁰⁶ “al-Lā’iḥa al-‘āmiyya li’l-Jamā‘at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn 1994 m.” (The Global By-Laws of the Society of the Muslim Brothers of 1994 A.D.) in *ibid.*, pp. 273-87.

¹⁰⁷ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ For a detailed discussion, see Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, pp. 10 ff.

¹¹⁰ (13). Interview, Cairo, 16 September 2013.

¹¹¹ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

important factor to realise the organisation's recruitment and mobilisation potential. According to rank-and-file Brothers, the concept of the family implied "that we have strong relations among each other – a sentimental bond (*rābiṭ wijdānī*)".¹¹² Hasan al-Banna had emphasised "spiritual energy and sentimental bonds between pupil and teacher" as an essential element in the Society's organisational design.¹¹³ These factors played an important role for motivating potential members to join the Society. Virtually every one of my informants joined the Brotherhood because of either personal affection for his recruiter or because of "love for Islam."¹¹⁴ One of the Brotherhood's dissidents wrote: "The first relationship is between the disciple and the Sheikh, and then the *tanẓīm* [...]. Like this, we find that the spiritual practice is linked to the organisational programme."¹¹⁵

The Brotherhood's emphasis on sentiments provides members both with an "emotional community" as well as a kinship group for people sharing the same belief.¹¹⁶ The influence of Sufism, with its conception as an all-embracing spiritual bond, is very tangible here. This emotional attachment was important in the Brotherhood's recruiting efforts, which included creating a bond of loyalty between superior and subordinate, with the latter having a strong sense of "adoration" (*hiyām*) for the former. It was reflected in terms like *muḥibb* (literally "lover"), or in rituals such as pledging the *bay'a* to the General Guide. Sentiments also played an important role in terms of mobilisation by giving the leaders "total emotional control over the hearts of individuals".¹¹⁷ Decisions were communicated from the top down and then implemented across the levels of the organisational structure, which were a critical factor for the Brotherhood's resilience and efficiency.¹¹⁸ This is illustrated in a highly insightful text message from a Guidance Office member (see Figure 3) on the day before the first round of parliamentary elections in November 2011. This message shows both how decisions were communicated down the internal hierarchy, as well as the way in which symbolism was employed in an effort to evoke religious sentiments among the rank-and-file membership. The word "bond" (*ribāṭ*) was particularly sensitive since, according to Ahmed Ban, it carried the implicit meaning of waging an armed jihad.¹¹⁹ When a top commander of

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ al-Banna, Hasan. *Mudhakkirāt al-Da'wa wa'l-Dā'iyya (Memories of the Message and the Advocate)*. Cairo: Dar al-Zahra' li'l-'Ilam al-'Arabi, 1990, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ See for example (5). Interview. Cairo, 10 May 2013; (13). Interview. Cairo, 30 January 2012; Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012.

¹¹⁵ Abu Khalil, Haytham. *Ikhwān iṣlāḥīyūn (The Reformist Brotherhood)*. Cairo: Dar al-Dawwin, 2012, p. 30.

¹¹⁶ For a highly original study on the concept of "emotional community", see Rosenwein, Barbara. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

¹¹⁷ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2012.

¹¹⁸ Also see Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, pp. 10-3.

¹¹⁹ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2012.

the Guidance Office sent a message using this sort of vocabulary, the obvious intent was to appeal to religious instincts by evoking the powerful imagery of defending Islam:

Brothers and sisters, you who continue in your bond (*fī ribāṭ*). The hours are few, many and mighty in the balance (of life). The one who is aware doesn't know any laxity. Instead, he will always be active and increase his activity in order to accomplish his marvellous task and the weight of responsibility. We need to call for striving, and work to elevate and increase the prayer of the people so that God opens your hearts.¹²⁰

Within the family, each member had specific duties and tasks. One Brotherhood informant, whom I interviewed on 22 March 2013 in a mosque on the sidelines of the skirmishes during a siege of the Brotherhood headquarters, explained:

I am the one responsible for education. I speak to the captain and tell him: 'I need five people because I want to defend the headquarters'. Within one hour, all of them gather in a place where I want them to gather, because they have faith in the message and love for God, and because of strong bonds and a strong organisation. This is what makes the Brotherhood's power since eighty years, and we still exist and have trust in our leadership. This is the most important thing. If you don't have trust in me, you will not answer my call.¹²¹

In terms of accession to and progression within the formal organisation, new recruits underwent different stages (see Figure 4), at the end of which stood an official approval (*tawfiq rasmi*) to formally join the Society. The family acted as a screening mechanism to make sure that new members had the necessary qualities and competences to be formally admitted. Since the Brotherhood operated underground during the greater party of its history, recruitment was primarily conducted through individual preaching (*da'wa fardiyya*). Great attention was given to recruit only those having the necessary characteristics: "The Muslim Brotherhood, and especially the understanding ones among them, always imitate the hadith of the Prophet: 'People after me are like camels. But it is hard to find a far-travelling [camel] (*rāhila*)'."¹²²

¹²⁰ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012. I promised my source not to reveal the name of the sender.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012. The word *rāhila* in this context signifies a camel that is particularly smart, energetic, and active, based on the Hadith reported by Sahih al-Bukhari. *Fath al-Bāri li Ibn Ḥajr* (11/335). Scholarly Saudi Society for the Prophetic Sunna. www.sunnah.org.sa/home/association-news/3414---q-----q.

Once the key characteristics of intelligence, courage and ethics were fulfilled, the new recruit was admitted to the first stage of membership (see Figure 5), that of a fan (*muḥibb*). Fans were not considered to be actual members, as they did not “sacrifice their time and money” for the Society. Once selected to participate in family meetings, a fan would become a supporter (*mu’ayyid*) for a period of six months to one year. Once he accepted to formally enter the Society (*inḍamm al-Ikhwān*), the new recruit became an associate (*muntasib*) for a period of six months to one year, participating in regular family gatherings and other activities:

Somebody monitors the individuals on the family to evaluate their character. If he advances in his activities or morals, he can be seated on the family. After that, he will be on the family and maybe a leader of one of the committees.¹²³

The level above the associate was that of a regular member (*muntazim*), which the recruit was required to hold for a period of three years. The final step was that of an active Brother (*akh ‘āmil*), which opened the door to acquire any position in the Brotherhood’s internal organisation. The recruit would formalise this step by pledging an oath of allegiance (*bay‘a*) to the General Guide.

I pledge allegiance to God Almighty to protect the principles of Islam, to struggle in His way, to adhere to the provisions and duties of the Brotherhood’s membership, and [to the principle] of listening and obedience to the just leaders, in sorrow and in joy, as long as it does not involve disobedience [to God]. I pay allegiance to this, so help me God’.¹²⁴

Because of the different stages of educational development of those in the pre-membership stage and those who were official members, the family-system had a two-tier structure, containing families with “people who are in the *usra* for longer than three years, and [families consisting of] those who make the first step.

Whereas the family was the smallest educational unit of the Brotherhood, the branch (*shu‘aba*) was its smallest administrative unit. The branch was composed of seven to ten families and its task was to manage its members’ activities in the districts (*aḥiyā’*, sg. *ḥay*) to which they were assigned. There were between seventy and eighty branches in the Central Cairo region (one of five sectors into which the Egyptian Brotherhood was subdivided), with

¹²³ (13). Interview. Cairo, 30 January 2012.

¹²⁴ Art. 4 of the General Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1982 A.D. in *Statutes and By-Laws*, p. 263.

each branch having a responsible (*mas'ūl*) and an administrative branch council (*majlis idārī al-shu'aba*) attached to it. The branch responsible was in charge of managing and supporting the captains of the families in the areas of pedagogy, health, welfare and social life. Three to four branches made up a region (*munṭaqa*), which was administratively managed by a regional council (*majlis al-munṭaqa*). Captains were members of one of the twelve committees attached to a region, and their role was to “call towards Islam, towards ethics and good cooperation (and to) educate the public about the Brotherhood and its idea of Islam”, besides managing day-to-day activities.¹²⁵ The regional committees implemented the policy directives formulated by the twelve Central Committees on the regional level. Above the regions were the administrative offices (*maktab idārī*), to which again were attached twelve committees whose heads were represented in the administrative office council (*majlis maktab idārī*). Different administrative offices were comprised in a sector (*qitā'*), whose head reported to a member of the Guidance Office. The Cairo sector, for instance, consisted of seventy to eighty branches, which were divided into eight regions, corresponding to sixteen districts that were managed through two administrative offices.¹²⁶ This rigorous, pyramidal and top-down managed organisational structure, which allocated clear roles and responsibilities, established regional subdivisions, and featured a tightly supervised educational curriculum, constituted the Society's crucial factor of strength, and the means through which the leadership could exert power in the street.

The Brotherhood as Ideology

The position of a Brother within the organisation depended on his level of knowledge and training.¹²⁷ Organisational progression went hand-in-hand with an individual's ideological upbringing (*tarbiyya*), to ensure that he was familiar with the main ideas, cultural-religious narratives and politico-social concepts as he moved upwards. This process was tightly supervised through the Committee for Upbringing (*lajnat al-tarbiyya*), which was in charge both for defining the content of the educational curriculum, but also for internal promotion. The Committee for Upbringing thus acted as the gatekeeper for progression inside the organisation's formal hierarchy.

¹²⁵ (5). Interview. Cairo, 10 May 2013.

¹²⁶ (24). Interview. Cairo, 10 May 2013; Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, pp. 7 ff.

¹²⁷ We will use the masculine pronoun, although the process of familiarisation with the Brotherhood's ideology is similar for women.

The ideological progress of members was classified into a system that corresponded to categories outlined in Banna's *Letter on Teachings*.¹²⁸ The first category was that of "familiarisation" (*ta'rīf*) with the general concepts of Islam. Familiarisation was open to "whoever wants to participate in the Brotherhood's activities". The second phase was that of the spiritual, mental, physical "development" (*takwīn*), where an individual took on organisational and administrative tasks. This was achieved through "selecting and consolidating those righteous members who can bear the burden of jihad" and execute the commands of the leadership "without hesitation, turning back, doubt or discomfort". Members at this stage were ideologically and spiritually "fully prepared to carry the burden of a long and continuous struggle". The third level was that of "implementation" (*tanfīdh*) of the teachings. This phase consisted of "uncompromising jihad and persistent effort in pursuit of their objectives". For those Brothers, Banna foresaw "trials and tribulations which only the truthful people can endure", while success was not achieved but through "total obedience".¹²⁹ The family as the incubator of the ideal-type of a Muslim Brother was a reflection of the inclination of organisational members to consider the Society as the "owner of an idea" (*ṣāhibat mashrū'a*), in the sense of a political ideology:

We believe in our ideology with a faith which, when we discuss it with people, leads them to believe that it will impel us to shatter mountains, to offer up our persons and our wealth, bear misfortunes, and struggle against adversities until we triumph through it, or it through us.¹³⁰

At the centre of this ideology stood the notion of Islam as a "comprehensive and complete system" (*niẓām shāmil wa kāmīl*) that encloses all aspect of human life, both in the spiritual domain as well as in the political and worldly spheres.

[The Muslim Brotherhood] is a complete group, both religious and political. Islam itself is not something that is practiced solely in a mosque. We are here in the mosque [...] Do we only practice Islam in the mosque and not outside of it? I know that Christianity is practiced in the church only, but Islam is different. It controls everything in life. In the Quran, God Almighty says through the lips of the

¹²⁸ (13). Interview. Cairo, 16 September 2013.

¹²⁹ al-Banna. "Risāla al-Ta'līm" (Letter on Teachings) in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

¹³⁰ (20). Interview. Giza, 9 June 2013.

prophet Abraham: ‘Say: Indeed, my prayers, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the worlds.’¹³¹

Because of Islam’s comprehensive character, Brotherhood members believed that it provided a “curriculum for life” (*manhaj al-ḥayāt*) for Muslims:

Islam must rule our personal life, and we must follow the Almighty God’s teachings. First of all, I worship Him. I pray, fast, give *zakāt* and go to pilgrimage to witness that He is One and His creed is Islam. I call people towards Him. I call my colleague to follow God’s teachings. This is the general idea: for Islam to return to how it was, in control of life and to act as [life’s] system.¹³²

The Brotherhood’s organisational objective was realised with the “implementation of Islam” (*taṭbīq al-Islām*) in society, meaning when the entire *umma* acted according its teachings. The primary tool of how to realise this objective was through *da‘wa* – the act of calling of an individual to be a good Muslim and act in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunna. At the same time, the Brotherhood was understood by organisational members to stand in a competitive struggle with other global reform projects. According to a mid-level operative, these other global projects (*mashārī‘ ‘ālamī*) were the “Zionist-American project”, which consists of “globalisation, the opening to the West and the marginalising of the role of Muslims”, and the Iranian project, whose essence is the “spread of Shia Islam and the Shia doctrine”. The Brotherhood’s Islamic reform project, on the other hand, was “based on the Sunni doctrine and Islamic ideology” and contained “not just some rituals, but Islam as a curriculum for life”.¹³³

The implementation of the Islamic project was based on a bottom-up approach. The prime area of intervention was to act on individuals’ hearts and minds through preaching, education and spiritual upbringing (*tarbiyya*). Rather than focusing on political questions, the original focus was to create spiritual and institutional frameworks that would allow individual Muslims to practice Islamic ideals, while their practical efforts would be focused on “transforming such basic social institutions [...] into anticipations of the new Islamic society.”¹³⁴ Constitutional, political and economic matters were issues of secondary

¹³¹ Ibid., referring to the Quran, 6:162. The principle of comprehensiveness is the first principle of the first of pillars of the the Brotherhood’s covenant. See al-Banna. “Risāla al-Ta‘līm” (Letter on Teachings) in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

¹³² (20). Interview. Giza, June 9, 2013.

¹³³ (24). Interview. Cairo, 10 May 2013.

¹³⁴ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 261.

importance, while the main focus was to forge the spiritual and cultural identity of the individual Muslim believer as integral part of a larger *umma*. In a quasi-historicist manner, Banna foresaw the concrete and final polity of the Islamic state to emerge organically once that basic preconditions in terms of values and morals were in place.¹³⁵ The process by which the Islamic state would emerge was articulated in the *Letter on Teachings*. In this epistle, Banna outlined a seven-step blueprint for the emergence of the caliphate – effectively a “strategic long-term plan” (see Figure 6).¹³⁶

If we are to take the Brothers on their own terms, Banna’s seven-step blueprint was seen as the most viable strategy for Islamic reform. Similar to a mission statement of a modern corporation, it outlined a clear objective, offering members an end-goal to be achieved, as well as the way the Islamic project would be realised. This conceptual map formed the backbone of the widely accepted “political theory” of the Brotherhood:

The goal of the Muslim Brotherhood today is summarised in the seven stages. Our stated goal is to bring back the nation of Islam and make Islam the ruler of the earth; this goal comprises seven stages: [...] the individual, the family, the society, the government, the liberation from the foreign powers, then return of the Islamic caliphate and then the leadership of the world.¹³⁷

In the words of the founder, Islamic reform would start with the “construction of the Egyptian person” (*binā’ al-insān al-maṣrī*) through “reforming the self, his body, his character, his thought, belief and worship”. Once the Muslim individual was forged, the second step consisted of establishing a truly “Islamic home” (*beit muslim*). The transformed individual should “be wise in selecting his wife and inform her about her rights and duties” and raise his children according to the principles of Islam. The third step consisted in “guiding society by spreading the call of righteousness”, with the objective of winning over public opinion and establishing an “Islamic society” (*mujtama’ muslim*). Once society was Islamised, this would result in the “liberation of the homeland from all foreign or un-Islamic control” through the establishment of a “Muslim state” (*dawla muslima*). This was to be followed by a reform of the government to make it a truly “Islamic government” (*ḥukūma islāmiyya*) in the sense of a “government whose officers are Muslims who perform the obligatory duties of Islam, who do not make public their disobedience, and who enforce the rules and teachings of Islam”. If such a state was performing all its political, religious and moral functions correctly and

¹³⁵ On the notion of historicism, see Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. London: Routledge, 1995; Popper, Karl R. *The Poverty of Historicism*. London: Routledge, 1986.

¹³⁶ (19). Interview. Sixth of October City, 26 July 2012.

¹³⁷ (20). Interview. Cairo, 9 June 2013.

according to Islamic teachings, it was “incumbent upon the people to be obedient and loyal to it, to assist the government with their lives and their property”. Following the reform of the government, the next step consisted in rebuilding the international prominence of the Islamic *umma* “by liberating its lands, reviving its glorious past, bringing closer the cultures of its regions and rallying under one word. Until once again the long awaited unity and the lost caliphate is returned”. The seventh and final step consisted in Islam’s “guidance of the world” (*ustādhiyat al-‘ālam*) and “the spread of the call of Islam to all corners of the globe”.¹³⁸

For Brotherhood members, the caliphate was conceived of as a modern institution – an economic and political union whose function was to unify all Arab-Islamic states under a supra-national entity. “The caliphate will have a lot of economic power”, one rank-and-file member asserted.

We, the Arab and Islamic states, have a lot of resources, which allow us to have global influence. When you find that Egypt, Iraq, Syria and all Muslim countries are one bulk – this is the caliphate. Then we have influence on global decisions. All the countries will stay independent entities, but they are under one framework, like the European Commission [sic]. There is one constitution and one idea that rules all of them.¹³⁹

It was primarily the economic might of the aspired caliphate that would allow for the spread of Islam to the rest of the globe, leading to the final stage of Banna’s blueprint: the guidance of the world through Islam. “The Brotherhood’s guidance of the world is the guidance of justice and equality”, one mid-level supporter explained. Pointing to the difference between the Brotherhood and the United States, he maintained that the latter was all about “killing, destruction, rape and slavery”. They had become “the biggest people [sic] in the world through the killing, destruction and ruining of the entire world”, having exterminated “one hundred and fifty million black slaves”. The Brotherhood, on the other hand, would act according to the “curriculum of Islam” rather than by force:

We want the guidance of the world by spreading justice, equality and mercy. That is our guidance. We want to give power to the weak African countries [...]. The guidance that we want consists of giving victory to the weak countries to make them independent. The goal is to liberate the Islamic countries that are occupied, like Palestine from the Jews, and Iraq and Afghanistan – all of the countries occupied

¹³⁸ al-Banna. “Letter on Teachings” in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

¹³⁹ (5). Interview. Cairo, 10 May 2013.

by foreigners. And for the Islamic countries, the main goal is to liberate them [...]. We want to purify our countries and societies so that our Islam has value.¹⁴⁰

In a speech held shortly after the revolution of 2011, Shatir provided some further context to the notion of Islam's "guidance of the world". Evoking Islam's early history as a model for good governance, Shatir asserted:

Guidance was actualised in reality with the expansion of the Arab conquests across the [Arab] peninsula. This, my Brothers, was concluded in forty or fifty years and endured for more than one thousand years. The last form of the Islamic caliphate was the Ottoman government, but last century, it first lost the state of guidance, which had been present only in a weak form. Hence we (Muslims) lost the guidance, and then after this the caliphate itself collapsed. For the first time we were outside the sphere of government or authority.¹⁴¹

The guidance of Islam was conceived as a state of supreme enlightenment, where justice and equality would rule and where the oppressed and wretched peoples of the earth would be finally liberated. It was kind of an Islamic version of Fukuyama's end-of-history scenario, with the exception that the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" was not the "universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government", but the universalisation of the Sharia as the final form of government.¹⁴² Once the caliphate was established, one base supporter affirmed,

you become a light of knowledge, a light of guidance, a light of thought for others. [...] God created humans and gave them messages and books to guide them, to organize the relationships amongst each other, and between them and God. The Quran is what we believe in, and we don't change even a single letter in it. It provides guidance for humanity in the world and in the afterlife [...], informing each individual of his rights, privileges and duties.¹⁴³

According to widely prevailing opinions on the base level, the Islamic caliphate was frequently compared to the European Union or the United States. There would be only

¹⁴⁰ Group interview, Raba'a al-Adawiyya (2). (15). Interview. Cairo, 30 June 2013.

¹⁴¹ al-Shatir, Khairat. "Mashrū' al-Nahḍa al-Islāmī" (The Project of Islamic Renaissance). Speech. Alexandria, 24 April 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

¹⁴² Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992.

¹⁴³ (24). Interview. 10 May 2013.

one ruler for the Islamic countries, so that they become one nation without borders or visas. Like the European Union, we want a single currency for all the Islamists [*sic*] so that we have the level of prosperity and growth to the point that we don't even know where to go with all that food.¹⁴⁴

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¹⁴⁴ Group interview, Raba'a al-'Adawiyya (2); (16). Interview. Cairo, 30 June 2013.

THE SECOND FOUNDING (1973-1981)

On 11 November 1973, ‘Omar al-Tilmisani became the third General Guide of the Society of the Muslim Brothers. As the oldest member of the Guidance Office, the sixty-nine year old lawyer assumed the position of his predecessor Hasan al-Hodeibi.¹ When Tilmisani took over, the Brotherhood could be barely called an organisation, let alone a social movement. Once a powerful contender in Egyptian politics with a membership of approximately one million in 1948, the Society in the early seventies was not well known among younger Egyptians. In 1954, Nasser had shattered its organisational infrastructure and countrywide support networks, driving its members underground and into prison and exile. Attempts at reorganising under the spiritual leadership of Sayyid Qutb were crushed once again in 1965. When Richard Mitchell published his book *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* in 1969, it seemed obvious to him that the Brotherhood was a relic of the past.²

Yet, under Tilmisani’s leadership, the Society would witness its “second founding” (*al-ta’sīs al-thānī*) – a period of organisational growth and a strengthening of its rank-and-file membership that would make it once again a central political actor on the Egyptian national scene.³ Whereas in the early seventies, only about two to three hundred Brothers had “kept the ideology” intact, by the end of the decade the Society had reconstituted itself as a mass-movement and expanded its influence in the Egyptian polity.⁴ Tilmisani played a vital role in this reconstitution. Working within the political and legal system of the nation-state, he impressed a new strategic direction on the movement by continuing the gradualist and reformist current of his predecessor Hasan al-Hodeibi. In his tract *Preachers, not Judges* (*Du‘āt la Quḍāt*), Hodeibi had refuted the *takfīrī* ideas of Sayyid Qutb, which had divided the Islamist movement. Tilmisani rejected the use of violence to effect political change as a

¹ Tilmisani’s nomination as the Brotherhood’s General Guide in 1973 was known to insiders only. See (6). Interview. Cairo, 27 March 2013. The U.S. Embassy in Cairo was unaware until 1977 of Tilmisani’s actual position, referring to him as “Ombar [sic] al-Tilmisani, managing editor of *al-Da‘wa* – monthly publication of the Muslim Brotherhood”. See NNN (Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs) to Secretary of State. “State of Muslim Brotherhood / the Ikhwan Today.” 4 November 1977, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 3 June 2014. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1977CAIRO18347_c.html. The start of Tilmisani’s guidanceship (and Hasan al-Hodeibi’s death) has been falsely dated to 1976 in the literature, for instance by el-Ghobashy. “Metamorphosis.” *IJMES*, p. 377.

² Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 328. Also see Munson. “Islamic Mobilisation.” *The Sociological Quarterly*.

³ ‘Abd al-Jawad, Muhammad and Mashhur, Mustafa Mashhur. *Ḥayat Muṣṭafa Mashhūr: kāma ‘ashatha Ushrathu* (*The Life of Mustafa Mashhur: how his Family Experienced It*). Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi’ wa’l-Nashr li’l-Islam, 2005, p. 84.

⁴ The number was provided by Gum‘a Amin. See al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

matter of principle. He directed the Brotherhood's activities towards its original mission – the education and moral rectification of the Egyptian people through spreading Islamic teachings. In an effort to achieve legality, Tilmisani by the end of the decade had managed to reconcile the Brotherhood with Egyptian society and set the conditions for its de facto tolerated presence in the eighties.⁵

* * *

The Life of 'Omar al-Tilmisani

Tilmisani was born in Darb al-Ahmar, the Fatimid quarter of Cairo, in November 1904, as one of seventeen children.⁶ His grandfather had immigrated to Egypt from Tlemcen, a courtly, artistic-intellectual centre for textile manufacture in north-western Algeria, and settled in Cairo as a merchant. He later bought an estate in Nawa, a small village in the Qalyubiyya governorate, where his father 'Abd al-Fattah was born. Later, 'Omar's father moved with his two wives and their offspring to Cairo. In 1907, when 'Omar was three years old, the family moved back to Nawa, where Tilmisani grew up in the idleness of a typically Egyptian *efendi* household, removed from the bustling city life of Cairo.⁷ His early childhood years instilled in him a "love for nature and the simplicity of rural life, [for] beauty in everything, beauty of essence and appearance, beauty of manner and morals, and beauty of place and nature". He would be remembered for his "dreamy and romantic personality", as well as for his sense of humour, generosity and humbleness.⁸

In his autobiography, Tilmisani writes that his grandfather had "followed Mohammed Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, and published books on Wahhabism from his own expenses".⁹ Tilmisani had familiarised himself at an early age with Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*). The staunchly conservative imprint was reflected in his attitude to women. His wife (whose name is tellingly not mentioned in his autobiography) he described as "an ideal wife [who] cooked delicious food and helped the women who washed

⁵ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 246.

⁶ The biographical data on Tilmisani's early childhood are taken from his autobiography, as well as from a biography published by (6), a close confidant of Tilmisani. See al-Tilmisani, 'Omar. *Dhakarīāt lā Mudhakarāt (Memories, not Memoires)*. Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa al-Nashr li'l-Islam, 2012; Badr, Mohammed. 'Amr al-Tilmisānī. Cairo: Unknown publisher, 2008; (6). Interview. Cairo, 27 March 2013.

⁷ For an analysis of what made an *efendi* in terms of class and in cultural terms, see Ryzova. *The Age of the Efendiyya*.

⁸ Badr. *al-Tilmisani*, p. 25.

⁹ al-Tilmisani. *Memories*, p. 27-28.

their clothes.” Later, he mused: “Man is a man and a woman is a woman, and as such God created her. Humans cannot change God’s wisdom in his creation. [...] A woman who believes she is equal to a man is a woman who has lost her femininity”.¹⁰

When he was twenty years old joined, Tilmisani the prestigious Law Faculty of the Fuad I University – today’s Cairo University. Growing up during the turbulent times of Egypt’s “liberal experiment”, he developed an early interest in politics and a deep resentment against British colonial rule in Egypt. He was drawn into the political activism of the Wafd and for a while supported Sidqi Pasha. Having failed his graduation exams repeatedly, he finally received a law degree in 1931, aged twenty-seven. Motivated by a desire to become a “clean-handed” lawyer, he worked for a while in a law firm owned by a Copt, before opening his own practice in Shibin al-Qanatir, close to his family estate.

According to his own account, on a Friday in early 1933 Tilmisani was feeding animals in the garden of his family residence when two men approached him. When they asked Tilmisani what he was doing, he answered: “I am raising chickens”. The men replied that it was much more important to “raise Muslims who have steered away from their religion and whose authority deteriorated in their own countries.” They told him of a “comprehensive Islamic committee” (*hay’a islāmiyya shāmila*), founded in Cairo by a certain Imam Hasan al-Banna, that was committed to precisely this task. Tilmisani accepted a proposal to meet this man, to whose message he sensed an “inherent religious affinity”.¹¹

A few weeks later, the two men met in Banna’s office. This encounter had a transformative impact on the young lawyer’s life.

He is God’s light sent to us in the most difficult, cold and gloomy period so that polytheism and atheism are dispersed and religion is only for God [...]. He planted hope in our hearts and helped us to be patient and endure everything he faces for the sake of the call.¹²

He admitted that he had been unaware of his “general responsibilities towards the homeland and the nation”. Like most Muslims, Tilmisani had understood Islam in a ritualistic manner and not as an activist ideology for reforming society. The interactions with Banna made him aware of his “mission and responsibility” and a few days later he pledged an oath of allegiance (*bay’a*). Having gained Banna’s trust, the young lawyer swiftly moved up the ranks of the Society’s internal hierarchy. In his late thirties, he became a member of the Guidance

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 23 and 28.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 43-4.

¹² Ibid., pp. 50 ff.

Office and was proposed at one point to act as Banna's deputy (*wakīl*) – an offer he refused for fear of lacking the necessary skills.

Tilmisani was well aware of the difference between him and Banna. To him, Banna was “all about calling to work (‘*aml*) and struggle (*jihād*) for God's sake [...], a simple person with deep faith in his mission and responsibilities”. Himself he described as someone whose “upbringing indicated welfare and whose idle concern with aesthetics and elegance [was unable to] endure the hardships of working for God's sake”.¹³ He also seemed to have never lost his efendi roots, which brought him into repeated conflicts with those who were “committed to a course of sacrifice and struggle” and who complained about Tilmisani's “keenness for elegant well-dressed appearance [...] and his smoking habits”.¹⁴ Foreshadowing the kinds of cultural differences that would be characteristic of the movement's subsequent history, they saw in him an elitist aristocrat unable to bear the burden of hardship necessary to “strive in the way of God” (*jāhidū fī sabīl Allāhi*).¹⁵ Tilmisani later regretted not having been a member of the Special Apparatus, which to him represented “the totality of manhood (*al-rujūla al-kāmila*), loyalty and sacrifice for the sake of God”.¹⁶

When Nasser cracked down on the Brotherhood in 1954, Tilmisani received a fifteen year prison sentence, which he served in Wahat prison camp, located in the Western desert.¹⁷ Although he was not spared acts of humiliation, he suffered less than those who were associated with the Special Apparatus:

I was the least tortured in the military prison. All that happened to me was that, when I was admitted to cell no. 24 in the big jail, a barber came to shave my hair. He slapped my neck and told me: ‘Sit down on the floor, you son of a dog’. After shaving my head, [the wardens] brought thick ropes and rolled them around my body, from my thighs to my chest, making me stand up on a chair and tying these ropes to a hook hanging from the ceiling. They took the chair away, so that I was hung between the ceiling and the floor, and started beating me with whips and cursing me. I did not whimper or express pain.¹⁸

¹³ Badr. *al-Tilmisani*, p. 40.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 45-50.

¹⁵ Quran, 28:78 is quoted in al-Banna. “Letter on Teachings” in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

¹⁶ al-Tilmisani. *Memories*, p. 261.

¹⁷ The most prominent account of the conditions of Nasser's prisons is provided by al-Ghazali, Zainab. *Return of the Pharaoh : Memoir in Nasir's Prison*. Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1994. Also see Cole, Juan. “Muslim Religious Extremism in Egypt: A Historiographical Critique of Narratives” in Gershoni et al. *Middle East Historiographies*, p. 262-87.

¹⁸ al-Tilmisani. *Memories*, pp. 180-1.

Wahat Prison provided a comparatively large amount of freedom, allowing prisoners to plant fruits and vegetables and raise chicken and rabbits. And although Tilmisani suffered from “bitter feelings of injustice”, he later claimed that he relished this ordeal “as long as it was for the sake of God, bearing it and benefitting from this time in prison as a lover and seeker of knowledge”.¹⁹ After serving fifteen years, he was referred to two more years of detention until he was released in June 1971.

The Islamic Awakening

When ‘Omar al-Tilmisani stepped into freedom, aged sixty-seven, he encountered an unfamiliar social scene. The war of 1967 was experienced as a grave setback (*naksa*) in the entire Arab world. In Egypt, the defeat of the army at the hands of the Israelis shattered the hopes of young people across all sectors and classes, creating a climate where frustrations with the general repressive political context came to the forefront.²⁰ Students started to show a renewed interest in politics and engaged in acts of open protest. In February 1968, factory workers in the industrial Cairo suburb of Helwan protested against a far too lenient military court verdict against air force pilots.²¹ When university students staged a sit-in in front of the gates of Cairo University, the protests quickly escalated into a wider mass demonstration that forced the regime to lift certain restrictions. In November, new protests erupted in the Delta city of Mansura over legislation promulgated by the Ministry of Education. A series of confrontations between the police and rioting students led to the death of three protesters. The news spread to Alexandria, where it provoked another confrontation with the police. On 23 November, two students from Mansura joined a student assembly in Alexandria, telling their fellow students of the “massacre” that had taken place days before.²² One of the two men was a young engineering student called Khairat al-Shatir, who fired up the crowds in the assembly hall. Massive demonstrations took place the next day and on 25 November, large crowds took to the streets, demanding the sacking of the ministers of education and of the interior. The riots ended with sixteen dead, 167 wounded and a large-scale destruction of public property.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

²⁰ Szyliowicz, Joseph. *Education and Modernisation in the Middle East*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1973, p. 296.

²¹ Ibid., p. 153.

²² The events in Alexandria were reconstructed by Abu Khalil, *The Reformist Brotherhood*, pp. 216-18. According to his own account the author, whom I interviewed several times, received his information from eyewitnesses who were present at the events in Alexandria at the time. According to Kepel, Brotherhood members had infiltrated the Arab Socialist Union’s youth branch in Mansura and led the demonstrations against university reform, a claim that seems unlikely given the fact that the Brotherhood was largely unknown and its leadership was still in prison. See Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, p. 132.

For some of key future Brotherhood figures, the year 1968 constituted an early battle experience that provided them with an example of successful mass mobilisation against the regime. Attempting to interpret these developments, the religiously inclined students put forward a specifically Islamic answer. Mustafa Mashhur, a long-time member of the Brotherhood who would later emerge as the Society's fifth General Guide, retrospectively saw Egypt's loss in 1967 as caused by the "pact with the devil" that had been forged between the regime and communism.²³ Mohammed al-Ghazzali, a famous Azhari preacher and former Brotherhood member, who had left the movement in the forties to pursue an independent career, provided another interpretation. In a tract entitled *From Here Let's Learn (Min hunā na 'lam)*,²⁴ he attributed Israel's victory to the fact that the Jewish state had succeeded in uniting politics and religion within a single political entity, arguing that Egypt should regard Israel as a role model.²⁵ Such explanations provided the background for the formulation of a specifically Islamic response to the 1967 defeat.

Many young Egyptians reacted to the "severe shock" (*ṣaddama 'anīfa*) caused by the realisation of the defeat with a desire to "return to God" (*rujū' ilā Allah*).²⁶ 'Abd al-Mon'im Abu al-Futuh, who would later become a key figure in the Brotherhood, was fifteen years old when he learned of the defeat. Of rural descent, his family had benefitted from Nasser's Land Reform Laws of 1953. As such, Abu al-Futuh had a special veneration for Egypt's leader.²⁷ The ideological vacuum left by the collapse of pan-Arab nationalism constituted for him the "death of the dream of the revolution. [...] We discovered that what we had experienced as our victory were lies and fabrications". This realisation entailed a loss of self-confidence, not so much because of the military defeat itself but because of the feelings of dignity and strength many young Egyptians had brought to a revolutionary project that aimed at "changing the face of Egypt in the region and even in the entire world".²⁸ Many hastened to instinctively "embrace religion" (*tamassuk bi'l-dīn*), having the effect that large segments of Egyptians experienced what was described as a "religious awakening" (*iyqāz dīnī*), expressing itself in a bustling life of pious activity and growing religious consciousness.²⁹

²³ 'Abd al-Jawad. *The Life of Mustafa Mashhur*, p.88.

²⁴ The title echoes the 1969 anti-Brotherhood tract by Khalid, Khalid Muhammad. *Min hunā nabda' (From Here Let's Begin)*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglu al-Misriya, 1969.

²⁵ al-Ghazzali, Muhammad. *Min hunā na 'lam (From Here Let's Learn)*. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Haditha, 1965. The book was translated into English by al-Faruqi, Isma'il. *Our Beginning in Wisdom*. Washington : American Council of Learned Societies, 1953.

²⁶ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, pp. 22-4.

²⁷ Nasser's Land Reform Laws of 1953 had allowed his impoverished father to marry his mother, who was of feudal background, giving his family five feddans of land. Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 21.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 22-3. This is also observed by Hinnebusch. *Egyptian Politics under Sadat*, p. 199.

²⁹ al-Qaradwi, Yusuf. Interview, quoted in 'Abd al-Jawad. *The Life of Mustafa Mashhur*, p. 89.

Islamic Activism at Egypt's Universities

The Islamic Revival (*al-nahḍa al-islāmiyya*) took a more systematic form in the context of Egyptian university life.³⁰ In October 1970, Abu al-Futuh enrolled at the Medical Faculty of Cairo University. His trajectory is representative of that of an entire generation of young students of the second post-revolutionary generation, most of them urbanised, educated and upwardly mobile. These students started to disseminate religious teachings and familiarise themselves more intensively with the Quran and the prophetic traditions. By 1969, the mutual hostilities across the Suez Canal between Israel and Egypt had evolved into an extensive campaign of aerial warfare and commando raids. In the context of the War of Attrition, the activities by these students started to assume a more political character. With growing frequency, the students started to publically call on the duty of Muslims to liberate Palestine.

These calls for political action brought the Islamist students into a growing conflict with the leaders of the student unions, which were dominated by the Nasserists under the leadership of Hamdin Sabahi and the Socialist Left under ‘Adel Fathi. Beyond controlling the unions administratively and financially, the Nasserists and Leftists also controlled the editorial content of the wall magazines.³¹ Abu al-Futuh reminisces how he and his companions were shocked at the way the Leftists and Nasserists “criticised” Islam in these publications. They felt that they “attacked their religion” (*i‘tidā’ ‘alā al-dīn*), which strengthened their resolve to struggle for the “victory of Islam” (*intishār al-Islām*). They believed that Egypt’s social and political crisis was rooted in its moral laxity, deviation and “un-Islamic behaviours” such as smoking, drinking and mixed-sex parties. When one day they got word of such a party, they staged a sit-in in front of the place where the show was supposed to be held.

Our fights with the Communists were an expression of our jihadi conduct, which we pursued to achieve change of this evil [...] by force. I remember that the student unions had a party in 1973 with dance and music. We thought about how we could stop this party [from taking place]. We aimed to occupy the amphitheatre thirty minutes before the start and hold Quran readings. When [the partygoers] came, they couldn’t enter.³²

³⁰ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 22.

³¹ Ibid., p. 44. Abu al-Futuh claims in his biography that the wallpaper magazines were derogatory “against Islam”, but this most likely political rhetoric. However, it is more likely that the wallpaper magazines mocked the Islamists and that they were perceived as attacks on Islam.

³² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 53-4.

Abu al-Futuh and his colleagues celebrated this as a great success. Such actions were to them an expression of their jihadi conduct to resist “evil” (*munkar*).

This episode shows the way in which many religious students in Cairo and Alexandria embraced staunchly conservative attitudes. They attended lectures of preachers who propagated Salafi doctrines, such as Sheikh Mahmud Khattab al-Subki’s *Jam‘iyyat al-Shar‘ia* and the *Jama‘iyyat Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya*, founded by Sheikh Hamid al-Faqi. They also drew inspiration from influential clerics, such as Muhammed al-Ghazzali, ‘Abd al-Mon’im Abu al-Fadl, Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Sabiq. The most widely read writings were those of Abu’l-‘Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, which informed their social and cultural outlook and stirred in them a “burning desire for revolution and rebellion”.³³ Hamid Dafarawi, who played a critical role in the formation of the Islamic student movement in Alexandria, became acquainted with Qutb’s Islamist manifesto *Milestones* when he was seventeen years old:

The friend of my father had a large library, and he gave us once the book of Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, the manifesto of the Islamic movement in the seventies. When I read it, it started an ideological transformation. [...] We exchanged the books of Sayyid Qutb, which became the most read book. All of my friends read it in two days, and then gave it to their friend, who also read it in two days. The book had a very high circulation rate; it was the only book that was read a hundred or hundred and fifty times per year.³⁴

The reading of Sayyid Qutb was the beginning of the contact of religious students with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood.

During the early years of Islamic activism, the intellectual and conceptual universe of these students was focused on simple concepts that were not anchored in specific theoretical references. The student activists eclectically collected different and contradictory legal concepts and theories from a variety of sources, ranging from Sufi origins to more radical teachers such as ‘Aisi Abduh, al-Bahi al-Khawli, Kamal Abu’l-Majd and ‘Abd al-Halim Mahmud. By and large, the activism of these students took an increasingly revolutionary shape. Within the unstructured and randomly assembled collage of ideas, the notion of political violence to them was acceptable in principle, while the only disagreement was in terms of timing.

³³ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 39.

³⁴ (7). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

As religious activities spread, efforts were made to give them a more coherent institutional framework. In Cairo, students attempted to organise their activities through a committee for religious awareness (*lajnat al-taw'iyya al-dīniyya*), which was administratively situated under the Student Union. When the Nasserist-dominated unions withdrew their financial support, the Islamist students set up a separate religious association (*jamā'at dīniyya*) to continue their activities. A similar development took place in Alexandria, where Khalid Dawud, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Hamid Dafarawi and Khairat al-Shatir established a religious association in the Engineering Faculty.³⁵ These associations strived to meet the practical and religious demands of students by providing services, such as the provision of prayer space, holding religious lessons that promoted the memorisation of the Quran, and the segregation of male and female students.³⁶

As they interacted more closely with others who did not share their beliefs, the religious students at times entered into physical fights to defend their views, for example “when one of [the communists] insulted Islam”.³⁷ They were generally intolerant towards any sort of disagreement, especially when religious matters were concerned. Despite their myopic vision and the “intellectual terrorism” (*irhāb fikrī*) they exerted on others,³⁸ the new cadre of activists had to engage with an audience holding a different ideological outlook, including those of the secular Left and the atheist Communists, giving rise to a culture of debating and arguing. During these debates, those who proposed religious interpretations and solutions to the current political crisis of Egypt often struggled for arguments. As they themselves later admitted, their conceptual universe was immature and they adhered to a “utopian and idealistic mind-set, content to act on the basis of such slogans as ‘Islam is the solution’, without concerning ourselves with the details”.³⁹ Indeed, Islam’s foundational texts offered only a precariously elaborated “theory of the state”. They drew on verses in the Quran, which were only vaguely related to governance, such as on sura 4:59, where Muslims were enjoined to “obey those in authority” who can draw correct conclusions in political matters.⁴⁰ Since, according to the Quran, “We have not neglected any matter in this Book”, these students assumed that Islam included an implicit political theory.⁴¹ Yet, Islam’s foundational texts were unable to equip them with a conceptual apparatus rigorous enough to counter the sophisticated arguments of their colleagues on the left, who were able to draw on the rich

³⁵ (8). Interview. Alexandria, 29 March 2013.

³⁶ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 35.

³⁷ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 40.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

³⁹ ‘Issam Sultan is quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 64.

⁴⁰ Quran, 4:59.

⁴¹ Quran, 6:38.

intellectual universe of Marxism and its derivatives. The Islamist students admitted that they possessed neither the experience to debate, nor the capacity to “respond to the issues to which those cultured students referred to”.⁴² It was precisely this critical intellectual gap that the Muslim Brotherhood was able to fill. Once they were free from prison after 1971, the Society’s leaders began engaging in debates and discussions with the leaders of student associations, gradually convincing them of the superiority of the Brotherhood’s ideology and the effectiveness of its method in their common goal of implementing the Islamic project.

Sadat’s Policies towards the Brotherhood

The convergence between the Brotherhood and the Jama‘at Islamiyya took place within the context of larger changes of the political system. On 15 May 1971, Sadat adopted a number of institutional and economic measures that led to a redirection of Egyptian politics. Pressured by his rivals within the army and various state institutions, Sadat’s “correction of the revolution” was an attempt to purge the “centres of power” from the clique of Nasserists and Socialists within the Arab Socialist Union.⁴³ In January 1972, Sadat’s rivals worked through the student unions in order to mobilise tens of thousands in an effort to pressure Sadat towards war, staging a massive sit-in at Tahrir Square. Taking place under the international media spotlight, this sit-in was a public embarrassment for the president. As he realised the danger coming from the Left and the Nasserists, who were able to mobilise thousands of supporters, the idea began to take shape of adopting a more proactive policy with regard to the student movement.⁴⁴

Sadat made different attempts to co-opt the student movement. Charging his confidant Mohammed ‘Uthman Isma‘il, he aimed to form an Islamist organisation that was independent of the religious associations managed by the student organisers, with the goal of maintaining indirect links to the leaders of the religious associations. The precise nature of the relationship between the regime and the student leaders is unclear, but Abu al-Futuh later claimed to have never had any direct contact with the regime, since “our programme’s foundation and obligation was (at least initially) the removal of [Sadat’s] government and the establishment of God’s law. This did not encourage the regime to open clear and direct relations with us.”⁴⁵ Rather, he was surprised by the sudden existence of a new association called Jama‘at Shabab

⁴² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 29.

⁴³ Hinnebusch. *Egyptian Politics under Sadat*, pp. 50-1.

⁴⁴ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadyya*, p. 73.

⁴⁵ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 52.

al-Islam (Society of the Youth of Islam) at the Engineering College, which was managed by a religious committee under the supervision of ‘Issam al-Sheikh and “even employed women in its ranks”. This was a strict taboo for him and the Salafi-influenced religious students. The student leaders looked condescendingly at the new group, certain that their own religious commitment was purer. When Isma‘il was unable to co-opt the Islamist students into the regime’s orbit, the Society of the Youth of Islam lost traction and eventually disappeared as rapidly as it had emerged.⁴⁶

Another option available to Sadat to contain the Islamists was by working through the Muslim Brotherhood. Having himself been a member in his youth,⁴⁷ the Society seemed to him a useful and politically expedient ally whose popularity he could leverage in order to outmanoeuvre his political rivals on the left.⁴⁸ Nasser had initiated the rapprochement with the Brotherhood already in August 1967, when at least four secret meetings between Sadat and ‘Abbas al-Sisi occurred, while Nasser was attending the Khartoum Summit in Sudan. According to Mohammed Gami‘, three of these meetings took place in his own house while a fourth meeting was held in the house of Sadat. The content of the discussions is unknown but it seems that their objective was for the regime to explore how it could align itself with the Brotherhood leadership. After the 1972 sit-in, Sadat became convinced that he had to more firmly strengthen his ties to the Islamist right.⁴⁹ Recognising that “the field was ripe for the Islamist movement to grow and spread spontaneously and naturally”, he saw this as a suitable opportunity to strike at his rivals.⁵⁰ Tilmisani recounts an episode where, sometime in the latter half of 1972, Sheikh Sayyid Sabiq told him that “a minister in the Sadat government, had informed [Sayyid Sabiq] that Sadat was ready to meet with some of the Brotherhood leaders in order to remove the differences and work for the service of the country”.⁵¹ Such outreach efforts on the part of the regime were not limited to Egypt. Mustafa Mashhur wrote that “among those who escaped the hell of Nasser’s prisons, some went to the United States, Europe and the Arab states, where many earned their doctorate and the [accessed to the] highest positions in Western institutions and universities”.⁵² Around the same time, Sadat’s friend and private doctor Mahmud Gami‘ was dispatched to Mecca to meet with exiled

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 55-6.

⁴⁷ Sadat’s membership in the Brotherhood is seen as a given by Brotherhood members. See for example (25). Interview. Alexandria, 16 October 2012.

⁴⁸ ‘Ali, *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 70-71.

⁴⁹ Jami‘, Mahmud. *‘Araftu al-Sādāt : Naṣf Qarn min Khafayā al-Sādāt wa’l-Ikhwān (I knew Sadat: Half a Century of Secrecy of Sadat and the Brotherhood)*. Cairo, Alexandria: al-Maktub al-Miṣri al-Hadith, 1998. The anecdote was also referred to by al-Banna, Gamal. Interview. Cairo, 30 October 2012.

⁵⁰ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 53-4.

⁵¹ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 79.

⁵² ‘Abd al-Jawad. *The Life of Mustafa Mashhur*, p. 93.

Brotherhood figures, including Yusuf al-Qaradawi, asking them to cooperate in return for a general amnesty.⁵³

As a result of this deal, several exiled officials of the Society returned to Egypt. Prison conditions were relaxed and Brotherhood leaders were allowed to receive health treatment at the Manial Hospital in Qasr al-‘Aini. It was here where Abu al-Futuh for the first time met with ‘Omar al-Tilmisani, Fathi Rafa‘i and Mustafa ‘Amin. During one of these medical visits, Rifa‘i provided him with a copy of Banna’s *Letter on Teachings*.⁵⁴ This was the first time that Abu al-Futuh became acquainted with Banna’s political theory. The reading of Banna’s texts stood at the beginning of a transformational process in the worldview of many student activists. Unlike other texts such as al-Azhar’s *Fiqh al-Sunna (Sunni Jurisprudence)* and the numerous pamphlets of Saudi origin, the epistles of Banna appealed to these students because of their simplicity and conceptual clarity.

Birth of the Jama‘at Islamiyya

In the summer of 1973 the religious associations underwent a rebranding. Inspired by the Jama‘at-i-Islami, founded in 1941 in Pakistan by Abu’l-Ala al-Mawdudi, the Islamist students settled for the name Jama‘at Islamiyya.⁵⁵ Rather than an organic response to a perceived Islamic need, the Jama‘at Islamiyya gradually grew to become a more activist (*harakī*) organisation. Its leaders were selected through the “natural emergence of a leadership”, by using the proto-democratic process procedure of *shurā*, following the Prophetic hadith: “If three go on a trip, make one (of them) your leader” (*idhā kuntum thalātha fī safar falī ya’murū aḥadhum*).⁵⁶ The tasks of the leader (*amīr*) were dedicated to religious matters, such as acting as imam during prayers, whereas the function of the president of the student union focused on administrative and political tasks. As the activities and membership of the Jama‘at Islamiyya grew, the student unions became increasingly integrated into the umbrella organisation of the Jama‘at Islamiyya as the latter’s branch for “culture and society”.⁵⁷

⁵³ Jami‘, Mahmud. *‘Araftu al-Sādāt : Naṣf Qarn min Khafayā al-Sādāt wa’l-Ikhwān (I knew Sadat: Half a Century of Secrecy of Sadat and the Brotherhood)*. Cairo, Alexandria: al-Maktub al-Misri al-Hadith, 1998.

⁵⁴ In the copy Abu al-Futuh was given, the sections concerning the organisational structure of the Brotherhood had been removed.

⁵⁵ (8) claims that the inventor of the name Jama‘at Islamiya was a student at the Engineering College of the University of Alexandria called Tag Haytham. See (8). Interview. Alexandria, 29 March 2013.

⁵⁶ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 50, referring to a hadith in Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistani. *Sunan Abū Dawūd*. 1st edition. New Delhi: al-Madina Publications, 1985.

⁵⁷ library.islamweb.net/newlibrary/display_book.php?idfrom=2682&idto=2683&bk_no=47&ID=1146

⁵⁷ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, pp. 48-9.

Faced with continued obstacles in the unions, the Islamist students decided to run for seats in the upcoming elections. Strengthened by a new institutional structure, the Jama‘at Islamiyya won by a landslide and then elected Abu al-Futuh as the president of the Student Union of the Medical College of Cairo University, which quickly grew to become an epicentre of Islamic activity that attracted students from across the country. The Islamists’ electoral victory enabled politically active religious students to rely on the financial resources of the unions, which increased their presence on campuses. Islamist supporters distributed Islamic veils to female students, as well as ‘scientific booklets’ aimed at providing academic and financial support for less privileged students. This period saw a gradual transformation of Islam from its traditional leaning towards Sufism to a more rigorous Salafi interpretation. This encouraged a growing ideological and doctrinal feud between Wahhabi-inspired Salafists and a more lenient, politically-oriented Islam advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Salafism in Egypt was originally a quietist and ritualistic movement, not much concerned with questions of governance and the state. Salafi teachings were known for their extreme fundamentalist approach and their binary vision of the world, where on the one side there stood unbelief (*kufṛ*) and on the other Islam. In contradistinction to the more pragmatic and politically active ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi religious analysis rejected the historical diversity of Islamic tradition as a matter of principle. This attitude was conceptualised in the notion of “loyalty” to true Muslims and “disavowal” to all that is deviant in Islam (*al-walā’ wa’l-barā’*).

The penetration of the Egyptian religious market with Salafi ideologies occurred against the backdrop of rising oil prices after 1973. It is estimated that King Fahd of Saudi Arabia spent over \$75 billion in his efforts to spread Wahhabi doctrines through books, scholarships, fellowships and subsidies to journalists, academics and Islamic scholars, as well as the building of hundreds of Islamic centres, universities, schools and mosques.⁵⁸ Pamphlets, brochures and cassettes from Saudi Arabia flooded Egyptian publishing markets, where they were handed out to students for free, leading them to adopt hard-line literalist conservative attitudes that were quite at odds with the generally liberal interpretation of Islam in Egypt. Heated debates took place concerning the relations between men and women. Youth activists demanded a stricter separation of the sexes in classrooms, public places and hospitals and advocated for the imposition of the *niqāb* on women.⁵⁹ In this competition for the hearts

⁵⁸ Estimation by a former U.S. Treasury Department official, quoted in Ottaway, David. *The King’s Messenger : Prince Bandar Bin Sultan and America’s Tangled Relationship with Saudi Arabia*. 1st edition. New York: Walker & Company, 2008, p. 185.

⁵⁹ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 71. On the impact of conservative ideologies of Wahhabi origin, see Dekmejian, R. Hrair. “The Anatomy of Islamic Revival: Legitimacy Crisis, Ethnic Conflict and the Search for Islamic

and minds of young Egyptians, Sayyid Qutb's notion of *takfir* was eclectically mixed with radical jihadi ideas, giving rise to a "bizarre mix of Salafism and jihadism".⁶⁰

Saudi funds were also used to organise annual summer camps, which would become a defining experience of Islamic training and solidarity. The first such camp was held in 1973 in Cairo, bringing together the most important symbols (*rumūz*) of the student movement, including Abu al-Futuh and 'Issam al-'Arian from Cairo, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Khalid Dawud and Hamid Dafa'rawi from Alexandria, and Khairat al-Shatir from Mansura. Many influential Sheikhs were also invited, including the Azharites Mohammed Mitwally al-Shar'awi, Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Mohammed al-Ghazzali, the famous Salafi preacher Nasir al-Din al-Albani as well as 'Omar al-Tilmisani and Mustafa Mashhur from the Brotherhood.⁶¹ The leaders of the Brotherhood were impressed with the success of the Jama'at Islamiyya, which had "spread from the womb of obscurity without [an] organisation that could chart its way".⁶² To them, the emergence of a nation-wide religious movement corroborated their political theory. During long discussions at these camps, the senior leaders of the Brotherhood tried to convince the students to accept their methodology and political theory, trying to convince them of the "correct" understanding of Islam. They appealed to the central ideological imperative of unity and argued for the Brotherhood to act as the mechanism to provide the Islamist movement with direction and organisation. The student leaders were reluctant to accept these ideas. They doubted the religious commitment of the Brothers as much as the suitability of the Society's reform methods.⁶³ In 1974, after the Jama'at Islamiyya had organised a Saudi-sponsored 'umra trip to Mecca, heated discussions took place where the adherents of different ideological directions accused one another of not being "true Muslims". The fact that they had become acquainted with the core dogmas of Saudi aggravated the cultural and doctrinal differences between a version of Islam that was considered to be more modernist, propagated by the Brotherhood, and a more dogmatic Salafi outlook proffered by the Jama'at Islamiyya leaders.

The interaction with the Brotherhood's historic leadership had a transformative impact on many. Faced with the collapse of Nasserist pan-Arabism, the Brotherhood's pragmatic political reform project convinced the student leadership to see the Brotherhood as the true "owners of the renaissance project" (*aṣḥāb mashrū' al-nahḍa*). Their leaders now came to be

Alternatives." *Middle East Journal* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1980); Dessouki, Ali E. Hillal. "The Islamic Resurgence: Sources, Dynamics, Implications" in Dessouki, Ali E. Hillal (editor) *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*. New York: Praeger, 1985, p. 22-3.

⁶⁰ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, pp. 17, 40 and 67.

⁶¹ 'Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 74.

⁶² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 73.

⁶³ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 40.

regarded with great veneration while the fact that they had suffered in prison during many years endowed them with a special sort of legitimacy.⁶⁴ They were seen as harnessing noble purposes for Egypt, goals for which they had paid dearly during their decade-long ordeal. This change of perception was encouraged by leading Islamic preachers who defended the Society's record, such as Sheikh al-Buhairi of the Jama'at al-Sunna and 'Abd al-Mon'im Abu'l-Fadl, who was Abu al-Futuh's spiritual mentor.⁶⁵

The Jama'at Islamiyya's Merger with the Brotherhood

In 1973, Sadat went to war with Israel in order to avenge the catastrophe of 1967 and restore Egypt's national pride, as he claimed. This decision earned him the respect of the Islamist camp, whose cadres were released from prison during that time. The leaders of the Jama'at Islamiyya discussed their place within the Islamic movement and the nature of their relationship with the Brotherhood. This issue had been debated as far back as 1970, but became more pressing towards the end of 1974, when the last remaining cadres of the Brotherhood were freed. The central question that polarised the student activists was whether the Jama'at Islamiyya should remain independent or whether it should join an existing organisation. The field of Islamic activism was limited to only a few *da'wa* and charity associations, who had little social or political impact and no organised membership. The leaders of the Jama'at Islamiyya did not possess any intellectual heritage or political tradition to draw on. "We did not know much about the logic and philosophy of the state and had only very primitive ideas".⁶⁶ In the eyes of the student organisers, the Brotherhood possessed exactly the kind of intellectual tradition they lacked.

The absorption of the leaders of the Jama'at Islamiyya into the ranks of the Brotherhood was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Society still operated under the 1946 regulations and did not have the bureaucratic structures and administrative procedures that would allow it to allocate concrete tasks and responsibilities to new members. It could hardly be called an organisation in any meaningful way and therefore was unable to

⁶⁴ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 24-5. Abu al-Futuh stresses that despite his radically changed view of Nasser, he did not consider him as having committed apostasy (*takfir*). Rather, he understood the conflict between Nasser and the Brotherhood as being politically motivated. This comment is interesting given the publication date of his book, where he seeks to distance himself from the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. Also see Kamāl al-Helbwī: al-Khilāfa bayna al-Ikhwān wa 'Abd al-Nāṣir kān Sabāban fī Hazīma 67" (Kamal al-Helbawi: the Conflict between the Brotherhood and Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir Originated in the Catastrophe of 1967." *al-Watan*, 6 February 2014. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/114298

⁶⁵ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 23-4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

incorporate the student leaders into its ranks.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Brotherhood was not the only Islamist group in Egypt. In the context of the political opening of the seventies, a number of individuals and groups assumed growing influence in Egyptian political and religious life. Some of those who were subjected to cruel treatment and torture during the prison years started to advocate the use violence as a means for political change. The most prominent group advocating jihadist and *takfīrī* ideologies was the Jama‘at al-Muslimin (the Society of Muslims, subsequently labelled Jama‘at al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra by the Egyptian state media), which had been founded by Shukri Mustafa.⁶⁸

Another, less-known and more short-lived group was the “Technical Military Group”, named after a failed attempt in April 1974 by a group of soldiers in the Military College in Heliopolis to take over an army weapons depot. The ill-conceived coup was masterminded by Salih Sirriyya, a Palestinian lecturer at the Arab University of Cairo. Amongst the “Sirriyya group” were two cadets, Mustafa Yasri and Usama Khalifa, both students at the Military College and both involved in the activities of the Jama‘at Islamiyya. Although no immediate connection can be established between these groups and the leadership of the Jama‘at Islamiyya, the episode shows that there was at the very least an overlap of membership among those who carried out violent attacks and those who condoned violence only in principle. It seems, however, that the leaders of the Jama‘at Islamiyya in Cairo realised early on the danger of their association with jihadi groups. In their eyes, the attempt of Sirriyya was naïve. Their desired state was couched in romantic notions, based on the utopian idea of the “return to the caliphate” (*rujū‘ al-khilāfa*) – a scenario that vitally included the enforcement of Quranic criminal penalties (*ḥudūd*) – and not as a starting point for serious political ideas. Existing institutions to them represented an exit from the Islamic spirit. They needed to be replaced with Islamic mechanisms who were unaffected by secular modes of government.

Although the leaders of the Jama‘at Islamiyya approved of violence in principle and even circulated radical extremist writings in the *Sawt al-Haqq* publication, they refused to join these clandestine groups, preferring instead to work on strengthening the ranks of their

⁶⁷ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 250.

⁶⁸ Mustafa at one point tried to persuade Abu al-Futuh to join his group, but the latter refused. See Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 60. *Takfīr* can traditionally only be pronounced by qualified religious authorities under very specific circumstances. It is a label given by outsiders to Islamist actors whose political behaviour is seen as illegitimate. The term therefore does not represent a distinct ideological movement. For a discussion, see Hegghammer, Thomas, “Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries?” in Meijer, Roel (editor). *Global Salafism : Islam’s New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 245-65. It is worth noting how reluctant mainstream authorities have been to use this label, except against particular individuals singled out for attack (i.e. al-Azhar declared Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd an apostate but has refused to use the *takfīr* label to delegitimise ISIL), pointing to the political implications of using this notion.

own organisation.⁶⁹ In mid-1974, the different Jama‘at Islamiyya chapters in the colleges of Cairo University formed a council whose purpose was to unite the leaders of all colleges and appoint one leader for the entire university. ‘Issam al-‘Arian was elected as the first leader of the council of leaders (*majlis al-umarā’*) at Cairo University. Around that time, the Brotherhood formally reached out to Abu al-Futuh, who played a key role in the establishment of this relationship.⁷⁰ The leaders of the two groups had met previously during the summer camp of 1973, but these relations had been informal, taking place as part of the general Islamist activities. Brotherhood leaders were aware of their perception among the students as the “owners” (*aṣḥāb*) of the Islamic project but they were in need of a popular mass following. The person chosen for this task was Kamal al-Sananiri, who was part of the first cohort (*raḥīl awwal*) of Brothers and a former member of the Special Apparatus. Sananiri had been arrested during the crackdown of 1954, condemned to twenty years of hard labour and had just recently left prison.

After having sent a message to Abu al-Futuh, they agreed to meet him in February or March 1974 in a small shoe shop in Qasr al-‘Aini Street owned by a Brotherhood member.⁷¹ Because of the ordeal he had endured in prison, Sananiri was a notoriously cautious man, paying great attention not to reveal any direct link between the two organisations. Sitting next to Abu al-Futuh on a bench, both men pretended to try on shoes while Sananiri talked about the conditions in prison and reminisced about Sayyid Qutb, with whom he had shared a cell. He exposed the key ideas of the Brotherhood and argued for the validity of the Brotherhood’s reform method. Abu al-Futuh was fascinated by Sananiri’s unrelenting commitment to the *da‘wa*, remembering this meeting as “impressive and emotional to the highest degree”.⁷² From this first encounter, a relationship started to gradually crystallise between the leaders of the two organisations. Over the coming years, various meetings would take place in Cairo, Alexandria and other cities in Egypt between the student leaders and the historic leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, including with Ahmed al-Malt, Ahmed Hassanin and Mustafa Mashhur. At one such meeting in Alexandria, ‘Abbas al-Sisi met Abu al-Futuh and tried to invoke in him the “spirit of jihad and secret work (*‘aml sirrī*)”.⁷³

⁶⁹ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, pp. 63-5.

⁷⁰ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadiyya*, p. 75.

⁷¹ For more information on Kamal al-Sananiri, see Mansfield, Laura. *In His Own Words : Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*. Old Tappan, NJ: TLG Publications, 2006, pp. 27 ff.

⁷² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 75.

⁷³ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadiyya*, p. 75.

Similar outreach efforts were undertaken in Alexandria, where Khalid Dawud became the leader of the Jama‘at Islamiyya.⁷⁴ The engines behind this push were ‘Abbas al-Sisi and Gum‘a ‘Amin. ‘Abbas al-Sisi was born in November 1918 and joined the Brotherhood in 1936 as part of the “first cohort”. He was arrested for his activities in the Special Apparatus and then again in 1965 during the attempted reconstitution under Sayyid Qutb.⁷⁵ Sisi’s ideas were inclined towards *da‘wa ilā Allah bi’l-hubb*, of calling towards God with love, a young Brotherhood member, Abdullah al-Haddad, later explained: “You have to engage with passion and love, and you have to make [another Brother] feel that you are his friend, that you are his Brother [...] in order to present him Islam in the very right way.” He further related a story about Gum‘a Amin, who was in Lima al-Torah prison together with Shukri Mohammed, where he would speak out forcefully against *takfīrī* ideas. Apparently, Abbas al-Sisi was so opposed to the idea of using violence that Shukri Mohammed’s prison mates tried to kill him by putting rat poison in his food.

‘Amin started to fight these ideas [...]. The majority was radicalised already, but [‘Amin] understood the idea correctly and started to speak against Shukri Mohammed [sic] and his prison mates. They didn’t like the idea that he is fighting them, not by ignoring them but through ideology, through understanding, through using the same background, the same verses of the Quran and the Hadith.⁷⁶

As a consequence of the dominance of Salafī ideas, students in Cairo and Alexandria denounced (and even ridiculed) the Brotherhood’s leaders for their un-Islamic lifestyle, expressed by their refusal to grow beards. With Salafism offering them clear-cut roles for what was condoned to be properly religious behaviour, they were reluctant to associate themselves with an interpretation of Islam that was unsympathetic to their religious instincts. Despite these doctrinal feuds, the students were impressed with the historical leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. Having suffered during many years in prison and exile, these men were seen as “legends of resistance, steadfastness and patience in the face of injustice and *jāhiliyya*”.⁷⁷ Nobody personified this resoluteness better than ‘Omar al-Tilmisani, and it was not until Abu al-Futuh personally met him at the end of 1974 that he became convinced to join the Society.

⁷⁴ (8). Interview. Alexandria, 29 March 2013.

⁷⁵ “al-Dā‘iyyat al-Ḥajj ‘Abbas al-Sīsī” (The Preacher Hajj ‘Abbas Al-Sisi). *Ikhwanwiki*. Accessed 19 July 2015. www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3_%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A

⁷⁶ al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. Cairo, 11 July 2015.

⁷⁷ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 79.

The exchange between the venerated Sheikh and the student activist was held at the former's house in Cairo and went on into the early morning hours. Abu al-Futuh later remembers:

I have been in the presence of a man who had spent twenty years in jail and yet left jail still preoccupied with the cause of Islam and preaching for God [...]. His words were magic to me. He was a role model in whom I found my own consciousness, one of the people we read about in the biography of the Prophet, who were tortured for the sake of preaching God's method.⁷⁸

Elsewhere, he summarised the sense of admiration many young Islamist activists felt towards these Muslim heroes:

We saw fighters who had sacrificed themselves for the *da'wa*, who refused to bargain even if this meant prison, torture or certain death. I was joyful to meet them, spend time with them and listen to them; and we were eager to approach them and learn from them.⁷⁹

Following the meeting with Tilmisani, Abu al-Futuh took the *bay'a*, followed by a pledge of the entire leadership of Cairo University's Jama'at Islamiyya.

The merger between the Jama'at Islamiyya and the Society in Cairo was a matter of secrecy. Since the student unions were organisationally situated under the Ministry of Education, they depended on the state for their legitimacy. Abu al-Futuh and 'Arian, in their roles as leaders of the student unions in Cairo, occupied prestigious positions. This created an awkward relationship between the Jama'at Islamiyya and the regime. Anwar al-Sadat did not entertain direct relations with the Jama'at Islamiyya, yet he hoped to contain both the Communists and the radical elements within the Islamic movement through a tactical alliance with Tilmisani, who was known for the respect he commanded among younger activists. "When I spoke to the students [...], they accepted my arguments against violence, demonstrations, strikes and sabotage", the General Guide later claimed⁸⁰ He also acknowledged how the Minister of the Interior, Nabawy Isma'il, called him regularly for advice on how to contain the radicals. Yet, the deal between Sadat and the Brotherhood was primarily of a tactical nature, and the regime continued to consider the Society as a potential threat. By denying the Brotherhood its claim to legality, Sadat kept up the pressure on the

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 75 ff.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

⁸⁰ Tilmisani is quoted in Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 249.

Society.⁸¹ He certainly would not have regarded favourably a deal between the Jama‘at Islamiyya and the Brotherhood. The students were aware of this fact and shared with the Society a concern for keeping the association secret. The pledge of allegiance of Abu al-Futuh and other leaders in Cairo and Alexandria was concealed even from the rank-and-file members throughout the seventies and it was only in 1979, in the context of the worsening relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood following the rapprochement with Israel, that the merger was made public.⁸²

Bolstered by their new alliance, the Jama‘at Islamiyya entered the General Egyptian Students’ Union in 1975 and soon gained control of its various committees.⁸³ The rise of the Islamists was supported by decree 335, according to which the prime objective of the student unions was “to deepen religious values among students”.⁸⁴ In 1976, the Jama‘at Islamiyya scored a landslide victory. Abu al-Futuh, acknowledged by his colleagues to be the undisputed leader, became president of the Student Union of Cairo University.⁸⁵ In December 1976, the group organised public ‘Eid prayers and was able to mobilise tens of thousands of supporters at public squares in Cairo and Alexandria.⁸⁶ The Jama‘at Islamiyya now grew into a nation-wide movement with membership of over 100,000 and commanding one fifth to one third of the student body in Egypt.⁸⁷ Its appeal spilled from the university campuses into mosques and religious schools. Because of their alliance with the student organisers who controlled the rank and file of the Jama‘at Islamiyya, the Brotherhood once again commanded a broad-based mass following.

Discourse on Social Justice

In 1976, Sadat undertook a controlled experiment in political liberalisation by establishing three platforms within the Arab Socialist Union and authorising them to migrate into political parties. While denying the Society full political legitimacy, he permitted the re-publication of *al-Da‘wa* magazine, which became the Brotherhood’s main organ, to present its political opinions to the general public. *Al-Da‘wa* started in a small library in Sayyida Zainab and after two years moved its base of operations to Suq al-Tawfiqiyya Street. The license was

⁸¹ Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, p. 107.

⁸² ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 75.

⁸³ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 36.

⁸⁴ Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, p. 140.

⁸⁵ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 36-8; Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 47.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁷ Hinnebusch. *Egyptian Politics under Sadat*, p. 205.

originally owned by Salih al-‘Ashmawi, the former deputy of Banna and the first head of the Special Apparatus, but was transferred to Tilmisani in 1976, who acted as the chairman of the board and editor-in-chief.⁸⁸ *Al-Da‘wa* soon reached a circulation rate of approximately 60,000 to 80,000 copies per month.⁸⁹ The readership consisted of current Brotherhood members, former Brothers who had left the group, as well as the new generation of young Islamists of the Jama‘at Islamiyya. Tilmisani personally recruited the magazine’s staff, and gathered them for weekly editorial and reviewing meetings. Most of the initially ten-strong workforce were students from the Faculty of Journalism of Cairo University who were in their twenties and thirties. The editorial board consisted of Tilmisani, Salih al-‘Ashmawi, Mohammed ‘Abdallah and Mustafa Mashhur.

Tilmisani used his position to launch a public campaign that aimed at rehabilitating the Society as a religious and educational movement committed to peaceful means of reform. The platform of *al-Da‘wa* offered him an opportunity to bolster the Society’s credibility among young people.⁹⁰ At the same time, the various letters to the editor and requests for fatwas established a feedback loop for how the vision the Brotherhood’s social and educational reform project was experienced at a local level. In the absence of an organisational mechanism, *al-Da‘wa* magazine allowed the Brotherhood’s leadership team to read what non-elites were thinking.⁹¹ Editorially, the magazine’s articles reflected the Brotherhood’s conservative worldview through its demands of the application of strict Sharia rules.⁹² The Brotherhood further remained stuck in its anti-Semitic and anti-Western rhetoric, which was encapsulated in the frequent rants against the “four horsemen of the apocalypse” – the Jews, the Crusaders, communism and secularism. Entire sections were devoted to an Islamist version of the “clash of civilisations” idea, emphasising the duty for Muslims to defend Islam against perceived attacks.

Perhaps the most powerfully expressed grievances concerned socio-economic issues. By 1976, the Egyptian economy was under mounting pressure. Soviet arms purchases, foreign

⁸⁸ Salih al-‘Ashmawi is quoted in Mitchell. *The Society*, pp. 54-5 and 80-5.

⁸⁹ Gilles Kepel identifies 78,000 copies sold per month, referring to the statement of one of *al-Da‘wa*’s authors: Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, p. 107. Hinnebusch mentions 80,000 to 150,000 copies per month, though the higher end of this spectrum is implausible: Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat*, p. 205. A January 1977 accounting statement listed an initial circulation of 60,000 copies in July 1976 and a circulation of 78,000 by January 1977, see *al-Da‘wa*, January 1977, p. 17, quoted in Rock-Singer, Aaron. “A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976–1981.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2015), pp. 427–46.

⁹⁰ al-Arian. *Answering the Call*, pp. 177 ff.

⁹¹ Rock-Singer. “A Pious Public”, p. 435.

⁹² A discussion of *al-Da‘wa* can be found in Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, pp. 107 ff. A new dissertation by a Princeton historian will appear soon. See Rock-Singer, Aaron. *Guiding the Pious to Practice: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976-1981*. Princeton University. PhD Dissertation, submitted in September 2015.

military adventures, a bloated defence budget and a \$1.5 billion social welfare programme had accumulated into a staggering foreign debt. Two years before, Sadat had started to dismantle the Nasserist corporative system, a process that became known as the *infithah* (opening) policy, which consisted of encouraging foreign direct investment by offering lucrative opportunities to private-sector enterprises. In the wake of a massive liberalisation of the Egyptian economy, government employees started to forge alliances with the business elite, leading to a growing concentration of capital in the hands of a small clique of a well-connected businessmen. Sadat relied on the provision of foreign aid to deliver the prosperity he had promised to his people, doubling foreign debt from \$7.5 billion in 1977 to \$14.7 billion in 1980, with debt service growing from \$454 m to \$1.6 billion over the same period. Gradually, a new class of state capitalists emerged that derived its wealth and influence from parasitic relations with the state rather than from entrepreneurial activities.⁹³ Although Egypt's annual GDP growth increased from 2.5 to 14.6 per cent between 1974 and 1976, this was largely a result of petroleum exports, revenues from rents such as the Suez Canal and the accumulated effect of increased remittance payments as a result of high oil prices.

On a structural level, Sadat's liberalisation programme shifted the economy away from productive sectors and towards increased foreign trade and investment, with trade as a percentage GDP increasing from 35 to 97 per cent between 1975 and 1979. Choosing low-risk investments over the uncertain performance of Egyptian industry, foreign investors diverted their assets into the construction sector, resulting in a mushrooming of apartment buildings, office towers and luxury hotels.⁹⁴ During the seventies, Egypt gradually moved away from an exporter to a net importer of food, with the total volume of agricultural exports falling from 41 to 15 per cent between 1973 and 1980. By the end of the decade, the economy had returned to state planning, with the difference of a bloated private sector that assumed the bulk of economic activity.⁹⁵ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned Sadat that Egypt would not qualify for further loans until the money used for subsidies was diverted into productive sectors.

The restructuring of the Egyptian economy threatened to cancel the advances towards a social state that had been made during the fifties and sixties. IMF-imposed austerity

⁹³ Kandil. *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 203.

⁹⁴ On informal settlements, see the study by Sims, David. *Understanding Cairo : The Logic of a City out of Control*. Cairo ; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010.

⁹⁵ This tendency was already well underway with the start of U.S. food-aid programmes during the Nasser era. For a regional macro-view from a critical leftist perspective, see Hanieh, Adam. *Lineages of Revolt : Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2013. For a spatially and chronologically more localised look at Egypt's political economy, see Waterbury, John. *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes*. Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.

measures resulted in severe social dislocations. A highly skewed income distribution, deteriorating infrastructure and an increasingly burdensome corruption in state administration and economic sectors sharpened class cleavages and added to the general discontent experienced by Egypt's urban poor.⁹⁶ In early January 1977, Sadat cancelled subsidies on a number of basic food items, resulting in a sharp spike of bread prices. On 18 January, Egyptians protested in their tens of thousands in what became known as the Bread Riots (*muṣaharāt al-khubz*). The spontaneous uprising included students and workers who were frustrated with the rising costs of basic commodities and the symbols of conspicuous consumption visible on the streets of Cairo.⁹⁷

Disillusioned by Arab socialism and the economic hardship brought about by Sadat's neoliberalism, many felt attracted to Islamist ideologies. By forging a specifically Islamist critique of the status quo, the Brotherhood was able to leverage this popular discontent to its benefit. In the pages of *al-Da'wa*, authors pointed to the materialist values that pervaded society as the main culprit of economic hardship. The lead article of its July 1978 edition read: "The Fall of American Society", while the associated article pointed out that sex was the culprit for America's degeneracy.⁹⁸ Another article looked at the gap between rich and poor and pointed out that it had worsened significantly as a result of the creation of a new class of capitalists who reaped large profits through collaborating with Western business interests.⁹⁹ In their critique of the material conditions in Egypt, Brotherhood ideologues frequently reverted to one of Islam's central concepts, social justice (*'adāla ijtima'iyya*), which was employed to articulate a socio-economic critique of current economic policies.

The tradition of social justice in Islam had a long pedigree. Ritually anchored in the practice of almsgiving (*zakāt*), social justice had historically occupied a central place in Islamic discourse.¹⁰⁰ In his influential book *Social Justice in Islam*,¹⁰¹ Qutb thought to apply authentic Islamic principles to Egypt's current political, social and moral context.¹⁰² Locating its origin in the early days of Islam, he argued that the Prophet had himself started "a social movement, declaring war against the class of nobles and the wealthy, taking away their wealth and distributing it among the poor". Drawing on the same kind of implicit historicism

⁹⁶ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 122.

⁹⁷ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 60; Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 118.

⁹⁸ Rizq, Gabir. "al-Gins: Awwal mā yushaghghil bāl al-Sha'ab al-Amrīkī" (Sex: the first Thing that preoccupies the Mind of the American people), *al-Da'wa*, July 1978.

⁹⁹ Wadur, Mohammed 'Abd al-'Aziz. "Taṭbīq al-Shar'iyya al-Islāmi hwa al-Sabīl al-Taḥqīq al-'Adāla al-Ijtima'iyya" (Implementing the Islamic Shari'a is the only Way to achieve Social Justice), *al-Da'wa*, June 1979.

¹⁰⁰ For an account of the role of charity in Islam, see Singer, Amy. *Charity in Islamic Societies*. Themes in Islamic History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Qutb, Sayyid. *al-'Adāla al-Ijtima'iyya fī'l-Islām (Social Justice in Islam)*. Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1975.

¹⁰² See the discussion by Shepard, William. "The Development of the Thought of Sayyid Qutb as Reflected in Earlier and Later Editions of 'Social Justice in Islam.'" *Die Welt Des Islams* 32, no. 2 (1992), pp. 196–236.

underlying Banna's seven-step blueprint, he wrote: "[God] knew that true social justice can come to a society only after all affairs have been submitted to the laws of God, and the society as a whole is willing to accept the just division of wealth prescribed by Him".¹⁰³ He further argued that the Prophet had started a movement of moral reform in addition to that of social reform, "for the establishment of moral standards, for the purification of the society and for self-evaluation". Morality could be built solely on faith,

which provides criteria, creates values, defines the authority from which these criteria and values are to be derived, and prescribes the reward of the one who accepts this authority and the punishment of those who deviate or oppose. Without this kind of belief of the concept of a higher authority, all values remain unstable, and similarly morals based on them remain unstable – without accounting, without authority, without reward!¹⁰⁴

Under conditions where faith and morality were strong,

society was freed from all oppression, and the Islamic system was established on which justice was God's justice and in which weighing was by God's balance. The banner of social justice was raised in the name of God, and the name of the banner was Islam. No other name was added to it and '*lā illaha illa 'llah*' (there is no God except God) was written on it. [...] Mankind was uplifted in its social order, in its morals, in all of its life, to a zenith of perfection which had never been attained before and which cannot be attained afterwards except through Islam.¹⁰⁵

In public, Sadat depicted the protest as an uprising of thieves (*intifāḍat al-ḥarāmiyya*) and accused his political rivals of orchestrating them. But he also recognised its deeper structural origins and for this reason decided to meet with some of the country's key political representatives, intellectuals and journalists. This meeting provided the context for the rise to national prominence of Abu al-Futuh, for whom the Bread Riots were a clear proof of "the vigour of the people, who possessed a high level of awareness and vitality that pushed it into the streets without any leadership".¹⁰⁶

When invited to meet with the president, Abu al-Futuh found himself in the presence of key figures of the president's staff, including Vice-President Hosni Mubarak. The meeting was aired live, presumably for Sadat to portray himself as a president who took seriously the

¹⁰³ Qutb. *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq (Milestones)*. Cairo: Dar al-Shoroq, 2012, p. 11. For a translation, see Qutb, Sayyid and al-Mehri, A.B. (editor). *Milestones*. Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers. Birmingham, 2006, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 59.

concerns of ordinary Egyptians.¹⁰⁷ Unaware of the protocol of how to address the president, Abu al-Futuh raised his hand several times during Sadat's address, but was repeatedly ignored. At one point he stood up, confidently took the microphone and spoke "without authorisation":

We as the people find the state's behaviour contradictory. I can give you a simple example: when you declared that [Egypt] would be a country of knowledge and faith, Sheikh al-Ghazzali was deposed from the 'Amr Ibn al-'As mosque. [...] Why was he deposed? The believers went into the streets to [...] condemn this decision during a peaceful protest. But the protesters were attacked and al-Ghazzali was dismissed from the Ministry of Endowments. When he came out from prison, he left Egypt, as he didn't find any work. All the other loyal '*ulamā*' left Egypt in a similar way. Now, there are no '*ulamā*' anymore, except those who are hypocritical.

At one point, the president interrupted Abu al-Futuh, shouting:

Stop it right there, stop it right there! [...] I will never accept hypocrisy [...]. Nor will I allow you to come here and tell your opinions. This country will not allow religion to be exploited. [...] Learn how to be polite when addressing people [...]. Don't impose yourself as a leader by exploiting religion.¹⁰⁸

The intervention of the young student activist against the president of Egypt was an unprecedented event in Egyptian political culture. While Abu al-Futuh's career suffered as a result, his boldness earned him the adoration of Islamists across the country.¹⁰⁹ The incident also epitomised the beginning of a period of decline in the relationship between Sadat and the Islamist movement.

Towards Camp David

By early 1977, the Jama'at Islamiyya had grown into a nation-wide umbrella movement that could provide an organisational structure to the activism of the Islamist students.¹¹⁰ The

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 60-1.

¹⁰⁸ "Munazara bayna al-Sadāt wa Abu al-Futūh" (Debate between 'Abd al-Mon'im Abu al-Futuh with President Mohammed Anwar al-Sadat). Accessed 30 June 2010.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FokW6klhn1k&feature=youtu.be

¹⁰⁹ When Abu al-Futuh graduated from Cairo Medical College and applied to become a teaching assistant, his request was cancelled, presumably as a punishment for his provocative stance against the president. See Abu al-Futuh, *Witness*, pp. 58-9.

¹¹⁰ 'Ali, *The Road to Ittihadiyya*, p. 75.

leaders of different Jama‘at Islamiyya groups now came together under the name Jama‘at Islamiyya in Egypt and elected Helmi Gazzar, a student from the Medical College of Cairo University, as their first national leader. The Brotherhood leadership team was aware of the vibrant Islamic activities taking place at university campuses in Middle and Upper Egypt, and the importance of restructuring the ranks of the Society in the south, where the Brotherhood had been virtually absent.¹¹¹ In an effort to build organisational capacity there, Brotherhood leaders travelled across the country to meet with student organisers.¹¹² In March 1977 Mustafa Mashhur, in his function as the head of the Society’s University and Youth Committee, visited Asyut and Minya. These efforts were unofficially sanctioned by state policy, as Sadat was hoping to counter both the Egyptian left and the threat arising from radical elements of the Islamist right.¹¹³

As in the urban centres, the students in Middle and Upper Egypt met the Society’s leaders with scepticism. Activists in rural southern areas held conservative social and religious attitudes, and were unconvinced by the Brotherhood’s religious commitment. They reproached the Society’s leaders for not wearing beards and criticised them for the fact that their wives were not wearing the *niqāb*. One man who was at the centre of the debates in Minya was a young engineering student called Abu’l-‘Ila Madi. Born in April 1958, Madi hailed from a lower middle class background. In 1976, he entered university and immediately found in Islamic activism a means not only towards religious and spiritual self-fulfilment, but also towards the realisation of his political ambitions. Distinguishing himself through his extraordinary organising talents and his charismatic personality, he entered the ranks of the Jama‘at Islamiyya a few months after the start of his studies and soon rose to become the president of the Student Union in Minya. Within a few years, Madi would emerge as an important rising star in the Brotherhood, convinced that the Brotherhood should take every possible legal route to spread its message and that anything else would render the Brotherhood “intellectually impotent”.¹¹⁴

In November 1977, Sadat announced his intention to travel to Jerusalem and speak before the Knesset. Faced with mounting political unrest at home, he hoped that this diplomatic initiative would lead to an improvement of Egypt’s economic situation. The growing accommodation between Egypt and Israel added another layer of complexity to the already vulnerable relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood. In the pages of *al-*

¹¹¹ Interview with Abu’l-‘Ila Madi, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 40-1.

¹¹² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 49.

¹¹³ ‘Abd al-Jawad. *The Life of Mustafa Mashhur*, p. 101.

¹¹⁴ al-Tilmisani. *Memories*, p. 234.

Da'wa, Brotherhood intellectuals spelled out a penetrating critique of Sadat's policies. Rather than confronting the president directly, the Brotherhood manufactured a discourse that opposed the rapprochement with Israel on a religious, rather than on a political level: "I did not politically oppose the treaty", Tilmisani wrote later in his autobiography. "However, I religiously opposed it as Islam prohibits Muslims from resigning in front of a non-Muslim assault on a Muslim land".¹¹⁵ In a similar way, the pages of *al-Da'wa* framed Palestine as a universal Muslim problem, rather than a political concern specific to Egypt. In an article entitled "The Way to Save Jerusalem", the author appealed to Arab leaders to "rally in face of the common danger, the loss of Palestine". Warning that the aim of the Crusaders, the Jews and the Communists was to "erase Islam from our world" and "detach the Muslims from their religion", he argued that the Brotherhood was opposed to a peace treaty "not because we are in the opposition, but because of Islam". A failure to understand the depth of this issue would be the "graveyard of Muslims".¹¹⁶

Towards the end of the seventies, student life in Egypt became engulfed in a boiling atmosphere that brought to the fore debates about the use of violence.¹¹⁷ By committing the majority of the students of the Jama'at Islamiyya in Upper Egypt to a peaceful direction, Tilmisani played a central role in resolving this issue on behalf of the Brotherhood. He argued that in order for social and political reform to happen, the Islamic movement needed to work within the legal framework of the Egyptian state. He aspired to reconcile the Brotherhood with Egyptian society, establishing it as an accepted and legitimate player through a complete "eradication" (*isti'sāl*) of violence. He was able to convince the leadership of the Jama'at Islamiyya in Upper Egypt, chief among them Abu'l-Ila Madi, who would become a major figure on the moderate Islamist scene. During a lecture at the University of Minya, where star preachers and clerics were invited as speakers, Madi was transfixed by Tilmisani as the venerated Sheikh spoke. A few weeks later, he visited him in the Brotherhood's headquarters in Suq al-Tawfiqiyya:

[Tilmisani] invited us, bought us lunch and we sat and talked. This was the first time I sat with him – around 1978. When we decided to enter the Brotherhood, part of the decision was [motivated by the fact] that Tilmisani was a loving person, and part was that our colleagues in Cairo decided to enter, like

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 241.

¹¹⁶ Omar al-Tilmisani. "al-Ṭarīq ilā Inqādh al-Quds" (The Way to Save Jerusalem), *al-Da'wa*, June 1979.

¹¹⁷ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 59.

Abu al-Futuh and ‘Issam al-‘Arian. We took their position, as we trusted them. I stayed with him, spent the night with him, attended meetings and camps with him and started to get closer to him.¹¹⁸

But not all were convinced of Tilmisani’s argument of peaceful means of reform. As the debates intensified following the signing of the Camp David Accords in September 1978, a group of activists around Karam Zuhdi, a charismatic student leader at the University of Minya, along with the majority of the Jama‘at Islamiyya in Asyut, insisted on preserving their organisational autonomy and continue as an independent movement.¹¹⁹ A group of Salafi-inspired hard-line activists advocated an armed jihad against the Copts, whom they considered to be the major obstacle to the implementation of the Islamic project. They later merged with the Cairo-based al-Jihad group of ‘Abd al-Salam Faraj.

It is perhaps Tilmisani’s most remarkable achievement to have resolved the excruciating question of violence. He was the driving force of the initiatives that paved the way for the Society to re-integrate into political life under a moderate, reformist and peaceful vision. By distancing the Brotherhood from the radical elements in the Jama‘at Islamiyya, Tilmisani laid the intellectual and legal foundations for the expansion of the Brotherhood’s reform project into nearly all aspects of political life.¹²⁰ Doing so, the Brotherhood would speak out consistently against the use of violence. But internally, the differences persisted. “We didn’t know that there was a conflict inside”, Madi said:

We didn’t learn about the secrets of the organisation from the inside. We found encouragement from Tilmisani, who was for us a role model. But then we discovered that he was trying to find a compromise with the other trend. He suffered from the protection of the old Special Apparatus and its hard-line views. He wanted to keep a balance between the forces of the Muslim Brotherhood, the old Apparatus represented by the likes of Mustafa Mashhur, Kamal al-Sanairi, Ahmed Hasanin and Ahmed al-Malt.¹²¹

Similarly, the pages of *al-Da‘wa* warned against the danger facing Egyptians in the wake of a peace with Israel. “Peace will never change the doctrine of the Jews, which is only a means for Israel to achieve its larger goal: the establishment of a Greater Israel. For this reason, there is a need to change our doctrine and we need to look at the peace with a different perspective than the Jews”.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, p. 43; Baker, *Sadat and After*, p. 190.

¹²¹ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹²² Rizq, Gabir. “Mufattirāt Mināchim Bīgin” (The Lies of Menachem Begin), *al-Da‘wa*, January 1979.

In order to avoid a situation that would give the regime a reason to crack down on the Brotherhood, Tilmisani created a largely academic distinction between the principle of negotiations and its consequences. By refusing any consideration of Israel's existence as long as it did not lead to negotiations side by side with Palestine, he aptly avoided commenting on Sadat's policies. At a time when the Islamist movement categorically refused Camp David, Tilmisani supported negotiations under the idea of "restitution [of Palestine] to its owner". At the same time, he took a clear stance against any normalisation with Israel, warning of the danger that the entire region could "become Jewish". The approval of the principle of negotiation and the simultaneous rejection of its results was a strange contradiction, which would shape the Society's uncomfortable stance towards Israel going forward. It illustrated how the Brotherhood, through this act of intellectual acrobatics, attempted to stand with one foot within the political system and with another in opposition to it.

The Assassination of the Pharaoh

On 11 February 1979, a revolution in Iran swept the regime of the Shah Mohammed Reza out of power, thus ending the rule of the Pahlavi dynasty. The Islamic Revolution had a transformative impact on the globalisation of political Islam. Islamic associations and centres proliferated from the United States and Europe to India and Pakistan, while the revolution strengthened the activities of existing Islamist groups such as Necmettin Erbakan's Milli Görüş in Turkey. In Egypt, the events added fuel to the fire of impassioned debates embroiling the Islamist movement at the time. While the appropriateness of a Khomeini-type revolution was denied in the pages of *al-Da'wa*, it further divided the rank-and-file members of the Jama'at Islamiyya regarding the question of the use of force.¹²³ The relationship between Sadat and the Brotherhood at this point had reached a low point. Tilmisani later claimed that Sadat had deliberately encouraged the rise of militant groups in order to fragment the Islamic movement and weaken the Brotherhood's leadership over it.¹²⁴ Tilmisani's persistent appeal to make use of peaceful means succeeded in convincing many who previously had argued for a violent overthrow of the regime that change had to come through a popular revolution.¹²⁵ But a small and vocal minority at the fringes of the Jama'at Islamiyya

¹²³ Gabara, 'Abd al-Mon'im Selim. "al-Khūmīnī: bayna Āmāl al-Muslimīn wa Mu'āmarāt al-Ṣalībiyya wa'l-Shyū'iyya" (Khomeini: between the Hope of Muslims and the Conspiracies of the Crusaders and the Communists). *al-Da'wa*, March 1979.

¹²⁴ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 250.

¹²⁵ (7). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

had little patience for Tilmisani's moderate strategy. The Society's alliance with the Jama'at Islamiyya and its ties to the urban middle- and lower-middle class had made the Islamist movement an unpredictable element in the eyes of the regime.¹²⁶

When at the beginning of 1979 rumours started to spread about a merger between the Society and the Jama'at Islamiyya, Sadat realised that things had escaped his control. He reacted angrily to this announcement and went on to coerce Islamic activism across the board. The Charter of the Student Union was replaced with a more restrictive version that placed union activities under the strict supervision of university administrators.¹²⁷ In the ensuing crackdown in Upper Egypt, Abu'l-'Ila Madi was imprisoned. It was during the time of his arrest that Madi decided to enter the Brotherhood.¹²⁸ To him it was evident that Tilmisani's strategy was better suited in achieving Islamic reform than that proposed by any of the radical fringe movements to the right. When released three months later, he and Mohi al-Din Ahmad 'Aissa were among the first student leaders from Middle Egypt to join the ranks of the Society. Hundreds subsequently joined the Brotherhood in Minya and other Upper Egyptian governorates.¹²⁹

The Brotherhood was walking a fine line. In early August, the editorial staff of *al-Da'wa* held a meeting where the leaders of the first generation and the young university students from the Faculty of Information were present. The issue under discussion was an invitation extended to Tilmisani by the Minister of Culture and Information to attend the Islamic Thought Assembly in Ismailiyya, a yearly gathering of al-Azhar preachers. After some discussions, it was decided that Tilmisani should go, and he attended the conference together with Mustafa Mashhur and 'Abd al-'Azim al-Mo'tani. Optimistic that the invitation represented the beginning of a new understanding between the Brotherhood and the regime, Tilmisani was shocked when the president started to level a range of accusations against him. The Society should not attempt to plot against the regime, the president warned, and he would not tolerate "those who try to tamper with the high interests of the state under the guise of religion".¹³⁰ He accused the Society of treason, sabotage, fomenting sectarian riots and of corrupting the youth through misleading articles in *al-Da'wa*. When the President lectured the Murshid that "religion must not be mingled with politics", Tilmisani retorted in a refutation that would make him famed among his following: "If anyone else had said what you said, I

¹²⁶ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 248. Baker notes: "only the [Brotherhood's] organisation [...] could act as a political counterweight to the radical students and workers who had fallen under the influence on the left".

¹²⁷ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 36.

¹²⁸ Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹²⁹ al-Baz, Muhammad. "Abu al-Ela Madi: Ma'amoun al-Hodeibi Is a Threat to the [Muslim] Brotherhood!" *Sawt al-Umma*, 1 September 2003.

¹³⁰ al-Tilmisani, 'Omar. Interview in *al-Musawwar*, 22 January 1982, quoted in Baker, *Sadat and After*. p. 243.

would complain to you. But since you, Mohammed Anwar al-Sadat, are the author of these accusations, I can only raise my complaint against you to God, who is the wisest of rulers". He outlined that the solution to Egypt's crisis required that "God's Law must be applied" and reminded the President: "It is only when you do this that the masses will be with you".¹³¹

Shortly after this exchange, a private meeting took place in the president's residence outside of Cairo. Sadat was aware that the failure of his economic policies pressured him to replace "implicit cooperation with an explicit understanding".¹³² Accordingly, he offered to register the Society as an association under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Tilmisani, well aware of the power he had at this point through the Brotherhood's command of the rank and file of the Jama'at Islamiyya, refused. Madi later explained:

[The Jama'at Islamiyya] went beyond the student body as it was joined by engineers, peasants, teachers, workers and [members of] other professions. It started to have leaders and members from outside the student framework. A popular movement meant that it became diverse and was composed of all sectors of the population.¹³³

Tilmisani's rejection of Sadat's offer was based on the rationale that this would limit the scope of the Brotherhood's activities to the domain of charitable work, which would have blocked the transformation of the Brotherhood into a political party.¹³⁴ Tilmisani preferred the ambiguity of the Brotherhood's semi-legal status to dependence on government sanction. His unwillingness to accept this offer showed the extent to which the Brotherhood, by the end of the decade, had reasserted itself as a decisive player on Egypt's domestic scene.¹³⁵

Following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty on 26 March 1979, the confrontation between the regime and the radical elements of the Jama'at Islamiyya, who were unaffiliated with the Brotherhood, intensified. In April 1980, violent conflicts took place between Copts and the violent faction of Karam Zuhdi in Upper Egypt, leading to a split-off of a new organisation called al-Jihad, whose members were disillusioned by the Jama'at Islamiyya's hesitancy and lack of a national strategy.¹³⁶ The Cairo branch of the Jama'at Islamiyya, by now under the leadership of 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, saw the only solution as being to destroy the "infidel state". The poisonous atmosphere led to sectarian troubles in

¹³¹ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 244.

¹³² Ibid., p. 250.

¹³³ Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Alexandria, 21 May 2013.

¹³⁴ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 31.

¹³⁵ Baker. *Sadat and After*, pp. 244 ff.

¹³⁶ Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, p. 205.

Zawiyya al-Hamra in June 1981. With the security situation rapidly deteriorating, Sadat could no longer uphold the fragile balance of power with the Islamist camp. In September, he ordered the Central Security Forces to conduct a massive crackdown on Islamist activists. By abandoning his democracy rhetoric, he squashed Tilmisani's hope of establishing a political party and instead accused the Brotherhood of wanting to form a secret organisation.¹³⁷ Among a climate of growing repression, over 1,500 individuals were arrested, including the brother of Khalid al-Islambuli, a lieutenant in the army and a leader of the Jama'at Islamiyya in Asyut.¹³⁸ It was he who, during the military parade to commemorate the 1973 victory on 6 October 1981, assassinated the man he called the "Pharaoh".

¹³⁷ 'Ali. *The Road to Ittihadyya*, p. 81.

¹³⁸ Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*, pp. 191 and 205.

THE RISE OF THE VANGUARD (1981-1990)

During the eighties, the Society of the Muslim Brothers spread its vision of Islamic reform systematically among key state institutions. Under the leadership of Tilmisani, the student organisers expanded their presence in the teachers' clubs, the professional associations and the parliament. Their activities would now be organised within the formal structure of the Muslim Brotherhood, to which they had pledged an oath of allegiance during the previous decade. Entering professional life, the entrepreneurial student cadres remained committed to Tilmisani's vision, eager to turn the Society into a political party that would become a legitimate actor in the framework of the Egyptian nation-state.

Their ambitions were curbed both by the regime, as well as by an increasingly powerful coalition of hardliners within the Brotherhood. While the student organisers of the Jama'at Islamiyya were focused on spreading the Brotherhood's influence among broader segments of society, a group of senior figures within the Guidance Office were more concerned with rebuilding the ranks of the formal *tanzīm*. In order to forge a strong, effective organisation, these leaders were obsessively focused on reassembling the joints of the Brotherhood internally. This process was consolidated with the adoption of the statutes of 1982.¹

The efforts of what would become known as the Qutbist trend were not focused exclusively on Egypt. The founding of an "International Organisation" (*tanzīm dawlī*) represented an attempt to broaden the Brotherhood's activities on a global level. Within the conceptual universe of the Society's reform project, the International Organisation was a necessary requirement for the establishment of the caliphate.² It was the institutional arrangement through which Muslim nations would eventually be able to unite in order to "spread the call of Islam to all corners of the globe".³ The intellectual origins of this project had already been formulated by Hasan al-Banna, but it was only with Mustafa Mashhur that the International Organisation was formally established, with the Egyptian branch serving as its headquarters.

¹ "The General Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1982 A.D." in *Statutes and By-Laws of the Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 260-272.

² Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2012.

³ al-Banna. "Letter on Teachings" in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

The student leaders of the Tilmisani school of thought had a different focus, both in terms of activities as well as in terms of organisational vision. While they participated in the reorganisation of the Brotherhood's ranks, they conceived of the Society as an open community where every Muslim with the necessary skills and talents could join and contribute to the Islamic project according to his or her capacities. They interpreted Hasan al-Banna's writings as having set the cornerstone of a professional Society, where rewards and progression was based on the value of meritocracy.⁴ This vision differed markedly from that of the "Qutbists" (*al-quṭbiyyūn*) who were suspicious of people who have not been brought up according to the curriculum of the Special Apparatus and were therefore at risk of having been exposed to "impure" ideologies.

'Omar al-Tilmisani viewed the Society as a professional community, meaning it would take outsiders that are ready, brought up outside [the organisation], with an understanding from outside. This is the view of the open Society. It's different from the view of the secret organisation of the Qutbists, who don't recognize anyone who was not brought up within the Society from an early age.⁵

While Tilmisani's charisma and visionary leadership was able to hold the two ideological-organisational tendencies together, his death in 1986 brought the conflict between these two schools of thought to the forefront, leading to an aggravation of the internal power struggle, where actors of both trends sought to define a more pronounced articulation of their strategic vision. At the end of the decade, the internationalist project of the Qutbist leadership collapsed. Since the Kuwaiti Brotherhood branch had contributed considerably to the funding of the International Organisation, the Iraqi invasion of the Gulf sheikhdom in 1990 brought the Society's internationalist efforts to a provisional standstill.

* * *

Mubarak's Early Years

The growing internal power struggle took place against the backdrop of the larger national context in Egypt after Hosni Mubarak had succeeded Anwar al-Sadat in 1981. A career army officer and a former pilot, Mubarak was a different kind of leader than the charismatic Nasser

⁴ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

⁵ Ibid.

or the flamboyant Sadat.⁶ He was a simple-minded person from the countryside, known for his social awkwardness and an obsessive concern with privacy. He distinguished himself through a stiff physical appearance, a generally uninterested attitude and an inward-focused mind-set. For the greater part of his life, the former army officer that Egyptians likened to the red cow on the label of the French cheese *la vache qui rit* lived a comfortable middle-class existence – a predictable life unlikely to “produce a deep and complex personality fired by a sense of historical destiny”.⁷

Contrary to his predecessors, Mubarak had never been interested in politics and therefore was unable to develop much of a vision for Egypt. During the first decade of his rule, he eclectically drew on the legacies of his predecessors – a mix of ideologically and programmatically confused policies that were constantly challenged by his rivals.⁸ As Mubarak did not possess the kind of clientele on which he could rely in terms of political loyalty, this period witnessed a growing detachment of private interests from governmental and presidential control. Mubarak’s greatest challenge was to build a network of supporters while lacking the necessary material resources to ensure their loyalty. Unwilling or unable to engineer a fundamental change in the political economy, he continued to trade state capital and regulatory prerogatives to private sector interests in return for access to resources. In order to prevent his position from being eroded, he gradually replaced his rivals in the National Democratic Party (NDP) with a new breed of loyalists. These mostly second-rank Nasserists emerged as a new class of political apparatchiks over the coming years, and they would form the core of the group that would become known as the *fulūl* after the revolution of 2011.

The direction charted by Sadat also dictated Mubarak’s foreign policy, whose main focus was the preservation of the peace with Israel.⁹ This policy was characterised by a desire to reintegrate Egypt into the Arab world while bringing the Soviet Union back into the equation. Mubarak knew that in order to avoid a scenario in which the *infītāḥ* bourgeoisie would become too powerful, he would need to establish some distance between Washington and Cairo. His goal was to retain Egypt’s social peace and political cohesion in the face of economic difficulties, and for this he needed some degree of democratic governance, as well as the assistance of political activists from previous eras. Financial and economic dependency

⁶ See also ‘Awadi, Hisham. *In Pursuit of Legitimacy : The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. London: Tauris, 2004.

⁷ Springborg. *Mubarak’s Egypt*, p. 27.

⁸ Tripp, Charles and Owen, Roger. *Egypt under Mubarak*. London: Routledge, 1989.

⁹ Cleveland, William. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 5th edition. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2013, p. 390.

on the United States led to increasing levels of indebtedness. To guarantee social peace and stability in the context of a growing economic inequality, Mubarak relied on borrowing, a policy that led to a debt trap in 1987 and made Egypt reliant on financial assistance from the IMF.¹⁰ The country's growing indebtedness was the prime reasons why Mubarak consented to supply the U.S.-led coalition with Egyptian troops during the Gulf War of 1990 and 1991.

During the first years of his presidency, Mubarak tried to strengthen his power by maintaining a conciliatory tone towards the Islamists. To counter-balance the growing power of the *munfatihūn*, as the proponents of economic liberalisation were called, he granted the moderate Islamist opposition a high degree of freedom. But this tempered pluralism did not in any significant way widen the base of participation for a political opposition that would be strong enough to counter the emerging bourgeoisie as a class. Instead, Mubarak adopted a managerial and conciliatory approach to the Islamists, which proceeded along the trajectory charted by Sadat. As Robert Springborg observed, his formula was that of a “tentative pluralism” that operated through deception, manipulation and control.¹¹ Meanwhile, the president remained highly suspicious of Islamic fundamentalism. He was aware of the strong roots political Islam had struck in Egyptian society, but he differentiated – at least initially – between the gradualist approach of the Brotherhood and the more radical Islamic fringe on the right of the Islamist spectrum.

Yet, he never lifted the legal restrictions to allow the Brotherhood to step out of the shadow of illegality. Tilmisani's hopes of establishing a political party and converting the Society into a “normal” political actor remained unmet. Power continued to be concentrated in the hands of the army and the president, a situation that persisted thanks to successive extensions of the Emergency Laws. Throughout the decade, Mubarak ensured that the NDP would keep more than two thirds of the seats in parliament.¹² He had made clear that he did not regard the Brotherhood as standing on a par with other groups. After assuming the presidency in 1981, he underscored this attitude when he invited all opposition leaders to a meeting in the presidential palace – with the exception of Tilmisani.

Debates over Party Politics

Mubarak's tentative pluralism did not prohibit the young, ambitious student organisers from

¹⁰ Seddon, David. “The Politics of Adjustment: Egypt and the IMF, 1987-1990”. *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 47 (1990), pp. 95–104.

¹¹ Springborg. *Mubarak's Egypt*, p. 36.

¹² ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 85.

continuing their political activities. As Abu al-Futuh, ‘Arian, Madi, Dawud, Za‘farani and others graduated from university, Tilmisani put some of them in charge of the Students Section (*qism ṭalaba*) in a strategic attempt to reach out to a bigger crowd of university students. These student organisers were the same who had previously won seats in the universities’ governing boards, such as in Asyut in 1985 and in Cairo in 1986, demonstrating the extent to which the Brotherhood’s organisational capabilities had evolved. The student cadres organised various activities to reach out to new students and further strengthen the Brotherhood’s presence at the universities.¹³

The Brotherhood also gradually expanded its recruitment efforts into the orbit of secondary schools, thus broadening their outreach to younger generations.¹⁴ This policy was in line with the Brotherhood’s conviction that educating children guaranteed a firmer commitment to the Society’s culture, values and ideology. Indoctrination at a younger age was considered to be like an “inscription on a rock”.¹⁵ The Brotherhood adopted different curricula for girls, called “flowers” (*zaharāt*) and boys, called “young lions” (*ashbāl*).¹⁶ Similarly, active Brothers, supporters and fans were educated according to different curricula, while sisters (*ikhwāt*) were placed in a separate category altogether. The goal was to penetrate the pool of younger potential recruits and have them join the Brotherhood’s ranks before reaching university age.¹⁷ In later years, these efforts were extended to school children and teenagers, which were classified in the Brotherhood’s *tarbiyya*-system into the following categories: “young lions” consisted of kids from six to ten years of age, “primary” (*ibtidā’ī*), meaning young students between ten to thirteen, and “secondary” (*thanāwī*), meaning students from thirteen to seventeen.¹⁸

Another strategy of spreading the *da‘wa* was to place Brotherhood candidates on the boards of the professional associations. The syndicates (*niqābāt*) were an active and dynamic sector of Egyptian civil society, representing specific professions and as such offering an opportunity for political activities among the middle class. Towards the end of 1982, Tilmisani set a strategy aimed at targeting the educated middle class while expanding the Brotherhood’s activities in private voluntary organisations and recruit among the urban

¹³ Abu’l-‘Ila Madi, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 59.

¹⁴ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹⁵ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

¹⁶ On the role of women in the Brotherhood, see the analysis by Abdel-Latif, Omayma. “In the Shadow of the Brothers: The Women of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.” *Carnegie Middle East Center*. 31 October 2008. Accessed 2 October 2015. carnegie-mec.org/2008/10/31/in-shadow-of-brothers-women-of-egyptian-muslim-brotherhood/b072

¹⁷ Faruq, ‘Amr. *Dawlat al-Khilāfa al-Ikhwāniyya : Asrār wa Wathā’iq takshifu al-Jamā’a min al-Dākhil (The Brotherhood Caliphate State: Secrets and Documents revealing the Society from Within)*. Giza: al-Jazirah lil-Nashr wa’l-Tawzi’, 2010, p. 11.

¹⁸ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

poor.¹⁹ Tilmisani understood that, in order to establish stronger links with this strategic sector, nobody was better suited to this effort than the student organisers of the Jama‘at Islamiyya. ‘Issam al-‘Arian, who was the leader of the Medical College of Cairo, became a member in the Doctors’ Union and the youngest member of parliament in 1984. Abu al-Futuh, president of the Student Union of Cairo University from 1975 to 1977, was elected secretary general of the Doctors’ Union in 1988. Helmi Gazzar, former leader of the Jama‘at Islamiyya in Egypt, was elected assistant secretary general of the Doctors’ Union in Giza in 1984.²⁰

After their success in the Doctors’ Union, the Brotherhood competed in the elections of the Engineers’ Syndicate. In 1985, Brotherhood candidates achieved their first victory and two years later won fifty-four out of a total of sixty-one seats on the executive board. Abu’l-Ila Maadi, vice-president of the Student Union in Egypt in 1978 became assistant secretary general of the Engineers’ Syndicate in 1988. Other electoral successes were achieved in the associations of the pharmacists, the scientists, the agronomists, the journalists and the traders. By 1992 the most important professional association in Egypt, the Lawyers’ Syndicate, fell under Brotherhood dominance, with the charismatic star-lawyer Mokhtar Nuh taking the leadership.²¹ By controlling these strategically important bodies, Brotherhood candidates in many instances defeated pro-government candidates, thereby undercutting the ability of the regime to control the professional middle class.²² As the syndicates were subject to syndication legislation and government financing, this opened a new arena of conflict with the regime.²³ Being the political strategist he was, Tilmisani was conscious of the Society’s precarious position and the looming threat of a potential crackdown. For this reason, the Society avoided using political language that could be perceived as confrontational. Instead, it focused on administrative issues and aptly avoided competing for leadership positions, instead trying to penetrate the syndicates from the bottom-up.²⁴

As a next step, Tilmisani envisioned entering the People’s Assembly. Law 114 of 1983 replaced individual party lists with a system of combined lists, allowing Brotherhood members to run as individuals on the lists of a coalition of parties. The fact that the Brotherhood was allowed to participate in parliamentary elections was exciting news to politically ambitious people like Abu al-Futuh, ‘Arian, Gazzar and Za‘farani. Senior figures in the Guidance Office like Salah Shadi, Farid ‘Abd al-Khaliq and Ahmed al-Malt supported

¹⁹ Fahmy, Ninette S. “The Performance of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Egyptian Syndicates: an Alternative Formula for Reform.” *Middle East Journal* 52, no. 4 (Fall 1998), pp. 551-62.

²⁰ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 92.

²¹ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

²² Springborg. *Mubarak’s Egypt*, pp. 86 and 228.

²³ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 84.

²⁴ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 61.

this strategy.²⁵ Tilmisani was determined to direct the Brotherhood towards a “representative model” (*namaṭ tamthīl*) by turning the Society into a more political organisation “owned” by all who participated in it.²⁶ He negotiated an alliance with the Society’s historic rival, the secular Wafd, of which Tilmisani had been a member in his youth. This arrangement was in the interest of both sides: the Brotherhood allied itself with a party that had a historical legacy, while the Wafd linked itself to an organisation that could mobilise large numbers of street supporters.²⁷ The new alliance also benefitted the student cadres by giving them a new platform to express their positions. Following the elections of 1984, the Muslim Brotherhood, as the junior partner in the electoral alliance, won eight seats out of a total of fifty-eight.

The integration of the student organisers into the syndicates, and their growing engagement with broader segments of society, entailed a gradual shift in the attitudes towards religious and social questions. The activism in the unions and syndicates forged a culture among an emerging middle-rank leadership where meritocracy and inclusion became important values. The students gradually developed an understanding of politics that went beyond simplistic slogans such as “Islam is the solution”. There was a realisation that mental isolation within the conceptual universe of a rigid Salafism was counterproductive to their political ambitions and that engagement with society was more helpful for achieving their goal of Islamic reform.²⁸ Beards and traditional Islamic dress was gradually dispensed with and the students moved closer to the prevailing normativity of the political establishment.

The 1984 parliamentary elections led to a new turn in regime repression. Mubarak had instructed his Minister of the Interior, Hasan Abu Pasha, to ensure that the NDP would gain no less than ninety-five per cent of the vote. When regime-supported street thugs threatened voters, this vindicated those in the Society who were opposed to Tilmisani’s political approach. Although Mustafa Mashhur and Ahmed al-Malt supported electoral politics in principle, they did so out of the logic that participation in important state institutions would strengthen the Society’s *da‘wa* priorities. They strictly opposed the idea of turning the Brotherhood into a political party for fear that this would endanger the Society’s missionary activities. But from the point of view of Tilmisani, a party would be the very mechanism that would allow the Brotherhood to make inroads into Egyptian society.²⁹ After consultation with Islamist party leaders in Turkey, Jordan and Yemen, he charged an internal committee with

²⁵ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, pp. 98-9.

²⁶ ‘Ali. *The Road to Ittihadīyya*, p. 82.

²⁷ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 47.

²⁸ Abu al-Futuh. quoted in *ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁹ Zahid, Mohammed. *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s Succession Crisis : The Politics of Liberalisation and Reform in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 97.

drafting two separate manifestos, one for the Egyptian Reform Party (Hizb al-Islah al-Masri) and one for the Consultation Party (Hizb al-Shura). In an attempt to counter the arguments of his internal rivals, he reassured them that any future party would not be a substitute for the Brotherhood, but instead would remain firmly under its wing. He further assured them that the Society would not enter parliament in order to seek political power, but to spread the word of God: “Our goal is not [...] a political victory but rather [...] a victory for God and the application of His Law”.³⁰ In a largely semantic argument, he pointed out that Islam did not recognise the word “party” (*hizb*). “If you read the Quran from start to finish, you will not find the word ‘parties’. Hence, we don’t accept the idea of parties”.³¹

Tilmisani’s careful manoeuvring with respect to his internal rivals had little bearing on the fact that many of the former Jama‘at Islamiyya members started to actively flirt with the idea of party politics. The party project would remain at the centre of a growing ideological conflict between Tilmisani’s open vision and those who aspired to an organisational design along the lines of the Special Apparatus. Their dislike for party politics seemed to be vindicated by the letters of Hasan al-Banna, who viewed parties as a decisive factor of disunity. While approving of parliamentary politics, as shown in his collaboration with the Wafd’s Mustafa al-Nahhas 1944, Banna was convinced that liberalism – the idea that a parliamentary system was not possible without party pluralism – was absurd. Instead of an “undue insistence on voting, rebellion against the party, war-mindedness, liking of differences and tug-of-war for power” as the special feature of the party system, he advocated one-party rule.

The Legacy of Sayyid Qutb

Similar to Banna, Sayyid Qutb rejected party politics as a matter of doctrine. When asked in 1963 for advice by colleagues from Syria and Jordan on how the relationship between national Brotherhood chapters and the respective local regimes should be handled, Qutb

³⁰ Tilmisani is quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 48.

³¹ al-Tilmisani, ‘Omar. Interview, *al-Ahrar*, 7 November 1983, quoted in Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 51, referring to Haydar, Khalil ‘Ali. *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn : Sujāl al-Aḥdāth (The Muslim Brotherhood : Documentation of Events)*. Kuwait: Kazima Company for Publishing, Translation and Distribution, 1989, p. 91. This statement by Tilmisani is highly surprising, since the word “party” (*hizb*) occurs numerous times in the Quran, twice in a positive sense as the “party of God” (*hizb Allah*) – once in 5:56 and twice in 58:22, and four times in a pejorative sense – once in 23:53 and 30:32 respectively in the meaning of “sect”, and twice in 58:19, as the “party of Satan” (*hizb al-Shayṭān*). Furthermore, sura 33 is named “the parties” (*al-aḥzāb*). As it is impossible that Tilmisani did not know this, it is likely that he wanted to draw a distinction between moral and political meanings or aims, the former being properly Islamic and the latter not. I thank James McDougall for this insight.

encouraged them to focus on their religious, cultural and proselytising mission and eschew politics altogether.³² The Islamic movement had to capture the hearts and minds of Muslim believers *before* it was able to establish itself in power, he believed. The rejection of party politics constituted a central article of faith for the Qutbist leaders. To them, political competition was deplorable not only on religious and ideological grounds, but also in terms of the experiences they had endured during years in prison. These men suffered from traumatic psychological events that raised in them a deep-seated instinct of doubt and fear and a fundamental mistrust of anybody who was not part of their inner circle.³³ Tilmisani's open course, which would have been required if the regime would have legitimised the Muslim Brotherhood as a party, would expose the Society to the risk of persecution and divest it of its most valuable asset: secrecy.

But the legacy of Sayyid Qutb ran deeper in the conceptual universe of the "Qutbists". Qutb had emphasised the idea of the organisation (*tanzīm*) as the crucial element necessary for implementing the Brotherhood's global project. Because of his emphasis on a proper institutional mechanism as a prerequisite for Islamic reform, Qutb's followers were more focused on structuring the Society as an organisation. Their objective was to keep control of the rank-and-file membership. To this end, they re-established an internal bureaucracy and system for education, indoctrination and mobilisation by staffing the Committee for Upbringing (*lajnat al-tarbīyya*), through which the higher command monitored and cultivated the base, with loyalists.³⁴ The central command undertook regular investigations to "uncover the life" (*kashf al-ḥayāt*) of new recruits and assure their loyalty and acceptance of the principle of "listening and obedience" (*sama'a wa ṭā'a*).³⁵ Only an organisation characterised by effective internal decision-making procedures and clear lines of hierarchy, where the rank-and-file members would execute the leaders' orders without hesitation, would be able to endure the inevitable hardships.

Sayyid Qutb is conventionally associated with the tradition of political violence that emanated from those followers who were radicalised in prison.³⁶ He is perhaps most famous for his articulation in a modern context of the notion of *takfīr* – the act of declaring fellow Muslims as apostates and thus establishing the theoretical foundations for their killing. This notion derived from its corollary *jāhiliyya*, a term that described the time of "ignorance" of

³² Calvert. *Sayyid Qutb*, p. 239.

³³ Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

³⁴ For a detailed exposition of the function of the Committee of Upbringing, see Kandil, *Inside the Brotherhood*, pp. 9-10.

³⁵ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

³⁶ Kepel primarily associated with Qutb's thought the followers of Shukri Mustafa of the Society of Muslims, the radical fringe of Islamists that was influenced by the idea of *takfīr*. See Kepel. *Muslim Extremism*.

God's Law in pre-Islamic Arabia. Qutb had elaborated his concept of *jāhiliyya* in his famous work *In the Shadow of the Qur'an (Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān)*, written between 1951 and 1965, and articulated in a shorter and more succinct version in his 1964 manifesto *Milestones*. Qutb derived the concept of *jāhiliyya* from the Indian Muslim intellectual Sayyid Mawlana Abu'l-'Ala Mawdudi, founder of the Pakistani group Jama'at-e-Islami in 1941, as well as from the medieval scholar Taqī al-Dīn Ahmed Ibn Taymiyya. While Mawdudi and Ibn Taymiyya used the term *jāhiliyya* in the traditional sense, Qutb expanded the concept by adapting it to the contemporary context. He believed that the Muslim world was "locked in a state of ignorance from the teachings of God". The world was ruled by man-made laws and because of this was "ignorant" (*jāhil*) of divine guidance. This state of affairs amounted to a continuous "rebellion against God's sovereignty (*ḥukūmiyyat Allah*) on earth" and, as a consequence, the perpetuation of the "oppression and humiliation of mankind". He maintained that Islam was the only system that possessed the fundamental values and way of life to give peace to the human mind. Quite different to the gradualist approach favoured by Banna, Qutb believed that an Islamic state could only be achieved by a revolutionary transformation of the entire social and political order. "Only in the Islamic way of life do all men become free from the servitude of some men to others and devote themselves to the worship of God alone, deriving guidance from Him alone and bowing before Him alone."³⁷ The Islamic state stood in opposition to the system of nation-states produced by *jāhili* society, which were characterised by "one man's lordship over another". The very conception of the secular nation-state was, according to Qutb, "against the system of the universe", as it brought the "involuntary aspect of human life into conflict with its voluntary aspect".³⁸

Qutb's critique of the status quo captured the imagination of an entire generation of Islamists, especially among the young. The liberation he implied was understood not in the sense of the French revolution, as freedom from absolutism through popular sovereignty, but as "freedom of man on earth from every authority except that of God, and the declaration that sovereignty is God's alone".³⁹ In order to abolish the organisations and authorities of the *jāhili* system, the Islamic movement had to employ the methods of both preaching and persuasion, as well as of physical power by the sword (*jihād bi'l-sayf*). The interpretation of Qutb's thought by those in the Brotherhood who would lead the Society during the period of governance had implications beyond the context of political violence, and it is this angle that is of primary relevance for our understanding of the Qutbist school of thought. Qutb insisted

³⁷ Qutb. *Milestones*, p. 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

that Islam was not simply a theory, but also a “practical religion, which came to order the practical affairs of life”. He asserted that it was “an error, and what an error, to think that Islam can evolve in the shape of an abstract theory limited to intellectual learning and cultural knowledge”. Rather, Islam was “a way of life working with actuality”. Muslims needed to be autonomous and have power in their own society. Every aspect of life should be under the sovereignty of God, who “wanted the community and the movement to be founded on belief”. It was only through the “dynamic progress of the community [that] the faith also grew”.⁴⁰

According to Qutb, the Islamic theory was superior to the abstract and secular theories formulated by men, such as capitalism, communism and democracy. In contrast, Islam “appears personified in human beings, in a living organisation and in a practical movement”. Faith was to grow through the agency of a dynamic movement and an active organisation. The foundations of this idea went back to Hasan al-Banna, captured in his emphasis on “activity” (*nashāt*), a central concept in the ideological toolbox of the Brotherhood that is also at the basis of the revolutionary appeal of radical Islamist movements today. Banna elaborated that Islam fluctuated between an anaesthetic phase and a lively phase, making a distinction between the ritualistic and static (*khāmil*) approach to Islam propagated by the al-Azhar establishment of his time, and his own articulation of Islam as an activist ideology by which society could be transformed.⁴¹ In his tract *Between Yesterday and Today*, he argued that the principles and teachings of Islam should not remain “theories held by minds, or ideas relegated by books, or words to be bandied about”. Islam, he wrote, “instituted practical ways of applying them in order to implement them, strengthen them, and draw profit from their effects and results”.⁴²

Like Islamic society, so *jāhilī* society was for Qutb not merely a theory but a social reality that took the shape of a concrete living movement with its own specific leadership, concepts and values, traditions, habits and feelings. In order to resist the oppression emanating from this kind of society and bring about the revival of Islam, the new system of Islam “should also come into the battlefield as an organised movement and a viable group [...] with a determination that its strategy, its social organisation, and the relationship between its individuals should be firmer and more powerful than the existing *jāhilī* society.”⁴³ To liberate mankind from the shackles of oppression and revive the “true Islamic way of life”, an

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴¹ Note the similarity with Ali Shari‘ati’s formulations of a revolutionary “red Shi’ism” of martyrdom and an institutionalised, clergy-dominated “black Shi’ism” of mourning.

⁴² al-Banna, Hasan. “Bayna al-Ams wa’l-Yawm” (Between Yesterday and Today) in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 375-98. Translation by Wendell. *Five Tracts*, p. 16.

⁴³ Qutb. *Milestones*, p. 35.

“organised and active group” that is “independent and distinct from the active and organised *jāhili* society” was required. This movement would eventually enable Islam to attain “global guidance”.

In contrast to Banna’s gradualist conception, for Qutb the global rule of Islam was not to emerge through a bottom-up strategy that limited itself to preaching and educational reform. It would need to be initiated by “a vanguard (*talī’a*), which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of ignorance which has encompassed the entire world”. The vanguard was advised to “keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing *jāhiliyya* [while it] should also keep some ties with it”. In contrast to Takfīr wa’l-Hijra leader Shukri Mustafa, who had concluded that the only way of dealing with *jāhili* society was to completely abandon it in order to gain the necessary force to then attack it, Qutb advised his followers to practice “mental and emotional withdrawal” (*‘uzla shu‘ūriyya wa wijdāniyya*).⁴⁴

The vanguard constituted a new leadership that held together “an active, harmonious and cooperative group”, which “like the limbs of a human body work together for its formation” and organising its various efforts “into one harmonious purpose”.⁴⁵ Qutb had elaborated the idea of the faithful vanguard when he was in prison. There, he had already started to educate new cadres of activists from the remnants of the former Special Apparatus, with the objective of guiding the incipient re-organisation of the Brotherhood.⁴⁶ In order for the vanguard to “know the landmarks and the milestones of the road towards this goal so that they may recognise the starting place, the nature, the responsibilities and the ultimate purpose of this long journey”, *Milestones* was written as a guide. It was this idea of the vanguard – an elitist cadre of faithful and highly committed Brothers distinguishing themselves from others through their uncompromising obedience to the leadership and an absolute certainty in their mission – that would form the backbone of Qutb’s revolutionary theory. *Milestones* substituted the gradualist, seven-step blueprint of Banna’s reform project with a quasi-Leninist baseline. This idea had a strong impact on the organisational vision of the Qutbists, who insisted that it was difficult for even the most dedicated Brother to possess accurate knowledge of the faith.⁴⁷

Qutb’s revolutionary re-interpretation of Banna’s ideas offended many in the Society, such as Hasan al-Banna’s younger brother ‘Abd al-Rahman, who chastised him for not

⁴⁴ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

⁴⁵ Qutb. *Milestones*, p. 58.

⁴⁶ Ṣalah, ‘Abd al-Fattah Khalidī. *Amrīkā min al-Dākhil bi-Minzār Sayyid Qūṭb (America from the Point of View of Sayyid Qutb)*. Cairo: Dar al-Wafā’, 1986, p. 392.

⁴⁷ Calvert. *Qutb*, p. 234.

referring to the movement's established leadership. In 'Abd al-Rahman's view, Qutb had cultivated a new cadre of highly ambitious people during his time in Tora prison, a development which carried the danger of undermining the authority of the established leadership. Upholding the traditional Sunni theological position, Qutb's critics believed that he had no right to pass judgment on the faith of fellow Muslims. Already during the writing of his theory, Qutb became a source of friction within the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The idea of a vanguard was not altogether original, though Qutb was the first to articulate it explicitly. In *Milestones*, Qutb wrote that the vanguard was already in existence as "a waiting reality about to be materialised". Indeed, Banna's *Letter on Teachings* was addressed to "those who strive in the Muslim Brotherhood" (*ikhwān mujāhidīn*). The "striving Brothers" were those who

believe in the nobility of their call and the sanctity of their ideology, [who] have made a firm resolve to live by it and die in its path. Only to these Brothers do I direct my words. They are not lessons to be memorised but instructions to be carried out.⁴⁸

Members within this category distinguished themselves from others through the extraordinary strength of their faith, their unconditional devotion to Islam and their absolute obedience to the leadership. They had passed through the first two phases of "obedience" (*ṭā'a*) – one of the ten basic pillars of the Brotherhood's credo – which implied "full compliance with the commands of the leadership and prompt execution of these commands in hardship and in ease, whether pleasant or unpleasant".⁴⁹

While the category of the *ikhwān mujāhidīn* was added to the Brotherhood's membership structure already in 1935, it was only in late 1942 that it was organised more coherently in the framework of the Special Apparatus.⁵⁰ Qutb's notion of the faithful vanguard gave the members of this unit a more coherent doctrinal frame of reference by linking it to the theory of *jāhiliyya*. By substituting the "waiting reality" of the faithful vanguard with his revolutionary theory, Qutb formulated the ideological justification for an already-existing group of devotees, by introducing a revolutionary interpretation into Banna's gradualist conception of Islamic reform. It was the self-conception of the revolutionary avant-garde, a specialised group of highly loyal and devoted Brothers, that was at the heart of what

⁴⁸ al-Banna, Hasan. "Letter on Teachings" in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See Figure 4. On the early formation of the Special Apparatus see Mitchell. *The Society*, pp. 28-32.

would be called by the Egyptian media the “Qutbists”, the “Special Apparatus” (*nizām khāṣṣ*) or the “secret organisation” (*al-tanzīm al-sirrī*).

The *tanzīmī* vision was expressed during a lecture delivered in Alexandria in April 2011 by Deputy Guide Khairat al-Shatir. The “restoration of Islam, the subjugation of people to God’s rule and its institution on earth and the Islamisation of life” was only possible if two primary prerequisites were fulfilled. One was the “strength of the psychological construction of the individual” and the other was “a strong organisational construction”.

Islam disappeared from life, thus preachers of the Brotherhood undertook the work of restoring Islam in its all-encompassing conception to the lives of people, and they believed that this would only come by way of [a] strong Society. The Society is thus an instrument and not a long-term goal. It is an instrument or means to Islamise life in its entirety and institute religion.⁵¹

Because of the importance of the organisation, it was critical that its members obeyed the leadership’s decisions unconditionally: “When a decision is reached, all levels [of the structure] must commit and obey. The Society thus requires the strength of psychological construction and the strength of organisational construction. The organisational construction needs structures, officials and relationships that bind them.”⁵² Through connections and internal networks, the vanguard leaders managed to preserve a closed and exclusive elite organisation that produced “creatures that are of its like”. These men constituted a “secret unit in a secret organisation”.⁵³ (2), a Brotherhood dissident, used a pastoral metaphor to explain the mind-set of the vanguard:

Here, you have a group of chicken that you feed only with corn, and there is another one that you only feed hay or tomatoes. [...] You will find that the first [ones] become white chicken, [and the other ones become] red chicken. The country (*baladī*) chicken are the ones that eat everything. They are the best chicken for the soup, as they eat different kinds of food. So we (the dissidents) are *baladī* chicken, and not [chicken] from the farms. But the Brotherhood produces people that are of the farm kind. [...] It’s the whole idea of the *baladī* chicken versus the farm chicken.⁵⁴

⁵¹ al-Shatir. “The Project of Islamic Renaissance.” 24 April 2013.

⁵² www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Fieldnotes, 5 September 2012.

⁵⁴ (2). Interview. Cairo, 17 December 2012.

The primary concern of the Qutbist leaders was to preserve organisational effectiveness through strict command and control structures, where a strongly indoctrinated membership would act as the executive arm of the leadership. Defining the educational curriculum of the social base was therefore a priority.

Rebuilding the *Tanzīm*

In rebuilding its organisational infrastructure, the Brotherhood leadership's efforts were focused both on the domestic and the international scene. At home, Ahmed al-Malt, a prominent Brother from the *raḥīl awwal* and the founder of the Islamic Doctors' Association, was put in charge of the rebuilding efforts. Malt enjoyed a high level of prestige among younger members. Born in December 1917 in the Sharqiyya governorate village Qatawiyya, Malt had joined the Brotherhood as a teenager and later studied medicine at Cairo University. During the Palestine War in 1948, he acted as the head of the medical delegation for the Special Apparatus.⁵⁵ In his efforts at rebuilding the Brotherhood's ranks, Malt relied on Muhammed Habib, who would later play a prominent role in the Guidance Office. Born in March 1943 in the governorate of Damietta in Upper Egypt, Habib had joined the Society in 1969, after a stay in the desert as a soldier, when he decided that he wanted to "work for sake of Islam".⁵⁶ He was briefly imprisoned during the September arrests of 1981 and upon his release was informed that Malt needed his skills.

In mid-1982, representatives of various governorates met in Cairo and founded the Egypt Office (Maktab Misr), headed by Malt and whose board members included Gabr Rizq and Abu al-Futuh. The executive office was divided into different sectors (*qiṭā'*), which were placed under the management of prominent former student organisers. The Eastern Delta region was allocated to Mamduh al-Deiri and the Western Delta to Ibrahim al-Za'farani. Anwar Shahata was tasked with the Middle Delta, and Upper Egypt fell under Mohammed Habib. The Greater Cairo Sector, overseeing activities across an area of 529 square kilometres, was supervised by 'Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui.⁵⁷ The process of reorganisation and setting up procedural and administrative structures on the level of the administrative offices

⁵⁵ "D. Aḥmed al-Malt" (Dr. Ahmed al-Malt). *Ikhwanwiki*. Accessed 12 December 2014.
www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%B7

⁵⁶ Habib. *Memories*, pp. 67 and 109.

⁵⁷ Sims. *Understanding Cairo*, p. 96.

was completed by 1987.⁵⁸ But it had brought to the forefront the different visions of organisational design. The Tilmisani-educated student organisers drew inspiration from the Brotherhood's "golden period",⁵⁹ when the Society rapidly expanded its ranks by absorbing Muslims from all walks of life. They envisioned a structure that would accommodate transparency and democratic decision making, thus allowing the Society to cooperate with other state institutions. This vision differed from the *tanẓīmī* preference of the Qutbist leadership. For them, preserving secrecy was imperative in order to assure the Society's long-term survival. These different visions materialised in the disagreements between Malt and Tilmisani. As Malt was officially in charge of the Egypt Office, this implied that Brothers were supposed to turn to him for advice. But in reality, many bypassed Malt and consulted Tilmisani directly, something that the former considered to be an insult.⁶⁰

The formal re-establishment of the Brotherhood as an organisation occurred at a Consultative Council meeting on 29 July 1982. The meeting, which was attended by a hundred and thirty members (ninety from Egypt and forty from abroad) ended with the adoption by the Council of the Brotherhood's General Statutes – its first formal constitution since the statutes of 1951.⁶¹ Under five chapters and with a total of forty-seven articles, the new statutes were the main legal document that defined the Brotherhood's objectives, terms of membership, main administrative bodies, conditions for selection, electoral procedures and terms of office. In an unprecedented development, chapter five established the terms of the relationship between the Egyptian centre and the regional Brotherhood branches at the periphery.⁶² This reflected the way in which the Egyptian leadership intended to centralise political authority. The General Guide's jurisdiction was enlarged to give him formal control over Brotherhood franchises in other countries. To ensure federal representation, article 9 mandated that the new Guidance Office was to consist of fourteen members (eight Egyptians, five foreigners, and the General Guide). The Consultative Council was similarly to include thirty regional members. According to the provisions, the leaders of national Brotherhood branches (*aqṭār*, sg. *quṭr*) had to abide by the decisions of the General Guide, the Guidance Office and the Consultative Council in Egypt (article 43, paragraph 1). They were compelled to "adhere to its general policies and attitudes towards public issues" and obtain the approval of the Guidance Office before adopting important political decisions (article 43, paragraph 2).

⁵⁸ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 128.

⁵⁹ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

⁶⁰ Habib. *Memories*, p. 437.

⁶¹ al-Shami, Khalid. "Statements by Muslim Brotherhood Leaders on the Position of General Guide", *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 8 April 2009.

⁶² "The General Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1982 A.D." in *Statutes and By-Laws of the Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 260-272.

Local branch leaders were obliged to pay annual subscription fees to the mother branch in Egypt (article 64). In this new arrangement, power remained firmly vested in the hands of the Egyptians, represented through its General Guide and the Guidance Office.

With efforts of organising the ranks of the *tanẓīm* underway in Egypt, the vanguard leaders also focused on rebuilding the Brotherhood internationally. The building of an international structure reflected the strategy of the Egyptian leadership to hedge its bets against the uncertainty the Society faced in the early eighties.⁶³ Before long, the Brotherhood's "International Organisation" (*tanẓīm dawlī*) was associated with all kinds of conspiracy theories that sketched a picture of a global organisation about to infiltrate Western societies, destroy Western culture and dominate the world.⁶⁴ Such claims evoked an image of a James Bond-like world-spanning organisation endowed with a global decision-making structure, bent on hitting its Western targets at any time.⁶⁵ The idea of the Brotherhood franchise in Egypt as the "leading branch of the worldwide organisation" was later taken at face value at the highest levels of the U.S. government.⁶⁶ A number of websites and individual "terrorist experts" dedicated themselves to the task of exposing the Society's alleged global aspirations and international financial transactions – narratives that played well into the hands of American neo-conservative ideologues.⁶⁷

Speculations of a global Brotherhood conspiracy seemed to be somewhat vindicated in November 2001. In the context of a post-9/11 terrorist finance investigation, Swiss authorities launched a raid on the residence of Youssef Nada in Campione, an Italian enclave in Switzerland. During the raid, a fourteen-page document was discovered that became known as "the Project". This awkwardly worded paper pronounced in the shortest and most general terms a "global vision of a worldwide strategy for Islamic policy" and a "flexible, multi-

⁶³ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012. Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013

⁶⁴ See for instance Vidino. *The New Muslim Brotherhood*; Rubin. *The Muslim Brotherhood*.

⁶⁵ Such claims very much originated in the discourse of the Brotherhood and other Islamist movements. For instance, Hamas' Charter declared that the "Moslem Brotherhood movement is a universal organisation". See "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement", translated in *The Avalon Project*, 18 August 1988. www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm.

⁶⁶ Emerson, Steve. "Report on the Roots of Violent Extremism and Efforts to Counter It: the Muslim Brotherhood". *Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*, 10 July 2008. fas.org/irp/congress/2008_hr/roots.pdf.

⁶⁷ "The Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Watch" was started after 2001 and is dedicated to provide intelligence covering the "developments in the worldwide Muslim Brotherhood network". It claims to be "read widely by U.S. government agencies as well as by other governments and users worldwide" and is run by Steven Merley, a self-declared "investigator and intelligence specialist" specialised in the "investigation of political extremism" (see www.globalmbwatch.com). Merley is a former "Senior Analyst with the NEFA Foundation" and currently a "Chief Analyst" for Kronos Advisory. NEFA Foundation, headed by Michelle T. Hayes, a "director of development at the Medical University of South Carolina's Cardiovascular Institute" (according to Wikipedia) is not operational anymore. Kronos Advisory is an equally dubious organisation whose website has not been updated since 2013. It was founded by James E. Livingston, a retired Major General of the U.S. Marine Corps (see kronosadvisory.com).

phased, long-term approach to the ‘cultural invasion’ of the West”. According to this paper, “local Islamic policies will be drawn up in different regions”. The Brotherhood would “use deception in all areas of government and society to disguise the Islamist agenda”. It would “support movements engaged in jihad across the world” and “conduct covert operations within the halls of power in support of the global movement”, having as an objective to “infiltrate existing Western institutions and work within them until they can be subverted to Islam”.⁶⁸

An Italian and Egyptian dual-national and the chairman of al-Taqwa bank, Nada’s name had been previously placed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on a black list on suspicion of financing al-Qaida. Nada, who was known among the rank and file as the “foreign minister of the Muslim Brotherhood”, seems to have had little actual influence in Egypt.⁶⁹ In his autobiography, whose twenty chapters are framed with epigraphs featuring quotes ranging from Einstein, Shakespeare and Ghandi to George W. Bush, the Quran and Nada himself, we are presented with a rags-to-riches story whose protagonist is described as a “an acrobat with thought and languages” whose “enlightened message [...] at its simplest – and most provocatively – is to live and let live”. According to Nada’s co-publisher Douglas Thompson, the Egyptian businessman was “a good and honest man” with a “hard, clear, lucid vision”. This “ambassador of reason” was described as “the mystery inside the heart of the Middle East mystery; the part of the puzzle no one could place; that final part of the jigsaw out of reach like a wisp of smoke on the horizon”.⁷⁰

In the absence of any substantiated evidence of Nada’s or al-Taqwa’s terror financing, Swiss authorities dropped the charges in 2005. Four years later, following a request from the United States, Nada’s name was de-listed from the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committees List. Nevertheless, in 2009 an Egyptian military tribunal sentenced him to ten years’ imprisonment *in absentia* for “providing financial support” to the Muslim Brotherhood.⁷¹ Besides the general post-9/11 paranoia, it was partly the conspiratorial

⁶⁸ The “project” was published by vidion was adapted in 2012 into a documentary by the right-wing media personality Glenn Beck in “The Muslim Brotherhood ‘Project’,” *Documentary*, 2012. Accessed 7 August 2014. www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpPgmaVqKMA&feature=youtu.be_gdata_player

⁶⁹ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

⁷⁰ Nada, Youssef and Thompson, Douglas. *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood*. London : Metro, 2012, pp. xii-xv. On the inside cover of the English edition of the book, Douglas Thompson is featured as “biographer, broadcaster and international journalist” whose oeuvres include “bestselling biographies of Madonna, Clint Eastwood, Michelle Pfeiffer, Dudley Moore, John Travolta, Nicolas Cage and Leonardo DiCaprio”.

⁷¹ “Prosecutors Drop Terror Investigation.” *Swissinfo*, 2 June 2005. Accessed 6 August 2015. www.swissinfo.ch/eng/prosecutors-drop-terror-investigation/4538006; “Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee Removes Names of Three Entities”. *U.N. Security Council Press Release*. 11 March 2010. Accessed 15 August 2015. www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9877.doc.htm). Nada subsequently sued Switzerland in front of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and won the case. See “Case of Nada v. Switzerland”. *Judgment of the ECHR*. 12 September 2012. Accessed 6 August 2015. hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-113118

language and wishful thinking on the part of the Brothers that led to the perception of the Society as a global Islamic mafia.

The date of “the Project” (December 1982) was significant in that it was during the same time that Mustafa Mashhur and his collaborators set up the International Organisation. The International Organisation was not a novel idea. Its outlines were already conceived by Hasan al-Banna, whose seven-step blueprint required an international entity.⁷² Once the Brotherhood franchises had Islamised societies in individual countries, so the thinking went, an international entity would coordinate the activities of the various national organisations.⁷³ A Communications Bureau with the Islamic World was created already in 1945. Mustafa Mu'min and Nadah Sa'id helped in building Brotherhood branches in Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Indonesia, Somalia, Yemen and Afghanistan. After the persecutions and exile in 1954, some prominent Egyptian Brothers fled abroad, where they established a number of associations and companies whose purpose was to act as the base of the future International Organisation. Sa'id Ramadan, who was well connected to sympathisers in Saudi Arabia, managed to establish a network of relationships and institutions, such as the establishment of the Islamic Centres in Geneva and Cairo and a Media Institute in London.⁷⁴

In the sixties, efforts were made to form an Executive Office of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab Countries (*Maktab al-Tanfīdh li'l-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn fi'l-Bilād al-'Arabī*), which consisted of a “General Observer” (*murāqib al-'amm*) as president, a post that was held by 'Issam al-'Atar of the Brotherhood in Syria, a vice president under Mohammed 'Abd al-Rahman Khalifa, and 'Amin Lalsar, head of the Brotherhood in Lebanon. The heads of local Brotherhood franchises in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Palestine later joined the Executive Office. Since the Guidance Office in Egypt was not functional anymore following the 1965 crackdown, the Executive Office acted as the *de facto* general secretariat, with the idea that it would “coordinate” the activities of different national franchises.

The flaws of this approach were soon made evident when centrifugal national forces drove a wedge into the Brotherhood's internationalist project. In March 1968, Israeli forces launched raids into Jordanian territory to root out Yassir 'Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), leading to clashes with Jordanian security forces. The Jordanian branch circulated a memorandum aimed at defining the activities of the Brothers who wanted to form

⁷² al-Helbawy, Kamal. Interview. Cairo, 10 March 2013.

⁷³ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

⁷⁴ Tammam, Husam. *Taḥawwulāt al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn : Tafakkuk al-Ayḍulūjiyya wa Nihāyat al-Tanzīm (The Transformations of the Muslim Brotherhood: Ideological Splits and the End of the Organisation)*. 1st edition; Cairo: Maktaba Madbouli, 2006, p. 265.

a guerrilla base under the command of the Jordanian Fatah.⁷⁵ When the Jordanians attempted to use the Executive Office to further their goals, leaders of the Iraqi and Sudanese franchises vehemently resisted. For them, the International Organisation was not much more than a coordination office between independent local branches.⁷⁶ Conflicting priorities of various national Brotherhood chapters thus highlighted the ineffectiveness of this body.⁷⁷ Similar to the discrepancy between the rhetoric and reality of pan-Arabism, the pan-Islamist attempts of the International Organisation were theoretically attractive, but in reality were very much the result of wishful thinking.

Mustafa Mashhur and the Enemies of the Open Society

The formal inauguration of the International Organisation took place in Munich. The main architect behind this project was Mustafa Mashhur, who was already abroad when the September arrests occurred in 1981.⁷⁸ Mustafa Mashhur was born in September 1921 in al-Sa'diyya, a small village in the Sharqiyya governorate. Coming from a highly conservative family, he received his secondary education at Fouad I School in Cairo. When he was fifteen years old, he attended a lecture by Hasan al-Banna. Among those whom he encountered there, he found a community to which he would devote the rest of his life. After the jeep trial of 1948, he was imprisoned for three years for possession of explosives, which were intended to blow up British installations in the Canal Zone. His precise role in the Special Apparatus is unclear, but it was speculated that he had acted as deputy head.⁷⁹ When Nasser cracked down on the Brotherhood in 1954, Mashhur was sentenced to ten years of hard labour. Following his release in 1964, he involved himself in the Society's rebuilding efforts, for which he was detained in 1966. During the seventies, he worked closely with Tilmisani in reorganising the ranks of the Society, interacting with student leaders in an effort at winning them over to Banna's project of social reform.

Mashhur's ideas of the Brotherhood differed sharply from those of Tilmisani. He and other members of the Special Apparatus later reproached Tilmisani that it was because of him

⁷⁵ 'Ali. *The Road to Ittihadyya*, p. 65.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 64. Also see al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

⁷⁷ Similar to the International Organisation, the Islamic Centre in Munich became the object wild speculations among sensationalist journalists. Ian Johnson is an example of the way in which the Brotherhood (and Islamist movements in general) were treated in Western popular literature, i.e. as having a direct relationship with the CIA and the Nazis, which is of course nonsense. See Johnson, Ian. *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA and the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

⁷⁸ Mashhur had apparently travelled abroad shortly before the arrests and must have been aware of the impending crackdown. Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2012.

⁷⁹ "Obituary: Mustafa Mashhur, 1921-2002". *Impact International* 32, no. 12 (December 2012), p. 44.

that “uncultivated” Islamist activists with lax moral standards were incorporated into the Brotherhood’s ranks and promoted into top leadership positions. In opposition to the “rich and decent” Tilmisani, Mashhur was “a person of the Special Apparatus [...], strong and fierce and a man who magnified the *tanẓīm*”.⁸⁰ Because of the experiences of persecution and torture he had endured under Nasser, he was strictly opposed to Tilmisani’s plan of transforming the Brotherhood into a political party. But given the arduous task the Society faced in the seventies, he supported Tilmisani’s efforts to participate in the parliamentary elections, seeing this as a viable strategy to augment the Brotherhood’s outreach to Egyptian citizens. Along Qutbist ideals, his vision was that of a “total organisation”, based on a “complete religion, which organises people’s lives in this world as well as in the next life”. Since Islam transformed the Muslim *umma* into one body, it followed that “if one of its limbs suffer, the whole body comes to its protection”.⁸¹

Mashhur’s ally in the project of building the International Organisation was Mohammed Mahdi ‘Akif, who resided in Munich at the time of the September arrests. Nine years younger than Mashhur, ‘Akif was born in Kafr al-‘Awd in the Dakhaliyya governorate. After completing his primary education in Mansura, the young Mohammed went to Cairo to attend the Fouad I School. Suddenly exposed to the lifestyle of the big city, this son of a well-off rural family felt treated “like a farmer among the students”. This efendi-from-the-provinces experience was typical for an entire class of rural migrants, and in ‘Akif’s case translated into a sense of alienation from his urban peers.⁸² In 1943, the fifteen year old ‘Akif attended a lecture of Hasan al-Banna and shortly thereafter pledged the *bay‘a* to the Murshid. As a member of the Society’s youth group, he organised protests against the British presence in Palestine and was sent to a behaviour correction facility in 1945. After having finished his secondary schooling, he matriculated in the Engineering College and in 1947, at Banna’s request, took charge of training Brotherhood cadres. After a brief arrest in 1948, he joined the Law Faculty of Ibrahim College (today’s ‘Ain al-Shams), where he continued to instruct his fellow Brothers in techniques intended to “kill the British”.⁸³ In 1951, he became the president of the camp and was involved in an operation where he organised the shipment of

⁸⁰ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

⁸¹ Mashhur, Mustafa. *al-Jihād huwa al-Sabīl (Jihād is the Way)*. Cairo: Dar at-Tawzi‘ wa’l-Nashir al-Islamiyya, 1986. The analogy comes from a hadith narrated by Sahih al-Bukhari (277) and Abu Muslim (6011): “The example of the believers in their affection, mercy and compassion for each other is that of a body: when any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever”, quoted by *al-Durrar al-Sunniyya*, www.dorar.net/enc/mazahib/332

⁸² In Egyptian cinematography, such figures are often portrayed as having taken on the sartorial trappings of the city, which contrast markedly with the peasant dress of their fathers, who are nonetheless rich. Also, see for example the experiences of ‘Abdallah al-Tukhi as recounted in Ryzova. *The Age of the Efendiyya*, p. 237-58.

⁸³ ‘Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

300 kilograms of dynamite to blow up the British railways. He claims to have had a close relationship with Nasser, who pleaded with him for the Brotherhood to become part of the Liberation Rally, the loosely structured organising platform for pro-Revolutionary Command Council activities.⁸⁴ In April and May 1954, when the Brotherhood's relationship with the Free Officers started to deteriorate, 'Akif was arrested and spent the following twenty years behind bars:

I was in prison for twenty years and met the entire leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. I was responsible for many things. There were another two hundred [Brotherhood members] in Torah prison, and another one hundred from the Oasis (the Wahat Prison in the Western desert). After this, seventy more [Brotherhood] members came to us.⁸⁵

Like other imprisoned Brothers, he regarded the years he spent behind bars as a blessing. The community of the detained Brothers allowed him to be part of a group who shared the same fate.

Although prison life was difficult, we benefited from it [...]. We transformed the prison into a paradise and into an entire life. We elected responsible leaders, who were not from the Guidance Office [...] and we used to elect administrative committees for every six months. I changed the prison into three clubs: the Nasr club, the Fath club and the Jihad Club. I was the head of the clubs by election. Our life was all about sports, knowledge and brotherhood, and our daily program consisted of praying and lectures [...] The programmes of dawn prayers were excellent, consisting of fasting and lectures, and the large contingent of famous Sheikhs such as Muhammed al-Ghazzali and Sayyid Sabiq added to the overall prison experience.⁸⁶

Prison life also offered 'Akif an opportunity to acquaint himself with the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. In July 1974, the forty-six year old man was set free and, at the suggestion of Tilmisani, married the nineteen year old sister of Mahmud 'Izzat. Convinced by Hasan al-Banna's idea of the Islamic state and the necessity of an international entity to prepare for such a venture, he organised Islamic seminars in numerous countries, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Mali, the United States and European countries. Following the foundation of the International Organisation in 1982, 'Akif assumed the position of a director

⁸⁴ Kandil. *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 22.

⁸⁵ 'Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

of the Islamic Centre in Munich, a post he held until 1987.⁸⁷

Besides Mashhur and ‘Akif, another key figure involved in the constitution of the International Organisation was Mahmud ‘Izzat, who similarly had left Egypt before the arrests of 1981.⁸⁸ ‘Izzat was a close associate of Mashhur and the person who would enable the rise of Khairat al-Shatir during the nineties. He assumed the position of the General Secretary of the Brotherhood’s headquarters, one of the most prestigious administrative posts, and became the Murshid after the arrest of Mohammed Badi‘ in August 2013. It was rumoured that he had taken over the leadership of the Society, managing the sit-in at Raba‘a al-‘Adawiyya “from a beachside hotel in Gaza”.⁸⁹ In early 2014, news emerged that he had been killed,⁹⁰ though current members of the Brotherhood claim that he was still hiding in an apartment in Nasr City.⁹¹ Whatever the truth of the matter, ‘Izzat remained a mysterious figure of whom little is known. What is certain is that he played an instrumental role in the reorganisation of the Brotherhood in the sixties. He would later be described as the organisation’s “iron man”, the “Mr. X” who made the actual decisions behind the puppet Guide Mohammed Badi‘ and who maintained strong relations with international Brotherhood leaders.⁹² Khairat al-Shatir and ‘Izzat were known to be the actual decision makers behind Morsi during the governing period. Together with ‘Akif and Badi‘, they formed the inner leadership circle of the Society during the governing period.⁹³

Born in August 1944 in Cairo, ‘Izzat became acquainted with the Brotherhood in the early fifties and formally joined in 1962 while completing his studies at the Medical College of Cairo University.⁹⁴ During the period of rebuilding the Brotherhood under the Organisation’65, ‘Izzat and a small group of recruits organised the formation of some cells in Cairo, the Delta and Upper Egypt.⁹⁵ Together with the future General Guide Mohammed Badi‘, who was also recruited in 1962, ‘Izzat worked in strict secrecy. Contrary to the directives of the sitting General Guide to abstain from violence, they discussed a plan to

⁸⁷ Habib. *Memories*, p. 171.

⁸⁸ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 128.

⁸⁹ “Debka: Mahmud ‘Izzat and Five Members of the Brotherhood Leadership Flee to Gaza and Manage the Terrorist Operations from There”. *al-Watan*. Accessed 15 July 2014. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/231149

⁹⁰ “Ikhwan without Violence: Mahmud ‘Izzat Is Killed in Gaza - Hamas: This Is Not True”. *al-Masry al-Youm*. Accessed 15 July 2014. www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/405157.

⁹¹ Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

⁹² *al-Watan*. “Brūfil: Maḥmūd ‘Izzat: “al-Tha‘lab al-ḥākīm” (Profile: Mahmud ‘Izzat: ‘the Ruling Fox’), 5 August 2014. Accessed 29 August 2015. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/158581

⁹³ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 128.

⁹⁴ The biographical information on Mahmud ‘Izzat is very sparse. The only details of his biography were extracted from “Maḥmūd ‘Izzat” (Mahmud ‘Izzat). *Ikhwanwiki*. Accessed 4 July 2014. www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AF_%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%AA

⁹⁵ Calvert. *Qutb*, pp. 229 ff.

attack Nasser's motorcade. Like Mashhur, 'Izzat and Badi' were among those imprisoned in 1965, receiving sentences of ten years' of hard labour. It is not clear what his exact involvement was in the reorganisation of the Brotherhood, but having just recently taken the oath of allegiance, it is unlikely that he was part of the senior leadership. While in prison, 'Izzat became a pupil of Shukri Mustafa and Sayyid Qutb before the latter's execution in 1966.⁹⁶ The organisational skills he had acquired during his work in secrecy would be put to effective use after his release in 1974. 'Izzat played an instrumental role in the reconstitution of the Brotherhood during the eighties and subsequently progressed as a key decision maker among the inner circle of vanguard leaders. In 1981, he was nominated to the Guidance Office, where he managed the activities of the Student Section that supported the Society in gradually expanding its presence at Egyptian universities. He also played an influential role in managing the Society's financial resources and during the late nineties became the Brotherhood's General Secretary.⁹⁷ According to Kandil, the internal network of Qutbist cadres included around 1,000 members who reported directly to 'Izzat.⁹⁸

These men represented different generations of the Qutbist intellectual tradition. Mashhur and 'Akif, both of an older generation, had important functions in the activities of the Special Apparatus during the forties. 'Izzat and Badi' were involved in the underground activities of the Organisation'65 during sixties. Shatir, the youngest of the group, was indoctrinated by leaders who had been affiliated with the activities of the Special Apparatus. The lives and personal experiences of these men can help us understand why and how the idea of a closed organisation was preserved within the larger organisational culture of the Brotherhood – a culture that ran opposite to the open vision formulated by Tilmisani and the reformist student organisers.

The Interregnum of Hamid Abu Nasr

The death of Tilmisani on 22 May 1986 brought the internal conflict between the rival factions into the open. The loss of a strong and charismatic leader significantly weakened internal cohesion. When it was announced that Hamid Abu Nasr was to assume the leadership post, many in the Brotherhood were surprised. Nasr came from Manfalut, a village in Upper

⁹⁶ "New Brotherhood Supreme Guide Linked to 'Radical Qutb Current'". *Al Monitor*. Accessed 14 July 2014. www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/politics/2013/08/egypt-brotherhood-new-interim-supreme-guide.html.

⁹⁷ *al-Watan*. "Brūfīl: Maḥmūd 'Izzat: 'al-Tha'lab al-ḥākīm'" (Profile: Mahmud 'Izzat: 'the Ruling Fox'), 5 August 2014. Accessed 29 August 2015. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/158581.

⁹⁸ Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, p. 34.

Egypt where he was born in 1931. Unknown to the Brotherhood establishment in Cairo, he was the offspring of one of Asyut's wealthy families. Upon hearing a lecture by Hasan al-Banna in 1934, Abu Nasr gave the *bay'a*, joining the Society during the period of its early expansion in Upper Egypt. Like Tilmisani, he was not affiliated with the activities of the Special Apparatus, and like him he had received a life sentence in 1954.⁹⁹ When he left prison in mid-1974, he returned to Manfalut, where he lived a life secluded from the political intrigues in the capital.

At Tilmisani's funeral, said to be attended by half a million Egyptians, the top leaders of the Brotherhood decided over succession. After the burial ceremony, senior figures gathered in the house of one of the Brothers.¹⁰⁰ In this quest for the Holy Grail, Mustafa Mashhur played a skilful political game, gradually consolidating his position over organisational leadership. As the Deputy Guide, Mashhur controlled the administrative, financial and educational resources and as such had a natural claim to the top job. But his claim was threatened by different contestants, such as Salah Shadi, a former Special Apparatus member with close contacts to the radicalised wing of the Jama'at Islamiyya.¹⁰¹ Further to his left were moderate conservatives, such as Hasan al-Banna's brother 'Abd al-Rahman, as well as independent Islamic preachers like Mohammed al-Ghazzali and Sayyid Sabiq.¹⁰² Finally, there was the growing and increasingly vocal camp of younger generation Brothers who demanded a role in decision making. However, these young Turks were not well enough connected to impose their own candidate. Faced with an unstable internal parallelogram of forces, Mashhur supported the candidacy of Hamid Abu Nasr by exerting "huge efforts" on the Consultative Council to agree to this appointment. As a result of these intrigues, the inconspicuous notable from Upper Egypt ended up being elected as the fourth General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁰³ Mashhur was thus able to place a person in the highest leadership position who could act as a buffer between the intransigent factions and accommodate the various claims to legitimacy raised by different personalities.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, it would allow Mashhur to stay in control.

⁹⁹ Ban, Ahmed. *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn wa Miḥnat al-Waṭan wa'l-Dīn (The Muslim Brotherhood : the Crises of the Nation and the Religion)*. Cairo: Markaz al-Nil li'l-Dirasat al-Iqtisadiyya wa'l-Istiratiyya, 2013, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Habib. *Memories*, p. 186.

¹⁰¹ Mitchell. *The Society*, p. 102.

¹⁰² Springborg. *Mubarak's Egypt*, pp. 235 ff.

¹⁰³ Habib. *Memories*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁴ Springborg. *Mubarak's Egypt*, p. 235.

Abu Nasr thus became a figurehead of the Society through whom Mashhur, like an *eminence grise* behind the de facto ruler, was able to exert effective control.¹⁰⁵ The notable from Upper Egypt was considered to be only a “temporary guide” (*murshid mu’aqqat*): “[Abu Nasr] was a very kind, humble, and polite person, but his hearing and his eyesight were weak. Mustafa Mashhur sat with him in the room to help him [make decisions] while in fact it was Mashhur who was in control of the situation.”¹⁰⁶ While on the surface continuing Tilmisani’s course of political participation by opening the Society’s access to civilian institutions, Nasr’s reign would allow for Mashhur and the vanguard leaders to further entrench themselves in key positions. The period after 1986 saw a sharpening of the internal struggle over power and identity between the *tanzīmī*-focused Qutbist leadership and the mid-ranking Brothers of the Tilmisani school of thought, who aspired to a more politically engaged organisation.¹⁰⁷ The fact that the Brotherhood became involved in politics before resolving crucial questions over its identity and internal organisation raised the spectre of disintegration, which would continue to haunt the Society over the coming years.

The Brotherhood’s internal conflicts were pointed out with growing frequency by a self-confident class of younger members.¹⁰⁸ While Tilmisani had allocated important leadership positions to the former student leaders, the *tanzīmī* leadership tried to block their advance, instead placing their own loyalists into key administrative positions. Abu al-Futuh, a member of the Guidance Office since 1985 and head of the Committee for Professionals (*lajnat al-mihan*) lost his position to the Mashhur loyalist Sa’d al-Katatni, a long time adherent of the *tanzīmī* conception and the future head of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in 2012. The Committee for Rovers and Families (*katā’ib wa usar*) was placed under the command of Mahmud ‘Izzat, who used it to appoint new captains for the individual families.¹⁰⁹ The political party project, the crown jewel of Tilmisani’s reformist vision, was shelved.¹¹⁰

But the generation of former student organisers would not easily give up their newly acquired prestige. They disagreed with the way in which the new leadership sacrificed the Brotherhood’s internal laws and statutes to a politics of nepotism and gerrymandering. The Brotherhood to them increasingly resembled a tightly knit group of insiders exclusively loyal

¹⁰⁵ Wisner (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Muslim Brotherhood: Eager for U.S. Contacts, Fearful of GOE”. 16 September 1986, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 7 October 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/86CAIRO21221_a.html

¹⁰⁶ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Saghiya, Hazem. “Profile of Abu’l-‘Ila Madi”. *al-Hayat*, 25 December 1996.

¹⁰⁹ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

¹¹⁰ Statement of al-Hodeibi, 29 March 1989, cited in Dalal, ‘Abdullah Sami Ibrahim. *al-Islāmiyyūn wa’l-Dīmuqrāṭiyya fī Maṣr (The Islamists and Democracy in Egypt)*. Cairo: Madbouli Publishers, 2006.

to each other. With growing frequency, they used the sessions of the Consultative Council to openly challenge the authority of the leadership, lobbying for change in the programmatic positions regarding the rights of women and Coptic Christians. Some went even as far as questioning some of the central articles of faith of the Banna doctrine.¹¹¹ They thought of themselves as more closely involved in the every-day issues concerning ordinary Egyptians, viewing the cadres of the Special Apparatus as subjected to a psychological crisis.

Their vision differed sharply from the one of the vanguard leadership, for whom legitimacy was conferred not by meritocratic principles, but by deference to the leadership. The senior leaders regarded the newcomers from the Jama‘at Islamiyya as rebellious youth bent on usurping their long-established and hard-fought power and who lacked the religious credentials that would give them any legitimacy to make claims on senior positions. Neither did they share with them the defining prison experience that would give credibility to their claims, nor the rigorous ideological training they had acquired through their contact with Sayyid Qutb. Instead, they simply echoed the arguments and claims pronounced in the books and speeches by Sheikhs representing the so-called “new Islamist discourse” (*al-khitāb al-islāmī al-jadīd*).

Under Abu Nasr, the Brotherhood was able to guarantee unity only superficially, while in reality centrifugal forces became more pronounced. During the parliamentary elections of April 1987, the Society decided to participate in a negotiated alliance with the Liberal Party (Hizb al-Ahrar) and the Labour Party (Hizb al-‘Amal). These parties were united primarily in their desire to rein in the power of the NDP.¹¹² As the dominant force in the alliance, the Society competed in an electoral campaign that displayed a high degree of pro-Islamist sentiment. Out of the fifty-six seats won by the alliance the Society won roughly two thirds, establishing itself as the largest opposition block in parliament. But instead of nominating candidates who were well versed in the political domain, the vanguard leadership advanced almost exclusively populist figures whose strongpoint was to attract people to the Islamic *da‘wa* but who otherwise had little experience in the political domain. Of the thirty-six seats only ten, including Ma’mun al-Hodeibi, the head of the parliamentary group, his deputy Habib, Mokhtar Nuh and ‘Issam al-‘Arian, were effective in advancing legislation and launching parliamentary motions.¹¹³ The practice of nominating preachers (*du‘at*) rather than politicians was part of a general pattern during future parliamentary nominations, showing the

¹¹¹ Ghanim, Ibrahim Bayoumi. Interview, 9 March 2004, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 69.

¹¹² Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 52.

¹¹³ Habib. *Memories*, p. 211.

extent to which the Qutbist's anti-political tendency prevailed over those who saw the Brotherhood's objectives as primarily political.

Towards the Gulf War of 1990

These events took place against the backdrop of a deteriorating economic situation. Sadat's partnership with the U.S. had replaced Soviet assistance with conditional American aid, leaving Egypt in an ever-growing state of dependency on foreign debt. This was exacerbated by the government's own spendthrift practices. When oil prices started to collapse in 1985, the Egyptian treasury was left with a massive budget deficit.¹¹⁴ In May 1987, Egypt signed a deal with the IMF under whose terms the Fund would assist Egypt to break out of its \$8 billion debt trap. The proposed structural adjustment program called for a sharp reduction of public expenditures by cutting subsidies and liberalising the economy. The regime was aware of the risks such austerity measures would have on social stability. For this purpose, the Emergency Laws of 1981 were extended and the government negotiated a debt rescheduling agreement that obliged Mubarak to implement further reforms, including cutting subsidies of vital goods.¹¹⁵ By 1990, the Egyptian economy was unable to support its loss-making public industries. Lenders were no longer willing to float an economy that was dependent on state-run enterprises, forcing the government to adopt a "stabilisation plan" that slashed the budget and imposed further cuts on subsidies.

Within this economic context, the Brotherhood pushed for further reforms.¹¹⁶ They established a logical chain between Egypt's current economic morass and the "moral decadence" of its citizens. They blamed the president for lacking seriousness in "purifying Islamic society of moral abominations and depravities" and demanded that he shut down liquor factories and "forbidden entertainment places" and instruct "the media, and especially the television, to protect our sons, daughters and wives".¹¹⁷ In the context of a mutiny by the

¹¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion see Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts : Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

¹¹⁵ See Hanieh, Adam. *Lineages of Revolt : Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2013. Also see Seddon, David. "The Politics of Adjustment: Egypt and the IMF, 1987-1990". *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 47 (1990), pp. 95-104. For a more detailed analysis of Egypt's debt problems, see Sulayman, Samir. *The Autumn of Dictatorship : Fiscal Crisis and Political Change in Egypt under Mubarak*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011.

¹¹⁶ Hasan, Ammar 'Ali. "'Adā al-Taḥāluf al-Islāmī fī Majlis al-sha'b khilāl al-Faṣl al-Tashrī'i al-Khāmis: Dirāsa fī'l-Riqāba al-Barlamāniyya" (The Performance of the Islamist Alliance in the Fifth Legislative Session of Parliament: A Study in Parliamentary Oversight) in *al-Tatawwur al-Siyāsī fī Miṣr 1982–1992 (Political Development in Egypt 1982–1992)*, Kharbush, Muhammad (editor). Cairo: Markaz al-Buhuth wa'l-Dirasat al-Siyasiyya, 1994, pp. 133–60.

¹¹⁷ Hodeibi is quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 55.

Central Security Forces in 1986, enthusiastic Islamists tested the limits of their permissible behaviour. The resulting clashes left a trail of destruction of nightclubs, video and grocery shops at the Pyramid Street in Giza. In the parliamentary elections of 1987, Brotherhood MPs held banners that had the words “give your vote to God, give it to the Muslim Brotherhood” emblazoned on them. Following their electoral victory, it was clear to the regime that the Brotherhood was leading a broad-based, well-financed and well-organised opposition movement that mounted a growing challenge to its authority. With an emboldened Brotherhood in parliament and growing unrest at the Islamist base, Mubarak cracked down on the Islamist scene in the summer of 1987, leading to the arrest of over 3,000 Islamists, including many from the Muslim Brotherhood.

The arrests could not hide the fact that the Brotherhood’s continued emphasis on corruption, social justice and political freedom was attractive to wide segments of Egypt’s deteriorating middle class. In the context of economic hardship and political arrests, the Brotherhood offered a credible voice of opposition. Because they had swept the elections in all the major professional unions during the previous years, the boycott in the parliamentary elections of 1990 deeply embarrassed the government. The Brotherhood’s withdrawal from electoral politics was the clearest sign of protests against the regime’s attempts to decrease the Brotherhood’s presence in the People’s Assembly.¹¹⁸

Geopolitical changes in the broader region presented the regime with an opportunity to alleviate its chronic debt situation. On 2 August 1990, the Armed Forces of Iraq invaded Kuwait under the pretext of a border dispute. Against the backdrop of the collapse of communism and the failure of the Palestinian Intifada, Saddam Hussein profiled himself as the new champion of the Palestinian cause. Following the invasion, Saudi Arabia asked the United States to send troops to defend the Kingdom. “Operation Desert Shield” was set in motion in October 1990 and 200,000 American soldiers were stationed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In an effort to secure allies among the Arab countries, U.S. President George Bush assured Mubarak that America would write off half of Egypt’s debt in return for its participation in the war. Unable to refuse this offer, Mubarak dispatched two divisions to support the war efforts and granted America overflight rights to Kuwait.¹¹⁹ The state’s fiscal crisis was thus mitigated and the regime was able to resume its authority. By November, the UN Security Council issued a resolution, setting an ultimatum for a withdrawal of Iraqi troops by January 1991. “Operation Desert Storm” was completed on 27 February 1991 and George

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹⁹ Amin. *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak*, p. 58.

Bush proclaimed the liberation of Kuwait.¹²⁰

The invasion of Kuwait led to deep rifts within the Brotherhood's International Organisation. The Egyptian branch condemned the invasion, demanding the total withdrawal of Iraqi forces while rejecting any sort of foreign intervention.¹²¹ The Kuwaiti branch, on the other hand, staunchly opposed the dispatching of Egyptian troops to support the American war effort. Because the International Organisation was to a large extent financed by the Kuwaiti branch, the rift and the subsequent withdrawal of the Kuwaiti Brotherhood significantly weakened the *tanẓīm* in Egypt, showing the extent to which the Egyptian leadership had lost its control over the International Organisation.¹²² The Gulf War further aggravated the relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood. When in January 1991 Brotherhood-led syndicates issued a joint statement to denounce the involvement of Egyptian troops in Kuwait, this was all the regime needed to launch its next assault.

¹²⁰ Cleveland. *A History of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 450 ff.

¹²¹ Sheheta, Dina. *Islamists and Secularists in Egypt: Opposition, Conflict and Cooperation*. London: Routledge, 2013.

¹²² 'Ali. *The Road to Ittihadiyya*, p. 268.

BROTHERHOOD INCORPORATED (1990-2001)

The nineties witnessed a growing confrontation between the regime of Hosni Mubarak and the Muslim Brotherhood, a development that stood against a context of a general aggravation of the social and economic conditions of Egypt. IMF-imposed reform measures had put growing pressure on the middle class. Living conditions for average citizens deteriorated while prices for basic commodities and services skyrocketed. This was exacerbated by structural changes in Gulf labour market policies, where the import of unskilled South Asian labourers reduced the need for skilled Egyptian workers such as teachers, doctors and pharmacists. The Egyptian economy saw a significant loss of remittances that strained the budget and hampered economic growth. The government was forced to end its long-standing policy of hiring university graduates, a decision that stood at the beginning of an escalation of youth unemployment in the coming years. When in 1995 the regime cut state subsidies by 75.8 per cent, this led to severe conflicts on the political front.¹

The economic reform measures led to a number of transformations that set the structural conditions for the emergence of a broad protest movement during the next decade.² The liberalisation of Egyptian real estate markets led to speculative investments, so that what initially was conceived as an export boom intended to revive the economy was perverted into a real estate bubble.³ This enabled the rise of a new class of capitalists among whom the Islamists were a distinct sub-group, whose wealth was intimately linked to the economic liberalisation of that time. A new class of apparatchiks started to enter the Society, well-connected businessmen that included Khairat al-Shatir and Hassan Malek. In a parallel development, the reduction of subsidies led to increased migration pressures from the countryside and a growth in the urbanisation of the satellite cities. With the Brotherhood's recruitment activities increasingly concentrated on the countryside, these rural newcomers swelled the ranks of a previously majority middle-class movement. This brought provincial values into the society in a process Husam Tammam labelled the "ruralisation" (*tarīf*) of the

¹ For an expose of how a neoliberal regimes empowers itself to defend property rights even against its own people, see Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine : The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin, 2008.

² Kandil, Hazem. "Why Did the Egyptian Middle Class March to Tahrir Square?" *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 2 (2012).

³ Mitchell, Timothy. "Dreamland: The Neoliberalism of Your Desire." *Middle East Report*, Spring 1999. www.merip.org/mer/mer210/dreamland-neoliberalism-your-desires

Brotherhood. The spread of Salafi values led to a simultaneous Salafisation of the Brotherhood's organisational culture.

Taking recourse to oppressive measures to strengthen its control over the opposition, the progress towards a democratic political system was reversed in the nineties, when the regime contained the political opposition with growing vigour. Whereas political parties continued to operate, an exception was placed upon religious or personality-based parties. One of the most important challenges facing the regime was the Muslim Brotherhood. The boycott of the 1990 elections had embarrassed the regime at home and internationally, something it would not easily forgive. In addition, a number of national and regional events threatened Mubarak's position. In 1992, an insurgency broke out in Algeria after an Islamist party that looked set to capture the legislature was prevented from doing so by a military coup. At home, the heroism displayed in the Brotherhood's first response operations during the earthquake of October 1992 demonstrated its organisational effectiveness and added to its expansion in terms of membership among the urban poor. This convinced the government to crack down on the movement with growing vigour. Faced with a growing threat of trial and arrest and still barred from the legal status Tilmisani and his reformist disciples had aspired to, the Brotherhood became known as the "banned Society" (*jamā'at mahzūra*), operating outside of the view of the regime and conducting its recruitment efforts largely underground (*taḥt al-'ard*).

* * *

Khairat al-Shatir and Salsabil

Despite these repressive measures, the Society continued to bolster its legitimacy among the Egyptian public. Because of its penetration of key state institutions such as the student and professional unions, the Brotherhood threatened to undermine political spaces traditionally inhabited by the secular-liberal elite. Mubarak's mismanagement of the economy led to a growing sell-off of public assets to private investors, whose connections to government employees entailed a concentration of capital in the hands of an emerging business elite. The public debt burden forced the government to implement further privatisation programmes, leading to a further restructuring of the economy and to deep changes within the societal fabric. By 2007, poverty rates had increased up to 43 per cent, which implied that 28 million were now living under the \$2 poverty line. Basic food commodities rose by 10 per cent,

inhibiting opportunities for workers and causing a steep rise of unemployment rates and an unprecedented erosion of the middle class.⁴ With American real-estate developers entering the market, Egypt witnessed an unprecedented building boom.⁵ This enabled the rise of a new class of Islamic entrepreneurs as a specific sub-group of the *infītāḥ* bourgeoisie, a group that included both politically active Islamists as well as Muslim entrepreneurs who were apolitical but used the “Islam brand” for marketing and advertising purposes. The emerging *bourgeoisie islamique* remained largely absent from organisations such as the Rotary Club or the Egyptian-American Chamber of Commerce and instead entertained memberships with Islamic organisations. The cultural milieu of these merchants was Islamic, they spoke Arabic as their primary business language and were committed to Egypt as an Arab-Islamic country. In terms of their investment portfolios, they were oriented towards the East, and they based their investment decisions on Islamic rather than secular principles.⁶

The neoliberal turn of the Brotherhood had already been preconditioned by the teachings of Hasan al-Banna. During the Society’s fifth conference in 1939, Banna had explicitly defined the Society as an “economic company”.⁷ He wrote in the *Letter on Teachings*:

Islam is a comprehensive system (*nizām shāmil*), which deals with all spheres of life: it is a country and homeland or a government and a nation; it is conduct and power or mercy and justice; it is a culture and a law or knowledge and jurisprudence; *it is material and wealth or gain and prosperity* (my emphasis); it is jihad and a call or army and a cause; and finally, it is true belief and correct worship.⁸

While Banna believed in the importance of Western science and technology, he complained that modernity had “failed to satisfy human needs and fulfil the conditions of a stable life”. It was not able to “give the human soul a ray of light, a hint of spiritual inspiration or a strand of faith”. It was only Islam, he thought, which would offer “the most detailed, most complete, all-encompassing system compared to all other social philosophies that have ever emerged”.⁹ In accordance with the notion of “comprehensiveness”, the Brotherhood’s activities now started to expand into the sphere of economic development. Business-versed Islamists

⁴ Tamam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 57; “Arab Republic of Egypt: Selected Issues”. *IMF Country Report* no. 07/381, December 2007. For Egypt’s debt situation, see Sulayman. *The Autumn of Dictatorship*.

⁵ Sims. *Understanding Cairo*, pp. 207-9.

⁶ Springborg. *Mubarak’s Egypt*, p. 48.

⁷ al-Banna. “Letter of the Fifth Conference” in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 258-9

⁸ al-Banna. “Letter on Teachings” in *ibid.*, pp. 208.

⁹ al-Banna. “Peace in Islam” in *Islam Bulletin*. Accessed 6 October 2015.

www.nsw.islamicbulletin.org/free_downloads/resources/peace_in_islam.pdf

benefited from neoliberal policies by investing their capital in different sectors and industries. Examples of successful entrepreneurial Brotherhood ventures included the al-Rayan conglomerate, founded by Fathi Tawfiq ‘Abd al-Fattah, whose twenty companies threw off an annual turnover of £E6.5 billion. In Upper Egypt, Islamist companies constituted a breeding ground for the spread of the Brotherhood’s message. One of the largest companies in Asyut was called Tali‘at al-Iman (the Vanguard of the Faith). Customers were required to be “good Muslims” while employees were advised against shaving their beards.¹⁰

The Brotherhood figure most emblematic for the Brotherhood’s neoliberal turn was Khairat al-Shatir. Later ominously portrayed in the Egyptian media as the Society’s “secret guide” (*murshid sirrī*) and the “political devil who rules Egypt”,¹¹ Shatir was a unique figure in the Brotherhood. A school friend described him as “sharp, polite, terribly neat and a good student” with an appearance that was “tall, thin and almost translucent because he was a tad fair”.¹² While he seems to have been a shy man, his bulky physical stature and his sharp business acumen earned him the respect of rivals and friends alike. He was said to be able to organise his thought “in such a way that makes it hard to escape from what he wants to tell you”. Shatir would soon assume a key role in the Guidance Office.

Shatir was born on 4 May 1950 in Mansura, situated in the Dakhaliyya governorate on the banks of the Nile. Brotherhood sources claim that his father owned a trading business and tens of *feddans*, while others assert that he came from a middle-income earning household.¹³ It was said that had earned two Bachelor’s degrees in “Civil Engineering and Anthropology, and several diploma degrees in Islamic studies, business administration, social work and NGOs, and international marketing”.¹⁴ During the student protests of November 1968, he was one of the students from Mansura who fired up the crowds in the auditorium of Alexandria’s Engineering College. At that time, Shatir seems not yet to have made up his mind as to his ideological inclination. According to a school friend, he was the head of one of the Socialist Union’s “neighbourhoods”.

¹⁰ Springborg. *Mubarak’s Egypt*, p. 48.

¹¹ ‘Abd al-Sahfo. Ussam. “al-Shāṭir: Qiṣṣa al-Shayṭān al-Siyāsī alladhī yaḥkum Maṣr” (al-Shatir: the Story of the Political Devil that rules Egypt), *el-Mogaz*, 20 December 2012. Accessed 11 August 2015.
www.elmogaz.com/node/60044

¹² Howeidy, Amira. “The Brotherhood’s Engineer.” *al-Ahram*, 29 April 2012.

¹³ Due to a lack of reliable sources, Shatir’s life narrative is primarily based on the account of Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, pp. 216-46. For the Brotherhood’s version see “Khayrat al-Shāṭir” (Khairat al-Shatir). *Ikhwanwiki*. Accessed 2 June 2014.

www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%AE%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B1

¹⁴ Islamic Human Rights Commission. *Muslim Brotherhood - Khairat Al-Shatir*, May 2007.

www.ihrc.org.uk/file/PF070515KhairatAlShatirFinal.pdf; al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

Following his arrest, he was imprisoned for a few months and then drafted into the army for two years. The Brotherhood's official website claimed that Shatir had been engaged in Islamic work since 1967 and that he "played a pivotal role in bringing about Islamic awakening".¹⁵ But in reality it seems that he started to develop an inclination for political Islam only after concluding his army service in 1970. At a time when religious societies mushroomed at the University of Alexandria, Shatir organised seminars and lectures in his college, establishing the Fatima al-Zahra' Association for (Muslim) Sisters in 1973. After having completed his studies in 1974, he returned to his home village near Mansura. This was an important milestone in his trajectory, as it was here where Shatir became acquainted with the teachings of Sabri 'Arafa al-Kawmi and Mohammed al-'Adawi, two senior Brotherhood leaders who belonged to the historic leadership of the *raḥīl awwal* and who had both been involved in the reviving efforts of the Organisation⁶⁵ during the sixties.¹⁶ It was through these figures that Shatir became acquainted with Qutbist teachings, especially the importance of the *tanẓīm* as the vital mechanism for the implementation of the Islamic reform project. After travelling in the Gulf and Europe during many years, Shatir allegedly went to London to complete a doctorate. However, "his interests changed and he instead became involved in business activities", starting to trade in a range of sectors and industries including garments, textiles and furniture.¹⁷ While he does not seem to have been particularly successful in any of his ventures, he established personal and commercial networks with international reach within the global Islamist scene.

Shatir returned to Egypt in the mid-eighties, where he partnered up with his old friend Hasan Malik, and founded a company called Salsabil. The brief history of Salsabil provided the pretext for a new wave of crackdowns that heralded an aggravation in the relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood and opened the door for the military trials of that decade. There is little factual information on Salsabil's revenue and operations. It seems that the company was founded in 1986 as an "international company for development and advanced systems", at a time when a growing information technology market provided opportunities for newcomers to reap lucrative profits.¹⁸ Together with Taher 'Abd al-Mon'im, another Brotherhood businessman, Shatir and Malik developed training and research manuals

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Calvert. *Sayid Qutb*, p. 230.

¹⁷ Islamic Human Rights Commission. *Muslim Brotherhood - Khairat Al-Shatir*, May 2007. www.ihrc.org.uk/file/PF070515KhairatAlShatirFinal.pdf

¹⁸ Traeger, Eric. "Who's Who in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood." Accessed 3 September 2014. www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/whos-who-in-the-muslim-brotherhood

for mainly private sector companies.¹⁹ Shatir also gave lectures on business management and trained consultants in centres set up by Salsabil's sister company, the Umma Administrative Centre.²⁰ Over the coming years Salsabil's profits multiplied and the company established itself as a serious competitor in the Egyptian market.²¹ Its biggest success came during the trade exhibitions of 1991, when the company was selected to submit a proposal for a partnership with the government to bid for a contract in the upcoming Pan-African games. Although Salsabil's pitch was solid, the tender was granted to a French company, whose CEO entertained connections with the father-in-law of Mubarak's younger son 'Ala'.²² Following this incident, security agencies started to monitor the movements of Brotherhood members and officials were alerted of the potential threat posed by the Society. Salsabil at the time had acted as a front for the Brotherhood's clandestine activities and Mustafa Mashhur frequently visited its headquarters.²³ On 5 February 1992 the regime raided its offices, confiscating large quantities of papers and computer disks.²⁴ Salsabil's directors were accused of being members in a forbidden group and of owning illegal documents.²⁵ Several board members were arrested, including Shatir, Malik and Mon'im, as well as other members of the Brotherhood in several governorates, including Guma' Amin and Mahmud 'Izzat.²⁶ The prosecution ordered the arrest of another 1,250 people.²⁷ 'Abd al-Rahim 'Ali later claimed that Salsabil had financed the Islamic Revolution with \$60 billion.²⁸

¹⁹ Minutes of the investigation of Khairat al-Shatir before the General Prosecutor Hisham Hamouda, 6 February 1992, see "Khayrat al-Shāter wa Qaḍiyat Salsabīl" (Khairat al-Shatir and the Salsabil Case). *Ikhwanwiki*. Accessed 22 August 2014.

216.245.208.90/index.php?title=%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84

²⁰ Tammam, Husam and Haenni, Patrick. "A l'ombre du sourire des winner pieux. Le positive thinking et autres ruses musulmanes de la raison néolibérale." Unpublished paper. Cairo, 2004.

²¹ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 57.

²² "Khairat al-Shatir and the Salsabil Case". *Ikhwanwiki*.

²³ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 220.

²⁴ "Khairat al-Shatir and the Salsabil Case". *Ikhwanwiki*.

²⁵ *al-Akhbar*, 20 September 1992.

²⁶ 'Awda, Hisham. *Shirā' alā al-shar'iyya : al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn wa Mubārak, 1982-2007 (The Assault on Legality: The Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak, 1982-2007)*. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyya, 2009. al-Anani, K. "A different game for the MB", *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 31 December 2009-6 January 2010; "Khairat al-Shatir on 'The Nahda Project'". *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 13, 2012.

²⁷ *al-Jumhuriyya*, 23 September 1992, quoted in Habib. *Memories*, p. 341. The information about Salsabil and the seizure of the Brotherhood's internal documents is affirmed by current and former Brotherhood sources, including 'Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui: "Former Egyptian Shura Council Member from Muslim Brotherhood 'Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui Accuses Presidential Candidate Khayrat al-Shater of Embezzling MB Funds." *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, 9 September, 2014. www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/6300.htm; al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

²⁸ Posted on "Yalla nebny Masr" (Lets build Egypt). *Facebook Group*. 14 February 2013. Accessed 29 September 2015. www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=147948195264243&story_fbid=476284952430564

The Empowerment Plan

During the raid, the government discovered a cache of documents, which was ominously called the “empowerment plan” (*khiṭṭat al-tamkīn*). State media claimed that this plan was proof of the Society’s “overwhelming desire” to ascend to power.²⁹ In 1994, the Egyptian weekly state-owned magazine *al-Musawwar* published a summary of the documents with the intent of illustrating the Brotherhood’s project of the “Islamisation of reality” (*aslamat al-wāqiʿ*). According to the magazine, the Brotherhood aspired to acquire power as the necessary condition for the implementation of the Islamic project. One of the documents, entitled “We are a Jihadi Group”, was said to lay bare the Brotherhood’s will to impose their presence on the street through public preaching. The regime claimed that the plan was evidence of the Brotherhood’s ambitions to engineer a radical change of the social, political and economic structures of Egypt, revealing “the power of the Society, which had come close to a parallel state”.³⁰

Brotherhood members, on the other hand, claimed that the company was shut down because of “envious businessmen” around Mubarak.³¹ It was said that the empowerment plan had been drafted by State Security in order to paint the Society in a bad light and provide the regime with an *ex post facto* justification for the crackdown. The idea apparently came from Hamdi Rizq, who “fabricated” this story on the government-controlled television channel ON TV.³² The prevailing view among Brotherhood members was that Shatir’s professionalism was the reason why his competitors tried to slander him. The evidence pointed out in support of this statement was that the general prosecutor had closed the case eleven months later without filing any charges. Salsabil’s directors were freed and an order was issued to close down both Salsabil and the Umma Administrative Centre.³³

While the pro-regime press certainly inflated the importance of the empowerment plan, such a document seems to have existed nevertheless. The Gulf War and the collapse of the International Organisation had laid bare the weakness of the Society’s international efforts. As a result, younger Brotherhood members founded two committees in charge of

²⁹ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

³⁰ *al-Musawwar*, 25 December 1992.

³¹ Heshmat, Gamal. Interview. Cairo, 1 April 2013.

³² “al-Kātib Hamdī Rizq wa Kitāb ‘Fath Miṣr’ wa Khiṭaṭ al-Tamkīn al-Ikhwān” (The Writer Hamdi Rizq and the Book ‘The Opening of Egypt’ and the Empowerment Plan of the Brotherhood’). *ON TV*, 2013. Accessed 22 July 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU5R6er80&feature=youtu.be_gdata_player

³³ “Khayrat al-Shāter wa Qaḍiyat Salsabīl” (Khairat al-Shatir and the Salsabil Case). *Ikhwanwiki*, Accessed 22 August 2014.

www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84

“administrative development” (*tanmiyya idāriyya*), one in Cairo presided over by Hussein al-Qazaz, a Professor at the American University of Cairo, and a second one based in Alexandria headed by (1), a freshly graduated psychology student in his late twenties, who was a member in the political committee (*lajna sīyāsiyya*) of the local branch in Alexandria.³⁴ The atmosphere among the younger generation at that time was one of unbridled optimism. These youngsters believed in the success of the Islamic project and shared a strong conviction for the Brotherhood’s reform methods. Like many among his generation, (1) harnessed a belief that only the Brotherhood’s model provided a suitable blueprint to solve Egypt’s social, economic, cultural and political malaise. Eager to turn the Society’s “state of inability” into an opportunity, (1), together with five fellow Brothers, established the directions committee (*lajnat al-tawajjuhāt*), which proposed an independent proposal for a long-term development plan.³⁵ The idea was to present the Guidance Office with a broad overview of the Society’s activities, assess how these should be adapted to changing external and internal circumstances, and propose concrete steps of how the Islamic project was to be implemented.³⁶ The initiative was sent to Shatir’s office in the headquarters of Salsabil, and Khalil’s “directions committee” was subsequently absorbed into the Committee of Administrative Development, which was controlled by the Guidance Office. Such independent initiatives challenged the authority of the Guidance Office, which may have been one of the reasons why the plan was confiscated by Shatir.³⁷

Rather than a viable strategy for taking over the state apparatus, the “empowerment plan” seems to have been little more than a position paper proposed by enthusiastic youngsters from a local branch in Alexandria. The episode provides a glimpse into the internal state of affairs among the Brotherhood’s middle ranks, reflecting the aspirations of a new generation of activists who were eager to take ownership of the Society. These youngsters were frustrated by the fact that their access to senior positions remained blocked by the vanguard leaders, who appointed whomever they considered close to their own ideology.³⁸ While they were eager to contribute intellectually and practically to the Brotherhood’s administrative development and challenge the way things were run, the enthusiasm of an upward-pressing younger generation was perceived as a threat by the *tanẓīmī* faction. The young reformers openly talked about introducing new features into an

³⁴ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *al-Musawwar*, 2 December 2005.

³⁷ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

³⁸ The empowerment plan is mentioned in a strategic report of al-Ahram, see al-Sayyid, Yasin, “al-Taqrīr al-istratījī al-‘Arabī 1995.” *Arab Strategic Report 1995*, Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1996.

established top-down run organisation, such as supervising elections and financial resources.³⁹ People like Mashhur, ‘Izzat and Guma‘ Amin, on the other hand, were eager to mould the organisation into an efficient command-and-control structure modelled along the organisational design of a state, where the Guidance Office was equivalent to the Prime Minister’s office and the Consultative Assembly to the parliament.⁴⁰

External Challenges and Internal Crisis

Following the “Salsabil affair” of 1992, the regime was left with little doubt that the Brotherhood had grown into a powerful opposition movement with an effective ground machinery and a well-organised network of hundreds and thousands of highly motivated members, supporters and fans. The Brotherhood’s network of charitable and social institutions boosted its welfare provision efforts in rural and informal urban areas, increasing its educational and social activities in the countryside and providing the urban poor with access to services.⁴¹ Since charitable organisations did not politicise their activities, the regime tolerated them and even encouraged their contributions, which were seen as a guarantor of social stability.

This perception changed when in October 1992 an earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale hit some of Cairo’s poorest areas, resulting in 541 dead, 8,000 destroyed homes and an estimated financial loss of over E£1 billion.⁴² The hardest hit areas were the informal settlements that lacked both public infrastructure and social services.⁴³ While Mubarak was travelling in China, the Brotherhood displayed an extraordinary organisational efficiency in mobilising its rank-and-file membership and activating its charity organisation networks to mount a rapid rescue operation. The Brotherhood-dominated Engineers’ Syndicate formed a committee to assess damaged infrastructure and prepare rebuilding efforts, mobilising over five hundred engineers within a few days.⁴⁴ The Doctors’ Union organised an emergency relief fund that raised E£200 for each of the families who were affected by the quake. Brotherhood doctors were dispatched to Madinat al-Salam, where many of the affected

³⁹ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

⁴⁰ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 34

⁴¹ ‘Awda, Hisham. *Şirā‘ ‘alā al-Shar‘iyya : al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn wa Mubārak, 1982-2007 (The Assault on Legality: The Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak, 1982-2007)*. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al-‘Arabiyya, 2009, p. 231.

⁴² Habib. *Memories*, pp. 357 ff. The quote can be found on p. 358.

⁴³ Sims. *Understanding Cairo*, p. 68.

⁴⁴ *al-Hayat*, 16 October 1992.

citizens were sheltered, to provide medical assistance.⁴⁵ The Brotherhood could moreover rely on its networks within the Islamic informal sector to provide facilities for healthcare provision, educational and other services.⁴⁶ As a result, the Society's popularity saw a significant surge among the urban poor. Global broadcasting stations praised the movement for its rapid response, dealing a further public relations blow to the regime.⁴⁷ The image of a government that was slow and incompetent was further exacerbated by a wave of protests of the newly homeless residents.⁴⁸

At the same time, the Brotherhood's popularity grew among the middle class. In 1992, Brotherhood candidates won a majority of seats in the elections of the oldest syndicate in Egypt: the Lawyers' Syndicate. This institution had a long history in terms of its involvement in politics.⁴⁹ In the eighties, the infighting between different political and ideological preferences had paralysed the body, something that the Brotherhood took to its advantage, winning eighteen seats on the syndicate's executive board and securing majority control. The Lawyers' Syndicate now became a mouthpiece of Islamist propaganda, debating issues of Islam and secularism, economic reforms and other political topics.⁵⁰ One of its key personalities was Mokhtar Nuh, who had been recruited into the Society by Tilmisani in the early eighties and, having absorbed the Murshid's strategic vision, became one of his key advisors:

Through my work at the syndicate and through the training of 'Omar al-Tilmisani, I learned to understand the meaning of loving others, working with others, opening up to others. This was Tilmisani's curriculum, and this is what we all discovered. This is what 'Abd al-Mon'im [Abu al-Futuh] and 'Issam [al-'Arian] and everyone else discovered, [including] Helmi Gazzar, Ahmed 'Omar and many others. [Tilmisani] was like a fisherman of pearls (*ṣayyād al-jawāhir*). There was nothing like: 'Mokhtar was not brought up in the Brotherhood and so wouldn't be useful to us.' There was only something like: 'What is Mokhtar's behaviour?'⁵¹

⁴⁵ Habib. *Memories*, pp. 357-8.

⁴⁶ Springborg. *Mubarak's Egypt*, p. 225.

⁴⁷ See for example Murphy, Kim. "Muslim Groups Take Lead in Cairo Quake Relief: Egypt: Mosques House and Feed the Homeless. Disappointment in Government Assistance Is Expressed." *Los Angeles Times*, 15 October 1992. articles.latimes.com/1992-10-15/news/mn-411_1_muslim-groups

⁴⁸ *al-Wafd*, 18 October 1992.

⁴⁹ 'Abd al-Hafiz, A. *Niqābāt al-Muḥāmiyyīn: Sūrat Miṣr fī'l-Qarn al-'Ashrīn (The Lawyer's Syndicate: Egypt's Image in the 20th Century)*. Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003.

⁵⁰ Zahid. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 118.

⁵¹ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

During the September crackdown of 1981, Nuh was imprisoned for approximately one year and shortly after his release entered the Lawyers' Syndicate. In 1987, he entered parliament and became one of the most efficient Islamist legislators.

The rising popularity of the Brotherhood among the lower and middle classes coincided with a broader regional resurgence of Islamist movements in North Africa following the Gulf War of 1991. In Tunisia, Rached Ghannouchi's Ennahda movement mobilised public opinion by raising slogans that denounced the government of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had become the president after a soft coup in 1987. In Algeria, the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) popularity peaked in the parliamentary elections of late 1991. When in January 1992 the FIS threatened to take control of the legislature, the military cancelled the election. Islamist guerrilla commandos sprouted up across Algeria and launched a fierce campaign against the regime from the hinterland, plunging the country into a civil war.⁵² The Islamist upsurge was echoed in Egypt, where radical extremist groups escalated attacks against government posts and security installations. In June 1992 Farag Fuda, a prominent secular intellectual who during the 1992 Cairo bookfair had spoken out forcefully against famous Islamist preachers like Mohammed al-Ghazzali, was assassinated.⁵³ Attacks on civilian targets, especially Coptic churches and establishments associated with Western influence, became more frequent. In December that year, Islamist militants announced the foundation of the "Islamic Republic of Imbaba" in one of Cairo's poorest suburbs, which led to a low-level urban insurgency that lasted until 1997 and resulted in a body count of over 2,000 people and over 47,000 detainees.⁵⁴ In Luxor in November 1997, militant Islamist violence erupted in a dramatic way in the spectacular mass killing by members of the Jama'at Islamiya of sixty-two people, including thirty-six Swiss, in front of the Djeser-Djeseru temple of the Pharaoh Hatshepsut.

The combination of the Salsabil case, the skilled response of the Brotherhood after the 1992 earthquake, and the fear of a repetition of the "Algerian scenario" in Egypt brought the gentlemen's agreement between the Brotherhood and the regime to an end. The pattern of escalating political violence convinced a growing number of functionaries that the

⁵² Willis, Michael J. *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria : A Political History*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1997; Quandt, William. *Between Ballots and Bullets : Algeria's Transition from Authoritarianism*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998.

⁵³ Beinin, Joel and Stork, Joe. *Political Islam : Essays from Middle East Report*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

⁵⁴ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. "The Changing Face of Egypt's Islamic Activism" in Marr, Phebe (editor), *Egypt at the Crossroads : Domestic Stability and Regional Role*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1999, pp. 29-46.

Brotherhood possessed a serious potential to undermine state institutions.⁵⁵ The regime launched a concentrated media campaign that portrayed the Society as an illegal organisation firmly opposed to the existing social and political order, accusing it of providing material, logistical and moral support to jihadi groups.⁵⁶ The Brotherhood was labelled “the banned Society” (*al-jamā‘at al-mahzūra*) while the government tried to rein in its activities and revenue streams. In 1993 and 1994, syndication legislation was restricted, based on the rationale that the government was seeking to prevent an “organised minority” from dominating the syndicates for political ends. The Egyptian University Act was amended to curb the influence of faculty clubs, causing massive protests against this “assassination of the professional associations in parliament” that ended with the arrest of 15,000 Islamists. The Brotherhood responded by objecting to Mubarak’s re-nomination for elections.⁵⁷ In the waves of arrests that followed, the regime pursued a strategy of vertical intervention, whose purpose was to cause a “maximum amount of fear and confusion”. Khairat al-Shatir later remembered this period as follows:

The changes occurred in order to curb, confuse and constrict the Brotherhood. This new strategy was based on two primary lines. The first line was the enactment of a number of oppressive procedures, manifested in the imprisonment of Brotherhood members [...]. Mubarak began in 1992 to arrest groups of Brotherhood members and placing them in prisons. These groups consisted of a number of the higher leaders, a member or two from the Guidance Office, someone from the officials in the provinces or departments, and groups of Brothers on various administrative levels. He [arrested] key sectors from top to bottom in which all levels were represented so that no one within the Society’s body felt safe from prison.⁵⁸

Khairat al-Shatir also highlighted the state of anxious anticipation among the Brothers, where the looming threat of impending arrest was a constant possibility:

We all began to put our prison suitcases under our beds as we expected to be imprisoned at any time. Any door that was knocked at 12 p.m. or 1 a.m. at night, even if a Brother was coming to you about an issue or with a problem, the first thing to come to your mind was that State Security had arrived [...]. They prevented our children from being hired for faculty positions at universities; those who came out first were not appointed as lecturers, or representatives in the union, in the judiciary, or in the press.

⁵⁵ Weaver, Mary Ann. “The Novelist and the Sheikh.” *New York* 99, 30 January 1995.

⁵⁶ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ Habib. *Memories*, p. 412

⁵⁸ al-Shatir. “The Project of Islamic Renaissance.” 24 April 2013.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Those who worked as teachers in education, [as well as] those who worked as mosque preachers, were moved to administrative positions.⁵⁹

The rising popular sympathy for the Brotherhood, coupled with the challenges of mounting repression on the part of the regime, led to growing disagreements within the Society's ranks, which were articulated in conflicts around election rules and procedures. At the end of 1994, administrative councils in different governorates held separate elections.⁶⁰ The Administrative Office in Alexandria at that time was headed by Osama Nasr, a microbiologist born in 1956 who had joined the Brotherhood in his early youth.⁶¹ Seeking to present their ideas on organisational development and internal reform to the leadership (1) and his colleagues, whose committee had previously drawn up the empowerment plan, insinuated that the 1992 Consultative Assembly elections had been rigged. (1) argued that during these elections forty members of the Administrative Office had been nominated by the Guidance Office, while of the eighty-three candidates who did run only a third were less than sixty years old. (1) and the reform-minded activists complained that positions held by younger members were "limited to the extreme" and advocated for more transparent electoral rules.⁶² They suggested that electoral procedures would have to be monitored through a new supervisory body selected by the Consultative Council and that the Brotherhood's budget should be submitted to an independent auditing committee. The senior leadership vehemently rejected (1)'s proposals. The meeting soon descended into a vicious quarrel, illustrating the diametrically opposed positions held by the two sides.

The vanguard leadership, ever concerned about publicity, considered such proposals to be a great risk. Rather than openness and presence within the Egyptian public, they aspired to secrecy and clear measures of control over the organisation's rank and file. Their idea of the Brotherhood was based on Qutb's idea to form a "*tanẓīm* made of iron" that could push the Islamic project forward and defend the Society against outside aggression.⁶³ On the other hand, the leadership in the Guidance Office could not afford to simply ignore calls for internal reform. To some extent, the adoption of a new charter in 1994 accommodated these demands. New standing divisions were added to the older administrative structure, including the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Habib. *Memories*, pp. 425-6.

⁶¹ Ikhwanwiki. "al-Duktūr Usāma Naṣr: 'Aḏū Maktab al-Irshād" (Dr. Osama Nasr: Member of the Guidance Office). Accessed 8 September 2014.

www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9_%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1

⁶² al-Saiyid, Yasin. *al-Taqrīr al-istratījī al-'Arabī 1995* (Arab Strategic Report 1995), Cairo: al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1996.

⁶³ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

Political Apparatus, the Planning Apparatus, the Committee on Elections and Parliamentary Affairs, the Committee on State Security and the Committee on Human Rights. This proliferation of new administrative bodies indicated the growing degree of specialisation in the functioning of the Brotherhood and a relative reduction in the scope of activities directly controlled by the Guidance Office.⁶⁴ While it is not clear how much power these new units actually had, they were likely a result of the pressure exerted by a younger generation to grant them a greater role in some areas, thereby formally recognising their contributions to the Society's institutional development.

The 1994 elections also laid bare the extent of the confrontation between the Brotherhood and the regime. State Security knew that these elections would not only lead to the composition of a new Consultative Council, but also to a new Guidance Office – a scenario the regime was seeking to prevent. During the Salsabil raid, a membership database had been discovered on one of Shatir's computers that provided the regime with intimate knowledge of the identity of the members of the Guidance Office.⁶⁵ A new executive body composed of potentially younger Brothers would have complicated the efforts of the security apparatus to monitor the Brotherhood. In addition, internal electoral procedures inspired by the quasi-democratic principle of consultation (*shūrā*) would have potentially created a dynamic, less pyramid-shaped and more vertically integrated organisation that would have been more difficult to control. Additionally, the regime had established a number of unwritten rules with the sitting leadership as to the limits of their behaviour, which a younger leadership might have ought to change.⁶⁶

Shortly before the elections, an officer from State Security called Ibrahim Sharaf, a former officer in the Armed Forces and now the General Secretary of the Brotherhood, in order to warn him that the regime would not tolerate a Consultative Assembly meeting. Particularly the election of a new Guidance Office would be regarded by the regime as a "red line". Sharaf informed the members of the incumbent Guidance Office, but after some deliberation it was decided that the demands of the regime were unacceptable and that the session would go ahead as planned. In order to avoid detection, this decision was orally communicated to the members of the organisation. The assembly took place in late December 1994 or early January 1995 and was attended by almost all members of the sitting Consultative Council, including Brotherhood heavyweights like Hamid Abu Nasr, Mustafa

⁶⁴ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 71.

⁶⁵ "Former Egyptian Shura Council Member from Muslim Brotherhood Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui Accuses Presidential Candidate Khayrat Al-Shater of Embezzling MB Funds." *MEMRI - The Middle East Media Research Institute*, 9 September 2014. Accessed 23 July 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH6JDnpe6TI

⁶⁶ The account of the 1994 elections is based on Habib. *Memories*, pp. 425-6.

Mashhur, Ahmed Hassanin, Ahmed al-Malt, Hosni ‘Abd al-Baqi, Ma‘mun al-Hodeibi, ‘Abbas al-Sisi, Mohammed Hilal, Mohammed Habib, ‘Abd al-Mon‘im Abu al-Futuh, Mahmud ‘Izzat and Ibrahim Sharaf. During this session, the idea of forming a political party was debated. The Guidance Office was tasked with evaluating the extent to which the political atmosphere was suitable to the creation of a political party. As in previous debates, there existed widespread disagreement over whether the Brotherhood should be transformed into a political party – as argued by Abu al-Futuh and Habib – or whether such a party should be formed in parallel to the Society’s *da‘wa* activities, as Mashhur and the vanguard loyalists around him thought.

Elections were held by secret ballot. According to newly introduced rules, each member was to write the name of the individual he wished to nominate on a piece of paper. (1) later complained that there were no clear guidelines about the criteria according to which Guidance Office candidates should be chosen.⁶⁷ As Consultative Council members in many cases were seeing each other for the first time, they were unclear about whom to nominate. The only ones who actually knew each other were the senior figures of the vanguard leadership who had spent time together in Egypt’s jails and shared the defining experience of persecution and imprisonment. Because of this strategic advantage, many members of the younger generation experienced the elections to be a farce that was unable to deliver a leadership capable of facing the challenges of a changing national and global environment.⁶⁸ When (1) submitted a blank paper as a sign of protest, he broke a taboo and caused uproar within the Society’s ranks. According to his own account, this was the first time that a member of the younger generation openly resisted the decisions made by the leaders.⁶⁹ More and more, a perception started to take root among younger members that their elders were out of touch with the reality of the Egyptian street. The empowerment plan was their first attempt to rectify this situation, emphasising the need for the Brotherhood to stay in touch with Egyptians of other political and ideological leanings. Along the lines of the late Tilmisani’s ideas, calls for internal transparency and reform illustrated the way members of a younger generation understood their proposals as contributions to “create a strong Society that is open and inspires people’s empathy”.⁷⁰

Shortly after the elections of 1994, Khairat al-Shatir was elevated to the Guidance

⁶⁷ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

⁶⁸ Habib. *Memories*, p. 427.

⁶⁹ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

⁷⁰ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

Office.⁷¹ On 15 May 1995, Abu al-Futuh's spiritual mentor Ahmed al-Malt passed away, emptying a space in the Brotherhood's top executive body. In quick succession, Shatir first became the head of the prestigious and influential Greater Cairo Sector, and then the deputy to the General Guide. Shatir's rapid rise was facilitated by Mahmud 'Izzat, who had spotted in him the organisational competencies he and other Qutb-educated leaders deemed necessary to revive the Brotherhood to its original strength. To 'Izzat, Shatir represented "the crystallisation of his dream", a strong personality able to "lead the organisation towards the project of an Islamic caliphate in a traditional form."⁷²

Capitalisation, Ruralisation and Salafisation

Shatir's rise occurred against the backdrop of a wider transformation of Islamist discourse. After the Gulf War of 1991, a group of young Islamists from Iraq, Kuwait and Palestine met in the United States. There, they enrolled in management programmes at American business schools and soon became versed in the thinking and vocabulary of American management sciences. Newly acquired concepts such as that of the "individual", the "efficient" use of time, "networking" and "management" gradually became the ideals of a new kind of Islamism that combined modern management practices with Quranic ideals. As observed by Patrick Haenni, Islamist public discourse transformed itself into a new conceptual system that adopted the modern capitalist corporation as a model for Islamist policies and objectives. The world of the modern enterprise provided to these Islamists new categories of thinking, allowing them to invigorate the spirit of the Islamic "renaissance" (*nahḍa*) through the appropriation of modern values such as personal growth (*tanmiyya*) and quality (*jawda*).⁷³ These ideas quickly became popular among the emerging Islamist bourgeoisie in Egypt, who benefited from the privatisations of the early nineties. In his book *Renew Your Life*, Yusuf al-Qaradawi used concepts originally articulated by the American author Dale Carnegie in his bestseller *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by mixing them with Islamist notions and ideals, representing a typical post-modern inflection of two very distinct theoretical universes.⁷⁴ In his management centres, Khairat al-Shatir trained these future pious consultants, with Salsabil publishing textbooks whose intent was to equip an emerging class of Islamist entrepreneurs

⁷¹ "Profile: Egypt's Khairat Al-Shatir." *Al Jazeera*. Accessed 4 October 2014.

⁷² www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/04/20124117205835954.html

⁷³ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 223.

⁷⁴ Haenni, Patrick and Tammam, Husam. "Penser dans l'au-delà de l'islamisme." *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, no. 123 (July 4, 2008), pp. 179–201.

⁷⁴ When I interviewed (25), I found an Arabic edition of Dale Carnegie's book on his library.

with the tools, methods and skills to succeed in the global economy of the twenty-first century.

In a paradoxical way, Qutbist organisational values were well suited to the ideals generated by modern capitalism and globalisation. The model of the “pious winner” fit well into the conception of a vanguard that saw itself as the revolutionary avant-garde to implement Islamic reform.⁷⁵ Banna had already conceptually chartered the way for this development to take shape. In his *Letter of the Fifth Conference*, he described the ideal-type of Brother that he had in mind. This Brotherhood proto-type, whose presumed characteristics resembled those of a McKinsey management consultant, was supposed to be “a busy man with a full schedule [who] participates in four big gatherings in thirty hours across the country, remains away from home for a month or two, does not aggrandise his activities, [and] is everywhere all the time.”⁷⁶

In numerous ways, Shatir was the perfect embodiment of this new kind of leader. He was said to be highly effective, gifted with a high degree of business and management skills. His organisational talent, long-term thinking and the way he combined an understanding of business with a deeply conservative worldview was the principal characteristic that distinguished him from other members in the Guidance Office.

Here you have someone who is conservative, who understands internal politics, who is intelligent and has a business mind-set. He also has money and is rich – he is a well-known figure in the Society. He started to be accepted in terms of his ideas and influence [...]. [It] is very difficult to find someone like him. He’s like Abu al-Futuh, but more business professional, less charismatic and more conservative. Someone from the older Brothers told me once: ‘the Muslim Brotherhood [consists] only [of] Abu al-Futuh and Khairat al-Shatir.’⁷⁷

Having grown up as part of the same generation as Abu al-Futuh, Khalid Dawud and Ibrahim al-Za‘farani, Shatir was more open-minded than other vanguard leaders, although he refrained from engaging too closely with outsiders and emphasised the importance of the *tanẓīm* as the crucial tool for Islamic reform. But in opposition to Abu al-Futuh, whose boasting personality revealed a sense of entitlement, Shatir was more reserved and introverted. Mastering internal organisational politics with great skill, he passed decisions through the Consultative Council

⁷⁵ Tammam, Husam and Haenni, Patrick. “A l’ombre du sourire des winner pieux. Le positive thinking et autres ruses musulmanes de la raison néolibérale.” Unpublished Paper. Cairo, 2004. Also see Roy, Olivier, and Boubekeur, Amel. *Whatever Happened to the Islamists? : Salafis, Heavy Metal Muslims and the Lure of Consumerist Islam*. London: Hurst and Company, 2012.

⁷⁶ al-Banna. “Letter of the Fifth Conference” in *Collection*, p. 267.

⁷⁷ al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

both by employing standard administrative procedures as well as by bringing in trustworthy friends from the Delta governorates of Mansura and Sharqiyya and establishing these newcomers as functionaries in mid-level positions.⁷⁸ The rise of the *Bash Muhandis* (“Pasha Engineer”, as Shatir was called by Brotherhood youths)⁷⁹ entailed an influx of a new group of apparatchiks – talented young people versed in finance and management who would come to define the Brotherhood’s organisational culture to a growing degree.⁸⁰ The story of this emerging class of functionaries and businessmen exemplified the extent to which the Society was not simply a cultist community, but a modern business network through which one was able to further one’s interests.⁸¹

Examples of this rising class of Brotherhood professionals included the members of the Haddad family, some of whom would play a prominent role during the period of governance. The youngest brother, Hisham al-Haddad, was a businessman involved in the exhibitions of durable goods in the Engineers’ Syndicate. The oldest one, Midhat, was an engineer who played a central role in the revival of the Brotherhood in Alexandria during the seventies, where he acted as the president of the Administrative Office. The middle one, ‘Issam, later became Morsi’s foreign policy advisor, where he played an instrumental role in the president’s masterful brokerage of a last-minute ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.⁸² Before joining the Brotherhood, ‘Issam came from a “normal Egyptian family”:

He was having [female] friends, girls and girlfriends. Not like girlfriends (in the Western sense) – just female friends from the university. He attended parties and most of his friends were normal liberals [...]. Then, the day came where he attended a lecture (*muḥāḍara*) where someone started to cite the Quran in a higher voice [...]. He didn’t like it and he said to [the reciter]: ‘why do you recite the Quran in a higher voice?’ He actually went to the guy and had a fight with him!⁸³

In an effort to assuage the conflict, the reciter took ‘Issam to Ibrahim al-Za‘farani, who at that time had a senior position in the Jama‘at Islamiyya. The two men had a long discussion whose main focus was about the necessity of preaching as the engine for Islamic reform.

⁷⁸ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 225.

⁷⁹ Ayyash, Abdelrahman. Interview. Berlin, 2 October 2015.

⁸⁰ Tammam, Husam and Haenni, Patrick. *A l’ombre du sourire des winners pieux. Le positive thinking et autres ruses musulmanes de la raison néolibérale*. Unpublished paper, 2004.

⁸¹ (25). Interview. Alexandria, 16 October 2012.

⁸² Ayyash, Abdelrahman. Interview. Berlin, 2 October 2015.

⁸³ al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

Following these discussions, “things started to get pretty serious for [‘Issam], and then he started to change”.⁸⁴

Haddad later went to England where he completed an MBA at Aston University before reading microbiology at the University of Birmingham. He was a member on the board of trustees of the Islamic Relief Committee, an “independent Non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded in the U.K. in 1984 by a group of concerned postgraduate students” that would open over one hundred offices in forty countries.⁸⁵ Residing in the U.K. at the same time as Shatir, it is likely that he was involved in the operations of the International Organisation.⁸⁶ Upon returning to Egypt, he established the Arab Development Group, which organised exhibitions for Egypt’s construction sector, and later founded Interbuild, a construction company operating in over twenty markets. He also became the deputy head of Hasan Malik’s Society for Business Development (Ebda). In 2009, he was elected to the Guidance Office, where he gained a reputation as a skilled public speaker who was able to advance the Brotherhood’s dialogue with the West. When the FJP was founded in April 2012 he was made in charge of the party’s foreign relations committee. The following May, Haddad appeared at a World Economic Forum regional meeting in Istanbul, where he assured sceptical investors about the Brotherhood’s commitment to capitalism and democracy, confidently announcing that Egypt was “ready for business” in the kind of glib corporate verbiage that is typical for such gatherings.⁸⁷

Similar to their father, ‘Issam’s two sons also assumed important positions in the Society. Gehad studied marketing and filmmaking in the U.K., having been attracted to Hollywood movies and technology ever since his father brought with him the latest toys and gadgets from his overseas business trips. After having worked with the Muslim televangelist ‘Amr Khaled in his program *Life Makers (Sana‘ al-Hayat)* and at the Clinton Foundation, Gehad returned to Egypt with his family. He married Bassma Abu Zayd, the daughter of Guidance Office member Mahmud Abu Zayd, whom he met in prison when both were visiting their respective fathers. It was also there where Gehad got to know Khairat al-Shater, who spotted in him a highly talented young man. After the removal of Morsi in 2013, Gehad took over his father’s role as the Brotherhood’s media spokesperson and later got arrested and

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ See the website of the Islamic Relief Committee at www.islamic-relief.org.uk

⁸⁶ al-Masry al-Youm. “The Brotherhood Snake Has Different Heads in the Governing Palace,” 15 April 2014. www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/429269

⁸⁷ Fieldnotes, 21 May 2010.

imprisoned. Gehad's younger brother Abdullah, born in 1988 in the U.K., subsequently assumed responsibility for the Brotherhood's press office in London.⁸⁸

The rise of a new class of business-minded Islamists led to a growing transformation of the Brotherhood. Shortly after his elevation to the Guidance Office, Shatir was placed by Mahmud 'Izzat to manage the Society's "financial file".⁸⁹ The Brotherhood now became increasingly entangled in the world of big business. This gradual conversion into a quasi-corporation spurred various claims by Shatir's rivals, who accused the Deputy Guide of embezzling the Society's funds for private purposes. Money generated from individual membership contributions were used for speculative investments in global financial markets, leading to a growing concentration of capital in the hands of Shatir.⁹⁰ The lack of financial transparency was strongly criticised. 'Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui, a mid-ranking leader of the Alexandria Administrative Office, urged Mahdi 'Akif to "take the financial file away from Shatir, as there was a big danger for the *da'wa*".⁹¹ In a Consultative Council session, he demanded that local administrative offices should present a clear budget over which the Council would guard financial oversight, instead of collecting contributions through the General Headquarters, thus publically contesting the orders of the leadership.

The rise of a religious business class within the ranks of the Society coincided with a diversification of the Brotherhood's social base. Traditionally a middle class movement whose members consisted largely of the educated Muslim bourgeoisie, the regime's crackdown during the late eighties and early nineties had weakened the Society's mobilising capacity in urban centres, leading to an intensification of recruitment efforts in rural areas. This was exacerbated by the regime's neoliberal economic policies that caused a downgrade of development programs, with the repercussions most dramatically felt in the countryside. The termination of agricultural rent controls and the elimination of tenants' security led to a spike in unemployment figures, falling wages and higher prices for basic goods and services.⁹² This spurred growing rates of migration of rural workers to provincial cities and the new peri-urban fringes of metropolitan areas. While the main wave of rural-to-urban migration had already occurred under Nasser and Sadat, the new arrivals of the nineties were differently related to metropolitan values and more intensely connected to global media and

⁸⁸ Trew, Bel. "London Underground." *Foreign Policy*, 27 September 2013. Accessed 20 September 2015. www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/09/26/london_underground_muslim_brotherhood

⁸⁹ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 224.

⁹⁰ "Former Egyptian Shura Council Member from Muslim Brotherhood Abd Al-Sattar Al-Meligui Accuses Presidential Candidate Khayrat Al-Shatir of Embezzling MB Funds." *The Middle East Media Research Institute*. Accessed 9 September 2014. www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/6300.htm

⁹¹ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 22.

⁹² Fletcher, Lehman. *Egypt's Agriculture in a Reform Era*. Iowa City, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1996, p. 4.

therefore alternative life models. Whereas Hasan al-Banna's generation had migrated to proper cities, the generation of the nineties and early two thousands migrated to giant villages on the fringes of Tanta, Mansura, Damanhur and other Delta cities, where they lived in marginal spaces of informal neighbourhoods, deprived of the benefits of an urban and urbane lifestyle.⁹³ The rural expansion of the Brotherhood, a movement that traditionally thrived on recruiting first-generation urban arrivals, thus replicated a social dynamic of earlier times, in the sense that those among first generation rural newcomers were seen as the "low-hanging fruits" in terms of the Brotherhood's recruitment efforts.⁹⁴

These migration patterns caused a gradual transformation in terms of the Brotherhood's internal organisational culture. The emerging social base of the nineties was quite at odds with urban middle class lifestyles, habits and values. Stemming largely from rural conservative, close-knit family and kinship structures, the new rural base had been brought up in schools that were significantly neglected during the neoliberal era.⁹⁵ Excluded from the lucrative business activities offered by the economic opening and subsequent privatisation, the Brotherhood's organisational framework offered this *petite bourgeoisie* a home that psychologically compensated them for grievances caused by the loss of their rural lifestyles.⁹⁶ Many of the teachers and professors recruited during this decade were the first-time educated sons and daughters of those in the countryside who had suffered from neoliberal reforms. Rural culture was more patriarchal and parochial, with relationships between elder and younger characterised by strict obedience and deference. Cultural markers such as the *zabība* were seen as signs of religiosity, showing the extent to which a rural-conservative culture had gained ground among the urban classes. This contrast between the rural ethos of the newly recruited, and the middle class values of the urban elite, led to a growing cultural clash within the ranks of the Society that manifested itself along urban-rural lines. This ruralisation of the Brotherhood's social base was reflected in the Brotherhood's highest political bodies, which underwent a process of gradual diversification that resulted in a Guidance Office increasingly dominated by rural and semi-urban upstarts. The composition of the Consultative Council of 1994, saw a dramatic increase in terms of quotas by members from Dakhiliyya and Sharqiyya. The internal elections of May 2008 further increased the

⁹³ Schielke, Samuli. "Surfaces of Longing. Cosmopolitan Aspiration and Frustration in Egypt." *City & Society* 24, no. 1 (1 April 2012), pp. 29–37.

⁹⁴ I thank Walter Armbrust for this observation.

⁹⁵ For a description of the quality of schooling in these cities, see Samih, Fayz. *Jannat al-Ikhwān : Riḥlat al-Khurūj min al-Jamā'a (The Paradise of the Brotherhood : Journey of the Exit from the Society)*. Beirut: al-Tanwīr li'l-Tibā'a wa'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzī', 2013.

⁹⁶ Tammam, Husam. "Tarīyyf al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn" (The Ruralisation of the Muslim Brotherhood) in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 71-93.

relative weight of rural members at the expense of urban governorates. At this point, one third of the seventy-five Egyptian members came from only three rural Delta governorates: ten from Dakhiliyya, eight from Sharqiyya and five from Gharbiyya.⁹⁷

This process of “ruralisation” (*tarūf*) of the Brotherhood’s social base went hand-in-hand with a transformation on the level of identity, values and behaviours, with the new semi-urban generation increasingly adhering to Salafi doctrines – a process Husam Tammam called the “salfisation” (*tasalluf*) of the Brotherhood.⁹⁸ The Salafi call (*da‘wa salafiyya*) had its origins in the early nineteenth century, when Ibrahim Pasha returned to Egypt from Saudi Arabia after the battle of al-Dir‘iyya in 1818. The spread of Wahhabi ideas later led to the foundation of the Gama‘iyya Shar‘iyya in 1912 and the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya in 1926 – charity associations that received Saudi financial and ideological support.⁹⁹ Salafi doctrines expanded further under Rashid Rida, whose influence on Banna led him to absorb Salafi worldviews into the ideological framework of the Society in an effort to unite the different *madhāhib*.¹⁰⁰ As a consequence of the oil price shock of 1973, Saudi-subsidised Wahhabi-Salafi literature infiltrated Egyptian publishing markets, where it was distributed for free by the student activists. Salafised Brotherhood preachers such as Ahmed Farid, Mohammed Isma‘il and Yassir Burhami played a critical role in this process, using critical argumentative reasoning to address doctrinal questions related to questions of Islamic law (*fiqh*) and faith (*‘aqīda*).¹⁰¹

The grievances of the Salafis revolved primarily around issues of outward appearance and the relationship between men and women, with the wearing of the *niqāb* and the growing of beards taking preponderance over political issues. The “Salafi temperament” was characterised by an extreme conservatism and a pedantic literalism, “coupled with a zealous desire for change that later turned into an ‘ideological’ project that aimed at building an alternative society based on Islam.”¹⁰² The Brotherhood originally rejected Wahhabi-Salafi ideology, leading to numerous jurisprudential clashes and “extreme debates” between younger generation student leaders and the Brotherhood.¹⁰³ The saturation of the religious market in Egypt with Salafi literature was to the Brotherhood as much an organisational as an intellectual challenge, as it represented both the aspirations of a younger generation that

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Tammam, Husam. “Tasalluf al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn” (The Salfisation of the Muslim Brotherhood) in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 95-135.

⁹⁹ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Kerr, Malcolm. *Islamic Reform : The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā*. Berkeley: University of California Press ; London, 1966.

¹⁰¹ al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

¹⁰² Tammam. “Salafisation” in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 95-135.

¹⁰³ al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

emphasised questions of behaviour and public morality, while simultaneously questioning the hegemony of traditional elites.

Besides the patchwork Salafism proffered by the student organisers, another strand developed in the context of prison life in the sixties. This line of Salafism differed from other schools of thought in terms of its integration of Salafi religious doctrine and Qutbist political theory. This kind of Salafism took concrete shape in the revolutionary activities of Shukri Mustafa, Salih Sirriya and ‘Abd al-Salam al-Faraj. This syncretism was decisively shaped by the prison experience, and subsequently was preserved by the vanguard leadership around Mashhur, Kamal al-Sananiri and ‘Abbas al-Sisi. Combining a militaristic organisational structure with secrecy, the Qutbist Salafism combined highly conservative and literalist viewpoints in matters of faith and jurisprudence with the revolutionary ideology of Sayyid Qutb, subsequently entailing a transformation in terms of the Brotherhood’s values and culture. The split of the Islamic movement following the Gulf war of 1990 and the disintegration of the Society’s internationalist project had weakened the Egyptian Brotherhood, providing an opportunity for Salafi discourse and concepts to dominate the space that was hitherto occupied by the modernist approach of the Brotherhood. The influence of Sheikhs such as Mohammed al-Ghazzali and Sayyid Sabik gradually vanished, making room for the proliferation of salafised Brotherhood sheikhs like ‘Abd al-Khaliq al-Sherif and Mohammed Hussein ‘Aisa. This discourse was supported by the communication revolution of the nineties and the spread of vocational tools such as satellite channels and websites. The Brotherhood’s educational curriculum was subsequently reformed to emphasise values of patience, endurance and steadfastness, with Banna’s *Letter of Education* and *Letter to the Fifth Congress* emerging as the primary readings for the social base, along with texts of Sayyid Qutb.¹⁰⁴ Salafism and Qutbism thus stood in a mutually influencing paradigm. Wahhabi-Salafism impacted the Brotherhood on the level of ideology, while the impact of the Brotherhood on Salafism was primarily of organisational nature.

¹⁰⁴ Other widely-read books of the Brotherhood rank and file included the account of its early history: *The Muslim Brotherhood: the Events made History: View from Inside*; educational material such as *Fī Rihāb al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashrīn (In the Vastness of the Twenty Principles)* and *Mawāqif Tarabawīyya fī Ḍaw‘ Arkān al-Bay‘a (Educational Situations in the Shadow of the Pillars of the Oath)*. In addition, a widely read book was the anti-semitic tract *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Fieldnotes, 6 March 2013.

Beginning of the Military Trials

On 26 June 1995, while on a state visit in Addis Ababa, an attempt was made on the life of Mubarak. The regime immediately tried to establish a connection to the Brotherhood, pointing to Mustafa Mashhur's visit to Sudan around the same time. While no evidence of this link could be established, the assassination attempt was used by the regime as a pretext to crack down on the Brotherhood.¹⁰⁵ State Security forces raided the facilities of Islamist companies and establishments, arresting leaders in governorates and cities across Egypt, including Abu al-Futuh, 'Issam al-'Arian, Ibrahim al-Za'farani and Khalid Dawud. The arrested Brothers were charged with holding secret meetings while the prosecution pointed to an alleged relationship between Brotherhood members and the assassins. One hundred and fifty videotapes were apparently found that were said to show how young Brotherhood members had been sent abroad to wage jihad in Bosnia. Reuters reported that investigations had revealed evidence of a connection between the Brotherhood and radical Islamist groups in Upper Egypt. *Al-Hayat* reported that five members of the Brotherhood had met with members of the Jama'at Islamiyya to plan terrorist activities. The Ministry of the Interior had previously charged the humanitarian relief committee of sponsoring Brotherhood members' military training. But as pointed out by Ma'mun al-Hodeibi, the accused were part of an official committee that had been previously established as part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and as such was under government control. He further argued that the stance of the Brotherhood on political violence was widely known and that, despite the government's attempt to accuse the Society of terrorism, every person who had been arrested was later released without conviction.¹⁰⁶

The regime capitalised on the assassination attempt by re-instigating the practice of the infamous military trials – thirty years after the last such trial had been held.¹⁰⁷ This was a clear sign for the Society that the regime had taken off its gloves. Mubarak argued that, in the absence of the Brotherhood reaching legal status, thus allowing for civilian proceedings, the regime was compelled to resort to military courts according to the provisions of the Emergency Laws of 1981.¹⁰⁸ These trials continued on a bi-annual basis until 2007 and

¹⁰⁵ Ibrahim, Youssef. "Egyptian Group Says It Tried to Kill Mubarak." *The New York Times*, 5 July 1995. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.nytimes.com/1995/07/05/world/egyptian-group-says-it-tried-to-kill-mubarak.html

¹⁰⁶ This account of is based on the memoirs of Habib. *Memories*, p. 431.

¹⁰⁷ "Military Courts: Long History of Human Right Violations." *Ikhwanweb*. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=2466

¹⁰⁸ "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood Detainees Face Military Tribunals". *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/02/14/egypt-muslim-brotherhood-detainees-face-military-tribunals

became a characteristic locus for the confrontation between the regime and the Brotherhood. The first trial was held in August at Hikestep military prison, located at the eastern periphery of Cairo International Airport. The only witness of the prosecution was a State Security officer and the main evidence was a videotape that showed Brotherhood members leaving their headquarters in Suq al-Tawfiqiyya after the Consultative Council assembly of the previous year.¹⁰⁹ Habib, Shatir, ‘Izzat and Abu al-Futuh all received five year sentences, while fifty-six others received three years.¹¹⁰ The harsh verdict and the way the proceedings were carried out infuriated the Brotherhood’s rank and file, whose members mobilised into the streets, leading to massive demonstrations and the arrest of hundreds more.

The regime now proceeded to systematically shut down strongholds of Brotherhood publicity and cut off any communication channel.¹¹¹ The timing of the verdicts was linked to the upcoming parliamentary elections and was designed to prevent the Brotherhood from running an effective electoral campaign. The Brotherhood’s organisational effectiveness, which it had demonstrated during the rescue efforts of 1992, had convinced the regime that it had to intervene more decisively in the voting process. Skirmishes at voting booths led to the death of fifty-one people and the injury of over eight hundred Egyptians. From the one hundred and fifty candidates who did run as independents, the Society ended up winning only one seat, which was subsequently contested in court. In 1996 the regime closed down the Lawyers’ Syndicate, where the Brotherhood had held a majority since 1992.

Despite this setback, the Society’s leaders were not discouraged. Quite to the contrary, these trials confirmed to them once again the truthfulness of the predictions that were made in its core texts. Speaking about the implementation (*tanfidh*) of the Islamic project, Hasan al-Banna demanded from his followers “complete and total obedience”, warning them that the future would hold “trials and tribulations, which only the truthful people can endure”.¹¹² In *Between Yesterday and Today*, Banna warned that the Brothers would face

stern opposition and sharp hostility. Your way will be riddled with hardship and obstacles. Only then will you be following the path of those who convey the message [...] The ignorance of the people as to what constitutes true Islam will remain an obstacle in your path, and you will find among the religious body and the official scholars those who will regard your understanding of Islam as outlandish, denouncing your campaign. Chiefs, leaders and men of rank and authority will hate you. Every government without exception will rise against you, each one trying to limit your activities and hinder

¹⁰⁹ Habib. *Memories*, p. 457.

¹¹⁰ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 93.

¹¹¹ Scobey (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “MB Internal Clashes Continue.” 15 December 2009, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 12 August 2015. Accessed 8 October 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09CAIRO2298_a.html

¹¹² al-Banna. “Letter on Teachings” in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 207-48.

your path. The oppressors will use all the mechanisms to oppose you and extinguish the light of your mission.¹¹³

Such predictions created a powerful psychological anticipation, enabling the vanguard leaders to interpret the military trials and subsequent ordeals as the fulfilment of a prophecy.

As a result of widespread pervasion of corrupt practices within the state bureaucracy, prison conditions became more relaxed. Security guards were “less violent compared to the period of Nasser, as they were eager to achieve material advantages and social prestige” for their own economic benefit. Shatir was able to leverage this to his advantage. Within a short period, he became a prominent figure in prison, gaining the respect of both inmates and guards. His remarkable memory enabled him to remember the personal details of prison guards, such as the names of their children, while the relationship he forged with the security personnel led to a situation where they depended on him for certain services. They recognised, and indeed depended on him as a fixer who could solve fractious disputes and negotiate between competing factions to keep the camp quiet. For his fellow inmates, Shatir organised religious lectures and Quran reading groups. One of the inmates later said about him: “He excelled to promote himself, as he had a talent of persuasion and charisma, which enabled him to attract all sides around him”.¹¹⁴

The Wasat Party Split

Under the impact of this latest crackdown, a group of Brothers from the Tilmisani school of thought saw the time appropriate to move the Brotherhood into the political domain. An initiative to forge a “national consensus on constitutional and political reform” had already been launched at a syndicates’ conference in October 1994, but collapsed the following August due to the intransigence of Ma’mun al-Hodeibi, who objected to the presence of secular representatives. The next year, the replacement of the imprisoned members of the Guidance Office by a bunch of handpicked appointees was regarded as another violation of the internal statutes, infuriating many among the younger generation. One of them, Salah ‘Abd al-Karim, reproached the vanguard leaders for employing Machiavellian tactics, pointing out the necessity for a more thorough division of labour, where the elders should

¹¹³ al-Banna, Hasan. “Bayna al-Ams wa’l-Yawm” (Between Yesterday and Today) in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 375-98.

¹¹⁴ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 224.

restrict themselves to the role of advisors.¹¹⁵ Institutionally, these generational differences were reflected in conflicts between the Political Committee and the Guidance Office, where the former was second to the Guidance Office. The Political Committee, on the other hand, was populated mainly with the young Turks of the Tilmisani generation in their late thirties and forties, while the Guidance Office consisted primarily of vanguard leaders with a strictly Qutbist mindset, such as Mashhur and Hodeibi, most of whom were in their late seventies and eighties.¹¹⁶ This generational imbalance created an image among younger Brothers of an ageing leadership whose strenuous opposition to any kind of organisational reform obstructed the Society's agility. Hodeibi was widely considered as a self-righteous leader and was reproached by Madi and others for arrogating dictatorial powers without consulting with the Consultative Council.

The generational differences broke into the open at the beginning of 1996, when a group of younger members made a bid to establish the Wasat (Centre) Party. Abu'l-'Ila Madi, at the time thirty-seven, and a group of activists around him, argued that it was precisely the Brotherhood's aura of secrecy that compelled the regime to launch its attacks. As long as the Society operated in the shadows of legality, it would not be able to meaningfully participate in the political system. The Wasat Party initiative was published in the form of a forty-nine page document that elaborated the party's vision and objectives in some detail. Attempting to be more transparent, it placed itself squarely within the tradition of Tilmisani's reformist vision. Based on the earlier party project of the Consultation Party (Hizb al-Shura), Madi's project was designed in collaboration with a number of senior figures, including the Brotherhood lawyer Selim al-'Awa, but had been shelved by Mashhur after Tilmisani's death in 1986.¹¹⁷ The Wasat Party attempted to establish an intermediate position between Western values and Islamic orthodoxy. It expanded the concept of *umma* to include Christians who shared a common identity with "Arab-Islamic civilisation", thus adopting a kind of pseudo-pluralism. The goal of Madi and his colleagues was twofold: to direct the Society towards the political space, and to seek better relations with the West by advocating a "human interpretation of Islam".¹¹⁸ However, this outward openness did not hide the fact that the continued insistence on the Sharia as the basis of a constitutional order remained the primary motivation of this project. The Wasat Party initiative thus established a tension between the competing impulses

¹¹⁵ Ramih, Tal'at. *al-Wasat wa-al-Ikhwān : al-wathā'iq wa-al-qisṣah al-kāmilah li-akhṭar ṣirā' siyāsī fī al-tis'īnāt* (*The Wasat and the Brotherhood: the documents and the complete stories of the most serious political conflict in the nineties*). Cairo: Markaz Yafa li'l-Dirasat wa'l-Abhath, 1997, pp. 226 ff.

¹¹⁶ *al-Ahram*, 30 July 1998.

¹¹⁷ Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹¹⁸ Madi, Abu'l-'Ila. Interview. Cairo, 2 July 1997, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 90.

of a defence of conservative values against Western secularism, and of a broader sphere for free political, intellectual and cultural expression.

The Wasat Party initiative stirred up considerable interest in the Arab and international media, with commentators speculating about this “greatest conflict in the Brotherhood’s history”.¹¹⁹ A report published by the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies ominously predicted: “This year marks the Brotherhood’s 70th anniversary. Unless they reach agreement on a new method to keep them going, there won’t be anything called the Brotherhood by the turn of the century”.¹²⁰ The regime interpreted the split as a cover whose real purpose was to disguise the Society’s true ambitions – a camouflage designed to mislead the Egyptian public into believing that the Wasat Party had split off voluntarily, whereas in fact it was just a second political front for the Brotherhood’s project of imposing its atavistic vision on society. On 3 April, sixteen senior leaders were arrested. Eight of them, including Rashid al-Bayumi and Mahdi ‘Akif, were sentenced to three years in prison by a military court.¹²¹ Two years later, the court rejected the Wasat Party’s filing for legal recognition on the grounds that it did not contribute anything new to the existing party landscape, in addition to failing to meet the requirements of the Political Parties Law of 1977. Further attempts by Madi to register his party were equally thwarted, and the Wasat Party remained a paper tiger until after the revolution of 2011.

The vanguard leadership refused to recognise the Wasat Party, arguing that its signatories had acted without the consent of the leadership.¹²² Mashhur’s wingman Ma’mun al-Hodeibi demanded that the Wasat Party’s signatories should immediately withdraw their names or risk expulsion – a threat to which a majority of the signatories succumbed.¹²³ Faced with vehement opposition on the part of the vanguard leaders, many signatories retracted while the initiators – Madi, ‘Issam Sultan, Mohammed ‘Abd al-Latif and Salah ‘Abd al-Karim – submitted their resignation to the General Guide. While the actual number of dissidents was comparatively small and unable to cause a schism in the Society’s social base, the mutiny of Madi and his colleagues nevertheless challenged one of the Brotherhood’s central ideological credos. It touched on the “very basis of the Brotherhood’s existence,

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 92.

¹²⁰ *al-Ahram*, 30 July 1998.

¹²¹ “Fī Dhakrā Mawladihi: Mustafā Mashhūr A‘ād al-Ḥayāt li’l-Nizam al-Khaṣṣ wa’l-Tanzīm al-Dawli (On the Anniversary of His Birth: Mustafa Mashhur Reviews the Life of the Special Apparatus and the International Organisation).” *Bawab al-Harakat al-Islamiyya*. Accessed 30 September 2014. www.islamist-movements.com/3393

¹²² Ramih, Tal‘at. *al-Wasat wa’l-Ikhwān : al-wathā’iq wa’l-qiṣṣah al-kāmilah li-akhṭar ṣirā’ siyāsī fī’l-tis ‘ināt (The Wasat and the Brotherhood: the documents and the complete stories of the most serious political conflict in the nineties)*. Cairo: Markaz Yafa li’l-Dirāsāt wa’l-Abhath, 1997.

¹²³ Utvik, Bjørn Olav. “Hizb al-Wasat and the Potential for Change in Egyptian Islamism.” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 14, no. 3 (2005), p. 296.

preservation and the principles and rules and foundations”, as Hodeibi admitted.¹²⁴ But whereas under Hasan al-Banna the concept of unity was a political imperative whose purpose was to resist colonial encroachment, it became an organisational *sine qua non*, in the sense of a psychological defensive mechanism that was reproduced instinctively by the organisational culture of the Qutbist leadership. The split-off by what was considered a group of heretics around Madi was perceived as a “crime of rebellion” (*jarīmat al-tamarrud*). In addition, because of the Brotherhood’s perceived monopoly over the meaning of “true Islam”, it was further interpreted as equivalent to a departure from Islam, and therefore considered to be outright sin.¹²⁵

Madi’s move constituted a precedent that exposed the Brotherhood to the risk of disintegration. To prevent a greater exodus by younger members, it was imperative for the vanguard leaders to convince its rank and file of the dissidents’ moral degeneracy. But these fears were ill placed. Despite the storm in the media, base members largely remained loyal to the leadership. The Wasat Party split was a top-down driven initiative that did not include representatives of the central positions in the Administrative Offices of local and regional branches. Similarly, the Committee for Upbringing, with its crucial responsibilities for recruitment, indoctrination and promotion, remained firmly in the hands of officers who remained faithful to Qutbist orthodoxy.¹²⁶ After 1996, no major departures took place except for individual ones, such as that of Sayyid ‘Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui and Mokhtar Nuh, in addition to some mid-ranking members of the Administrative Offices in Cairo and Alexandria.¹²⁷

What the Wasat Party initiative did do was to cause a schism within the ranks of Tilmisani’s students, with one direction represented by Madi, Sultan and others, and on the other one by those who tried to pursue reform *within* the Brotherhood, such as Abu’l-Futuh, Za‘farani, Nuh and ‘Arian. It is not clear what the individual motives were of those who remained in the Society. Likely, they found themselves in a dilemma, as they subscribed to the ideas spearheaded by the Wasat Party while at the same time being subjected to internal disciplinary pressures. Certainly, there were also personal motives at stake. The way Abu’l-Futuh portrayed himself in his 2012 autobiography, as well as his political manoeuvring following the revolution of 2011, suggests that he conceived of himself as the actual motor behind the Society’s second founding and therefore the heir to Hasan al-Banna’s ideology. It

¹²⁴ al-Hodeibi, Hasan. Interview, quoted in *al-Hayat*, 20 February 1996.

¹²⁵ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. Cairo, 21 May 2013.

¹²⁶ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2012.

¹²⁷ Tammam. *Transformations*, p. 46.

is fair to speculate that pride, power, personal risk preferences and the security offered by the Society's community and organisational resources were other factors motivating him to remain part of the Muslim Brotherhood.¹²⁸

The conflict between the Political Committee and the Guidance Office worsened following the death of Supreme Guide Hamid Abu Nasr in 1996, who was succeeded by Mustafa Mashhur. After the memorial service, a public ceremony took place at the Raba'a al-'Adawiyya mosque where, in broad daylight and under the eyes of the security apparatus, huge masses of Brothers publically pledged allegiance to the new Murshid in what became known as the "cemetery pledge" (*bay'at al-maqābir*). In an unprecedented public display of Islamist solidarity that foreshadowed the scenes of mass protests of 2013, Mustafa Mashhur was elevated to the highest executive post. Once again, his coronation took place without any elections, not to speak of any discussions in the Consultative Council, as the Brotherhood's statutes stipulated. Ma'mun al-Hodeibi became Deputy Guide and arrogated for himself the high-profile position of the Brotherhood's official spokesperson.¹²⁹ By 1996, the Qutbist leadership was firmly in control of the *tanẓīm*, whereas the disciples of Tilmisani were powerless, vulnerable and marginalised.¹³⁰

Brotherhood 2.0

The years following Mashhur's elevation to the post of General Guide are marked by a general absence of sources. Some clues as to the Society's internal state of affairs at that time can be gauged from its nascent online activity, which started in 1998. The Brotherhood had always embraced communication tools as a means to spread its *da'wa* to a wider public, including newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasts. The shutdown in 1981 of *al-Da'wa*'s headquarters, however, had "confused" the Brotherhood's media experience, mainly because of its ambiguous relationship with the regime.¹³¹ During the crackdown of the early nineties, Brotherhood-sympathising newspapers and magazines, such as *al-Mokhtar*, *al-I'tisam* and *Liwa' al-Islam* (the latter of which grew to a circulation of 95,000 copies in 1987) were

¹²⁸ The special case of 'Issam al-'Arian will be addressed in Chapter 5.

¹²⁹ el-Ghobashy. "Metamorphosis." *IJMES*, p. 390.

¹³⁰ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

¹³¹ Hamza, Khalid. "Faith and Media: Muslim Brotherhood's Media, from the Missionary to the Political Discourse." *Ikhwanweb*, 16 June 2009. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=20546

closed down.¹³² The onset of the communication revolution offered the Society new ways of spreading its message online, leading to first attempts in terms of virtual *da'wa*.¹³³ Over the coming years, the Brotherhood accustomed itself with this medium, using it more frequently in order to share information, organise supporters, challenge the regime and move towards transnational online activities. This allowed the Society to operate well beyond government control. In the decade ahead, the Internet would emerge as its crucial mobilisation and propaganda tool.¹³⁴

The origins of the Brotherhood's online adventures were characterised by trial and error. Two Arabic-language websites were launched in 1998, one hosted on a server in Jordan under www.ikhwanmuslimoon-jordan.org (after July 2002 www.ikhwan-jor.org), featuring official statements alongside comments that critiqued domestic and international politics.¹³⁵ The website was aimed both at recruiting through religious and political motifs such as the Palestinian cause, and mobilising local supporters for certain political activities related to domestic issues. An associated newsletter was called *Letters of the Brotherhood*, featuring an e-mail list of Brotherhood supporters that pointed to a joint endeavour between the Jordanian and Egyptian organisations.¹³⁶ It published a weekly newsletter that operated well beyond the lines of informal censorship, providing regional news and analysis while accusing governments of abandoning the Palestinian cause. It also featured a weekly column written by Mustafa Mashhur.

In Egypt, the Society attempted to circumvent government censorship by diverting to transnational online activities. Two websites were established, one in English and the other in Arabic. The English-language site, hosted under the domain name www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan, was rather rudimentary, with two pages providing some general historical data and information about the organisation's structure, goals and methods, in addition to a frequently asked questions section with some fairly standard and generalist positions on Islamic economics, politics and Sharia. The Arabic site, hosted under the domain

Breuer, Anita. *Media Experiences and Communication Strategies of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood from 1928 to 2011: A Brief Historical Overview*. SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 4 April 2014. papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2430090

¹³³ One of the broadest and most ambitious works on the communication revolution and the emergence of the Internet are the three volumes by Castells, Manuel. *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume I, II and III*. Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

¹³⁴ Egypt has a young and technically versed population. The median age in Egypt is 24, and 33 per cent of the population are under 14. Cell phone use is wide spread, with 67 mobile phone subscribers for every 100 inhabitants.

¹³⁵ The website is cited by McLaughlin, W. "The Use of the Internet for Political Action by Non-State Dissident Actors in the Middle East." *First Monday* 8, no. 11 (3 November 2003).

journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1096. The website is not accessible anymore today.

¹³⁶ McLaughlin, W. "The Use of the Internet for Political Action by Non-State Dissident Actors in the Middle East." *First Monday* 8, no. 11 (3 November 2003). journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1096

name www.al-ikhwan-al-muslimoon.org, featured content similar to that of the English site, the only difference being a summary of the religious credo of the Brotherhood, peppered with Quranic quotations and exhortations from Hasan al-Banna's foundational texts. Both websites remained untouched until they were shut down in 2002 and 2001 respectively.¹³⁷

Different than its sister-organisation in Jordan, the Egyptian Society's activities and goals were characterised in religious terms, with little or no mention of anything political. The Brotherhood presented itself as a movement that focused on moral reform and education, conceiving of the Internet as simply another tool for its *da'wa* activities. A disclaimer on the English-language website even emphasised that "the maintainer of this page is not a member of the al-Ikhwan party [sic]" and that the page had no political orientation. The tendency towards religious-focused domestic mobilisation reflected the political reality the Brotherhood faced in Egypt, by showing the extent to which the movement actively refrained from being perceived as a political player.

In 2000, according to its own analysis, the Brotherhood witnessed "a new era with the Muslim Brotherhood's first serious media outlet in the cyberspace", culminating in the launch of the Society's official Arabic website www.ikhwanonline.com.¹³⁸ The decision to establish Ikhwanonline was made at a conference in Qatar, where E£3 millions were raised for the launch.¹³⁹ The new class of functionaries who drove the expansion of Islamist discourse into the online sphere were a group of tech-savvy programmers and coders that included Ahmed Abdullah, Hisham Ga'far, Hibah Ra'uf 'Izzat and Hussam al-Sayyid. The process was driven and incentivised by Shatir, who believed in new media as a tool to create excitement within the Brotherhood's ranks. He encouraged the new generation of online geeks to use their skills to spread the *da'wa* virtually and get the Society's message out into the world. Dissidents later claimed that Shatir's ambition to venture into the online space was driven by the calculation to build a "parallel organisation" (*tanẓīm mawāz*) operating alongside the Brotherhood, and using his networks in business and the media to assert his control over the organisation.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, the Brotherhood's nascent online activity constituted a means for younger Brothers to gain practice in the art of political rhetoric by bypassing traditional religious authorities.¹⁴¹ In some cases, the articles posted on these websites went

¹³⁷ This material was published on the domain www.ikhwan-info.net, which is no longer available. An archived version of the websites can be found under www.archive.org

¹³⁸ Hamza, Khalid. "Faith and Media: Muslim Brotherhood's Media, from the Missionary to the Political Discourse." *Ikhwanweb*, 16 June 2009. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=20546

¹³⁹ (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ "Virtual Brotherhood." *The Arabist*. Accessed 3 October 2014. arabist.net/blog/2010/7/8/virtual-brotherhood.html

far beyond the norms of decency endorsed by the conservative leaders. This was the case, for instance, with an article published on Islamonline by the psychologist (1) and his colleague Mohammed ‘Abd al-Jawwad, who used it to promote a self-realisation tool called *Together We Develop*. In an article entitled “Enthusiasm and Touching: the Language of Dialogue” (al-Ḥamāsa wa’l-Lamsa: Lughāt al- Ḥiwār), they presented an interpretation of the Quran that focused on “intimate relations” between men and women in an attempt to apply concepts of Western psychology to Quranic ideals. Doing so, they “entered a nest of hornets”. The recalcitrant (1) was subsequently stripped of his voting rights in the Consultative Council and not invited anymore to further *usra* gatherings.¹⁴²

Other websites launched during this period were www.ikhwanwiki.com, the Brotherhood’s online encyclopaedia, and www.ikhwantube.com, where “footages of tortures against some of its elements or violations committed against its demonstrators or any election fraud in constituencies of its candidates” were uploaded. The site www.rasd.com was established as a watchdog to monitor the regime’s repressive measures, and even an island on the virtual reality platform Second Life was created, whose purpose was to “show the group’s cultural project”.¹⁴³ The Brotherhood’s English-language portal www.ikhwanweb.com was launched in 2005 with the explicit objective to improve the Brotherhood’s image with Western audiences. Directed primarily at “the public, academics, researchers, media, think tanks and decision making centres in the West”, the mission of Ikhwanweb was to “bridge the knowledge gap between the Brotherhood and Western intellectuals so that they get to know its ideology without distortion, and understand our political, cultural, and moderate religious message”.¹⁴⁴ Ikhwanweb explicitly avoided any direct religious discourse and instead adopted a political, cultural and intellectual narrative. By 2010, both Brotherhood sites had built up into impressive online portals that featured over 6,000 pages for Ikhwanonline and over 3,400 pages for Ikhwanweb.¹⁴⁵

At the Dawn of the New Millennium

¹⁴² (1). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

¹⁴³ Hamza, Khalid. “Faith and Media: Muslim Brotherhood’s Media, from the Missionary to the Political Discourse.” *Ikhwanweb*, 16 June 2009. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=20546

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ “Opening Closed Regimes - What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?” *Scribd*. Accessed 3 October 2014. www.scribd.com/doc/66443833/Opening-Closed-Regimes-What-Was-the-Role-of-Social-Media-During-the-Arab-Spring

The expansion of the Brotherhood's web presence not only testified to the communication and media skills the Society had acquired since the ascendancy of Khairat al-Shatir, but also reflected the general political atmosphere in Egypt at the end of the millennium. It was no coincidence that the digital dawn of the Brotherhood concurred with a growing amount of state repression. During the 2000 parliamentary elections – the first to be legally supervised – the government cracked down once again on the Society. While the Brotherhood had fielded only seventy-five candidates, it was still able to secure seventeen seats, amounting to more than all other opposition parties combined. The results of the elections were yet another success for Tilmisani's strategy of participation in the political system and gave further headwind to the internal coalition of younger and reform-minded members. Baffled by this victory, the regime rounded up twenty Brotherhood candidates and sentenced them in a military show trial. But this did not deter the Society from continuing to push ahead with its demands of social and moral reform. Brotherhood MPs fielded inquiries about a range of social and educational issues, such as the distribution of sanitary napkins in junior and high schools. Mohammed Morsi, who at the time was the spokesperson for the Brotherhood bloc, justified this intervention by arguing: "in our culture, these matters are dealt with between a mother and her daughter in the privacy of the home." He objected to the use of schools as advertising spaces for only certain brands of sanitary napkins, arguing that "[the school authorities] were distributing only the American Always brand; schools shouldn't be used to market specific products to students!"¹⁴⁶

While such seemingly unimportant matters were debated in the People's Assembly, the tectonic plates of politics in Egypt's neighbourhood started to shift. In September 2000, Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon visited to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which preceded the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada. The events in neighbouring Palestine provided the Brotherhood with an opportunity to mobilise its rank and file through the formation of popular solidarity committees that were able to turn the widespread popular sympathy for the Palestinian cause into political gains at home. Rural Egyptians contributed livestock and other valuable assets, which were sold by committee organisers at fundraising auctions. The Brotherhood's rank and file worked hand in hand with socialist and leftist groups to stock and send aid caravans to the Rafah border crossing. Meanwhile, the figures of the Tilmisani generation who had been incarcerated during the crackdown of 1995, such as Abu al-Futuh, 'Issam al-'Arian, Ibrahim al-Za'farani and Kahlid Dawud, re-emerged from prison and assumed their old leadership roles, patching up the Wasat split by re-establishing

¹⁴⁶ Mursi, Mohammed. Interview. Cairo, 26 June 2002, quoted in el-Ghobashy. "Metamorphosis." *IJMES*, p. 388.

ceremonial and substantive ties with other political groups. In order to publically mark their reformist credentials, the annual *ifṭār* dinner traditionally hosted by the Brotherhood during Ramadan in December 2000 was held at the luxurious Heliopolis Sheraton Hotel. Notable political and media personalities and intellectuals were invited, including the staunchly secular sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who was prominently placed next to Ma'mun al-Hodeibi. Despite being legally banned and repressed, the Society at the beginning of the millennium remained a prominent and respected player on the national scene of Egypt. The Brotherhood had survived the vagaries of government repression of the previous decade more or less intact. The slanders mounted against them by state media could not keep the Society away from keeping its seat on the table of national politics.

RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES (2001-2011)

On 11 September 2001, far away from the events in Cairo, simultaneous terror attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. shook America to its core. While startled commentators on global news networks declared America was under attack, a frightened public turned its eyes towards Osama Bin Laden, a mysterious Saudi billionaire who had previously declared an armed jihad on the United States. Ten days later, a grim looking George W. Bush went on national television, declaring: “Enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country”. The “war on terror” would begin with al-Qaida and “will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated”.¹

This message was received with mixed feelings in Cairo. The Muslim Brotherhood had only just recovered from the wave of persecution of the previous decade. Having secured for itself a fragile position within the Egyptian political space, the Society now suddenly found itself under the spotlight of an inquisitive global media. The Guidance Office was now confronted with the task of managing international perceptions, in addition to the defending itself against the accusations of a hostile regime.² In order to prove its peaceful credentials, the Society’s leadership team embarked on an ostentatious pro-democracy campaign that placed representatives of the socially more progressive Tilmisani school of thought at the centre stage of publicity. In 2004, following the unveiling of a reform initiative, prominent figures such as Abu al-Futuh spoke out more openly in favour of democracy (*dimūqrāṭiyya*). Over the next years, the Brotherhood embarked on a progressive course, a development that was (not unreasonably) applauded by a liberal American political science establishment. Over the coming decade, the Society would forge a closer relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and by early 2011 had become a considerable factor in American Middle East policy. Simultaneously, the U.S.-Brotherhood relationship to a growing degree influenced internal debates on organisational development, identity and culture. The altered international security

¹ Bush, George W. “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People.” Washington D.C., September 20, 2001. georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html

² Matar, ‘Ala’. “Al-Jihad and the Brotherhood Are Two Faces of the Same Coin.” *Ākhir Sā’ah*, September 19, 2001. www.arabwestreport.info/year-2001/week-51/22-general-fouad-allam-al-jihad-and-brotherhood-are-two-faces-same-coin

environment of the post-9/11 world thus added an American dog to the cat and mouse game that was underway between the regime and the Society of the Muslim Brothers.

The Brotherhood's history during this decade was decisively shaped by geopolitical events taking place in the broader Middle East. In the wake of the failed attempt to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, American "democratisation" policies put growing pressure on the regime to allow for a more open political process. This benefitted the Brotherhood in that it led to a gradual rapprochement with the United States. But the 2006 parliamentary victory scored by the Brotherhood's Palestinian franchise Hamas alarmed American policymakers and put the Brotherhood in the defence. In general, the power play between the different national and international actors shaped the Brotherhood's margins of manoeuvrability, with global politics becoming an increasingly important factor in terms of the Brotherhood's internal political strategy.

At the same time, the Brotherhood was faced with a highly dynamic political scene in Egypt. Galvanised by the unlawful intervention in Iraq in 2003 and frustrated with the level of corruption among the political elite, a significant protest movement consisting of young Egyptian political activists gained growing prominence. After a strike in Ghazl al-Mahalla in 2008, this protest movement increasingly drew Egyptian workers into its orbit, giving rise to a mounting trend of labour mobilisation.³ The dynamism of Egypt's social scene put pressure on the Qutbist-dominated vanguard leadership in the Guidance Office, as it vindicated the Tilmisianians within its ranks who advocated for more engagement with wider society. With growing frequency, rhetorical confrontations at the highest echelons of the leadership were fought out publically, with younger Brothers contesting their elders' authoritarian, paternalistic and self-righteous course of action, and their obsessive focus on secrecy to the complete disregard of the obvious transformations that were shaping Egyptian society.

The growing internal discrepancy between the two organisational visions would trickle in bits and pieces into the public domain, giving rise to speculations of a gradual disintegration of the Society. Faced with the triple challenge of internal calls for reform, a hostile regime, and a weary American political establishment, the vanguard leadership walked an uneasy path. By early 2010, the Qutbist faction had succeeded in ejecting the remaining bastions of reformist thinking from senior executive positions while forging a pragmatic working relationship with the United States. Once the revolution came in early 2011, the Brotherhood was able to capitalise on this relationship by mobilising broad-based support among Egyptians. While the rapprochement with the U.S. foregrounded Abu al-Futuh and the

³ Alexander, Anne. *Bread, Freedom, Social Justice : Workers and the Egyptian Revolution*. London: Zed Books, 2014.

Tilmisanians in the first half of the decade, this same support gave the vanguard leaders the international backing they needed to turn the revolution to its advantage, providing them with the necessary legitimacy they required to emerge as a major political player.

* * *

The Question of Political Violence

The extent of the relationship between the Brotherhood and the United States at the end of the decade could not have been predicted ten years before. After 9/11, the advisors around George W. Bush were unsure about what to make of the Brotherhood. Against a sprawling “terrorism studies” literature, intellectuals within America’s liberal political science tradition launched a narrative of the Brotherhood as a force for reform and democratisation and a “bulwark” against extremism, making a case for the U.S. government to engage with moderate Islam. This school of thought was opposed by neo-conservative scholars, like Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington, who shaped a discourse that was seeking to explain terrorism through amorphous concepts such as “culture” or “civilisation”. Along the lines of the argument of hashish as a gateway drug for cocaine, they portrayed the Brotherhood as a stepping-stone for Islamic violent extremism.⁴ In his widely read book *The Looming Tower*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Lawrence Wright argued that Qutb’s experience in New York during the late forties constituted a decisive “proof” that confirmed the existence of a battle between Islam and the West.⁵ The close association between the Brotherhood and al-Qaida subsequently became part of the generally accepted narrative among wide segments of the American political elite.

While emphatically denied by the Brotherhood, the association with violence was more entangled than its leaders would have preferred to admit. In the *Letter of the Fifth Conference*, Banna rhetorically asked whether the Brotherhood was ready to use force to attain their objectives. He answered by stating: “Power is a way of Islam, which is apparent in all its systems and works”. Quoting the Quran, he wrote: “As far as possible, you acquire power and keep ready tied horses against them, in order that you may frighten the enemies of

⁴ Vidino. *The New Muslim Brotherhood*; Lewis, Bernard. *What Went Wrong? : The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002.

⁵ Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower : Al-Qaeda’s Road to 9/11*. London: Allen Lane, 2006.

God and your enemies”.⁶ For Banna, acquiring state power was an intrinsic element of his political theory. Following the strategy outlined in the seven-step succession towards the caliphate and Islam’s “global guidance”, Banna left little doubt that “the Muslim Brotherhood will become powerful and will necessarily use power”. However, it would do so “at the time, when there is no other way out and when [the Society] will be fully satisfied that they have also already gained the power of belief and surety and unity and oneness.”⁷

Banna distinguished different kinds of power. The most basic form was of individual and spiritual nature, consisting of “faith and belief”. The second level was organisational and ideological power, which created “unity and oneness” within the ranks of the Brotherhood by forging a sense of belonging to the Islamic *umma*. It was imperative that the first two forms of power would be entrenched within the hearts and minds of the Muslim believers *before* military power should be used. “No organisation is powerful unless it has all these powers. If it uses military force, and it is disunited and the organisation disjoined, and faith is weak and belief feeble, then surely it will meet disaster.” The idea of military force was for Banna never excluded as a matter of principle and was always preserved as an *ultima ratio*. However, he also emphasised that even once the moment came “when [the Brotherhood] uses force, they would be an epitome of gentleness bravery and boldness. First of all, they would warn, then they would wait, thereafter they would proceed with honour and dignity”.⁸

For Sayyid Qutb, coercion was a central element of his political theory. He insisted that in order to abolish the *jāhili* system, the Islamic movement had to employ methods of physical power and jihad by the sword (*jihād bi’l-sayf*), in addition to methods of preaching and persuasion. In Qutb’s conceptual universe, jihad was not an offensive strategy, but a means to defend men “against all those who limit its freedom”. Doing so, Qutb reverted to the trope of an “attack on Islam”, which was well established in the Brotherhood’s narrative and which conceived of the Society as the last line of defence against the “enemies of Islam”. This instinctive mechanism was an integral part of the Brotherhood’s ideology, as exemplified in the two words emblazoned in its logo: “And prepare” (*wa a’idū*).⁹ Born within the context of an occupied country, the Brotherhood’s historical narrative was very much centred on the idea of a conflict between the West and the Muslim *umma*, whereby a technologically strong but

⁶ Quran, 8:60. The same verse is also quoted today by ISIL in their propaganda video “Flames of War”. An excerpt can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sai2ggP2tJU

⁷ al-Banna. “Letter of the Fifth Conference” in *Collection of Letters*, p. 274.

⁸ Ibid., p. 275.

⁹ The full text of the Quran, 8:60, is: “And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war, by which you may terrify the enemy of God, and your enemy, and others besides them whom you do not know but [whom] god knows. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you. You will not be wronged.”

morally decadent aggressor aimed at depriving Muslims of their history, identity and capacity to resist.¹⁰ Preparing against and resisting such an attack was portrayed as a religious obligation for Muslims, as only such resistance was able to guarantee the survival of the *umma*. Since the Brotherhood saw itself as having a monopoly over the meaning of “true Islam”, Qutbist ideology linked the survival of the *umma* to its survival as an organisation. By this twist, Qutb articulated a liberation theology in which jihad became a defensive mechanism designed to free the wretched and the oppressed of the earth from the imposition of secular laws, whereby jihad was conceived as a “declaration of man’s freedom”. The revolutionary potential inherent in these thoughts provided extremist (*mutaṭarrif*) elements in the Islamist movement with an intellectual-religious justification by which the dictators who tortured them could be declared “apostates” (*kāfirūn*), thus condoning acts of violence against them.¹¹ Qutb’s *takfīrī* ideas influenced radical extremist groups in Egypt and beyond. Despite Hasan al-Hodeibi’s refutation of “takfīrism” in 1969, the idea of violence as a means for political change had prevailed in parts of the Jama‘at Islamiyya’s rank and file until the late seventies, until Tilmisani decisively rejected them.¹² However, it latently survived within the ideological architecture of the Brotherhood. It was never fully excluded by the Qutbist leadership as a matter of principle, and the potential for political violence could therefore be enacted at any time in order to defend the Society (and by implication Islam) from outside aggression.¹³ One needs to note, however, that this latent potential towards violence was not unique to the Brotherhood. It can be argued that most political ideologies, with the exception perhaps of the most extreme forms of pacifism, eventually revert to political violence when under attack.¹⁴

The members of the vanguard leadership had indeed an ambiguous position towards the use of political violence. For Mustafa Mashhur, jihad was not simply “an inevitable necessity”, but it was a “religious public duty to spread the *da‘wa* incumbent upon the Islamic nation” and an “obligation cast upon Muslims to establish an Islamic state and the Islamic caliphate.” He explained that “preparation towards jihad [is] not only for the purpose of fending-off assaults and attacks of God’s enemies from Muslims, but also for the purpose of realising the great task of establishing an Islamic state, strengthening the religion and

¹⁰ Baker. *Sadat and After*, p. 260.

¹¹ (7). Interview. Alexandria, 28 March 2013.

¹² Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 69.

¹³ This point was also made in “Risāla ilā šufūf al-Thawār: wa a‘idū” (Message to the Rows of Rebels: Prepare!) *Ikhwanonline*. 7 January 2015. Accessed January 30 2015. A copy of this letter can be found here: www.facebook.com/KolenaKhaledSaeid/posts/951735161503528:0 (accessed 1 September 2015).

¹⁴ I thank Walter Armbrust for this comment.

spreading it around the world.”¹⁵ Further complicating the relationship was the fact that a number of top al-Qaida commanders, including Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, had joined the Muslim Brotherhood in their youth.¹⁶ In a video statement released much later while he already waged jihad in Afghanistan, Ayman al-Zawahiri explained:

Osama was part of the Brotherhood but was kicked out. When the Russians invaded Afghanistan, he left immediately to Pakistan to get to know the jihadi fighters. The Brotherhood had given him orders to go to the Jama‘at Islamiyya in Lahore to provide aid there [...]. After the battle of Kadi [...] he asked Mustafa Mashhur to come to Peshawar for a visit. So they met, and Mustafa Mashhur said to Osama Bin Laden: ‘Osama, you should come back to us’.”¹⁷

While there existed an uncomfortable historical connection between the leadership of al-Qaida and the Brotherhood, its leaders strongly repudiated the 9/11 attacks as unethical and un-Islamic. Mashhur signed a statement to the extent that the Muslim Brotherhood was “horrificed” by the attacks and that it strongly condemned “activities that are against all humanist and Islamic morals”.¹⁸ The Brotherhood largely succeeded in dissociating itself from the perception of a terrorist organisation. But this also implied that it had to distance itself from any political behaviour at home that might provoke the regime. While the Brotherhood’s “pragmatic” political position succeeded in shielding it from state aggression, this also meant that it would have to make concessions over deeply held ideological principles.

Wavering Between Pragmatism and Ideology

A litmus test came in the spring of 2002, after Israel invaded the West Bank in an operation called “Defensive Shield”. The incursion of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) deep inside Palestinian territory, and the behaviour of its soldiers in the “massacre of Jenin” where over

¹⁵ ‘Abd al-Jawad. *The Life of Mustafa Mashhur*, p. 17.

¹⁶ For Khalid Sheikh Mohammed’s association with the Brotherhood, see National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report : The Attack from Planning to Aftermath : Authorized Text*. New York: WWNorton & Co, 2011, p. 145.

¹⁷ al-Zawahiri: ‘Bin Laden Was a Member of the Muslim Brotherhood.’” *al-Arabiya*, January 31, 2015. Accessed 8 October 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOJGh-jCSO8

¹⁸ *al-Quds al-‘Araby*, September 14, 2001. See also: “[We] strongly condemn such activities that are against all humanist and Islamic morals. ... [We] condemn and oppose all aggression on human life, freedom and dignity anywhere in the world.” *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 13-19 September 2001. Accessed 11 August 2015. weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/551/fo2.htm

fifty people died, enraged the Arab public.¹⁹ In Egypt, grassroots networks were formed to oppose this aggression, with thousands demonstrating in Cairo and Alexandria.²⁰ While formally denouncing the incursion, the Brotherhood remained absent from protests, a stance that was justified by Hodeibi with the dubious claim that Egypt had to stay unified in the face of “external aggression”.²¹ Abu al-Futuh later admitted that the Society was not prepared to mobilise, as it faced the danger of being tried by the regime in military courts.²² This approach of double standards led to rebellions in the organisation, with the Alexandria branch calling for a million man march (*milūniyya*), mobilising tens of thousands of base supporters against the orders of its leaders.²³ In the wake of such obvious military aggression, the Society’s pragmatic politics had a hard time placating an unruly and restless base. The tightrope walk between truthfulness to its ideological principles while navigating the tricky waters of national politics led to growing tensions within the ranks of the Society.

In October 2002, U.S. President George W. Bush started to raise the spectre of a threat emanating from Iraq.²⁴ Over the coming months, the Bush administration, in close alliance with the government of Tony Blair, launched a cynical and carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign that bogusly framed Iraq as the new frontline in the “war on terror”.²⁵ On 19 March 2003, an international coalition led by an unholy alliance of the “industrial-military complex” in the United States, with the support of Britain’s Labour Party launched the invasion of Iraq, a military adventure that would soon turn into the biggest disaster of U.S. military history in the Middle East, with lasting repercussions on the fragile communitarian and ethnic balance of power in this country.²⁶ Offended by this blatant arrogance, leftist youth activists in Cairo organised street rallies during the weeks leading up to the invasion. A daylong sit-in in Tahrir Square morphed into widespread anti-regime rallies, with the masses chanting: “*Yā ‘Alā’ ‘ul*

¹⁹ The Israeli incursion in Palestinian-controlled territory from the beginning of March until 7 May was said to have caused 497 Palestinians’ deaths: Bennet, James. “U.N. Report Rejects Claims of a Massacre of Refugees.” *The New York Times*, 2 August 2002. Accessed 4 August 2015.

www.nytimes.com/2002/08/02/international/middleeast/02JENI.html. Human Rights Watch claimed that the Palestinian death toll was 52. Human Rights Watch. “Israel/Occupied Territories: Jenin War Crimes Investigation Needed.” *Human Rights Watch*. 2 May 2002. Accessed 15 July 2015.

www.hrw.org/news/2002/05/02/israel/occupied-territories-jenin-war-crimes-investigation-needed

²⁰ “Street Days.” *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 4 April 2002. Accessed 5 November 2014.

weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/580/eg5.htm. Baheyya. “Egypt Analysis and Whimsy. Kifaya: Asking the Right Questions.” Accessed 5 November 2014. baheyya.blogspot.ch/2005/04/kifaya-asking-right-questions.html

²¹ Hodeibi is quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 99-100.

²² al-Hamalawy, Hossam. “Closer to the Street,” *Cairo Times*, 6-19 February 2003.

²³ Howeidy, Amira. “Stepping into a Burgeoning Gap”. *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 23-29 January 2003, No. 622. Accessed 15 July 2015. weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/622/sc2.htm

²⁴ Bush, George W. “The Iraqi Threat”. 7 October 2002. Accessed 5 November 2014.

www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/10.7.02.html

²⁵ Gershkoff, Amy and Kushner, Shana. “Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administrations Rhetoric.” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005), pp. 525–37.

²⁶ For a detailed account from invasion to the outbreak of sectarian violence of 2004 and 2005, see Ricks, Thomas. *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*. New York ; London: Penguin Press, 2006.

Mubārak al-manaṣṣa fī'intizārak! – O Ala', tell Mubarak, the reviewing stand awaits you!"²⁷ It was one of the first times in recent history that demonstrators voiced anti-regime slogans, breaking a psychological barrier that led to a greater acceptability among the Egyptian public to engage in anti-regime street action.²⁸ It was here that the future makers of the 25 January 2011 revolution familiarised themselves with the tools of their trade – lessons that would come handy a decade later.²⁹

While the Brotherhood remained absent from these rallies, it was imperative for the Guidance Office to at least publically react to the American invasion. Mubarak had traditionally allowed the Society to hold occasional demonstrations on foreign policy issues, as long as they would not challenge the regime.³⁰ With the blessing of the government, the Brotherhood organised a massive gathering of tens of thousands in the Cairo Stadium on 27 February. The Society's leadership team was eager not to allow the demonstration to morph into a show of anti-regime anger. Adding to the general pressure came competing claims over who would succeed the ageing Mustafa Mashhur as General Guide. For almost a decade, the reformist-minded cadres of the Tilmisani generation had been calling for the Murshid to be elected by the Consultative Council. But the Qutbist leadership firmly rejected this approach, arguing that the changed geopolitical environment of the post-9/11 world would not justify such measures. When Mashhur passed away on 29 October 2002, his eighty-one year old Deputy Ma'mun al-Hodeibi succeeded him as the last remaining figure of the generation of the *raḥīl awwal*. At this point, according to Abu al-Futuh, a "climate of repression and exclusion" had taken preponderance over demands of internal organisational reform, strengthening the hands of "those who rejected the growth of democracy within the group".³¹

²⁷ The "reviewing stand" is the stage at Nasr Street where Sadat was assassinated in 1981. For the chant, see Baheyya. "Baheyya: Egypt Analysis and Whimsy: Kifaya: Asking the Right Questions." Accessed 5 November 2014. baheyya.blogspot.ch/2005/04/kifaya-asking-right-questions.html; Howeidy, Amira. "A Day at 'Hyde Park'." *al-Ahram Weekly Online*. 27 April 2003, Issue No. 631 edition. Accessed 5 November 2014. weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/631/eg8.htm.

²⁸ Schemm, Paul. "Egypt Struggles to Control Anti-War Protests." *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, 31 March 2003. Accessed 5 November 2014. www.merip.org/mero/mero033103.

²⁹ (26). Interview. Cairo, 18 August 2012.

³⁰ "Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy". *Crisis Group*. 4 October 2005, p. 15. Accessed 5 July 2015. www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/North%20Africa/Egypt/Reforming%20Egypt%20In%20Search%20of%20a%20Strategy.pdf.

³¹ Tammam. *Transformations*, p. 106.

The Democratic Paradox

In a speech given in November 2003, George W. Bush proposed a “forward strategy of freedom” to promote democracy throughout the Middle East. In the absence of any credible evidence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, U.S. planners were in need of justifying their illegitimate invasion of Iraq *ex post facto*. The administration now started to portray dictatorship as the breeding ground for terrorism, establishing a link between national security and the promotion of democracy. A proposal for a “Greater Middle East Initiative” was leaked to the press in February 2004 and subsequently approved by world leaders at a G-8 summit.³² Egypt was singled out by Bush as the target of high expectations: “The great and proud nation of Egypt has shown the way toward peace in the Middle East, and now should show the way to democracy in the Middle East”, he declared.³³

The American emphasis on “promoting democracy” prepared the ground for the emergence within the Brotherhood of a new discourse centred on notions such as democratisation, pluralism, and the “civil state”. Despite their careful tactical manoeuvring with respect to the question of terrorism, the Society had been unable to avoid a breakdown in the relations with the United States after 9/11.³⁴ Given the geopolitical context of the early “war on terror”, the maintenance of direct relations became the less preferred option for both sides.³⁵ But as the Bush administration embarked on a new course, the Brotherhood leadership leveraged this to its advantage. The driving force behind this effort was Mahdi ‘Akif, who would play a critical role in the Brotherhood’s internal political power game over the coming years. Although he was ideologically affiliated and emotionally close to senior Guidance Office figures of his generation, with whom he shared the defining prison experience, ‘Akif had also served in the legislatures from 1987 to 1990, and again from 1995 and 2000. He was thus ideologically more flexible than other vanguard leaders.³⁶ Because of his role as an intermediary between the rival factions, he had gained the reputation of a “balance” (*tawāzun*) among reform-minded Brothers and as such was well placed to reach an understanding between the Society’s vanguard leadership and the upwards-pressing younger

³² Perthes, Völker. “America’s ‘Greater Middle East’ and Europe: Key Issues for Dialogue.” *Middle East Policy* 11, no. 3 (1 September 2004), pp. 85–97.

³³ Bush, George W. “Remarks by President George W. Bush at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy.” 6 November 2003. Accessed 20 August 2015. www.ned.org/george-w-bush/remarks-by-president-george-w-bush-at-the-20th-anniversary

³⁴ Ricciardone (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Contact with Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary Leader.” 20 March 2007, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 20 August 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07CAIRO795_a.html

³⁵ Frampton, Martyn and Rosen, Ehud. “Reading the Runes? The United States and the Muslim Brotherhood as Seen through the Embassy Cables.” *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 03 (September 2013), pp. 827–56.

³⁶ Tammam. *Transformations*, p. 82.

members.³⁷ During the Guidance Office elections of January 2004, he took the lead over Mohammed Habib, an outsider to the inner circle favoured by the Tilmisanians.³⁸ Concerned about keeping the fragile internal unity intact, he appointed Habib as his first, and Khairat al-Shatir his second deputy.³⁹ Both were younger than the majority of Brothers in the Guidance Office and maintained good relations with middle-rank and younger members.⁴⁰ Throughout his tenure, ‘Akif worked to bridge the cultural divide between the two camps, and it was only after he resigned in early 2010 that the rift would break into the open and the internal balance of power would tilt decisively in favour of the Qutbists.

In March 2004, ‘Akif unveiled an “initiative to participate in awaited democratic reform”.⁴¹ The document stated that “comprehensive reform cannot be achieved except by implementing democracy, which we believe in, and whose fundamentals we commit ourselves to [...] while fully accepting that the people are the source of all authorities [sic].”⁴² The programme placated American policymakers, who could capitalise on it to showcase the early successes of Bush’s democratisation project.⁴³ But in fact, the programme contained rather general points, such as the demand to revoke the Emergency Laws, curtailing presidential powers and grant the release of political detainees. It embraced religious and political freedoms and supported a state system that is “republican, parliamentary, constitutional and democratic in the framework of the principles of Islam”. While the initiative did not propose any new ideas, its apparent emphasis on democracy and citizenship implied at least theoretically the acceptance by the Brotherhood of admitting women and Copts for senior government posts, including the presidency.

The main success of the reform initiative of 2004 was in terms of public relations, leading to what Husam Tammam aptly called the “democratic paradox”, where the Brotherhood’s image was suddenly rebranded “from an enemy of democracy to its biggest supporter”.⁴⁴ If the reform initiative showed anything, it was that the Brotherhood’s thinking on political and economic matters had not evolved significantly since the days of Hasan al-

³⁷ ‘Akif, Mahdi. Interview. Cairo, 19 May 2013.

³⁸ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

³⁹ Traeger, Eric. “Who’s Who in Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Accessed 3 September 2014. www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/whos-who-in-the-muslim-brotherhood

⁴⁰ Wickham calls Habib and Shatir “pragmatic conservatives”, together with Morsi and Katatni. Habib was said to be “somewhat closed to the reformists”. See Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 103-4.

⁴¹ Yacoubian, Mona. *Promoting Middle East Democracy II: Arab Initiatives*. DIANE Publishing, 2008.

⁴² Muslim Brotherhood Initiative: On the General Principles of Reform in Egypt. Cairo: Unknown publisher. 2004.

⁴³ ‘Issam al-Din, Gamal. “Brotherhood Steps into the Fray.” *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 11 March 2004, Issue No. 681 edition. Accessed 15 August 2015. weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/681/eg3.htm

⁴⁴ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 52.

Banna. As before, the main causes of Egypt's crisis was the lack of religiosity of Egyptians, which had been eroded by Western values. Selfishness and materialism were said to prevail both in the legal and the education systems. Anyone who would seek to rebuild Egypt's "moral character" was advised to do so "on the basis of faith and morals", while consolidating the respect for the

fixed principles of the nation (*thawābit al-umma*), represented by the faith in God and His Books and His Prophets and His Laws [...]. There is no hope for us to achieve any progress without returning to our religion, executing our laws, adopting modern science and technology, gaining as much knowledge and education as we can.⁴⁵

Seeing itself as the vanguard of the revolutionary reform project, the Brotherhood reserved for itself the task to "inform the masses, Muslims and non-Muslims, of Islamic teachings, explaining the signs in detail to those who understand the pure human nature upon which God has created men."⁴⁶ The objective was to motivate the people "to abide by worship and good morals and upright actions", with the purpose of establishing "God's rule on the basis of our faith. This is our true and effective way to escape all our internal and foreign problems, whether political, economic, social or cultural." The institution able to guarantee this was

an Islamic state that executes the laws and teachings of Islam in practice, protecting them domestically and working to spread them internationally [...] And preparing the nation in terms of jihad in order to stand united in the face of tyrants, enemies of God, to ultimately establish the guided Islamic state.⁴⁷

As Wickham pointed out, the programme was full of ambiguities. The most obvious contradiction was the idea of the people as the source of authority while simultaneously affirming the sovereignty of God. Another flaw was the Brotherhood's understanding of the principle of freedom of expression, seen as the right to promote ideas peacefully and "in the framework of the public order and public morals".⁴⁸ Besides the practice of the pseudo-democratic decision-making procedure of *shūrā*, there was little theoretical or conceptual content in this programme that would have allowed the Brotherhood to craft a substantiated argument on the relationship of Islam and democracy in the twenty-first century. Hasan al-

⁴⁵ Muslim Brotherhood Initiative. Cairo, 2004.

⁴⁶ Article 2, "The General Organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1982 A.D." in *Statutes and By-Laws*, p. 263.

⁴⁷ Muslim Brotherhood Initiative. Cairo, 2004.

⁴⁸ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 106-8.

Banna had complained in the *Letter of the Fifth Conference* that “individuality and unlimited liberty [led] to chaos and other short-comings”, resulting in the “fragmentation of the social structures and family system [...]. Democracy did not lead to the empowerment of the people but to the establishment of chosen tyrants”.⁴⁹ Similarly, in a 1981 article in *al-Da‘wa*, Mustafa Mashhur had stated: “Democracy contradicts and wages war on Islam. Whoever calls for democracy means they are raising banners contradicting God’s plan and fighting Islam.”⁵⁰

Emboldened by their growing relevance in public institutions, exponents of the Tilmisani school pressed ahead with their objective to mould the Brotherhood from a revivalist movement with internationalist aspirations to a political party devoted to national objectives. Since the public emphasis on democracy and citizenship improved the Brotherhood’s perception internationally, the vanguard elite tolerated and even encouraged the new reformist discourse, giving the Tilmisanian cadres the stage of publicity. But they were also aware of the fact that such “un-Islamic” liberal ideas would potentially weaken the Brotherhood’s spiritual and moral prowess and affect its capacity to mobilise. Despite the public display of the new reformist discourse, key internal positions in charge of spiritual and religious formation and indoctrination of the rank-and-file membership, as well as internal promotion, continued to be controlled by Qutbist loyalists.⁵¹ In conclusion, it seems that the alleged “democratisation” of the Brotherhood’s ideology was taking place on the discursive level rather than in terms of a fundamental “metamorphosis” of the Society’s core axioms, as some erroneously assumed.

Egyptian Street Politics

On 14 July 2004, Mubarak charged the computer engineer Ahmed Nazif with forming a new government. The cabinet was stacked with friends and business partners of Mubarak’s son Gamal, head of the NDP’s Policy Committee, whose mission was to “advise” the government on economic policy. It was here that the kleptocratic clique of the likes of Rashid Mohammed Rashid, Yusif Butros Ghali and Ahmed al-Maghraby took up the reins of power – and along with them the kind of crony capitalism that was the hallmark of the coming years. In an effort to consolidate their power base, the politicians from the new “cabinet of businessmen” dramatically accelerated “the pace of reform”, selling off large parts of the Egyptian public

⁴⁹ al-Banna. “Letter of the Fifth Conference” in *Collection of Letters*, pp. 249-94.

⁵⁰ Mashhur, Mustafa. “al-Itizām wa’l-Wafā’ bi’l-‘Ahd” (Commitment and Loyalty to the Covenant). *al-Da‘wa*, January 1981.

⁵¹ Tammam. *Transformations*, p. 82.

sector to the highest bidders and financing massive infrastructure projects through public money while “privatising” the gains. During the previous decade, the sell-off of the public sector had already increased Egypt’s debt burden from 67 per cent of GDP in 1992 to 90 per cent in 2002. While the budget deficit as a proportion of GDP had decreased from 15.3 per cent to 3 per cent since the mid-nineties, this had little to do with improvements in the real economy and was rather driven by the \$15.5 billions in savings that were made available to Mubarak in return for his participation in the Gulf War.⁵²

With a culture of nepotism entrenching itself within state institutions, popular calls for change became louder.⁵³ The combination of the pace of reform and the growing levels of corruption primarily affected the lower classes, where poverty rates increased from 16.7 per cent in 2000 to 19.6 per cent in 2005 – equivalent to 28 million people earning less than \$2 per day. It also contributed to the further erosion of an already struggling middle class.⁵⁴ A group of activists saw an opportunity to make themselves heard on the national stage. In the fall of 2003, the Brotherhood defector Abu’l-‘Ila Madi and a group of intellectuals from different ideological leanings founded the Egyptian Movement for Change, known as Kifaya (“Enough”). By September 2004, the initiators gathered over three hundred academics, artists, students, workers and farmers to sign an agreement enabling them to go public with a declaration. Calling for political and economic reforms and an end to the Emergency Laws, Kifaya organised unauthorised demonstrations during which Mubarak and other members of the ruling elite were publically derided.⁵⁵

The Kifaya movement met the Brotherhood unprepared, provoking strong reactions by members of the Guidance Office and further exacerbating internal political divisions. In the sort of knee jerk reaction that was typical for the vanguard leadership, the first impulse was to abstain from street action for fear of government repression. This refusal was partly based on the ideological conviction that the Society would not recognise any social movement except that of comprehensive educational, social and moral reform.⁵⁶ Psychologically, it was rooted in a deep-seated anxiety that overt protests might harm the Society’s existence. But the leadership’s decision was not supported by a number of Brothers at the intermediate levels of the internal hierarchy who shared a different historical experience. Ahmed Ban, a thirty-eight year old Brother, was representative for a generation of younger, urban and educated

⁵² For a study of Egypt’s dept. situation under Mubarak, see Sulayman. *The Autumn of Dictatorship*.

⁵³ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 58.

⁵⁴ “Arab Republic of Egypt: Selected Issues.” *IMF Country Report* no. 07/381, December 2007.
www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr07381.pdf

⁵⁵ Abu’l-‘Ila Madi. Interview in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 109.

⁵⁶ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 55.

Egyptians who had joined the Society in the nineties. He saw it as a “national duty” to support Kifaya’s cross-ideological solidarity, leading him to participate in the protests and public discussions against the orders of his leaders.⁵⁷

The internal divisions were reflected in the Guidance Office. Abu al-Futuh, ‘Issam al-‘Arian and Sayyid ‘Abd al-Sattar started to publically challenge their Qutbist rivals by participating in public activities, and by this rendered obvious the different strategic visions that prevailed within the Society between its political and *da‘wa* coalitions. The student activists of the seventies saw a potential in Kifaya for broader popular mobilisation. Though they were aware of the risk of social instability, they considered street actions and strikes as a legitimate means of challenging the state.⁵⁸ They were opposed by a group of leaders whose sectarian spirit (*ruh al-tā’ifa*) and parochialism refused any engagement with other social and ideological forces.⁵⁹ While Kifaya provoked tensions between the *da‘wa*-oriented vanguard and those who adhered to a more open vision, the movement was not able to forge a broader cross-ideological consensus between the various political forces in Egypt.⁶⁰ Although its smart branding on Facebook enabled it to attract the attention of foreign researchers, its achievements on the ground were rather limited. In the end, Kifaya remained an elitist and top-down led initiative with little grassroots support that was unable to establish itself as a credible force representing a broad segment of Egyptian society.⁶¹

In 2005, public protests against Mubarak’s plans to install a system of hereditary succession in Egypt became increasingly loud, with demonstrators chanting: “*Lā li’l-tamdīd la li’l-tawrīth!* – No to extension, no to hereditary succession!”⁶² As grassroots-organised activities expanded, the Brotherhood found itself under growing pressure to join the action in the streets.⁶³ In a decision that went against the will of most of his colleagues in the Guidance Office, Mahdi ‘Akif ordered the rank and file to protest in front of the People’s Assembly and the Fath Mosque in Ramsis Square. Other rallies assembling over 50,000 Brothers were held

⁵⁷ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

⁵⁸ Abdel-Latif, Omayma. “Abdel-Moneim Abul-Futuh: A Different Kind of Syndicalism.” *al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 19 May 2005, Issue No. 743 edition. weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/743/profile.htm

⁵⁹ Habib, Mohammed. Interview. Cairo, 20 April 2005, quoted in “Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy”, *International Crisis Group*, MENA report 46, 4 October 2005, p. 12.

⁶⁰ “al-Azma al-dākhliya fi Ḥaraka Kifāya al-Maṣriya” (The Internal Crisis in the Egyptian Kifaya Mouvement). *Al Jazeera Arabic*. Accessed 5 November 2014. www.aljazeera.net/home/Getpage/0353e88a-286d-4266-82c6-6094179ea26d/45fef4c3-9a0e-4307-baff-68ad1a5594e3

⁶¹ Habib, Mohammed. Interview. Cairo, 20 April 2005, quoted in “Reforming Egypt”. *International Crisis Group*, p. 12.

⁶² Baheyya. “Kifaya: Asking the Right Questions.” 30 April 2005. Accessed 5 November 2014. baheyya.blogspot.ch/2005/04/kifaya-asking-right-questions.html

⁶³ Sowers, Jeannie and Toensing, Christopher. *The Journey to Tahrir : Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*. London ; New York: Verso, 2012; Bayat, Asef. *Making Islam Democratic : Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 181-6.

in Tanta, Alexandria and other cities, reminding people that it was the Brotherhood, not Kifaya, that was the true force for popular mobilisation.⁶⁴ As a result of the protests, over 1,500 Brothers were incarcerated, including ‘Issam al-‘Arian and Mahmud ‘Izzat – the most senior leaders arrested since 1996.⁶⁵ The U.S. Embassy in Cairo noted that the arrests

broke a precedent that had held for at least ten years – that the [Government of Egypt] would not target the [Brotherhood’s] senior echelon for arrest. Their arrests were cited by observers as evidence that relations between the [Government of Egypt] and the [Brotherhood], tense but generally on slow-boil in recent years, was heating up into a full confrontation.⁶⁶

These arrests broke the gentlemen’s agreement between the government and the Brotherhood.⁶⁷ The mood in the Guidance Office now started to shift towards a more *tanẓīmī*-focused approach. Khairat al-Shatir and Mohammed Habib, the two most influential members in the Guidance Office, expressed dismay with ‘Akif’s “public trial balloons” that had led to the imprisonment. ‘Akif was sidelined in what the U.S. Embassy in Cairo labelled an “internal coup”.⁶⁸ In May 2005, when Abu al-Futuh independently and publically declared that the Society was prepared to accept the principles of a secular state “with religious terms of reference”, he went against the strategy of the conservatives and initiated a change from their long-standing position that Egypt should be ruled as an Islamic state. By virtue of his widespread popular legitimacy, Abu al-Futuh had a significant following among the base. The subsequent demotion of Abu al-Futuh and the side-lining of ‘Akif supported the contention of American diplomats, who saw the Brotherhood’s verbal commitment to democracy and human rights as a “tactical shift rather than an indication of evolving ideology”.⁶⁹

The Cairo Spring

⁶⁴ “Reforming Egypt”. *International Crisis Group*, p. 19.

⁶⁵ *al-Ahram*, 7 May 2005, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Gray (Cairo) to unknown. “Update on the GEO-Muslim Brotherhood Standoff.” 16 June 2005, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 15 September 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05CAIRO4577_a.html

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Gray (Cairo) to unknown. “The GOE and the Muslim Brotherhood: Anatomy of a Showdown.” 17 May 2005, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 15 September 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05CAIRO3755.html

In a speech at the American University in Cairo in June 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice openly challenged Mubarak to “fulfil the electoral promise he has made to his people”.⁷⁰ Rice’s diplomatic jargon could barely hide the U.S. administration’s annoyance with the regime’s obstinate recalcitrance to tackle the issue of domestic reforms.⁷¹ Under American pressure, Mubarak proposed a new agenda that foresaw a redistribution of power within the framework of wide-ranging constitutional and legislative reforms. While eager to secure the goodwill of his Western benefactors, Mubarak was determined not to loose control of the legislative branch of government. His idea was to present the outside world with the veneer of fair and transparent elections by engineering a moderate Islamist victory that would be designed to frighten the United States. State Security officials were instructed to negotiate with the Brotherhood the districts where the Islamists were allowed to run, and the number of seats they would obtain.⁷² The Guidance Office formed an internal committee to negotiate with the regime, which included Shatir, ‘Akif, Habib and Abu al-Futuh. This episode stood at the start of a more intricate relationship between the Society and the security apparatus, expressed in the fact that for the first time in many years not a single Brother was in jail. The alliance of convenience would be consolidated during the coming years, with Khairat al-Shatir playing a leading role.⁷³

The elections for the People’s Assembly were held in November and December of 2005. In light of this window of opportunity, the Brotherhood leadership ordered its rank-and-file membership to launch an impressive get-out-the vote operation.⁷⁴ When, after the first round of voting, the total number of elected Brotherhood parliamentarians stood at seventy-six, the regime understood that its gamble had backfired.⁷⁵ To prevent further gains, State Security agents put pressure on Shatir to ensure that the remaining candidates would withdraw from the race. Aware of the potential risks, Shatir called the candidates personally to convince them not to run. But he did so without consulting either Abu al-Futuh or Mohammed Habib, who were adamant at using this opportunity to increase the Brotherhood’s representation in the legislature. Shatir, however, thought that this strategy would expose the

⁷⁰ “Remarks at the American University in Cairo.” *Department of State – the Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs*. Accessed 7 November 2014. 2001-2009. state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm

⁷¹ Ricciardone (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Advancing the Freedom Agenda in Egypt.” 17 July 2007, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 15 September 2015. wikileaks.org/cable/2007/07/07CAIRO2206.html

⁷² ‘Akif, Madi. Interview, cited in Kandil. *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 198.

⁷³ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, pp. 226-7.

⁷⁴ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 117.

⁷⁵ “Egypt’s Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?” *Crisis Group*, 18 June 2008. www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/egypt-syria-lebanon/egypt/076-egypts-muslim-brothers-confrontation-or-integration.aspx

Brotherhood to greater risks. Certain that his colleagues of the Tilmisanian bent would not agree, he proceeded to exclude the remaining candidates without their knowledge.⁷⁶

In a landslide victory, the Brotherhood won eighty-eight seats out of a total of four hundred fifty-four, equal to twenty per cent of the legislature. The Brotherhood's media office embarked on a public relations campaign to assuage its sceptical critics in the West. In an interview with *The Guardian*, Shatir reiterated that the Society was committed to democracy and that it would not seek more than "a small piece of the parliamentary cake". He lambasted the "provocations of a corrupt, oppressive government" and affirmed that the regime would not be able to intimidate "our organisation, which has survived for seventy-seven years, or the Egyptian people, who have increasingly come to trust us". Repeating an age-old Islamist trope, he echoed that only Islamic values would be able to "effectively deal with the obstacles that have hindered reform and development".⁷⁷

According to Ahmed Ban, a Brotherhood informant peripherally involved in the Brotherhood's dealings with the United States, the political opening of 2005 known as the "Cairo spring", entailed a shift in the thinking of senior U.S. officials about the role and status of the Muslim Brotherhood. While six months before neither side had been prepared to engage with the other, the 2005 landslide led to a reassessment of the relationship.⁷⁸ The Bush administration increasingly came to regard the Brotherhood as a political reality and as a potentially important player that could be leveraged to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives. The change of attitude was reciprocated in the Guidance Office, as noted by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. Starting in 2005, various regional affiliates of American NGOs reached out to the Brotherhood in a more strategic way to establish lower-level communication channels.⁷⁹ The 2005 elections stood at the beginning of a mutual rapprochement that would ultimately convince U.S. policymaker that they could do business with the Brotherhood. It would also form the basis for the Obama administration's decision in 2011 to drop Mubarak like a hot potato.⁸⁰

The emerging entente between the Brotherhood and the United States was temporarily disturbed when, on 26 January 2006, Hamas won the elections to the new Palestinian

⁷⁶ This information was revealed by a Guidance Office member to Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, pp. 226-7.

⁷⁷ al-Shatir, Khairat. "No Need to Be Afraid of Us." *The Guardian*, 23 November 2005. Accessed 29 August 2015. www.theguardian.com/world/2005/nov/23/comment.mainsection

⁷⁸ Frampton and Rosen. "Reading the Runes?" in *The Historical Journal*, pp. 827-56.

⁷⁹ 'Ali, 'Abd al-Rahim. *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn : min Ḥasan al-Bannā ilā Mahdī 'Akif*. Cairo: Markaz al-Mahrusah li'l-Nashr wa'l-Khidmat al-Suhufiyya wa'l-Ma'lumat, 2007, pp. 275-6; Sharp, Jeremy. "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma." Congressional Research Service, Report RL33486, 15 June 2006. Wikileaks. Accessed 18 July 2015. file.wikileaks.org/file/crs/RL33486.pdf

⁸⁰ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

parliament. Claiming more than half of the seats of the legislature, the democratic victory by an Islamist group considered to be a terrorist organisation by the U.S. Department of State was a setback to the neoconservative architects of U.S. foreign policy. With Hamas about to form the next cabinet, it became clear to American policymakers that their strategy of “democratisation” had backfired. The United States was careful not to be perceived as violating Egyptian sovereignty by dealing with a group that was Hamas’ incubator.⁸¹ The victory of the Islamist resistance party implied that the alliance with the government would necessarily trump concerns of democratisation. Retreating from the previous strategy of engagement, the U.S. government downgraded its contacts with Brotherhood members and communicated only with elected parliamentarians.

The victory of Hamas created the international conditions for Mubarak to deal another series of blows at the Brotherhood. The members of the NDP’s policy committee understood only too well that repression was not the reason for the Society’s popularity. With respect to the 2005 elections, Ahmed Nazif admitted that, had it not been for the government’s interference, another forty Brothers would have won in the second round, bringing the number to over one hundred and twenty.⁸² Hamas’s victory played in the hands of a regime eager to stigmatise the Society as a terrorist organisation. Among escalating tensions, hundreds of Brothers who had previously participated in pro-democracy demonstrations were detained, including ‘Issam al-‘Arian and the inconspicuous parliamentarian Mohammed Morsi. This did not thwart the energy of the parliamentarians among the Brotherhood, who escalated their pressure on the regime. As Joshua Stacher observed, their eagerness and motivation changed the style of parliamentary politics, as Brotherhood MPs from rural governorates camped day and night in a hotel in Ma’adi in order to assure a permanent Islamist presence within General Assembly sessions. The regular attendance of Brotherhood deputies in the legislature was a nuisance to NDP candidates, not least because it forced them to maintain a regular majority of its deputies in order not to be out-voted by the Islamists.⁸³

In late November 2006, the regime spotted an opportunity to add more pressure on the Society. During the student union elections, State Security agents intervened to ban two hundred Brotherhood candidates. When a group of students demonstrated against this latest government infringement of internal student affairs, they were arrested and expelled from university. On 10 December, Brotherhood-affiliated students wearing black balaclavas and

⁸¹ Frampton and Rosen. “Reading the Runes?” in *The Historical Journal*, pp. 827–56.

⁸² Basam, Amir. *Hakamat al-Mahkamah (The Court Ruled)*. Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi‘ wa’l-Nashr, 2012, pp. 14-6.

⁸³ Shehata, Samer and Stacher, Joshua. “The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament.” *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, no. MER240 (Fall 2014). www.merip.org/mer/mer240/brotherhood-goes-parliament

white headbands, which had the word *sāmidun* emblazoned on them – one of the “ten pillars of the oath” – preformed martial arts exercises in the courtyard of al-Azhar University.⁸⁴ This triggered a campaign in the opportunistic Egyptian media, where the threatening postures of the “Brotherhood militias” (*mīlīshīāt al-ikhwān*) who wanted to “incite a military show” were denounced. State prosecution launched a legal case and, on Christmas Eve, rounded up one hundred and forty Brotherhood members in their homes and workplaces. Seventeen senior figures, including Shatir, Hasan Malik, Midhat al-Haddad and Mohammed ‘Ali Bishr, the former secretary general of the Engineers Syndicate, were apprehended and transferred to the Liman al-Torah prison complex, where an *ad hoc* military tribunal charged them with money laundering and attempts to revive the Brotherhood’s paramilitary wing. The “al-Azhar militias case” created the legal justification to freeze the assets of twenty-nine Brotherhood cadres, including seven who lived abroad.⁸⁵ Over seventy companies were shut down, drying up one third of the Brotherhood’s funding streams – some \$88 million in assets according to one source.⁸⁶ Brotherhood members claimed that the freezing of the Society’s assets caused a shock to Egypt’s financial system, with the stock market having crashed by E£20 billion [sic].⁸⁷ Brotherhood members speculated that the intent for this latest wave of arrests was the regime’s deliberate attempt to shake up the Brotherhood’s internal balance of power.⁸⁸ The strategy succeeded insofar that it managed to exacerbate a personality conflict between Shatir and Habib, which again exposed the internal clash between the two rival factions. After the arrest of Shatir, it would have legally been Mohammed Habib who, in his position as the first Deputy Guide, should have replaced Shatir as the head of the Greater Cairo Sector. This post was one of the most prestigious positions within the Society and included the administration, organisation and communication of the entire Cairo area. In violation of the Brotherhood’s statutes, Habib’s nomination was dropped, without him being even informed. Instead, the post went to the Qutbist loyalist and recent newcomer Mohammed Morsi.

Reassertion of the Vanguard

⁸⁴ “Mīlīshīāt al-Ikhwān fī l-Azhar” (The Brotherhood Militias in al-Azhar), *Youtube*, 2 April 2012. Accessed 20 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMPpGR-Pc3k&feature=youtube_gdata_player

⁸⁵ Basam. *The Court Ruled*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ “The Egyptian Regime vs. the Muslim Brotherhood.” *Frontpagemag*, 5 February 2007. archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=293

⁸⁷ Basam. *The Court Ruled*, p. 21.

⁸⁸ (10). Interview. Cairo, 3 June 2013; Basam. *The Court Ruled*, p. 19.

In December 2006, Mubarak introduced a number of amendments to the Egyptian constitution. The main feature of what was presented to the Egyptian public as a “reform” was a new party-list system, which barred the Brotherhood from forming a political party.⁸⁹ The regime’s latest offensive made it obvious to the vanguard leaders that the parliamentary strategy had backfired. Having previously conceded territory to Tilmisani notions of democracy and political participation, the subsequent period saw a gradual consolidation of Qutbist power within the Guidance Office. Shatir and ‘Izzat started a concentrated effort to denounce their internal rivals in front of rank-and-file members, launching attacks on those who had occupied the political space during the Cairo spring. Ideas of democratisation and internal reform were brushed off as merely personal opinions and not in any way representative of the Society’s ideology.

The rising prominence of *tanzīmī* ideas was reflected in a programme published in 2007. In an attempt to leverage the political opening enabled by the Cairo Spring and strengthen organisational control, the Qutbist leadership regressed to long-held Tilmisani positions and proposed a platform for a political party. But in reality, the programme proposed hardly any new provisions relative to those already outlined in ‘Akif’s reform initiative of 2004. The only development was the idea to establish a body of religious scholars, whose function was to vet executive and legislative bills for their conformity with Sharia law – a provision that would later be implemented in the 2012 constitution. Most crucially, the document “re-affirmed” citizenship rights for women and Copts – with the crucial exception that it did not allow representatives of these minority groups to run for the presidency.⁹⁰ The injection of this detail represented a fundamental shift in the Society’s previous progressive position, indicating the degree to which deeply conservative Salafi viewpoints had assumed prominence in the thinking of a majority of Guidance Office members.⁹¹

The way of how the programme was adopted illustrated the state of the Brotherhood’s internal organisational culture at this point. When it was put to a vote in the Consultative Council, members agreed to a different version of the one that was ultimately adopted.⁹² Immediately after the final vote, ‘Izzat changed the two articles regarding the rights of women and Copts, which was enough to erase the entire program of its reformist spirit. This unilateral

⁸⁹ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 127.

⁹⁰ Brown, Nathan and Hamzawy, Amr. “The Draft Party Platform of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Foray Into Political Integration or Retreat Into Old Positions?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 14 January 2008. carnegieendowment.org/2008/01/14/draft-party-platform-of-egyptian-muslim-brotherhood-foray-into-political-integration-or-retreat-into-old-positions

⁹¹ Tammam. “Salafisation” in *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 95-135.

⁹² Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 61.

move drew a harsh response from Abu al-Futuh, Gamal Heshmat and ‘Issam al-‘Arian who saw the key achievements of their party programme brushed away with the stroke of a pen. Instead, the Guidance Office favoured a draft that had been prepared by Mohammed Morsi. The episode was a public blow to the Tilmisani vision of an open organisational design, taking the Brotherhood back to the period before the Cairo spring. It showed the extent to which the Guidance Office was split into two opposing camps, where on the one hand stood Mahmud ‘Izzat, Khairat al-Shatir, Gum‘a ‘Amin and Mohammed Badi‘, and on the other Abu al-Futuh and Mohammed ‘Ali Bishr.⁹³ Mahdi ‘Akif and Mohammed Habib seem to have stood somewhat in between. In light of these internal differences, any attempt at preserving the appearance of unity became increasingly difficult. With growing frequency, Brothers from the younger generations vented their frustration publically and online, thus exposing the deep intellectual and generational divide that existed inside the Brotherhood.⁹⁴

While upholding their authority against the reform-minded cadres, the vanguard leaders continued to cement their relations with the United States.⁹⁵ Sa‘d al-Katatni called for a “constructive dialogue” based on “mutual understanding and the appreciation of diversity”.⁹⁶ As the leader of the parliamentary bloc, Katatni was well placed to act as the liaison to the United States. Born in 1952 in Girga, he had studied microbiology at the University of Assyut, where he completed his doctorate in 1984 and then worked his way up to the post of professor in Fungal Physiology in the Department of Botany at the University of Minya. Having been brought up “according to the curriculum of the Special Apparatus”, Katatni was an insider in the Brotherhood’s core leadership circle.⁹⁷

In March 2007, Katatni visited the U.S. Embassy in Cairo to get a visa for an upcoming trip. According to embassy cables, a “warm and friendly meeting” took place where “pleasantries and business cards” were exchanged, with both parties expressing their regret for the long absence of contacts.⁹⁸ The meeting was followed by a visit of an American delegation to Egypt where members of Congress met with Brotherhood parliamentarians. A few days later, at a lecture at Georgetown University, Katatni delivered a strongly worded statement in support of the mutual relationship. He suggested that Washington’s support for Mubarak was anti-democratic and drew attention to the upcoming vote for constitutional

⁹³ Madi, Abu’l-‘Ila. Interview. 1 July 2008, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 125.

⁹⁴ al-Anani, Khalil. “Brotherhood Bloggers: A New Generation Voices Dissent.” *Arab Insight*. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lang=en&id=96191

⁹⁵ Frampton and Rosen. “Reading the Runes?” in *The Historical Journal*, pp. 827–56.

⁹⁶ “Katatni: Dialogue Between Islamists And The West a Necessity.” *Ikhwanweb*, 15 December 2006. Accessed 15 September 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=936

⁹⁷ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

⁹⁸ Ricciardone (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Contact with Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary Leader.” 20 March 2007, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 6 October 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07CAIRO795_a.html

amendments. “U.S. support for unpopular regimes is one of the main reasons for the popularity of Islamists”, he contended. A report that summarised the meeting read: “Moderate groups like the MBs [sic] will continue to struggle, but more people will be driven to radical discourse by repressive governments. This is most harmful for Western security”.⁹⁹

The diplomatic overture was accompanied by a public relations campaign that leveraged the Brotherhood’s media machinery to exert pressure on the regime. From his prison cell, *Bash Muhandis* organised meetings with journalists, correspondents and bloggers, addressing various human rights committees and speaking out forcefully against the regime. His lawyer Hazem Salah Abu Isma‘il argued that his case was marred by procedural irregularities and that State Security investigators had committed numerous incidents of fraud.¹⁰⁰ At a court hearing, an emboldened Deputy Guide shouted from behind the bars: “I am being tried militarily for the second time [...]. I have spent five years [in prison], was released, and now I am being tried again.”¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Shatir continued to exert control of the Brotherhood’s policy and finances, with the large facilities of Torah prison allowing him to collaborate with his colleagues in the Guidance Office “as if he was present among them”.¹⁰²

The Society had by now firmly established itself as a considerable factor in U.S. Middle Eastern policy calculations. Because of the dynamics of local protest movements and regime-sponsored suppression, the relations between the United States and the Egyptian government had cooled off in recent years. The Americans were increasingly annoyed by Mubarak’s slow pace of political reform and his intention to install hereditary rule in Egypt, for which the constitutional amendments of the previous year had paved the legal ground. After the victory of the Brotherhood in 2005 and that of Hamas in 2006, American planners had accepted the fact that democratisation would eventually empower Islamist groups, leading to a belief in many quarters of government that relations with them would have to be built on a more strategic basis.¹⁰³ Around 2007, the Americans came to recognise the Brothers as the “dark horse” to place their bets on, leading to the resumption of direct communications between U.S. officials and Brotherhood representatives.¹⁰⁴ Mubarak, who sensed that the United States might consider hedging its bets by seeking a closer engagement with the

⁹⁹ “Georgetown Symposium on Islamist Politics”. *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, June 2007.

www.wrmea.org/2007-may-june/muslim-american-activism-georgetown-symposium-on-islamist-politics.html

¹⁰⁰ al-Anani, Khalil. “At the Brotherhood Trial: The Defense Accuses State Security of Fabrication of the Case.” *Islamists Today*, 28 December 2007. Accessed 2 August 2015. islamists2day-a.blogspot.com/2007/12/blog-post_28.html

¹⁰¹ Basam. *The Court Ruled*, p. 53.

¹⁰² Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, 2012, pp. 227-8. For the Brotherhood’s version of these events, see “Qadiyya Mīlīshīāt al-Azhar” (The al-Azhar Militia Case). *Ikhwanonline*, 20 March 2007. Accessed 14 April 2014. www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.aspx?ArtID=26011&SecID=420

¹⁰³ Frampton and Rosen. “Reading the Runes?” in *The Historical Journal*, pp. 827–56.

¹⁰⁴ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

Brotherhood, accordingly reacted “testily” to American outreach efforts.¹⁰⁵

Emergence of a Protest Movement

While the Brotherhood’s leaders had succeeded to some degree in consolidating their relationship with the United States, new internal challenges were looming. Egypt had witnessed an uptick of human rights activism since 2002, and a steady increase of grassroots and organised social and political activities. These early protests expressed the grievances of an educated liberal and mostly secular elite whose members were frustrated with the slow pace of political and economic reforms. They were originally disconnected from the demands of Egyptian workers, who only gradually were drawn into the orbit of protest activities. Between 2004 and 2008, over 1.7 million workers had participated in contentious collective actions.¹⁰⁶ In the absence of any legitimate political representation, workers reverted to mechanisms outside of institutionalised politics. In September 2007, a strike of over twenty thousand people at the Ghazl al-Mahalla Spinning and Weaving Company raised a number of economic and political demands.¹⁰⁷ The protests drew in representatives of a broad range of sectors and classes. People who had traditionally abstained from street action, such as intellectuals, doctors, journalists, university teachers and judges, now demanded a redesign of the social contract, based on a just redistribution of national wealth.

One of the central enabling factors for the emergence of a more coherently organised protest movement was the economic reform programme adopted by the government since the early nineties. According to the orthodoxy of neoliberal economic policy, growth could only come about through the imposition of regulations that allowed for greater flexibility of labour markets as a precondition for attracting foreign direct investment. With the arrival of the “cabinet of businessmen” in 2004, the Egyptian economy gradually bifurcated into two increasingly unrelated and largely inefficient economic spheres, with one servicing the less than ten per cent of the population who had a conspicuously high purchasing power, and the other one facilitating the transactions of the non-industrial middle class, the rural and state

¹⁰⁵ Ricciardone (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Muslim Brotherhood: Government Crackdown Continues, Party Platform Still in Draft.” *Wikileaks*, 30 August 2007. Accessed 8 October 2015. cablegatesearch.wikileaks.org/cable.php?id=07CAIRO2683

¹⁰⁶ Abdalla, Nadine. “Egypt’s Workers - From Protest Movement to Organized Labor. A Major Challenge of the Transition Period.” Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik, October 2012. www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-comments-en/swp-aktuelle-details/article/egypts_workers.html. Kandil. *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 217.

¹⁰⁷ Beinín, Joel. *The Rise of Egypt’s Workers*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2012. carnegieendowment.org/files/egypt_labor.pdf

bourgeoisie, as well as small businesses and professionals.¹⁰⁸ To a growing degree, the state became the exclusive domain of a business-oriented clique around Gamal Mubarak and his friends, who teamed up with large multinationals eager to cut out a piece of the Egyptian pie. As a consequence of unregulated neoliberalism, the social order became increasingly fragmented, resulting in the further erosion of an already vanishing middle class. The function of the rural bourgeoisie became increasingly dispensable, while the dismantling of the public sector dried up the wells of the traditional middle class by diminishing their intermediary role. Due to rising barriers of entry, the *infitāh* business class who had benefitted from the policies of Sadat during the seventies and eighties was increasingly sidelined. Unemployment, high rates of inflation, nepotism and corruption at the highest levels of government made it difficult for an educated and upwardly mobile youth to benefit from economic activities.

The compounded effect of shrinking social benefits, spiking price levels, the lay-off of thousands of workers and constant government repression led to growing waves of social unrest. As the leaders of the traditional representation of the workers, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), had not raised any objections to the privatisation measures, the union's rank and file started to escalate labour protests, strikes and other forms of contentious collective action. Between 1998 and 2003, an average of twenty-seven strikes took place per year, compared to 118 per year between 1998 and 2003 and 265 in 2004.¹⁰⁹ While initially centred on the textile industry, by 2007 these protests encompassed "virtually every industry, public services, transport, civil servants, and professionals".¹¹⁰ The two most important strike actions were the ones of 6 April and 4 May 2008 in Mahallat al-Kubra, a traditional centre of the labour movement. Workers in Cairo and Alexandria swiftly followed suit, raising the number of strikes to over 700 in the year 2008.

In anticipation of the strike of 6 April, online activists on Facebook established a group to call on people to stay at home. The group received 65,000 likes in a matter of days and subsequently morphed into the 6th of April (Sitta Abrīl) youth movement, which was composed of largely upper middle class students and activists who tried to link national demands for regime change with the economic grievances of industrial workers.¹¹¹ Although many of its founders were quickly imprisoned, 6th of April had a considerable psychological impact on the consciousness of the revolutionaries of later years, breaking the "barrier of

¹⁰⁸ Kandil. *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 208-18.

¹⁰⁹ Aidi, Hisham. *Redeploying the State : Corporatism, Neoliberalism, and Coalition Politics*. New York ; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 142-3.

¹¹⁰ Beinín. *The Rise of Egypt's Workers*, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Sowers and Toensing. *The Journey to Tahrir*, p. 104.

fear” that existed with respect to the regime.¹¹² Another major game changer was the way the group leveraged the potential of social media to spread the word of the injustices committed by the regime, mobilising thousands of young people and supporters into the streets. Refining their organisation and mobilisation skills, these activists came to appreciate the disruptive potential of both technology and contentious collective action. Many of the young activists who were at the basis of 6th of April were the same who would later ignite the Egyptian revolution of 2011.¹¹³

The Society’s position with respect to the protest movement was highly ambivalent. Islamist movements were traditionally unsympathetic to contentious politics, since such actions carried the risk of dragging Muslim societies in a state of civil war (*fitna*) by dividing and weakening the *umma* in its defence against foreign aggressors. The Brotherhood considered itself as a movement that was firmly “rooted in the deepest parts of society and interacting directly [with society]”. But in reality, the vanguard leadership had a rather limited understanding of the societal forces at work in Egypt.¹¹⁴ This may have partly been a result of the Brotherhood’s general disinterest in social sciences, as Kandil has argued.¹¹⁵ But more importantly, it had to do with the specific historical experiences of the vanguard leadership. As (2) wrote, these leaders had spent most of their lives sitting in “small dark rooms” or in prison cells.¹¹⁶ Because of Qutb’s emphasis on “emotional withdrawal” from *jāhili* society, they rarely interacted with ordinary Egyptians who were unsympathetic to the Brotherhood’s vision for Egypt, giving them few chances to scientifically study Egyptian society and the conditions of the poorer classes. Islamist movements were traditionally suspicious of workers and their secular, leftist and Marxist ideology. For the vanguard leadership, political action was seen as standing in contradiction to the Society’s central credo of comprehensiveness, as it focused on class-specific demands such as lower prices and rents, higher wages and improved conditions for workers and the poor. To the Brotherhood’s bourgeois elite, the demands of the protest movement represented a desire to “redraw a new social contract based on a fair distribution of wealth that would guarantee the rights of the poor and workers”.¹¹⁷ The historical experiences of the vanguard leaders, as well as their socio-economic orientation towards the middle and upper classes, made them unwilling or uninterested to appreciate the concerns of average working class citizens.

¹¹² (28). Interview. Cairo, 4 February 2013.

¹¹³ (27). Interview. Cairo, 25 December 2012.

¹¹⁴ (6). Interview. Cairo, 27 March 2013.

¹¹⁵ Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, p. 34-42.

¹¹⁶ ‘Abd al-Sahfo. “al-Shatir: the Story of the Political Devil who is Ruling Egypt.”

¹¹⁷ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 54.

The growing prominence of the protest movement put the Society in a dilemma. The leadership had to both manage public perceptions with regard to the West, while at the same time being compelled to protect itself against further onslaughts from a hostile regime. American pressure for democratisation had created a climate that was suitable to the discourse of the Tilmisani generation, forging a perception in the West of a movement that was in transformation. Maintaining this perception was important in the leadership's calculation to secure America's support. However, this implied that the Brotherhood would need to appear to support the protest movement as an expression of the legitimate democratic rights of workers. Yet, such support would expose the Society to potential crackdowns on the part of the regime. The compounded effect of these factors caused intense debates between the vanguard leadership and the disciples of the Tilmisani school of thought, who were eager to benefit from the dynamic social scene while being handicapped by the lack of control over organisational positions.¹¹⁸

Ahead of the April 2008 municipal elections, the Brotherhood faced a new wave of crackdowns. 800 candidates were arrested and only a fraction of the almost 6,000 would-be candidates were permitted to register, inducing the Brotherhood to pull out of the race. A few months later, after the Society had mobilised a large number of rank-and-file members during the Gaza War of December 2008 and January 2009, another 1,200 Brothers were arrested. A next wave of arrests followed in mid-2009, when the regime engineered a ramping-up of pressure on the Society by incarcerating a number of high-profile members of the Tilmisani generation. These arrests were part of a deliberate strategy, whose objective was to weaken the Brotherhood ahead of the parliamentary elections scheduled for November 2010. According to U.S. Embassy cables, the isolation of moderate voices was designed to move the Society away from political engagement. Mubarak calculated that this would allow the conservative leaders to consolidate their position in the Guidance Bureau and tighten their grip on the group's day-to-day affairs. The hoped-for radicalisation of the Brotherhood would then serve the regime's short-term interest in relieving American pressure for reform.¹¹⁹ On 28 July, Abu al-Futuh was apprehended, bringing the number of incarcerated Guidance Office members to five. Two of them, Bishr and Khairat al-Shatir, had been convicted in military courts in 2008. Osama Nasr, along with twelve other Brotherhood members, had already been arrested in May 2009, while Mahmud Hussein and ten lower-ranking members were apprehended in June. The Brotherhood was accused of wanting to create an international

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

¹¹⁹ Tueller (Cairo) to Secretary of State. "Ramping up Pressure on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: Recent Arrests." 30 July 2009, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 8 October 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09CAIRO1467_a.html

organisation “to ‘propagate’ MB thinking (in the Middle East and Europe) with the aim of ‘establishing a caliphate’.”¹²⁰

Faced with growing pressure, the vanguard leaders pushed for further consolidating of their relationship with the United States.¹²¹ In his 4 June 2009 speech at Cairo University, the new American president Barack Obama proclaimed a “new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world”. Like many in the Arab world who – perhaps naïvely – misread Obama’s charisma as heralding a change in U.S. policy towards the Middle East, the Brotherhood “anxiously [awaited] signals from the new administration on how it would handle its relationship with the group”.¹²² But it became soon clear that Obama’s accession to the Oval Office would not entail any substantive change in American policy. The sporadic communications that had started during the previous years continued.¹²³ Obama did, however, up the ante somewhat by personally meeting with members of Egypt’s Islamist opposition movement, including with representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood.¹²⁴

The Qutbist Palace Revolt

The crackdown of the previous years provided the inner circle of leaders around ‘Izzat, Shatir and Badi’ with an opportunity to strengthen their position against their internal rivals. With two acting Guidance Office members in jail, one having passed away and two frequently absent due to health issues, there was an acute need to replace the empty seats in the Guidance Office with new members. From his prison cell in Liman al-Torah, Khairat al-Shatir assisted ‘Izzat with facilitating the entry of five top commanders who were all firmly committed to the idea of a closed and disciplined *tanzīm*: Osama Nasr, Muhi al-Hamid, Sa’d al-Husseini, Muhammad Sa’d al-Katatni and Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman.¹²⁵ Abu al-Futuh and ‘Issam al-‘Arian, two of the most prominent former student leaders, were either demoted or overruled. To many, these elections were just the latest proof of the Qutbist strategy of wanting to systematically isolate those who favoured a more open and transparent course. The growing Qutbist dominance upset younger members in the Consultative Council, who claimed that the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Frampton and Rosen. “Reading the Runes?” in *The Historical Journal*, pp. 827–56.

¹²² Scobey (Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Egyptian Islamist Meets with Staffdel Hogrefe.” 3 September 2009, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 20 September 2015. wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09CAIRO1723_a.html

¹²³ Scobey(Cairo) to Secretary of State. “Update on Reports of Divisions within the Muslim Brotherhood.” 21 October 2009, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 8 October 2015. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/egypt-wikileaks-cables/8327131/UPDATE-ON-REPORTS-OF-DIVISIONS-WITHIN-THE-MUSLIM-BROTHERHOOD.html

¹²⁴ “Obama Met Muslim Brotherhood Members in U.S.”. *Haaretz*. Accessed 21 October 2014. Accessed 20 September 2015. www.haaretz.com/news/obama-met-muslim-brotherhood-members-in-u-s-1.277306

¹²⁵ Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 61.

elections had been rigged. Outside observers expected a break-up of the Brotherhood's ranks – a scenario that was only avoided because of the strong grip the vanguard leaders had on the organisation's decision-making positions and the influence they yielded on the hearts and minds of the rank and file.

The internal political tensions escalated into a full-on confrontation after a senior member of the Guidance Office, Mohammed Hilal, passed away in October 2009. According to the Brotherhood's internal statutes, it would have been 'Issam al-'Arian's turn to be appointed to take Hilal's place, as he had come in as number six during the previous elections.¹²⁶ But senior leaders blocked 'Arian's progression and Hilal's seat remained empty. A number of second-and third ranking cadres warned of an internal rebellion if 'Arian would not be placed in the Guidance Office.¹²⁷ An acrimonious conflict erupted between 'Akif and Mahmud 'Izzat, who mistrusted 'Arian because of his affiliation with the student movement and his support of the reform initiative of 2004. Against mounting pressure in the Consultative Council, the vanguard leaders were compelled to compromise and 'Arian finally made it into the Brotherhood's top executive body in December 2009. The reading-out of the election results by Mahdi 'Akif was captured in a leaked video published by *al-Watan* newspaper, allowing for a glimpse into the culture and behaviour in the Guidance Office. Sitting in a crammed office and grouped around a table headed by 'Akif, several top Brotherhood commanders could be seen in a scene reminiscent of the Godfather. One of the most intriguing parts involved the role played by Mohammed Morsi. The man who three years later would emerge as the president of the Egyptian Republic was ordered around by the General Guide and other senior members in a role resembling that of a lackey.¹²⁸

Morsi was indeed a recent arrival at the Brotherhood's top echelons and not in any way an organisational heavyweight. Born in August 1951 in a small village called al-'Adwa in the Sharqiyya governorate, he was the son of a farmer and a housewife. It seems that he was recruited into the Society in 1982 while completing his doctorate in engineering at the University of Southern California.¹²⁹ Upon his return to Egypt, he worked as a teaching assistant at the engineering department at Zaqaziq University, where he met many of the

¹²⁶ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 229.

¹²⁷ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 150.

¹²⁸ "The Former General Guide during the Announcement of the Results of the Guidance Office Elections, 2013". *Youtube*. Accessed 30 June 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OpYzXbrhDM

¹²⁹ Fieldnotes, 12 January 2012. There are conflicting reports as to Morsi's accession to the Brotherhood. See "Mohamed Morsi". *Biography*. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.biography.com/people/mohamed-morsi-20862695; "Profile: Mohamed Morsi." *Al Jazeera*, 21 July 2013. www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/20137314127329966.html. The most credible account is from Traeger, Eric. "Who's Who in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood"; al-Haddad, Abdullah. Interview. London, 11 July 2015.

Qutbist leaders, such as Mohammed Badi¹³⁰, Sa'd al-Katatni and Mahmud Ghozlan, who held faculty posts at the same institution. According to a number of dissident sources, Morsi owed his steep rise in the internal organisational hierarchy to Khairat al-Shatir.¹³⁰ Their relationship in many ways illustrated the importance of the strong emotional bond (*ribāṭ wijdānī*) between pupil and teacher, resembling that “between two married people”. According to Ahmed Ban, it was the former’s personal loyalty to Shatir that secured him such a high degree of influence. His status as Shatir’s “obedient son” (*ibn muṭī’a*) earned him a reputation of arrogance among many younger members.¹³¹ According to one source, Morsi’s role was that of an internal informer who snitched on those who were deemed as ideologically too lenient. He apparently was an expert in the craft of “moral assassination” (*ighṭiyāl al-ma’nawī*), whereby Brothers seen as disloyal to the leaders were publicly badmouthed and insulted in front of the rank and file.

When Ban served as a member of the political section in 2008, ‘Issam al-‘Arian headed the executive committee while Morsi, as a member of the Guidance Office, acted as his supervisor. Ban remembers a scene during a section meeting where Morsi interrupted ‘Arian, dressing him down in front of the entire assembly. The elections of 2008 and 2009 provoked strong reactions within the middle ranks of the Brotherhood, especially among younger members in the Consultative Assembly, who felt that the results were rigged. They insisted that the elections should be held in accordance with the charter in order to ensure democratic representation and accountability. With growing frequency, previously well-guarded secrets, and personality clashes among top-ranking Brothers, spread into the open. A forceful critique came from Ibrahim al-Za‘farani, who was technically a member of the electoral supervision committee and as such had first-hand knowledge of the voting procedures. Shortly after the 2009 elections, he submitted a legal appeal to the “generous father Mahdi ‘Akif, and to the members of the respectable Guidance Office”, where he listed a number of flaws that demonstrated the invalidity of the electoral process.¹³² The letter, which was ignored by ‘Akif, is an interesting document in that it testifies to some of the key grievances of those who disapproved of the authoritarian and paternalistic attitude of the senior leadership. One bone of contention concerned the question of how the electoral procedure was agreed upon. Election rules had been based on the results of a poll conducted by the Guidance Office, where Consultative Council members were asked whether they, or the next Consultative Council, should elect the new Guidance Office. Za‘farani argued that

¹³⁰ (8). Interview. Alexandria, 29 March 2013; (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

¹³¹ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

¹³² Za‘farani’s letter is reprinted in Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, pp. 66-78.

this question was already determined by the General Statutes and that, in any case, it was illogical as the members of the incumbent council would have hardly decided against their own vote. In addition, according to article 12 of the newly introduced by-laws, the Guidance Office would have the right to nominate twenty per cent of the members of the Guidance Council, providing the vanguard leaders with the ability to shape the outcome of the elections. Further, because of the process of ruralisation of the Brotherhood's membership, some of the Delta governorates had a proportionally high number of representatives in the Consultative Council when compared to other governorates, such as Cairo and Alexandria.¹³³

Another point contested by Za'farani concerned the number of members in the Guidance Office. According to the statutes, the executive body had sixteen members, two of whom were supposed to live abroad. But shortly before the elections in 2009, a paragraph was added that guaranteed that imprisoned members were to keep their membership. This exception applied specifically to Khairat al-Shatir. The idea was to drive a wedge into the regime's strategy that was aimed at disrupting membership in the Guidance Office by imprisoning its members. The number of seats in the Guidance Office was now eighteen, to which should be added the two members living abroad, bringing the total number to twenty – four seats more than what was stipulated in the statutes of 1990.

The issue that was most contested by Za'farani concerned the timing of the elections. Conservatives like Mahmud 'Izzat had pressed for holding the elections in December 2009, giving the strongly-positioned vanguard leaders a head start in influencing Council members' voting preferences. Another group around Mohammed Habib advocated postponing the elections until June 2010. As usual, 'Izzat's recommendation prevailed. In an effort to rush through with the process as quickly as possible, elections were publically announced at 10 p.m. on 16 December 2009 without informing Consultative Council members. The announcement asked for votes to be submitted at 9 a.m. on 18 December, leaving Council members only 36 hours to decide and submit their votes.

The General Consultative Council had only few hours to choose. As a result, nobody could effectively supervise the process, and even members [of the Consultative Council] did not know the results of the elections and only learned [about] them from the media. This meant that the people chosen to supervise

¹³³ According to the revised by-laws of 2009, the distribution of seats in the Consultative Assembly was fixed as follows: Cairo (5), Giza (5), Qaliubiyya (2), Alexandria (6), Suez (1), Isma'iliyya (1), North Sinai (1), Port Said (1), Daqihiliyya (10), Damietta (4), Sharqiyya (8), Munufiyya (5), Gharbiyya (5), Buhayra (6), Kafr al-Sheikh (2), Fayum (2), Beni Sweif (2), Asyut (2), Sohag (2), Qinaa (1), Aswan (1), al-Wadi al-Gadid (1). See "The General By-Laws of the Society of the Muslim Brothers of 1990 A.D. and the Revision of 2009 A.D." in *Statutes and By-Laws*, pp. 293-4.

the elections were not permitted to discuss the validity of the proceeding. [We were] a committee by name only.¹³⁴

The entire procedure outraged many of the Tilmisanians and led to widespread discontent within the ranks of the Society.

On 16 January 2010, Mahdi ‘Akif resigned from his position as the General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, making good on an announcement of October 2009 that he would not run for a second term.¹³⁵ The *de facto* resignation of a sitting Guide constituted a novelty in the history of the Society and presented a puzzle to outsiders. The main explanation provided in the press concerned the ‘Arian nomination, but this seems to have been only one bone of contention separating ‘Akif from the more hard-core vanguard leaders. Another issue concerned the question over the nomination of the new Brotherhood spokesperson in the West. After the death of Hassan Hawidi, who was the previous holder of that post, ‘Akif was legally entitled to nominate a new candidate. In order to assuage the conflict between the International Organisation and the Egyptian Brotherhood, he wanted to replace Hawidi with a non-Egyptian. However, Shatir and ‘Izzat staunchly opposed ‘Akif’s decision and pushed for their man, Ibrahim Munir, to occupy this prestigious post. Munir was a loyalist of the Qutbist school of thought who had played some minor role in the activities of the Special Apparatus during the forties, for which he received a life sentence. After his release in 1975, Munir travelled abroad and played an instrumental role in the foundation of Islamic centres in Europe and the Gulf. Although he had assisted ‘Akif in the establishment of the International Organisation in Munich, the latter considered him as incompetent. Yet, ‘Akif was outmanoeuvred by his rivals and his decision was rendered invalid by ‘Izzat, who had already sent his men Katatni and Sa‘d al-Hosseini to travel to London to inform Munir of their decision without informing General Guide.¹³⁶

By early 2010, the vanguard leadership had achieved a virtual monopoly over the Brotherhood’s executive branch and most of its second and third rank positions. All the heads of those representing the Tilmisanian organisational vision had been axed off. The only remaining symbols of the generation of the seventies and eighties were ‘Issam al-‘Arian, Gamal Heshmat, Helmi Gazzar and Mohammed ‘Ali Bishr. The former had succumbed to the

¹³⁴ Quoted in Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 70.

¹³⁵ Yeranian, Edward. “Egypt’s Opposition Muslim Brotherhood Denies Reports of Dissension.” *Ikhwanweb*, 22 October 2009. Accessed 2 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=21374

¹³⁶ “Ibrāhīm Munīr: al-Rajul al-ghāmiḍ fī Aūrūbā sabab Khliāfāt ‘Akif wa Qyiādāt al-Ikhwān” (Ibrahim Munir: The Ambiguous Man in Europe Is the Reason for the Conflicts between ‘Akif and the Brotherhood.” *Youm 7*, 2 April 2009. Accessed 2 August 2015. www.youm7.com/story/2009/4/2

orders of his superiors, while the remaining three were relegated to secondary-rank positions with little organisational influence. The Qutbist grip on the Society was further cemented through the nomination of Mohammed Badi‘ to succeed ‘Akif as the eighth General Guide. The U.S. Embassy, which had bet on Habib to inherit the post, was taken aback by this outcome, showing the extent to which the American government lacked insight into the Brotherhood’s internal politics.¹³⁷

The sixty-seven year old veterinarian professor was unknown among the rank-and-file membership.¹³⁸ Born in August 1943 in al-Mahalla al-Kubra in the governorate of Gharbiyya, he was recruited into the Society in 1962, when former Special Apparatus members were seeking to reconstitute the Society in the shadow of Nasser’s surveillance. He was arrested in 1965 along with Mahmud ‘Izzat, and then spent nine years in prison for his involvement in the Organisation’65. After his release, he became a teaching assistant at the Zaqaziq University, while serving two terms as the secretary general of the Veterinary Syndicate, where he focused on *da‘wa* activities to the complete neglect of politics. Badi‘ was a “quintessential insider” with intricate knowledge over the Society’s administrative structures.¹³⁹ Because of his experience in the Brotherhood’s underground activities in the sixties, and his proximity in prison to Sayyid Qutb, he was committed to *tanzīmī* organisational ideals. Quite in opposition to the boisterous and independent-minded ‘Akif, he ran the Society in close consultation with core Qutbist loyalists. This was reflected in the choice of his deputies Rashid al-Bayumi, Gum‘a Amin, Mahmud ‘Izzat and Khairat al-Shatir.

The nomination of Badi‘ to the post of General Guide ran against the stipulations of the Society’s internal statutes. Once again, the expectations of Mohammed Habib were disappointed. When Habib threatened that he would resign, Guidance Office members simply dismissed him. The reaction came as a shock to the man who had thought of himself as a prestigious figure within the Society. It is possible that not even he had realised that he was merely a pawn in a larger game. The final decision over who could stay and go always remained with the Special Apparatus – that small clique of insiders who managed the Society as their private feudal turf.¹⁴⁰ Weakened, side-lined and humiliated, Habib launched a ferocious attack on the new Murshid and the Qutbist loyalists who had engineered his

¹³⁷ Scobey, Margaret. “MB Internal Clashes Continue.” *Wikileaks*, 15 December 2009. Accessed 12 August 2015. wikileaks.brunogola.com.br/cable/2009/12/09CAIRO2298.html

¹³⁸ Hamida, Mohammed. “Muḥammad Badie Nominated General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt” *Ilaf*, 17 January 2010. Accessed 12 August 2015. www.elaph.com/Web/news/2010/1/524249.html; Scobey, Margaret. “MB Internal Clashes Continue.” *Wikileaks*, 15 December 2009. Accessed 12 August 2015. wikileaks.brunogola.com.br/cable/2009/12/09CAIRO2298.html

¹³⁹ Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 131.

¹⁴⁰ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

sacking, then left the Society on New Year's eve. 'Izzat sent a letter to Shatir in prison to inform him of these developments.¹⁴¹

On the Eve of the Revolution

With the vanguard leaders now firmly in control of the *tanzīm*, events in Egypt and the broader region took on their own momentum. In June 2010 Khaled Said, a twenty-eight year old computer programmer from Alexandria, was brazenly murdered by two police officers. The brutality of this killing crossed a red line in the consciousness of many young middle-class Egyptians. Said represented the average young, urban, educated, middle class and not necessarily politically involved Egyptian citizen. "Everyone else could see in him their neighbour, their sibling or their cousin", a revolutionary leader later explained.¹⁴² The fact that he was publically beaten to death in broad daylight electrified men and women across the country. A Facebook page called *We Are All Khaled Said* was set up by the Google executive Wael Ghonim and gained over hundreds and thousands of likes within days.¹⁴³ Said rapidly became a symbol for the martyrs who had fallen victim to the brutal practices of the security forces. Thousands of young Egyptians participated in weekly marches in an impressive manifestation of peaceful civil protest. It was at this point where the middle class started to align with the protest movement, leading to the combustible mix of educated youth and lower-class blue-collar workers.

The parliamentary elections of November 2010 hammered the final nail in the coffin of the Mubarak regime. They were a clear sign that the process of democratic opening and political reform had been reversed. Violence by regime-hired thugs claimed eight lives among elections that were strongly criticised for their high levels of fraud. While the NDP captured 83 per cent of the vote, not a single one of the 135 Brotherhood candidates won a seat. The stage-managed elections wiped out the formal opposition and axed the eighty-eight member strong parliamentary force down to zero. Brotherhood members pulled out of the race, causing an embarrassment to Mubarak whose security apparatus arrested 1,200 members. By the end of 2010, Egypt's prisons counted over 17,000 inmates. Meanwhile, other opposition movements started to rally. The previous February Mohammed al-Baradei, who had gained an

¹⁴¹ Hassan, Amro. "Former Muslim Brotherhood Leader Slams Hardline Power Grab." *LA Times*, 6 January 2010. Accessed 12 August 2015. latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/01/egypt-resigned-deputy-leader-slams-brotherhood-elections.html

¹⁴² (28). Interview. Cairo, 4 February 2013.

¹⁴³ "Kullunā Khālid Sa'īd." *Facebook*. Accessed 19 August 2015. www.facebook.com/ElShaheed

international reputation as the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had created the National Association for Change (al-Gam'iyya al-Wataniyya li'l-Taghayyur), a loose grouping of opposition movements that combined leaders from Kifaya, 6th of April and the members of the rapidly expanding Khaled Said Facebook community.

Then, in the early days of January 2011, a wave of protests spread from the Tunisian countryside to the urban centres, engrossing the country in a mass upheaval that caught Tunisians – and the world – by complete surprise. The spread of the uprising made headlines in Egypt, where “revolution was in the air”.¹⁴⁴ With the Tunisian unrest unfolding, Egyptian activists called for a “day against torture” on the national Police Day on 25 January 2011. Popular hashtags like #fuckmubarak started to make the rounds on Twitter. When on 14 January President Ben Ali and his wife fled to Saudi Arabia, the activists in Egypt decided that protest planned for 25 January should be called nothing less than a revolution (*thawra*). The stage was set for the dramatic events that would enter history books as the Arab Spring.

¹⁴⁴ (27). Interview. Cairo, 25 December 2012.

REVOLUTION, RISE AND FALL (2011-2013)

In early 2011, Egypt witnessed the beginning of a popular revolution of unprecedented proportions. On 25 January, a small group of activists managed to amass tens of thousands of previously politically uninvolved citizens into the streets. The situation completely overwhelmed the Central Security Forces. Over the coming days, urban insurgencies continued on a smaller scale in Suez, Alexandria and other cities and towns across Egypt. On 28 January, millions of people from all walks of life descended into the streets in a massive popular uprising, chanting for Mubarak to resign: “*Irḥal! Irḥal! Irḥal!* – Leave! Leave! Leave!”. The uprising continued for eighteen days, marked by a chaotic tug-of-war between an embattled security apparatus and Egypt’s revolutionary masses. On 11 February, a stern-looking ‘Omar Suleiman went in front of the cameras and declared: “President Hosni Mubarak has decided to step down from the position of the President of the Republic”.¹

The Brotherhood did not in any way predict their rapid ascendancy to power that was to follow in the coming year. It was only once the regime of Mubarak started to crumble in obvious ways that the opportunity of a place in Egypt’s post-revolutionary order was considered for the first time. While the scale and vehemence of the uprising caught the Guidance Office off guard, its leaders were quick to seize the momentum, seeing it as the opportune moment for empowerment. In a speech in Alexandria the following April, Khairat al-Shater urged his fellow Brothers to

take advantage of this revolution, which took place in Egypt and continues in the countries surrounding us, and which undoubtedly represents a historical moment and a major new transformative stage [...]. The obstacle has now been removed, so we must return to the beginning of the matter, which we were supposed to have undertaken since the nineties. We are expanding [the Islamic project] now, opening up towards society to a great extent, enlightening the entire *umma*, and summoning its strength so that it contributes to the realisation of its renaissance (*nahḍa*) on the basis of Islamic reference.²

¹ “‘Omar Sulaymān ya’līn Tanḥī Mubārak ‘an Maṣībīhi” (Omar Sulaiman Announces the Resignation of Hosni Mubarak). *Youtube*, 11 February 2011. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=feF8DGk_O-I

² al-Shatir. “The Project of Islamic Renaissance.” 24 April 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Through a combination of skilful political manoeuvring at the top and steady street pressure on the ground, the Brotherhood managed to obtain a majority in the People's Assembly in the November 2011 elections. But when, in June 2012, it conquered the presidency, the vanguard leaders were suddenly faced with the task of governing. At this point, the structural weaknesses of its internal political culture were revealed with astonishing speed. Morsi and his backers in the Guidance Office were unable to formulate a political vision for Egypt that could offer any sense of hope to its citizens. Instead, they displayed an erratic political behaviour that estranged them from other actors and institutions, and increasingly from those Egyptians who had voted for them. Erratic decision-making, internal personality and policy clashes, and overlapping responsibilities between the Guidance Office and the Presidential Office added to their rapid demise. The main protagonist in this drama was Mohammed Morsi, whose year of rule can best be described as a race to the bottom. In the end, the same revolutionary forces that had enabled the Brotherhood's rule mobilised to push them out of power, thereby expanding military rule in a country that had briefly sensed political freedom.

* * *

Causes of 25 January 2011

Like any great historical event, the Egyptian revolution was caused by a complex set of factors and escapes simplistic and mono-causal explanations. A youth survey conducted in March 2010 listed a range of grievances, from rising costs of living, rampant corruption, frustration with the domestic status quo and a lack of democracy.³ In explaining the Arab Spring, media commentators quickly tried to establish a causal link to the self-immolation of the street vendor Mohammed Bu'Azizi in a southern village of Tunisia, which was said to have "sparked" the Arab Spring. Another explanation saw social media as the critical enabling factor in terms of the "spread" of the Arab Spring across the Middle East.⁴ The

³ ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller. "3rd Annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, 2010-2011". Accessed 7 August 2015. www.arabyouthsurvey.com/en/media/whitepaper

⁴ Examples of this techno-determinist argument include Nunns, Alex. *Tweets from Tahrir: Egypt's Revolution as It Unfolded, in the Words of the People Who Made It*. New York: OR Books, 2011; Vargas, Jose Antonio. "How an Egyptian Revolution Began on Facebook," *The New York Times*. 17 February 2012. www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/books/review/how-an-egyptian-revolution-began-on-facebook.html. For a more nuanced account about the role of social media in the Arab Spring, see el-Nawawy, Mohammed. *Egyptian Revolution 2.0: Political Blogging, Civic Engagement, and Citizen Journalism*. Palgrave Macmillan Series in

Tunisian Revolution certainly had an electrifying effect on Egyptian activists, with the sudden and unexpected departure of Ben Ali catalysing the revolutionary energies of the activists in Cairo. However, the most immediate effects of the events in Tunisia occurred in terms of a steady flow of communication between the activists in the two countries. The former helped their co-revolutionaries to spread the news of the uprising among global media networks, while providing them with advice on mobilisation and protest tactics. As for the notion of a “Facebook revolution” promoted by social media enthusiasts, it is certainly a fact that the MENA region had, at 71.2 per cent, the third-highest social media network penetration rate globally, with 146 million users on social networks and 39.83 Internet users per 100 people.⁵ But the fact that the Internet was turned off across large parts of Egypt after the first day of the uprising makes this explanatory model untenable.⁶ Similarly, the evidence does not support the notion that State Department-financed “cyber-dissidents” and youthful bloggers were the driving force of the mass protest movement.⁷

Beyond these rather superficial explanations, there were deeper structural causes at work.⁸ Environmental changes in the climate linked to global warming played a critical role in fuelling widespread discontent among the general population in North Africa. In the summer of 2010, summer draughts in America, Australia and Russia caused spikes in global food prices. Protectionist policies by some of the governments of the affected countries led to severe grain shortages on global food markets, a situation that was compounded by the speculative practices of some commodity trading houses such as Swiss-based Glencore.⁹ In Winter 2010, the volatility of global grain prices was exacerbated by a winter drought in Eastern China, resulting in erratic price spikes with serious repercussions on Egypt as one of the world’s largest wheat importers.¹⁰ In addition, after thirty years of power the regime of Hosni Mubarak had failed to secure any measure of economic progress for its citizens,

International Political Communication. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Herrera, Linda. *Revolution in the Age of Social Media : The Egyptian Popular Insurrection and the Internet*. London: Verso, 2014.

⁵ A marked increase considering the numbers a decade before, which was at 0.83. See World Bank. “World Development Indicators: Internet users (per 100 people)”. databank.worldbank.org/

⁶ Only 9 per cent of Egyptians used the Internet to follow the news on a daily basis: al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies. “The Arab Barometer Project: Arab Republic of Egypt,” June 2011. Accessed 4 August 2015. www.arabbarometer.org/country-report

⁷ Abul-Magd, Zeinab. “Occupying Tahrir Square: The Myths and the Realities of the Egyptian Revolution.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (2012), pp. 565-72.

⁸ Nixon, Ron. “U.S.-Financed Groups Had Supporting Role in Arab Uprisings.” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2011. Accessed 4 August 2015. www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/world/15aid.html. (27). Interview. Cairo, 25 December 2012.

⁹ “Glencore Reveals Bet on Grain Price Rise.” *Financial Times*, 24 April 2011. Accessed 4 August 2015. www.ft.com/cms/s/0/aea76c56-6ea5-11e0-a13b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3dR1wxWgo

¹⁰ Sternberg, Troy. “Chinese Drought, Bread and the Arab Spring.” *Applied Geography* 34 (2012), pp. 519–24. The relationship of global food prices and the uprising in Egypt is analysed in an upcoming doctoral dissertation by Barthes, Charlotte Malterre. *Food Territories. The Political Economy of Food Systems and its Effects on the Built Environment: Case Study “Egypt”*. Department of Architecture, ETH Zurich. Expected in 2016.

standing next only to the regime's complete moral and political bankruptcy. The inherent structural weakness pervading the country's corrupt institutions could be seen when looking at the low levels of participation in this revolution: while only eight per cent of Egyptians participated in the revolution, even those limited numbers were able to overpower the marauding security apparatus and cause the overthrow of the regime.

But perhaps the most important factor was the determined resolve of a small group of young activists who pushed this revolution through with great vigour, courage and resolve.¹¹ The culture of dissent and protest embodied by these activists had originated in the protests following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. By the time of 25 January, the protest movement had acquired a high level of skill and sophistication. In a series of concentrated and organised operations, activists met at pre-arranged meeting points to mobilise the crowds, using a number of deliberate strategies. Waving Egyptian flags and chanting revolutionary songs, they called upon citizens to join their marches and demand economic and political reform. As they had learned from their Tunisian counterparts, they initially refrained from raising political demands, which were deemed as unacceptable among the apolitical general population, and instead limited their chants to socio-economic issues. "We should never start the revolution with [slogans like] 'Down, down with Mubarak', because we wanted to attract as many people as we could."¹² They started the marches in the small alleys of Giza, Imbaba, Shubra al-Khayma and other working-class neighbourhoods, where the streets were too narrow for police trucks to pass. Only once the crowds had reached certain numbers, they branched out into the larger streets, squares and roundabouts. Various youth groups, including "Ultras" soccer fans from the Zamalek and al-Ahly Clubs, activists from the 6th of April and Kifaya movements, as well as the Revolutionary Socialists played a crucial role in the early mobilisation efforts. The energy of these young people, who had gained a decade of experience in terms of urban mobilisation, was able to sustain the revolutionary momentum for over two weeks, until factory workers, teachers, union and syndicate members joined the uprising. The popular pressure that materialised during the eighteen days had a vital impact on the decision of the SCAF to ditch the old dictator.¹³

¹¹ "The Arab Barometer Project: Arab Republic of Egypt." *al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies*, June 2011. Accessed 4 August 2015. www.arabbarometer.org/country-report

¹² (27). Interview. Cairo, 25 December 2012.

¹³ Alexander, Anne. *Bread, Freedom, Social Justice : Workers and the Egyptian Revolution*. London: Zed Books, 2014. Bisharah, Marwan. *The Invisible Arab : The Promise and Peril of the Arab Revolution*. New York, NY: Nation Books, 2012; Khalil, Ashraf. *Liberation Square : Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation*. 1st edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011; West, Johnny. *Karama! : Journeys through the Arab Spring*. London: Heron, 2011.

The Brotherhood and the Revolution

At the time of the revolution, the Brotherhood was a weakened organisation. Many of its senior commanders were in prison, while the palace revolt of the previous year had robbed the Society of its most talented politicians. A growing segment of younger educated members were disillusioned by the lack of transparency and the practice of unconstitutional politicking among an ailing leadership. The Brotherhood's internal political culture at this point was marked by a significant divide that ran along both generational and ideological lines, between an educated, urban and younger class of Brothers on one side, and the hard-core Qutbist leadership on the other, with their singular focus on *da'wa* to the exclusion of any engagement with other political forces. This discrepancy became evident during the revolution and to a large extent explains the organisational behaviour of the Brotherhood during the coming two and a half years. While youth members were determined to defend the Square side-by-side with the revolutionary activists, the vanguard leaders displayed behaviour of indecisive wavering and backtracking.

A batch of Saudi cables recently released by *Wikileaks* reveals the depth of the generational divide within the Brotherhood. In an undated letter, a young Brother who presumably was among the crowd of members occupying Tahrir Square from the first days describes this internal dichotomy.¹⁴ On the one hand stood the youths in Tahrir who pressed ahead with the revolution, and on the other stood the leaders in the Guidance Office in Moqattam, who sent a message down the chain of command with the following text: "Very important – must reach all Brothers and Sisters at all levels. It is forbidden to contact anyone of the members of the Coalition of Youth Revolution".¹⁵ At a Sisters' meeting in Alexandria, Mahmud Ghozlan publically denounced prominent Brotherhood youth leaders such as Islam Lutfi, Mohammed al-Qassas and Ahmed 'Abd al-Gawwad. In the midst of the uprising, the Brotherhood youths tried in vain to establish contact with their leaders to provide them with a sense of "the reality on the ground" and obtain "instructions and the Society's vision" on how to proceed.¹⁶ They first worked through mediators such as Mahdi 'Akif and 'Issam al-'Arian, and then decided to personally visit the headquarters in Moqattam to plead with their leaders. But Mahmud 'Izzat concluded that the revolution had started "in a popular way" and that it was better to be completed it as it started.

¹⁴ The letter was part of 60,000 diplomatic cables, released by Wikileaks in January 2015, detailing Saudi diplomatic communications. "WikiLeaks Publishes the Saudi Cables." *Wikileaks*, 19 June 2015. Accessed 9 August 2015. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/press

¹⁵ Anonymous. "Saudi Cables: Letter." *Wikileaks*, date unknown. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc54578.html

¹⁶ Ibid.

While some of the young members met the decision of their leadership with outright refusal, others were trapped in a sense of anxious impatience. Ahmed Ban's story illustrates well the dilemma confronting many Brotherhood youth members in the face of an obstinate leadership that refused to seize the historical momentum. When on 27 January protesters called for a "Day of Rage" (*Yawm al-Ghadab*) to be held the next day, Ban requested permission from his superiors to join the uprising:

On the 25th I stayed at home and spent a difficult night. [...] As I watched TV, nothing was clear yet. The same was true for the 26th and the 27th. When I went to Tahrir Square, I found that the matter was very serious and that we were in the midst of a revolution. If [the Muslim Brotherhood] did not participate in the revolution, this would be our end.¹⁷

As Mubarak had cut off telephone and Internet lines, hundreds and thousands of previously apolitical citizens were driven into the streets on this day.¹⁸ Brotherhood youths coordinated with the leaders of other youth movements to streamline the upcoming mass demonstrations. On Facebook, they announced "twenty false meeting points" to mislead the security apparatus, only to then gather at other localities such as al-Talibiyya, Imbaba, al-Ma'adi, Shubra, al-'Abassiyya.¹⁹ At this point, the Brotherhood reached a "point of no return".²⁰ As the revolutionary activists mobilised for the Day of Anger, two options stood before them: either they would mobilise their ground troops and help the revolutionaries drive out the regime, or they would risk that, if the revolution failed, the regime would crack down on them much harder once it had retrieved its energy. Faced with growing internal pressure, the Guidance Office did not endorse the demonstrations until the 27th in the evening – without however explicitly ordering its members to turn out.²¹ The same night, Morsi, Katani and five other Guidance Office members were arrested and transferred to Wadi al-Natroun prison. In the early afternoon of the next day, different groups assembled at al-Gala' Square and then marched towards Qasr al-Nil Bridge, where they were confronted by security forces defending the western perimeter leading towards Tahrir.²² After a fierce thug-of-war, the

¹⁷ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 November 2012.

¹⁸ In terms of Internet penetration rates, Egypt ranks 91 on the "Networked Readiness Index 2014". Accessed 1 July 2015. www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalInformationTechnology_Report_2014.pdf

¹⁹ Anonymous. "Saudi Cables: Letter." *Wikileaks*, date unknown. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc39202.html

²⁰ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 November 2012.

²¹ There is a debate as to the exact day when the Brotherhood leaders gave the order for Society to join the revolution. Ahmed Ban was adamant that the date of endorsement was 29 January 2011.

²² "Egypt Revolution 2011: Demonstrators vs. Police". 28 January 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBtYLBQPRGQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player

revolutionaries broke through security cordons.²³ When the army deployed tanks and troops around the capital a few hours later, the crowds fraternised with the military, expressed in the chant: “*al-sha‘ab, al-gaysh, ‘iyd waḥda!* – The people and the army are one hand!”²⁴

The country plunged increasingly into chaos. When Mubarak appointed intelligence chief ‘Omar Sulaiman as vice president on 29 January, this infuriated protesters even more. With any sort of governing authority dissipating, Egyptian blogger Sandmonkey tweeted: “there’s no state at the moment, we’re governing ourselves #Jan25”.²⁵ In the ensuing turmoil, thousands of prisoners fled from Wadi al-Natroun prison in the night of 31 January.²⁶ In a telephone conversation broadcasted live on Al Jazeera, Morsi frantically detailed the prison escape. “I speak to you now! I speak to the world. We didn’t flee! [...] We are here, I am here! The telephone is here!” When the anchor asked Morsi who had escaped with him, he dutifully reported: “We are thirty-four members of the Brotherhood [including] Mohammed Morsi, ‘Issam al-‘Arian, Sa‘d al-Katatni, Mohi Hamad, Mahmud Abu Zeid, Mustafa al-Ghoneimi and Sa‘ad al-Hoseini. Those seven members are from the Guidance Office”.²⁷ The confused events, as well as the availability of a satellite phone, later gave rise to the preposterous, and even among educated Egyptians widely believed claim that Hamas and Hezbollah members were behind the prison break.²⁸ Four years later, the escape would form the centrepiece in the state prosecution’s case to demand the death penalty for Morsi.

The Nascent Connection with the Army

During the night of 1 February, an armada of Mubarak’s thugs attacked the revolutionary youth in Tahrir Square on horses and camels.²⁹ The “Battle of the Camel”, laconically so-called in reference to one of the Prophet’s battles in the earliest days of Islam, lasted for over sixteen hours. It was one of the most spectacular moments of this revolution and initiated a

²³ The events of that day are captured in a powerful blog by el-Hamalawy, Hossam. *Friday of Anger*. 6 February 2011. Accessed 5 September 2015. www.arabawy.org/2011/02/06/jan25-friday-of-anger/

²⁴ Ketchley, Neil. “‘The Army and the People Are One Hand!’ Fraternization and the 25th January Egyptian Revolution” 56, no. 1 (2014), pp. 155–86.

²⁵ Tweet of 29 January 2011. Twitter/Sandmonkey.

²⁶ Wilson, Michael. “Analysis for Comment - Egypt - Jailbreak”. *Wikileaks*, 1 February 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/11/1112772_re-analysis-for-comment-egypt-jail-break-.html

²⁷ “Mukāmila Mursī li-qanāa al-Jazīra” (Morsi’s Call to Al Jazeera). *al-Jazeera*, 2013. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg8EYdtBnxE&feature=youtube_gdata_player

²⁸ Fieldnotes, 12 July 2012. The accusations about a Hamas and Hezbollah orchestration of prison breaks were there from pretty much the first days of the revolution. They are the purest propaganda without the slightest bit of credibility. There are also many videos of prisoners talking about their releases from prison, telling stories about how they were told that if they did not leave prison, they would be killed.

²⁹ “Egypt Revolution 2011: Demonstrators Vs Police”. 28 January 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBtYLBQPRGQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player

shift in the balance of power between the revolutionary masses and the regime. The Brotherhood's youths fought at the forefront alongside the revolutionaries to defend the Square from invading Mubarak loyalists. Despite their determination, the Guidance Office ordered its troops to retreat from Tahrir in the middle of the events.

On 2 February during the [Battle of the Camel], we learned from one of the Brothers in downtown that the [Guidance Office] had issued an order to withdraw from Tahrir. We asked Brother Tareq 'Abd al-Gawwad, who was on his way to Tahrir, to return to the Guidance Office for more explanations.

In a subsequent call with Ayman Hudhud, the liaison between the Brothers at the Square and the Guidance Office, al-Gawwad begged his leaders, asserting that the youth was ready to defend the Square "until the last man" and that a withdrawal at this critical juncture would no doubt mean the end of the revolution.

We agreed that there needed to be a strategy of escalating procedures [sic] to push the regime out. When the revolutionaries went to the People's Assembly, we asked the [Brotherhood] youth to intensify their numbers there [and] fixed a point for our sit-in in front of People's Assembly and the Cabinet. Ahmed 'Abd al-Gawwad called Ayman Hudhud [...], asking him to inform our Brothers at the Guidance Office about what was happening at the People's Assembly and ask them to support the new sit-in, as the numbers were not large enough.³⁰

But Mahmud 'Izzat refused. Desperate for high-level support, Mohammed al-Qassas called Al Jazeera in Doha to ask Sheikh Yousif al-Qaradawi for a word of support.³¹ Thus, despite 'Izzat's direct order, the youths at the Square remained "steadfast".

The younger Brothers were unaware of the fact that negotiations on a post-revolutionary settlement had already started behind closed doors. 'Izzat and Ghozlan, who grasped the opportunity presented to them by the revolution, tried to leverage the Brotherhood's street power as a bargaining chip for extracting political concessions from the military. To this end, Morsi and Katatni were dispatched on 1 February to meet with 'Omar Sulaiman.³² When a few days later Morsi called 'Abd al-Gawwad to choose youth

³⁰ Anonymous. "Saudi Cables: Letter." *Wikileaks*, date unknown. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc76378.html

³¹ "Ta'liq al-Shaykh al-Qaradāwī 'an al-Thawra al-Maṣriyya" (Comment of Shaykh al-Qaradawi on the Egyptian Revolution). Al Jazeera Arabic. 29 January 2011. Accessed 16 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3g6pfGNZ98

³² Wickham dates the meeting between Sulaiman and the representatives of the Brotherhood on 6 February. My sources indicate that negotiations started to take place on 1 February, and very likely already on 31 January. It

representatives to attend the meeting, the latter declined. In accordance with the principle “no dialogue until after [Mubarak’s] departure” (*lā ḥiwār illā ba’d al-raḥīl*), the young Brothers decided to reject negotiations as long as their revolutionary demands were not met.³³ While the Qutbist leaders negotiated, Mohammed Badi‘ issued a public statement to the effect that the Society would refuse any negotiations with the regime.³⁴ Insiders who knew about the negotiations were asked to swear “on the Quran that not a single word about the agreement would be leaked”.³⁵

According to the emerging deal, the Brotherhood would instruct its rank and file to withdraw from the Square. In return, Shatir and Malik would be released from prison and the Brotherhood would become a legitimate actor in the emerging political system. The two sides further agreed that any future government would guarantee to preserve the vast economic empire of the Armed Forces and that no member of the SCAF would be charged for killing or torturing demonstrators. In return, the SCAF committed to “cement the road” for the Brotherhood to attain power “democratically”.³⁶ Both sides thus saw a collusion of interests: the Brotherhood interpreted the revolution as the opportune moment of empowerment, as it had been predicted by Banna’s seven-step blueprint, while the military junta in the SCAF, scared of losing their privileges in a potentially more democratic order, were in need of a willing and easily controllable partner.³⁷ As the military men knew only too well, the Society’s leadership had an inadequate understanding of politics, while international actors mistrusted them. In the case of a Brotherhood-controlled government, the army would ensure that regional stability would be maintained, particularly with respect to the peace treaty with Israel. But as the youth continued their protest, the army found itself increasingly dragged into this process, raising the status of the Brotherhood as the military’s new civilian partner. It is only thanks to the determination of the revolutionary youths to defend the Square that negotiations continued and the Brotherhood was prevented from signing the “worst agreement of its history”.³⁸

News of the secret negotiations trickled out in bits and pieces and was quickly absorbed by younger members, who felt a sense of betrayal. When Shatir became aware of

was on 6 February that the Brotherhood went public with the meeting. See Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 169. Also see Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, p. 137.

³³ Anonymous. “Saudi Cables: Letter.” *Wikileaks*, date unknown. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc76378.html.

³⁴ Tadros, Mariz. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt : Democracy Redefined or Confined?* London: Routledge, 2012, p. 36.

³⁵ Habib, Mohammed. *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn bayna al-ṣu‘ūd wa-al-ri’āsah wa-ta’ākul al-shar‘īyah (The Muslim Brotherhood: Between the Rise, the Presidency and the Erosion of Legitimacy)*. Cairo: Sama li’l-Nashr wa’l-Tawzi‘, 2013, p. 28.

³⁶ *al-Shuruq*, 12 October 2012.

³⁷ Habib. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 28-30; (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

³⁸ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

this fact, he asked the Guidance Office from his prison cell that those with knowledge of the secret negotiations should be expelled.³⁹ On 6 February, an awkward triumvirate consisting of Sulaiman, Katatni and Morsi appeared in front of the cameras to announce that an agreement was reached. The events on the street overtook them, however, when three days later Egyptian workers were pulled into the orbit of the revolution. Across the country labour strikes broke out that combined economic demands with support for the revolution's political goals. The next night Mubarak appeared on TV to repeat the concessions he had already made previously. But the masses would not concede: "*Irḥal! Irḥal! Irḥal!* – Leave! Leave! Leave!", "*Bāṭil! Bāṭil! Bāṭil!* – Invalid! Invalid! Invalid!" and "*Ma' al-salāma ma' al-salāma, yā ibn al-ḥaramiyya.* – Goodbye, Goodbye, you son of a crook", it thundered through the streets of Cairo and other cities in Egypt. The situation now hung in the balance. The army waited for a reply from the street, while the revolutionaries steered the marches towards Maspero, where the state-run broadcasting organisation is located. Mohammed al-Qassas called Hudhud to inform the Guidance Office of the next move: "The people will not wait for us", he warned. "The Brotherhood youth is already moving towards Maspero and the Heliopolis Palace, without any coordination or decisions. We are really very late to express the real ambitions of the people!"⁴⁰

Finally, on 11 February at 6 p.m. in the evening, 'Omar Sulaiman announced that the president had resigned.⁴¹ The message was greeted with a sense of triumph and disbelief by the people in the Square. "It was that strange euphoria where you can't believe what happened yet, while at the same time you are celebrating it", a young woman who participated in the revolution later remembered.⁴² With the revolution's core demand – the removal of Mubarak – suddenly fulfilled, the majority of citizens returned to their homes, tired from the tumultuous eighteen days and accomplished in their belief that the departure of the president would lead to a better future. The Brotherhood's rank and file, assured of the Society's role in the emerging political order, was ordered to withdraw. It was only a core of revolutionary activists who feared what was going to come next. When approached by intelligence officials to enter into negotiations with the army, they did so very hesitantly:

³⁹ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 16 December 2012.

⁴⁰ Anonymous. "Saudi Cables: Letter." *Wikileaks*, date unknown. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc57792.html.

⁴¹ Later this year, on 17 July, Sulaiman checked into the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, where he died on Wednesday 19 July. An earlier report by the Egyptian daily al-Watan claimed that 'Omar Sulaiman had died in Syria, targeted by a massive explosion on 18 July. The conflicting reports about Sulaiman's death, as well as his close relationship to the Americans, later gave rise to speculations that he had been assassinated by the C.I.A. as 'Ali Atta, a close confidant of Sulaiman, confirmed to a source. Fieldnotes, 13 January 2013.

⁴² Fieldnotes, 10 December 2014.

After the ouster of Mubarak, we were eager to contact the Brothers in order to accomplish the other demands of the revolution to avoid the [kind of] problems and clashes that erupted when we were at the Square. After a few days, military intelligence contacted some of the youths of the coalition and asked them to meet with the SCAF. Among them was Brother Mohammed ‘Abbas. Hani Mahmud went to the Guidance Office to ask ‘Issam al-‘Arian [for permission]. ‘Arian said: no problem [‘Abbas] can go [to negotiate].⁴³

While the Brotherhood’s youth kept their side of the bargain with the rest of the revolutionary forces, the deceptive tactics of their leaders were made clear a day before Mubarak’s resignation, when the Guidance Office called for a meeting of the Consultative Council in order to discuss the next steps. (2) remembers the meeting as follows:

[At the meeting] something absolutely unexpected happened. When the members of the Consultative Council demanded to know what happened [...] during the meeting on 6 February, the tongue of Dr. Mohammed Morsi slipped [sic]. Morsi said that ‘we didn’t touch on what we concluded during the first meeting’.⁴⁴

The revelation, implicit in Morsi’s statement, that negotiations had already started earlier than the Guidance Office previously admitted prompted a furious Abu al-Futuh to rise up and shout at the General Guide: “There was a first meeting, Badi‘...? Have you ever heard something like this in the history of this Society? Shame on you!”⁴⁵ Abu al-Futuh’s public outburst illustrated the extent of the internal divisions and the resentment many members felt when confronted with this latest unilateral action by the vanguard leaders.

The Freedom and Justice Party and the Role of Turkey

Shortly after the ouster of Mubarak, the SCAF declared that it would rule by martial law until the upcoming elections in six months. With the military increasingly taking control of political institutions, the revolutionary activists called on the people to return to Tahrir and keep up the pressure on the transitional government. It was at this point when ordinary citizens started to become disenfranchised from the revolutionaries. To many, the demise of Mubarak signified the success of the revolution, while the continued insubordination of youth

⁴³ Anonymous. “Saudi Cables: Letter.” Date unknown, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 7 October 2015.

wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc57792.html

⁴⁴ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 231.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

activists against the army amounted to a disturbance of public order and morality, and was therefore considered to be illegitimate. Quite to the contrary to the narrative of the Western press, the broad masses of ordinary Egyptians had a high veneration for the army. It was only a small group of activists who were suspicious of the intentions of the SCAF.

On 19 March, Egyptians were asked to vote for the amendment of nine constitutional articles through a SCAF-appointed committee that would allow the military to “manage” the transition. The referendum was supported by the Brotherhood’s leadership and approved with 77 per cent of the votes. But ten days later, the SCAF unilaterally proposed a new “constitutional declaration”. This 63-article document set the stage for a confusing and turbulent transition, where those at the head of the political pecking order simply arrogated constitutional power above the heads of a disorganised and fragmented opposition.⁴⁶ While the core of the revolutionary activists vigorously rejected these measures, the Brotherhood leaders and their Islamist allies kept silent. This was also the case when the SCAF, under the instruction of a relatively obscure general called ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, introduced so-called “virginity tests”, whereby an army “doctor” inserted his finger into a woman’s vagina to make sure that she was a virgin.⁴⁷ Speaking with his typical soft-spoken voice, Sisi later claimed in an interview with the BBC that these measures were taken “to protect the girls from rape, and the soldiers and officers from accusations of rape”.⁴⁸ The absence of any condemnation by the Brotherhood leadership of this massive breach of moral conduct discredited their claim to be the guardians of morality among Egypt’s revolutionary youths, especially among young women.⁴⁹ The compromise between its alleged Islamic beliefs and political expediency was a recurrent pattern in the Brotherhood’s political behaviour. It also illustrated the extent to which the organisation found itself more or less thrown into the political firestorm of post-revolutionary Egypt, something for which they were not prepared. This was evidenced on 30 April when the Consultative Council, despite the vanguard leaders’ principled rejection of forming a political party, announced the creation of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). The FJP’s name bore obvious resemblance to the Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) in Morocco, and that of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or

⁴⁶ Brown, Nathan. “Can Egypt’s Democratic Uprising Be Redeemed?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 24, 2012. carnegieendowment.org/2012/12/24/canegyptsdemocraticuprisingberedeemed/ewbv

⁴⁷ For an account of a woman who underwent such tests, see Shafy, Samiha. “‘Horribly Humiliating’: Egyptian Woman Tells of ‘Virginity Tests.’” *Spiegel Online*, 10 June 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015.

www.spiegel.de/international/world/horribly-humiliating-egyptian-woman-tells-of-virginity-tests-a-767365.html

⁴⁸ “Egypt: Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi Profile.” *BBC News*. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19256730. This especially abusive tactic was employed quite deliberately by Sisi and his henchmen since March 2011 and rapidly expanded with the growing grip of the army on the country. It was part of the systematic campaign of violence against women protestors in the later stages of the revolution.

⁴⁹ Fieldnotes, 12 October 2012.

AKP) in Turkey, showing the affinity the Society's leaders felt towards the "Turkish model" of governance.

The Brotherhood's relationship with Turkey went back as far as the Islamic revolution in Iran of 1979, when its leaders had started to cultivate contact with the influential Turkish politician Necmettin Erbakan. The Arab Spring and the subsequent empowerment of Islamist movements in different Arab countries gave this relationship a new spin, as it was likely to deepen Turkish influence in Egypt. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan supported the overthrow of Mubarak and already on 2 February called on him to "take the first step", while President Abdullah Gül travelled to Cairo in March 2011 as the first foreign dignitary after Mubarak's overthrow. Indeed, Turkey had much to gain from supporting the Brotherhood. The country's Middle East policy was built on the desire to create an "Ankara-Cairo axis" that could enhance Turkish influence along the region's southern periphery. This approach was based on a largely academic view of geopolitics, advocated by the owlish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoglu. In his 2001 book *Strategic Depth*, Davutoglu argued for the creation of a Turkish "zone of influence from Anatolia to Gaza".⁵⁰ The AKP believed that the Arab Spring signalled the end of the prevailing regional order, which Davutoglu defined as Western support for "oppressive political tendencies in Muslim countries for the sake of preserving Western interests".⁵¹ The revolution in Egypt was seen as part of a broader transition away from the "Camp David order" towards a "New Middle East", and as such was seen as an opportunity for Turkey to support a radical change of the status quo. This worldview was influenced by internationalist aspirations resembling those held by the vanguard leaders in Egypt, which viewed Arab nationhood destined to be replaced by governments representative of the Muslim *umma*.⁵² The transition in Egypt also coincided with the AKP's electoral victory in June 2011, which was seen as further proof for the theory of the empowerment of Islamists across the region.

This deeply ideological worldview was contradicted by the revolution, which stirred up nationalist sentiment in Egypt and led to a refusal among the FJP leaders of any foreign advice about the shape of the country's emergent political system. Turkey at different junctures tried to provide the FJP with reports and intelligence assessments about the

⁵⁰ Stein, Aaron. "III. The End of 'Zero Problems', 2010–13." *Whitehall Papers* 83, no. 1 (3 July 2014), pp. 34–58.

⁵¹ "From Rep. of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs." *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. 12 March 2012. Accessed 21 August 2015. www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-by-mr_-ahmet-davuto%C4%9Flu-published-in-auc-cairo-review-_egypt_-on-12-march-2012.en.mfa

⁵² Ibid.

military.⁵³ The Brotherhood leadership rejected a “white paper” that was proposed by the Turkish government and was supposed to outline Egypt’s path towards democracy. As Mohammed Younis observed, the FJP’s members were Egyptians and, despite their meta-historical proclamations of an Islamic caliphate that could enclose the entire Muslim *umma*, were deeply suspicious at any efforts by outsiders to guide political decision making. This was particularly true with regards to Turkey, which was viewed through the historical lens of colonialism, having ruled Egypt for nearly four centuries.⁵⁴ It was another indication of the widespread discrepancy between the rhetorical support for a pan-Islamist solution, and the historical reality of deeply entrenched local nationalisms.

The Qutbist decision makers in the Guidance Office preferred to find their own way as to the role the FJP was supposed to play in accomplishing the Islamic project. In a speech given in April 2011 in Alexandria, Shatir explained that the FJP was conceived not as a means of expanding the Islamic reform project, but merely as an “instrument for [engaging in] the [political] conflict”. In the conception of the vanguard, the party should focus exclusively on the political process, which was “only one part of the greater renaissance (*nahḍa*) project in politics, economy, society, education, morals, values, behaviour, children, women, the elderly and the young”. The FJP was seen as the way for the Brotherhood to obtain political power, while the Society was to be kept pure in its spiritual role of “integrating and rallying the entire *umma* in order to build its renaissance on the basis of Islam”, and to create the conditions for “an entire life of the *umma* on the basis of Islamic reference [and] the Islamic method”.⁵⁵

This distinction between the FJP and the Society was largely conceptual and had little to do with the actual political reality. The FJP’s leadership was handpicked accordingly, in order to assure that only “individuals known for their religious commitment and discipline” would be in charge of the party.⁵⁶ In a repetition of an earlier scenario, ‘Issam al-‘Arian was bypassed once again for the post of the presidency. Instead, the position went to Muhammad Morsi, while ‘Arian gained the powerless role of the vice president. The post of the administratively more influential secretary-general went to Sa‘d al-Katatni. The sidestepping of ‘Arian again stirred up heated debates within the remaining Tilmisanians of the Brotherhood’s second and third ranks. Za‘afarani resigned in protest while Abu al-Futuh

⁵³ Stein, Aaron. “III. The End of ‘Zero Problems’.” *Whitehall Papers*, p. 45.

⁵⁴ Younis, Mohammed. “Turkish Delight? The Feasibility of the ‘Turkish Model’ for Egypt.” *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Winter 2012. turkishpolicy.com/pdf/vol_10-no_4-younis.pdf

⁵⁵ al-Shatir. “The Project of Islamic Renaissance.” 24 April 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

⁵⁶ Mahmud, ‘Abd al-Mon‘im. Interview, quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 175-6.

announced that that he would run as an independent candidate.⁵⁷ In the wake of what was perceived as an act of blatant rebellion, the Guidance Office launched an orchestrated campaign of denunciation whereby Abu al-Futuh was accused of being an American spy.⁵⁸ The personal animosity between Abu al-Futuh and Shatir reached a symbolic peak when the former injured himself in an accident and Shatir would not even give him a call to wish him well.⁵⁹

Shatir and the Qutbist loyalists now seized the moment to expel the obstreperous Abu al-Futuh once and for all from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, the man who was the long-time hero of the Jama‘at Islamiyya and whose pact with Tilmisani in 1974 had vitally contributed to the Brotherhood’s second founding was defeated and humiliated. ‘Arian disavowed his long-time comrade-in-arms. In a scene reminiscent of Michael Corleone’s disowning of his older brother Fredo in *The Godfather (Part II)*, ‘Arian said: “He has nothing to do with us now. We cannot support anyone violating our decisions”.⁶⁰ Instead, he subordinated himself under the authority of the Qutbist leadership. Many wondered why ‘Arian, given his career and popularity, switched sides in spite of his long-standing reformist credentials. The final answer probably only ‘Arian can provide, but it is not inconceivable that he was motivated by personal ambitions, seeing the revolution as an opportunity to revive his stalled political career.⁶¹ However, ‘Arian and other Tilmisani-educated Brothers who remained loyal to the Society’s leadership, such as Mohammed al-Beltagi, Mohammed ‘Ali Bishr and Gamal Heshmat, remained isolated: “The secret organisation stays secret [and] you will never be part of it by insulting others (as ‘Arian did)”, Mokhtar Nuh explained. “We will use you to insult other people, but we would never put you in the secret organisations because you are insulting others”.⁶²

Conquest of the People’s Assembly

During the summer of 2011, the revolutionaries in Tahrir Square witnessed the forceful comeback of the security state, leading to a dangerous escalation of street clashes between

⁵⁷ Abu Khalil. *The Reformist Brotherhood*, p. 19.

⁵⁸ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

⁵⁹ (8). Interview. Alexandria, 29 March 2013.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Wickham. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 180. The Godfather scene referred to can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Weaop_aiTg

⁶¹ Zollner, Barbara. “The Brotherhood in Transition: An Analysis of the Organisation’s Mobilising Capacity.” Unpublished working paper (no date). *Academia.edu*.

[www.academia.edu/8616839/The Brotherhood in Transition An analysis of the organisation s mobilising capacity](http://www.academia.edu/8616839/The_Brotherhood_in_Transition_An_analysis_of_the_organisation_s_mobilising_capacity)

⁶² Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

youth activists and the Central Security Forces. While publically proclaiming themselves as the torchbearers of the revolution, the political behaviour of Brotherhood became increasingly obvious. On 28 June, the Central Security Forces violently assaulted the families of the martyrs gathered in Tahrir Square, injuring hundreds of civilians in a series of violent battles. Days later, opposition parties announced a *miltūniyya* that was followed by a three-week sit-in at Tahrir Square. During these months, military violence against Egyptian citizens became endemic and systematic.

In July 2011, a group of Islamist parties and associations, including the Nur Party, the Da‘wa Salafiyya, the Jama‘at Islamiyya and the Islamic Law Association of the Practitioners of the Book and Sunnah founded the Islamic Legitimate Body of Rights and Reformation (al-Hay‘a al-Shar‘iyya li’l-Huquq wa’l-Islah).⁶³ While this body had little actual political influence, the presence of Khairat al-Shatir on its board was a notable fact, and the alliance subsequently supported Morsi in his 2012 presidential bid. The Salafis and the Brotherhood were increasingly viewed by non-Islamists as one big conglomerate, creating a perception in the global media of a united Islamist opposition that shared a vile hatred of Baradei and the secular elements. While during parts of the transition period the Islamists certainly did rally under the banner of the Muslim Brotherhood in support of Mohammed Morsi, such support was largely of tactical nature, rather than a result of a broad ideological convergence. The rapid disintegration of the “Islamists camp” once the political situation changed showed the extent to which terms such as “Islamism” were largely conceptual and abstract, subsuming fractionally disunited groups with different political and objectives while saying little about their underlying strategic objectives and ideologies.

During numerous occasions when the Armed Forces brutally clamped down on the revolutionaries and the martyrs’ families, the Brotherhood paid merely lip service, condemning the atrocities of the *fulūl* and the “old regime”.⁶⁴ The vanguard leadership was much more concerned with acquiring political power, feeling assured by the readiness of top American officials to engage publicly with the Brotherhood. On 30 June Hillary Clinton confirmed that Washington would initiate “limited contacts”.⁶⁵ Mahmud Ghazlan doubled up when he declared that the Society was “ready for dialogue”, although he placed a – largely rhetorical – caveat on this by calling on the American government “to stop supporting the

⁶³ Brown, Nathan. “Islam and Politics in the New Egypt.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015. carnegieendowment.org/files/islam_politics.pdf

⁶⁴ Habib. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 30.

⁶⁵ Mohammed, Arshad. “U.S. Shifts to Closer Contact with Egypt Islamists.” *Reuters*, 30 June 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/30/us-usa-egypt-brotherhood-idustre75t0gd20110630

corrupt and tyrannical regimes, backing the Zionist occupation and using double standards”.⁶⁶ While shoring up its credibility internationally, the vanguard’s courting of the United States and of the military elite had the consequence that it estranged them from other opposition parties, as well as from some of their middle-ranking and reform-minded cadres. Although they played along, they privately condemned the Machiavellian policies pursued by the obstinate leadership. When activists called for protests on 30 September to reclaim the revolution, Brotherhood youth posted on social media websites that they were ready to defy the orders from the group’s elders and join the marches. The episode highlighted the growing difficulty the vanguard leadership faced in keeping together the disintegrating tendencies among its members, with a vocal segment pressing for more decisive action against the military establishment.

Once again, it was the Brotherhood’s younger members who led the way forward. In early October, a protest called for by the Coalition of Revolutionary Forces demanded an immediate halt to the use of military courts to try civilians, and the rescinding of a law passed last March that criminalised strikes. Many of the protesters gathering in Tahrir Square held posters of Gamal Abdel Nasser, accusing the Brotherhood to be motivated by their personal political interests rather than by social justice.⁶⁷ This was followed by a flare-up of religious tensions caused by the politics of identity behind the launch of a *Youtube* trailer that showed a provocative movie, obviously made to incite and ignominiously labelled *The Innocence of Muslims*.⁶⁸ A few days later, after a group of thugs set fire to the St. George’s Church in Edfu, members of different Coptic activist groups demonstrated in front of the Maspero television building near Tahrir Square. They were attacked in cold blood by the Armed Forces, who shot live bullets into the crowds, leaving over two dozen people dead. While the Brotherhood officially blamed the remnants of the Mubarak regime for the attack, some Brotherhood

⁶⁶ “Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood will talk to U.S.; demands ‘mutual respect’”, *Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report*, 4 July 2011. www.globalmbwatch.com/2011/07/04/egyptian-muslim-brotherhood-will-talk-to-u-s-demands-mutual-respect/

⁶⁷ Online Archive. “2 November 2012 – Tahrir – Islamist Demonstrations.” Accessed October 7, 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/2-november-2012-tahrir-islamist-demonstrations

⁶⁸ Online Archive. “19 October 2012 – Tahrir – Demonstrations against Anti-Mohammed Movie.” Accessed 8 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/19-october-2012-tahrir-demonstrations-following-the-release-of-a-movie-perceived-as-insulting-islam/. The release of an amateurish trailer depicting the life of the Prophet, who is portrayed as a bloodthirsty womanizer, was the result of an ambiguous plot that involves an Egyptian-born American Coptic real estate developer called Nakoula Basseley Nakoula and the anti-Muslim activist Steve Klein (Steve’s weekly video updates entitled “What Did Mohammed Do?” can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHPoTQteWVo). The trailer was uploaded in July 2012 and subsequently marketed online. On 9 September, an Arabic-subtitled version was shown by the Salafi tele-preacher Khaled Abdulla on al-Nas TV channel, which resulted in a number of protests in different Muslim capitals against this perceived insult. During the ensuing events in Libya, the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi was attacked, leading to the death of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens.

members were unsympathetic to what became known as the “Maspero massacre”,⁶⁹ with a writer on Ikhwanonline speculating that an “extremist Christian clergy” and “corrupt Coptic businessmen”, allied with the United States and Israel, were behind it.⁷⁰

While the tactical alliance with the military had helped the vanguard leaders to manage the first phase of the transition, on 18 November the balance of power started to shift. A few days before, the SCAF had issued a set of “supra-constitutional principles” that were designed to tighten the army’s grip over civilian politics and further delay the parliamentary elections. Playing second fiddle to the Salafi al-Nur Party, the Brotherhood started to mobilise its ground operations. In a dress rehearsal of what was to follow in December 2012 during the Ittihadiyya clashes, as well as in June 2013 at Raba’a al-Adawiyya, thousands of members and supporters were bussed in from the countryside, engulfing Tahrir Square and other public places in Alexandria, Sinai and Upper Egypt with the most significant protests since the toppling of Hosni Mubarak. According to the Brotherhood’s narrative, liberal and secular groups turned up in only small numbers, leaving the Islamists to dominate the Square. The international press uncritically absorbed this story-line.⁷¹ But in reality, the one-day demonstration on 18 November was attended by all political forces. On the same evening, the Brotherhood ordered its rank and file to withdraw. “*Thawra thawra ḥatta’l-‘aṣr* – revolution, revolution, ‘till the evening [prayers]”, the non-Islamists sourly joked. The same night, the security forces proceeded to remove the sit-in of martyrs’ families, causing non-Islamist forces to return to Tahrir in large numbers in the morning of 19 November. The situation escalated during the ominous Mohammed Mahmud Street clashes – the most vicious crackdown since the revolution – where the Central Security Forces raided Tahrir Square and

⁶⁹ Carr, Sarah. “A Firsthand Account: Marching from Shubra to Deaths at Maspero”. *Egypt Independent*. 10 October 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.egyptindependent.com/news/firsthand-account-marching-shubra-deaths-maspero. Also see “Ishtbākāt bayna al-Jaysh wa al-Mutazāhrīn amām Māsbīrū” (Clashes between the Army and the Protesters in front of Maspero). *al-Masry al-Youm*. 9 October 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzRpdcqV0gU;%20www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rbfs15b0o8E

⁷⁰ The respective article used to be posted on Ikhwanonline, but the website has since been removed. Basil al-Dab’a, a reliable source on Twitter, has translated the article and provided me with a summary of its content. The official statements of the Brotherhood can be found here: “Nadā’ Min al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn li’l-’Uqalā’ min ‘Azma Aḥdāth Māsbīrū” (Statement of the Muslim Brotherhood to the Understanding of the Events of the Maspero Crisis). *Islamstory*. 10 October 2011. Accessed 5 September 2015. islamstory.com/ar/Maspiro_Events; “Murshid al-Ikhwān: Aḥdāth ‘Māspīrū’ ṣanī’ū Fulūl al-Waṭanī wa lā Ḥarb ahlī fī Maṣr” (The Guide of the Brotherhood: The Events of ‘Maspero’ were fabricated by the National Fulul and are not a Civil War in Egypt). *al-Riyad*, 13 October 2011. Accessed 5 September 2015. www.alriyadh.com/2011/10/13/article675146.html. Presumably, Ikhwanonline provided the Brotherhood with a public platform to spread certain ideas without obliging them to take responsibility for them. I thank Basil al-Dab’a for this comment.

⁷¹ “Thousands Protest in Egypt’s Tahrir against Army Rule.” *Reuters*. 18 November 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/18/us-egypt-protest-army-idUSTRE7AH0WX20111118

left dozens of people dead and hundreds wounded.⁷² The Society excelled in its absence from these clashes, issuing only feeble and diplomatically jargoned condemnations. Over the coming days, the situation escalated further. Violent confrontations took place in cities and towns across Egypt, including in Alexandria, Suez, Port Said, Ismailiyya, Asyut, Qina and Aswan. Following a three-week sit-in at the Council of Ministers, the army launched another violent assault to disperse the protesters, with black-helmeted security men ruthlessly thumping down on a female protester and then dragging her through the street, a scene which was captured on video and widely circulated online. The incident of the “blue bra girl” symbolised the ruthlessness of the SCAF, as well as the extent to which the beating and systematic degradation of women had become an acceptable tactic of the new security regime.⁷³

Against the backdrop of this violence, the partnership of the SCAF and the Brotherhood ploughed ahead with their plan to hold a three-staged parliamentary election between 28 November 2011 and 11 January 2012, thumbing their noses at the non-Islamist forces who were pushing for the elections to be postponed. For the vanguard leaders, this represented the best chance yet to take control of the legislature and advance one step closer to their desired Islamic constitution. In order to assure a large turnout, the Guidance Office set an internal benchmark whereby every member was expected to mobilise one hundred friends, supporters or relatives.⁷⁴ On the eve of the election, a text message was percolated from the highest levels down the hierarchy of the *tanzīm*:

Brothers and sisters, you who continue in your bond (*fi ribāṭ*). The hours are few, many and mighty in the balance (of life). The one who is aware doesn't know any laxity. Instead, he will always be active and increase his activity in order to accomplish his marvellous task and the weight of responsibility. We

⁷² “Aḥdāth Moḥammed Maḥmūd” (The Events of Mohammed Mahmud). *Youtube*, 19 November 2011. Accessed 2 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=kM7N6uWNbLc

⁷³ “Intihākāt al-Gaysh fī Aḥdāth Majlis al-Wuzarā’” (Violations of the Army in the Events of the Council of Ministers). 16 December 2011. Accessed 4 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjHO3CjBsgs

⁷⁴ The guestimate of between 150,000 and 300,000 members, of which between 50,000 and 70,000 are active Brothers, comes from Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014. The number provided in a television interview by former Minister of the Interior, General Farouq al-Maqrāhi, apparently coming from the i-Pad of Khairat al-Shatir, is at 230,000 members, of which 77,000 are active Brothers. Tammam’s estimate is between 100,000 and 500,000 active members (see Tammam. *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 35). Mokhtar Nuh puts the number of members at 400,000 to 600,000 members, which includes active Brothers and fans (see Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013). Mohammed Badi’ claims the number to be around 750,000, though he admits that the Brotherhood does not keep any records of its membership (see “al-Duktūr Muhammad Badi’ fī Birnāmaj Ittajāhat ‘alā al-Tilifiziūn al-Maṣrī” (Dr. Muhammad Badi’ in the Egyptian Ittajahat Programme). *al-Wafd Media*. 29 May 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=svprMpBkLd8&feature=player_embedded). The fantastic Yusif Nada goes far beyond, claiming a membership of 100 million globally, which is equal to the total population of the Philippines (see Nada. *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 61-5).

need to call for striving, and work to elevate and increase the prayer of the people so that God opens your hearts.

X.Y., 29.11.2011 – 9:07 a.m.⁷⁵

In a massive get-out-the-vote operation, the Brotherhood set up tents in the country's poorest neighbourhoods, distributing sugar, olive oil and ghee to incentivise illiterate citizens to vote for them. As a result, the Brotherhood's FJP was spiralled into parliament with 47.2 per cent of the vote, while the Salafi al-Nur Party gained the surprisingly high number of 24.3 per cent. With Sa'd al-Katatni elected as a new speaker, the first session of the People's Assembly on 23 January 2012 witnessed a chaotic start, where Salafi MPs called for prayers in the middle of the debate. After the session, crowds of Brotherhood youths escorted their MPs to their cars to shield them from the assaults of protesters.⁷⁶ The army leveraged the popular tensions in a perverse game to escalate things further. A high point occurred in Port Said after a soccer game on 1 February 2012, when seventy-four al-Ahly Ultras were massacred in cold blood in what was most likely an act of revenge, either by the Ministry of the Interior, the army, members of the old regime or a combination of them. Even though fans from the Port Said Masry club were eventually tried and convicted of the crime, it is doubtful that they were the perpetrators.⁷⁷

With the legislature now firmly in their hands, the Brotherhood and its Islamist allies in the People's Assembly and the Shura Council began selecting a hundred-member constitutional assembly responsible for writing a new constitution.⁷⁸ Of the fifty parliamentary legislators, twenty-five came from the FJP, eleven from the Nur Party and fourteen were independents. The Islamist-dominated assembly's call for the abolition of the SCAF's constitutional declaration of March 2011 initiated a turf war between the presidency and the judiciary over legal and political prerogatives.⁷⁹ Ten days after its composition, the Supreme Administrative Court struck down the newly elected assembly, arguing that the

⁷⁵ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012. See Figure 3.

⁷⁶ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

⁷⁷ The massacre of Port Said was remembered in a graffiti at Mohammed Mahmud street: Willi, Victor. Personal website. www.victorjwilli.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Al-Hoseini-Abu-Dayf-773x1030.jpg. Also see Rommel. *Revolution, Play and Feeling*, pp. 158 ff.

⁷⁸ The Shura Council (*Majlis al-Shūrā*) designates the Upper House of the Egyptian parliament, which was created in the context of the constitutional reform of 1980 by Sadat and whose members were directly appointed by the president. It is not to be confused with the General Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shūrā al-'Amm*) of the Muslim Brotherhood.

⁷⁹ For an overview of Egypt's judiciary, see the excellent series of articles by Nathan Brown, for instance: "Egypt's Judges in a Revolutionary Age." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 22 February 2012. Accessed 6 August 2015. carnegieendowment.org/2012/02/22/egypt-s-judges-in-revolutionary-age/hdmk#

body's formation was invalid under a 1994 Supreme Constitutional Court ruling. The FJP threatened to appeal this decision.⁸⁰

On Towards the Presidency

Having secured an Islamist majority in both the People's Assembly and the Shura Council and with the adoption of a new constitution well on track, the Brotherhood now focused on conquering the presidency. In April 2011, Shatir had explained that the "stage of Islamic government" was to follow the "stage of society". However, this did not require "us striving to reach the seat of government ourselves" as the "secularists" were thinking: "Our one and only concern is for there to be a government that is faithful to the method of our Lord Almighty, a government keen on establishing the lives of people on the basis of Islamic reference, whether it be us or someone else."⁸¹ Despite the promise not to field a presidential candidate, the FJP did exactly that when they sent Khairat al-Shatir into the race on 2 April. The decision had been initially opposed by a majority of the members of the Consultative Assembly, during an election held at the end of March. But Shatir, 'Izzat and Morsi managed to arrange for a second vote, allowing them to push through their desired result of nominating a candidate. This was opposed by the camp of reformist Brothers who had remained in the womb of the Society, such as Mohammed al-Beltagi, Mohammed 'Ali Bishr and 'Issam al-'Arian. Different than the vanguard leaders, they had no trust in the army and were more inclined to listen to the youths. When hearing of the news, Mohammed Beltagi was frustrated and disappointed to such an extent that he suffered a cardiac attack and had to be transferred to the Qasr al-'Aini Hospital. Bishr, when visiting his comrade in the hospital, ominously asked: "What does this mean for our movement and the revolution?", obviously fearful of what he saw as a decision to "jump into the fire".⁸² Despite these internal disagreements, the Qutbist leadership plowed ahead. 'Issam al-Haddad, who had gained a seat in the Guidance Office one month before, became Shatir's campaign manager, overseeing a massive funding effort that amounted to £650 million (equal to \$91 million) according to one source.⁸³ In order not to be perceived as reneging on the Society's previous pledge, Shatir formally

⁸⁰ "Egypt's Supreme Administrative Court Suspends Embattled Constituent Assembly." *Ahram Online*, 10 April 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015. english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/38936/Egypt/Politics-/Egypst-High-Administrative-Court-suspends-embattle.aspx

⁸¹ al-Shatir. "The Project of Islamic Renaissance." 24 April 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

⁸² Elshayyal, Jamal. Interview. Berlin, 4 October 2015.

⁸³ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

“resigned” from the Brotherhood, arguing to be affiliated only with the FJP. Among the rank and file, it was rumoured that Shatir, being a “shy and introverted man”, had been selected to run for the presidency against his own will and that, when learning of the decision, he had cried bitterly.⁸⁴ Two weeks later, the electoral commission disqualified Shatir on the grounds that he had been imprisoned until recently and therefore would not qualify to run for the presidency.

This decision opened the door for the protagonist of this drama’s final act to enter the stage. When the Brotherhood announced that Mohammed Morsi would run as a their backup candidate, he was mocked as the “spare tire” (*istibn*) among many in Egypt. There was widespread agreement among Egyptians that Morsi “heeded no one’s advice but that of Brotherhood’s inner circle” and that the final decisions rested with the Guidance Office and its strongman Khairat al-Shatir.⁸⁵ Newspapers subsequently gossiped that Shatir had a private office in the presidential palace, with direct access to the president.⁸⁶ Once in power, Morsi announced that the Nahda (Renaissance) project would serve as the FJP’s blueprint for governance – an extremely vaguely phrased plan offering little in terms of concrete steps to improve Egypt’s desolate economic situation.⁸⁷ While the general public speculated about what the Brotherhood’s proclaimed “renaissance” was supposed to be, this did not seem to be much clearer to the Society, as Shatir admitted in his April 2011 lecture:

We need to have a number of tracks in social, economic, health, education and moral development in many fields [...]. Each of these tracks comprises sub-tracks and these sub-tracks comprise projects. Who will execute the projects? The people will. The private sector has a role. Civil society associations have a role. All Islamic and non-Islamic institutions have a role. The state also has a role in order to develop the *umma*’s renaissance. So we, as a people and as a Brotherhood, should contribute to defining what ‘renaissance’ means, and we invite people to take part in the implementation of this renaissance.⁸⁸

If the Nahda programme showed anything, it was that the Brotherhood did not have any original ideas of how to govern Egypt, nor a clear vision of where this country should go. In a fashion typical of Islamist political thought, it was assumed that economic wellbeing and social justice would somehow emerge automatically once the Muslim individual was properly

⁸⁴ Fieldnotes, 10 October 2012.

⁸⁵ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September, 2013.

⁸⁶ Ayyash, Abdelrahman. Berlin, 2 October 2015.

⁸⁷ “Dr. Morsi’s Electoral Program - General Features of Nahda (Renaissance) Project.” *Ikhwanweb*, 28 April 2012. Accessed 7 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29932

⁸⁸ al-Shatir. “The Project of Islamic Renaissance.” 24 April 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnSshs2qzrM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Islamised and once a new generation of believers had been brought up, in accordance with the curriculum proposed by the Muslim Brotherhood.⁸⁹

Presidential elections began on 23 May. In the first round, Morsi took 24.8 per cent of the vote while Ahmed Shafiq took 23.6.⁹⁰ The two candidates advanced into the runoff, confronting many Egyptians with the “nightmare scenario” of a choice between either an old regime candidate or an Islamist.⁹¹ In a Facebook post, Wael Ghonim explained the dilemma faced by liberal and secular Egyptians who ended up voting for Morsi: “Our support is not to the Brotherhood, but to legitimacy and democracy against any attempts [to subvert them] by anyone – either those with guns or those waging misleading media campaigns”.⁹² The revolutionary camp now factionalised into bitter debates, with some supporting Morsi on the condition that power would be shared, while others boycotting the elections altogether. Most notable was the role of a small fraction of Coptic revolutionary activists who voted for Morsi, showing the degree to which some placed their revolutionary and nationalist ideals even above their religious identity.⁹³

The judiciary firmly opposed the scenario of a Brotherhood-dominated presidency. Faced with the growing risk of an Islamist constitution, the SCC on 14 June ruled as illegal the electoral law under which the 2011 parliamentary elections were held and dissolved the parliament. In the absence of a legislature, Islamist members of the Shura Council two weeks later elected a new constitutional assembly. However, as the SCC argued, the constitutional assembly was elected by a body which itself had been elected unconstitutionally and was therefore null and void. The emerging constitutional battle with the country’s highest court could not deter the confidence of the Brotherhood’s rank and file. Having secured the parliamentary majority and now underway to win the presidency, Brotherhood members were in a state of high euphoria.

The second round of the presidential elections was held on 17 June. The next day, rumours emerged that Mubarak had died, only to be denied a few hours later. Egyptians found themselves in the surreal situation where both presidential teams declared that their candidate had won, while the previous president had apparently passed away – just to be declared alive again a day later. The announcement of the official results was mysteriously delayed for over

⁸⁹ Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, p. 107.

⁹⁰ Hamdin Sabahi was in the third place, with 20.7 per cent and Abu al-Futuh won 17.5 per cent. See “Final Results of the First Round.” *Official Site for the Presidential Elections 2012*. Accessed 19 July 2015. presidential2012.elections.eg/index.php/round1-results

⁹¹ Fieldnotes, 11 June 2012.

⁹² “Morsi Holds Press Conference as Protests Continue in Tahrir Square.” *The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy*. 22 June 2012. Accessed 8 August 2015. timep.org/timeline/jun22-12/

⁹³ Fieldnotes, 25 August 2015.

a week, raising suspicions among the public that the final announcement of the elections was a political decision cooked up between the SCAF and the United States.⁹⁴ In any case, Egyptians faced an impossible choice: a Shafiq victory would have meant a reversal of the revolution, which was likely to plunge the country into more turmoil, while a Morsi victory would commit Egypt on an Islamist course, a scenario that was rejected by a large majority of Egyptians.⁹⁵ Fieldwork conducted between 17 to 30 June by the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies found that 80 per cent of Egyptians agreed that religion was a private matter that should be separated from political and social affairs, reflecting a preference by a large majority for a civil state. However, the only way for Egypt to regain some degree of internal stability was for the presidency to go to Morsi, which was also the course preferred by the United States. In another blunder, the SCAF added six amendments to the constitutional declaration with the intent of limiting the powers of the presidency.⁹⁶ Sensing an intention on the part of the SCAF to exclude them from governance, the Brotherhood turned to other national forces for political cover. Morsi called for a meeting at the Fairmont Hotel, to which he invited opposition leaders, revolutionary activists and other prominent social and religious figures, promising that if he was elected, he would form a government of national unity.

Following the Fairmont meeting, Morsi held a press conference. Flanked by personalities from the opposition, he called on the SCAF to cede power to an elected civilian government and promised to appoint women and Coptic Christians to his cabinet.⁹⁷ On 24 June, the Supreme Presidential Elections Commission finally announced that Morsi had won with 51.73 per cent. Islamists were jubilant at this news, as the Brotherhood had reached the apogee of its power. Among the rank and file, this was widely seen as a corroboration of Banna's political theory. The incongruence that the stage of government was to theoretically follow that of the Muslim state was explained as follows:

Because of the revolution, we are now at two stages together. We are at the society-government level, but Islamic values have not yet appeared. [Egyptians] are Muslims, but they don't apply [Islamic] values yet, for lack of knowledge. We are at the stage of Islamic government, which carries itself

⁹⁴ Fieldnotes, 20 June 2012.

⁹⁵ "The Arab Barometer Project: Arab Republic of Egypt." *al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies*, June 2011. Accessed 7 August 2015. www.arabbarometer.org/country-report

⁹⁶ "SCAF Expands Its Power with Constitutional Amendments" *Egypt Independent*. 17 June 2012. Accessed 8 August 2015. www.egyptindependent.com/news/scaf-expands-its-power-constitutional-amendments

⁹⁷ Weaver, Matthew and Whitaker, Brian. "Egypt Protests ahead of Election Results - Friday 22 June 2012." *The Guardian*. 22 June 2012. Accessed 30 June 2015. www.theguardian.com/world/middle-east-live/2012/jun/22/egypt-protest-ahead-of-election-results-live

according to the Islamic principles, but the institutions of the state are not yet influenced by these principles.⁹⁸

With the Brotherhood in charge of both the legislative and executive branch of government, Morsi renounced his chairmanship of the FJP. In his place, Sa'd al-Katatni was appointed to head the party, once again bypassing seasoned politicians such as Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar al-Meligui, Helmi Gazzar and Gamal Heshmat, who were considered by the Qutbist leadership simply as "guests". The fact of the small number of people who were part of the inner circle entailed a chaotic staffing policy, where one individual would occupy different positions at the same time. Mokhtar Nuh explained the situation as follows: "You want a head for the FJP? Take Sa'd al-Katatni. You want the head for the parliament? Take Sa'd al-Katatni. You want a head for the Arab workers? Take Sa'd al-Katatni."⁹⁹

Morsi and his team now faced the difficult task of governing, something for which they were completely unprepared. From the very first days of his presidency, Morsi's leadership was marked by an alarming degree of incompetence. In his first public speech on 24 June, a paternalistic president appealed to his "beloved ones, my family and tribe, my brethren and my sons, who are looking forward to the future, you who want good, rebirth, development, stability, safety and security for our country."¹⁰⁰ It was particularly the expression "my family and tribe" (*ahlī wa 'ashiratī*) that rang alarm bells among many Egyptians who felt that they did not belong to this family or tribe. It seemed to make clear to whom Morsi's loyalty ultimately belonged. Five days later, in a thunderous event held at Tahrir Square, Morsi dramatically opened his shirt on stage to show that he was not wearing a bulletproof vest, earning him the title "Super Morsi".¹⁰¹ Making up for his gaffe from the previous week, Morsi clumsily affirmed: "You are all my family, my friends!" He also insisted that that he had no rights, only duties, and called upon his countrymen (and women) that, should he "not adhere to what I promised, you are not obliged to obey me".¹⁰²

The Brotherhood's lack of political experience, and the strong pull of ideology on the decision-making process, was rendered clear in the new administration's staffing policies.

⁹⁸ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

⁹⁹ Nuh, Mokhtar. Interview. Cairo, 11 March 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Morsi, Mohammed. "Khitāb Dr. Muḥammad Mursī Ra'īs Jumūriyya Miṣr" (Speech by Dr. Mohammed Morsi, President of the Republic of Egypt). *ON TV*. 24 June 2012. 7 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRZ6VphJrXE&feature=youtube_gdata_player

¹⁰¹ Egyptian street artists made fun of Morsi's move, as depicted for example in this depiction: Online Archive. "Super Morsi". Accessed 20 September 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/super-morsi-1030x683.jpg

¹⁰² Morsi, Mohammed. "Khitāb al-Ra'īs Muḥammad Mursī fī Mīdān al-Taḥrīr" (Speech by Mohammed Morsi on Tahrir Square). *Youtube*, 29 June 2012. Accessed 7 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWPVCUtpNWw&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Members of the presidential team and the cabinet were chosen not by criteria of post-holders' competencies, but of their proximity to the vanguard leadership and their loyalty to Qutbist ideology. Contrary to the promises made at the Fairmont meeting to appoint an independent patriotic figure to the post of the prime minister, the Brotherhood opted for Hisham Kandil, a former minister of irrigation and a "Brother in disguise".¹⁰³ To the astonishment of Egypt's corps of seasoned diplomats, Morsi appointed 'Issam al-Haddad as his new foreign policy advisor. Ayman Hudhud, who had never served in any security-related post or institution, became the president's security advisor. And Yassir 'Ali, a dermatologist with a diploma in media from Cairo University, became the presidential spokesperson. With considerable anger, Egyptians labelled this haphazard staffing policy as the "Ikhwanisation of the state" (*ikhwanat al-dawla*).¹⁰⁴ The Brotherhood, which had previously promised to offer cabinet posts to non-Islamists, claimed that it had in fact done so but that the appointees had refused to take them.

After one hundred days, Egyptian observers calculated that 84 per cent of the promises Morsi had made during his electoral campaign remained unresolved.¹⁰⁵ The early days of the governing period showed that the Brotherhood placed little priority on implementing a social justice agenda, which they understood in terms of charity rather than as a broad reform of economic, social and health policies. In terms of economic policy, the president continued the neoliberal approach of the old regime, with its dogmatic emphasis on free markets, foreign direct investments and rising taxes.¹⁰⁶ Amid a widening budget deficit and rapidly decreasing foreign currency reserves, Morsi requested an additional \$1.6 billion to the \$3.2 billion loan package that already been negotiated between Mubarak and the IMF.

On the foreign relations front, the government's actions spoke of an equally high degree of incompetence. Facing a complex set of regional alliances of which Egypt had been part since the Sadat era, the Brotherhood steered a political course labelled "pragmatic" by the international media, but which in fact had little direction or vision. The QIZ agreements with Israel were maintained and a generally friendly approach was adopted towards the Israeli government.¹⁰⁷ At the end of July, Morsi sent a letter to the president of Israel, addressed to "H.E. Mr. Shimon Perez [sic]". When the Israeli government released the letter a few days later, Brotherhood spokespeople immediately denied having sent it, causing a great deal of

¹⁰³ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 22 September 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Fieldnotes, 12 August 2012.

¹⁰⁵ This number is calculated from the website *Morsi Meter*, set up by the non-profit group Zabatak, which was set up to monitor Morsi's performance. Accessed 9 August 2015. morsimeter.com

¹⁰⁶ Kassem, Mohammed. Interview. Cairo, 25 September 2013.

¹⁰⁷ "Q.I.Z – Qualifying Industrial Zones." *Ministry of Economy, State of Israel*, Accessed 9 August 2015. www.moit.gov.il/NR/exeres/2124E799-4876-40EF-831C-6410830D8F02.htm

confusion.¹⁰⁸ On 29 August, in a move that worried both the Salafis and the United States, Morsi paid a visit to Teheran – the first of its kind in over thirty years. In his keynote address, the new Egyptian president breached diplomatic protocol by publically criticising Iran’s support for the Syrian regime, to the embarrassment of his hosts and the amusement of his rivals at home. One month later, Morsi gave a speech to the U.N. General Assembly in New York, reaffirming his legitimacy as Egypt’s first elected president and emphasising the struggle of the Palestinians, as well as his position against the Syrian regime. In September, Morsi announced the formation of a new “Islamic Quartet”, led by Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose envisioned role remained unclear even to its members.¹⁰⁹ On 30 January 2013, Morsi gave a speech at the Köber Stiftung in Berlin, where he advocated in broken English for a notion of “civilisation versus another one, not against another one [sic]”. He also declared, seemingly in an attempt to explain the disadvantages of drinking and driving, that “Benzin [sic] and alcohol don’t mix”. The TV celebrity Bassam Youssef subsequently derided him for this comment in his talkshow *el-Bernamej*.¹¹⁰

The Al Jazeera–Qatar–Muslim Brotherhood Connection

Morsi’s rise to the presidency also witnessed a rapprochement between the Brotherhood and the government of Qatar, most clearly shown in the reporting history by its government backed satellite television network Al Jazeera. The relationship between the Gulf state and the Egyptian Islamist group dated back to the sixties, when the sheikhdom granted refuge to Arab political émigrés of both secular and Islamist leaning tendencies.¹¹¹ Back then, Qatar was beginning to emerge into the oil era, and the purpose of this policy was to supply the Qatari education system with skilled teachers and public servants. The Brotherhood’s educational curriculum only marginally influenced Qatar’s exegesis of Islam.¹¹² The sheikhdom enjoyed

¹⁰⁸ “Confusion over ‘Fake’ Egyptian Letter to Israel.” *The Guardian*. 1 August 2012. Accessed 22 June 2015. www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/01/israel-egypt-letter-mixup

¹⁰⁹ Morsi, Mohammed. “Kalima al-Ra’īs Muḥammad Mursī li’l-Jama‘iyya al-‘āma li’l-Umm al-Muttaḥida” (Speech of President Mohammed Morsi to the General Assembly of the United Nations). 26 September 2012. Accessed 22 June 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaTgOPPiHU

¹¹⁰ “Mohamed Mursi redet in Berlin” (Mohammed Morsi talks in Berlin), *Koeber Stiftung*, 6 February 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_HvswVMeLU; Youssef, Bassem. “Morsī yataḥadath al-Ingīlīzī - Ḥalaqa 28” (Morsi Speaks English – Episode 28). *el-Bernamej*, 10 February 2013. Accessed 22 June 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jgVtQTOO74

¹¹¹ For instance Mahmoud Abbas, the current president of the State of Palestine, grew up in Qatar.

¹¹² For a database of Islamic publications from Qatar, see the *Waqfiyya al-Shaykh ‘Alī bin ‘Abd Allah Āl-Thānī li al-Ma’lūmāt wa al-Dirāsāt* (Sheikh ‘Ali bin Abdallah al-Thani Endowment for Information and Studies). Accessed 5 August 2015. sheikhali-waqfia.org.qa/SF/AR/Megala/MegalaTree.aspx?MegalaId=1

historic ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose Wahhabi-inspired outlook ran opposed to the Brotherhood's political and activist ideology. Qatari foreign policy towards the Brotherhood moved more or less in lockstep with that of Saudi Arabia.¹¹³

This changed after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, when Saudi Arabia broke its ties with the Society because of their rhetorical support for Saddam Hussein. Qatar, on the other hand, saw the Brotherhood's widely cast global networks and affiliates as a means through which it could buy political influence abroad and step out of the shadow of their Saudi overlords. In 1995, after a palace revolt had brought Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to power, Qatar's foreign policy took on a more idiosyncratic character. Under Hamad, decision making was increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small leadership clique around the Emir, his heir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani. This triumvirate was eager to expand the sheikhdom's regional influence by engaging in an expansionist investment policy through its "extroverted" sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), set up in 2005. Through QIA, Qatar established itself as the leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) while investing in a number of prestigious ventures, such as Barclay's, the Volkswagen Group, the Knightsbridge department stores, Sainsbury's and Credit Suisse.¹¹⁴

Qatar's foreign policy was marked by an equally hyperactive style, opportunism and the absence of a coherent strategy. Its boldest move was the founding in 1996 of Al Jazeera by a group of exiles from the BBC Arabic service. Al Jazeera pioneered a distinctly different "brand" angle and editorial line than either the BBC or the major US-based chains, which then dominated the market, such as CNN and Fox News.¹¹⁵ The establishment of the satellite channel was a key factor in the trajectory of Qatar's rising international influence, as it declared independence in a media landscape that was saturated by state-controlled channels. Widely popular among the general public, the network's unashamed criticism of Arab leaders earned it the sympathy of young people.¹¹⁶ In the wake of the communications revolution, religious programmes became widely popular, allowing the Brotherhood's reformist teachings to be disseminated globally. The most prominent programmes promoting the Brotherhood's

¹¹³ Roberts, David. "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood: Pragmatism or Preference?" *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 3 (2014), pp. 84-94. For an overview of Qatar's early history, see Zahlan, Rosemarie Said. *The Creation of Qatar*. London: Routledge, 1989, pp. 96 ff.

¹¹⁴ Behrendt, Sven. "Revisiting the Investment Policy of the Qatar Investment Authority." *GeoEconomica*, May 2014. Accessed 12 August 2015. geoeconomica.com/index.php/newsreader-9/items/60.html

¹¹⁵ Several copycats of Al Jazeera were founded subsequently, such as Al Arabiya in 2003, France 24 in 2006, and Russia TV in 2007. See Miles, Hugh. *Al-Jazeera: The inside Story of the Arab News Channel That Is Challenging the West*. 1st American edition. New York: Grove Press, 2005.

¹¹⁶ Khatib, Lina. "Qatar's Foreign Policy: The Limits of Pragmatism." *International Affairs* Vol. 89 (March 2013), pp. 417-31.

moderate *da'wa* were Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Sharia and Life (*al-Sharī'a wa'l-Ḥayā*), and to a lesser extent the Without Borders (*Bilā Ḥudūd*) programme by the arcane Brotherhood sympathiser Ahmed Mansur.

While popular among the public, Al Jazeera's reporting was frowned upon by Egypt's governing elite. A leaked 2010 cable from the U.S. Embassy recounted how Mubarak had reacted to Qatar's rise "emotionally". Its involvement in Sudan and Palestine, and Al Jazeera's "vitriolic broadcasts" seemed to have personally offended the president. Mubarak was "determined to thwart every single initiative" proposed by this "small and upstart country" that pretended to take the place of the "great and noble Egypt", including "Qatari proposals that would be in Egypt's own interest".¹¹⁷ The Arab Spring dramatically altered this relationship, as Qatar abandoned mediation in favour of more direct action. With Islamists becoming increasingly influential across the Arab world, the Gulf sheikhdom launched a foreign policy whose aim was to change the political status quo across the region. The sheikhdom's reactions to the uprisings in Egypt and Syria were initially hesitant, but once Qatari leaders realised that the revolutions had the potential to topple current dictators, Al Jazeera's reporting took a different line. Qatar's image as a detached mediator changed when it got directly involved in financing and training rebels during the early days of the Libyan uprising. Al Jazeera's support of the rebellions made it obvious that the network (certainly the Arabic-language channel) was increasingly co-opted by the ruling elite into political decision making.¹¹⁸ Accordingly, the long-standing director general Wadah Khanfar resigned in September 2011, to be replaced by Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani, a gas executive and a member of the royal family.¹¹⁹

Qatar's siding with the Islamists seemed to be evident in October 2012, when the Emir of Qatar paid a symbolic visit to Gaza. He was the first head of state to visit the Hamas-controlled enclave since 2006 and to a certain extent managed to detach Hamas's leadership from its alliance with Syria and Iran by granting its leader Khalid Meshal a home in Doha.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Nantongo (U.S. Embassy of Qatar in Doha) to Secretary of State. "Egyptian DCM: Cairo to Thwart Any Qatari Initiative." 28 January 2010, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 6 August 2015.

www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/10DOHA39_a.html

¹¹⁸ A recently released Saudi cable elucidates some important aspect of the relationship of Al Jazeera's Arabic service with the political elite: Saudi Embassy (Doha) to Unknown. "Saudi Cables: No. 49165220-ee6a-4fb6-a500-7a735c919589." Date unknown, *Wikileaks*. Accessed 5 August 2015. wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc32707.html

¹¹⁹ Al Jazeera journalists themselves complained about government interference in their reporting. See Sabbagh, Dan. "Al-Jazeera's Political Independence Questioned amid Qatar Intervention." *The Guardian*, 30 September 2012. Accessed 15 September 2015. www.theguardian.com/media/2012/sep/30/al-jazeera-independence-questioned-qatar

¹²⁰ "Qatari Emir in Historic Gaza Visit." *Al Jazeera*, 23 October 2012. Accessed 7 August 2015. www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012102353137370247.html

Qatar had cultivated Meshal for some time before the Arab Spring, as part of its policy of mediation in Arab and Islamic disputes. In Egypt, Qatar similarly embraced the Brotherhood and Mohammed Morsi as its new regional ally, though its role was generally more balanced than what it appeared to be. In contradistinction to Turkey's ideologically dictated interests, Qatar's calculations were driven primarily by political expediency, while its support for the Islamists was a result of pan-Arab nationalist sentiments rather than ideological convergence with an Islamist agenda.¹²¹ The casino-style foreign policy of the gulf sheikhdom was rendered clear in September 2014, when its approach towards the Brotherhood changed once the new ruler, Hamad Bin Khalifa's son Tamim, came to power.¹²²

The November Decrees and the Ittihadyya Clashes

For the moment, however, the Morsi cabinet was able to count on the political support of its Gulf backers, giving them the necessary international support needed to press ahead with their project of an Islamist constitution. The Byzantine power struggle unfolding during the second half of Morsi's term accumulated into an escalating tit-for-tat between the presidency, the military and the judiciary – all of whom were vying for perks in the emerging political order. In late June 2012, the SCC disbanded the parliament and declared the People's Assembly to be unconstitutional. By nullifying the constitutional declaration imposed by the SCAF in March 2011, the court temporarily put legislative power into the hands of the president until a new parliament was elected. But two weeks later, Morsi overruled the decision of the SCC to disband the parliament. Seeing its authority threatened, the SCC struck down Morsi's edict the next day, reaffirming the binding nature of its verdict.

On 12 August a militant attack on a border post in al-'Arish in North Sinai led to the death of sixteen soldiers. A few days later, Morsi forced Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein al-Tantawi and Army Chief of Staff Sami Anan into retirement. Tantawi was replaced with an obscure general in his late fifties called 'Abd al Fattah al-Sisi – an army bureaucrat and the head of the military intelligence, whose brief included spying on the military itself. Born in Cairo in November 1954, Sisi had graduated from the Military Academy in 1977, then commanded an infantry mechanised division and later served in different intelligence-related roles, including as an information security chief at the Defence Ministry and as the military

¹²¹ Elshayyal, Jamal (Journalist). Berlin, 4 October 2015.

¹²² "al-'Atiyya li'l-Hayāt: lā nad'am al-Ikhwān" (We Do Not Support the Muslim Brotherhood). *al-Hayat*, 19 February 2015. Accessed 6 August 2015. www.alhayat.com/Articles/7516062

attaché in Saudi Arabia. Sisi's appointment heralded the rise of a new generation of army officers, most of whom were born in the fifties and who would, after Morsi's overthrow, install a military dictatorship whose hallmark was a mixture of neo-liberal economic policies and a brutal repression of any form of opposition.

Morsi's removal of the two generals was represented in the Western press as a bold move designed to "wrest power from the Armed Forces and marginalise key holdovers of Mubarak's reign".¹²³ But in reality, Sisi was Tantawi's handpicked successor, having been groomed by the ailing general since many years, when the two served in the infantry. Tantawi saw in the young upstart a "clever student" (*talmīdh najīb*) and facilitated Sisi's swift progression within the military above the heads of other senior members of the SCAF. As shown by Kandil, the revolution of 25 January 2011 gave the SCAF an opportunity to deal a blow at their long-time rivals from the Ministry of the Interior.¹²⁴ Sisi leveraged this opportunity by convincing Tantawi on 27 January to open an investigation into the file of the Minister of the Interior, Habib al-ʿAdaly, who had himself been spying on the generals. After the collapse of the security apparatus on 28 January, Sisi paved the way for the revolutionaries to break into the offices of State Security. Once Mubarak was deposed, the SCAF divided the intelligence files among key generals to make sure that any future president would be contained by the army. Tantawi and Sisi were tasked with looking into the Brotherhood file, General Mohammed Said al-ʿAsar was put in charge of civil and liberal parties, and General Mahmud Hajazi, the new Director of Military Intelligence, received the dossier on the revolutionaries. The SCAF decided that, depending on who would win the presidential race, the general responsible for the respective file would become defence minister in the new government. Sisi subsequently convinced the members of the SCAF that the Brotherhood was the only political player they could work with. He later met with ʿIssam al-ʿArian and Saʿd al-Katatni in the Hotel Triumph to discuss the shape of a potential Brotherhood presidency. Apparently, Sisi had also met Morsi several times since the Wadi al-Natroun prison break, and it seems that the two men had developed a solid working relationship. When Morsi became president, it was agreed that Sisi should replace Tantawi once a new constitution was adopted, but for unknown reasons, this deal was implemented already after the attack of al-ʿArish. In the end, Tantawi went into retirement by keeping his

¹²³ "Egypt's Morsi Replaces Military Chiefs in Bid to Consolidate Power." *The Washington Post*, 12 August 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/egypts-morsi-orders-retirement-of-defense-minister-chief-of-staff-names-vp/2012/08/12/a5b26402-e497-11e1-8f62-58260e3940a0_story.html; "Egypt's New Top General Has U.S. Ties." *Wall Street Journal*, 14 August 2012. Accessed 30 August 2015. www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390444184704577587422651692212

¹²⁴ See the analysis on the "power triangle" in Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*, p. 245 ff.

privileges, including a permanent escort of bodyguards and a E£30'000 monthly pension.¹²⁵ Thus, by providing the most divisive army figures with a safe exit, Morsi had acted in full concert with the SCAF. Emboldened by his new role as a strongman, the president withdrew the constitutional amendments of March 2011. This transferred authority back to the president, who now had absolute legislative authority, including the power to appoint a new constitutional assembly.

The coming weeks saw a rushed and disorderly drafting process, which revealed the Brotherhood's single-minded focus to pass an Islamist constitution. A chaotic process unfolded in the (legally unconstitutional) constitutional assembly, where drafts were circulated among different internal committees, with Salafis trying to slip in clauses here and there in what Egyptians jokingly called a "wiki-constitution" (*dustūr wīkī*).¹²⁶ The document included some important revisions to the 1971 constitution. A major development was article 4, which established a council of religious scholars who were to be consulted on matters relating to the Sharia. As Nathan Brown observed, such a council carried within itself the inherent risk of turning al-Azhar into a "political football", where representatives of various religious tendencies could strategically place their protégés and pull the institution of Islamic learning into the direction of their desired legislative interpretation.¹²⁷ While freedom of religion was guaranteed in principle, it was confined to the "approved" Abrahamic religions. To the dismay of the opposition, the exclusive status of the SCAF was preserved. The military budget was kept outside of parliamentary control, the minister of defence was to be appointed by army officers and an "independent" military judiciary was to adjudicate over crimes committed by army personnel. As a concession to the Salafis, article 221 was added in the very last minute, defining the principles of the Islamic Sharia to include "general evidence, foundational rules, rules of jurisprudence, and credible sources accepted in Sunni doctrines and by the larger community."¹²⁸

With the constitution writing process underway, the Brotherhood continued to consolidate its power vis-à-vis the judiciary. On 10 October a Cairo criminal court acquitted police officers accused of killing protesters during the Battle of the Camel, provoking widespread popular discontent. Seizing this opportunity, Morsi sacked the prosecutor general

¹²⁵ This narrative is based on an article by Faiq, Ahmed. "al-Sīsī al-Malaf al-sirrī li-Akḥṭar Rajul fī Miṣr (al-Sisi the Secret File: The Most Dangerous Man in Egypt)." *el-Fagr*. 14 May 2013. Accessed 30 August 2015. www.elfagr.org/341757

¹²⁶ Fieldnotes, 19 March 2012.

¹²⁷ On the process of constitution writing, see the analysis by Brown, Nathan. "Egypt's Constitution: Islamists Prepare for a Long Political Battle." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 October 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015. carnegieendowment.org/2012/10/23/egypt-s-constitution-islamists-prepare-for-long-political-battle

¹²⁸ For the constitution in Arabic, see "Dustūr Jumhūriyya Maṣr Al-'Arabiyya." *Dostour Egypt*, 30 November 2012. Accessed 8 August 2015. egelections-2011.appspot.com/Dostour/Dostour2012.pdf

‘Abd al-Meguid Mahmud, assigning him to head Egypt’s mission at the Vatican. This was followed by demonstrations of Islamists in Tahrir Square, who rallied in support of the president’s decision. On 20 November, Morsi successfully brokered a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, preventing a last-minute invasion of the IDF into the Gaza strip. This foreign policy success earned him the admiration of Hillary Clinton, who praised him for “assuming the responsibility and leadership that has long made this country a cornerstone of regional stability and peace”.¹²⁹

With Morsi’s public opinion ratings surging, the presidential team was in a state of over-confidence. On 21 November, Morsi granted himself unprecedented powers through a series of decrees, declaring that all presidential decisions should henceforward be immune from legal appeal until a new constitution was passed. He appointed a new prosecutor general and gave himself the right to make any decision to “protect the revolution” and “save the nation to achieve national unity.”¹³⁰ The decrees prevented the constituent assembly, charged with the drafting of a new constitution, from dissolution. By attacking the judiciary’s independence, Morsi provoked a confrontation that stood at the beginning of his demise. The SCC, considering the March 2011 declaration as authoritative due to the SCAF’s “revolutionary legitimacy”, saw in the immunisation of presidential decisions an assault on the very principle of constitutionalism.¹³¹

Perhaps more importantly, the November decrees also antagonised large segments of ordinary Egyptian citizens.¹³² Over the coming days, violent clashes between Morsi’s supporters and opponents erupted across Egypt. Tens of thousands gathered in Tahrir Square and in public places in Alexandria, Suez, Ismailiyya, Minya and Port Said to protest against what was widely perceived as a dictatorial arrogation of power. The Brotherhood was oblivious to this popular backlash, with Morsi’s Twitter account dismissing the protesters as “thugs” (*baltagiyya*) and “remnants” (*fulūl*) of the old regime.¹³³ Against widespread public rejection, the constituent assembly approved the controversial Islamist constitution on 29 November. In its party organ *al-Hurriyya wa’l-‘Adala*, the Brotherhood praised the new

¹²⁹ Clinton, Hillary. “U.S. Welcomes Israeli-Palestinian Cease-Fire.” *U.S. Embassy in London, U.K.* 21 November 2012. Accessed 8 October 2015. london.usembassy.gov/midest240.html

¹³⁰ For a translation of the November decrees, see “English Text of Morsi’s Constitutional Declaration.” *al-Ahram Online*. 22 November 2012. Accessed 20 September 2015. english.ahram.org.eg/News/58947.aspx

¹³¹ Brown, Nathan. “The Revolution in Crisis.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 27 November 2012. Accessed 10 August 2015. carnegieendowment.org/2012/11/27/revolution-in-crisis

¹³² Popular sentiment with respect to the Brotherhood among ordinary Egyptians can be gauged when looking through the various depictions mocking Morsi and the Society. See Online Archive. “March 2012 – September 2013: Anti-Morsi & Anti-Brotherhood.” Accessed 7 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/march-2012-september-2013-anti-morsi-anti-brotherhood/

¹³³ The tweets of that period on Morsi’s account were subsequently deleted. See twitter.com/MuhammadMorsi. Luckily, I downloaded the entire Twitter history of Morsi’s account as a pdf file before its removal.

document as a victory for “the marginalised and the poor”.¹³⁴ Morsi doubled up with another decree that called for a referendum to be held in mid-December, while the FJP launched an intensive propaganda campaign to convince the Islamist constituency to vote for the new constitution.

The tense atmosphere could be tangibly felt on the streets of Cairo at this point.¹³⁵ Representatives of the respective political tendencies faced each other off in an incremental series of sit-ins, rallies, marches and protests, leading to a growing split between two camps, each engaged in a fierce contest over the meaning of democracy and revolution. The Society pushed the argument of Morsi as the elected president (*al-raʿīs al-muntakhab*), showing the way in which its understanding of democracy was centred on “legal constitutional legitimacy” (*sharʿiyya dustūriyya qānūniyya*). Seeing their own role as defenders of revolution and faith, they declared a *milṭūniyya* in front of Cairo University at Nahda Square.¹³⁶ Meanwhile, on the eastside of the Nile, secular and liberal activists rallied in Tahrir Square and staged a sit-in in front of the Ittihadiyya palace in Heliopolis.¹³⁷

On 5 December, as the sit-in in front of the Heliopolis Club had withered down to about 250 people, the Brotherhood mobilised its ground operations in what would be the crucial turning point of the Morsi presidency. Circulating a pamphlet to its rank and file, the Society leveraged religious-laden imagery by comparing the sit-in to the crisis that followed the assassination of the third Caliph ʿUthman.¹³⁸ At around 3 p.m., rumours spread among the *muʿtaṣamīn* that a group of about 300 Brothers were approaching via Salah Salem Street, armed with bricks and wooden sticks (*ʿaṣyān*). Once the Brothers had arrived in front of the presidential palace, they rummaged through the protesters’ tent villages, tearing down their makeshift shelters and accusing them of eating *gibna nistū* (foreign cheese).¹³⁹ After about one hour of chaos, the two camps separated. At 6.30 p.m., new Brotherhood reinforcements arrived “like ants” (*zāy namla*) from Madinat Nasr and Salah Salem street, this time armed

¹³⁴ *al-Hurriyya waʿl-ʿAdala*, 5 December 2012.

¹³⁵ Fieldnotes, 4 December 2012.

¹³⁶ “In Million-Man Marches Saturday, Rallies from Alex and Cairo to Assiut, People’s Revolutionary Will Shines On.” *Ikhwanweb*, 5 December 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015.
www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30448

¹³⁷ “100,000 Protest at Egypt’s Presidential Palace.” *Yahoo News*. 4 December 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015.
news.yahoo.com/100-000-protest-egypts-presidential-palace-232530692.html

¹³⁸ Kandil. *Inside the Brotherhood*, pp. 94-95.

¹³⁹ Fieldnotes, 5 December 2012. “Laḥza Dukhūl al-Ikhwān ilā Qaṣr al-Ittiḥadiyya wa Tachlīʿ al-Khiyām” (The Moment of Entry of the Brotherhood at Ittiḥadiyya Palace and the Tearing-Down of the Tents). *Youtube*. 6 December 2012. Accessed 9 August 2015.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEBDAPer324&feature=youtube_gdata_player; “Laḥza Hujūm al-Ikhwān ʿalā Iʿtiṣām al-Ittiḥadiyya” (The Moment of the Attack of the Brotherhood on the Sit-in in Ittiḥadiyya), 2012. 6 December 2012. Accessed 9 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=77H-Kr225h0&feature=youtube_gdata_player

with Molotov cocktails and *khartūsh* guns, with local leaders shouting out orders to the arriving crowds to break out the tins of a nearby garage and erect barriers in front of Costa Café.¹⁴⁰ The idea was to protect the presidential palace from the reinforcements of the revolutionary camp, who were rapidly approaching from Tahrir Square via Roxy and Khalifa Ma'moun Street, equally armed with Molotov cocktails and *khartūsh* guns. Brotherhood rank-and-file members broke up the stones of the pavements and stormed up the stairways of nearby houses to attack the revolutionaries from above. At around 8 p.m., the anti-Morsi camp had gained some ground against the Brothers. Suddenly, elements of the police forces stormed out from behind the cordon of Brothers that defended the palace in order to push back the revolutionaries and give the Brothers control over lost territory. In the ensuing chaos, several hundred people were injured and ten were reported dead, including the young photojournalist al-Hosseiny Abu Daif, who was shot in the head point blank while doing his job.¹⁴¹

The events of Ittihadiyya were the “straw that broke the camel’s back”.¹⁴² The Guidance Office presented the clashes as evidence of a “major plot”, where opposition groups had been “infiltrated by professional violent criminals paid by former regime figures”.¹⁴³ Ikhwanweb wrote: “Thugs and criminals used bladed weapons, firearms, tear gas bombs and Molotov cocktails as they attacked completely unarmed pro-President peaceful demonstrators [sic]”.¹⁴⁴ The Brotherhood claimed that they had failed to sufficiently “protect” the presidential palace, and that it was this lack of response that had allowed for the violence. But in reality, it seemed that the Guidance Office and the presidency had coordinated their response against the protesters, while the police forces took the opportunity to take revenge on the revolutionaries.¹⁴⁵ By calling on its rank and file, the Brotherhood started to meddle in the political process in an unprecedented way. Its leaders heated up tensions by injecting sectarian rhetoric into the mix, with Shatir claiming: “Seventy per cent of those protesting against the Brotherhood were Christians”.¹⁴⁶ The cover story of *al-Hurriyya wa’l-‘Adala* the

¹⁴⁰ This narrative of events is based on my fieldnotes and the account of an eyewitness who observed the events from her balcony. (29). Interview. Cairo, 1 August 2015.

¹⁴¹ “Egypt: Investigate Brotherhood’s Abuse of Protesters.” *Human Rights Watch*. 12 December 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.hrw.org/news/2012/12/12/egypt-investigate-brotherhoods-abuse-protesters. Abu Daif was remembered in graffiti on Mohammed Mahmud street: www.victorjwilli.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Al-Hoseini-Abu-Dayf-773x1030.jpg

¹⁴² Fieldnotes, 18 December 2012.

¹⁴³ “Egypt’s Revolution Is a People’s Revolution with No Islamic Agenda.” *Ikhwanweb*. 5 February 2011. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=27963

¹⁴⁴ “Camel Battle 2 Targets Muslim Brotherhood Outside Itihadia Presidential Palace.” *Ikhwanweb*, 10 December 2012. Accessed 5 August 2015. www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30479

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Khalid Dawud, quoted in “Point of No Return.” *The Arabist*. Accessed 10 August 2015. arabist.net/blog/2014/1/8/point-of-no-return

next day read: “Egypt bids farewell to the martyrs of the Brotherhood from al-Azhar”.¹⁴⁷ During an emotionally laden ceremony at al-Azhar mosque, General Guide Mohammed Badi‘ made a speech that was loaded with incisive religious rhetoric.¹⁴⁸ In a powerful dialogue with the crowds, the Murshid shouted: “Our dead are in heaven, yours are in hell”, evoking an image reminiscent of an early battle between the Prophet and his enemies. He reminded his flock: “Nothing shall ever happen to us except what God has ordained for us!”¹⁴⁹ The electrified crowds emphatically chanted: “*al-ḥamdu ‘li-Allah! – al-ḥamdu ‘li-Allah! – al-ḥamdu ‘li-Allah! – al-ḥamdu ‘li-Allah!*”¹⁵⁰

With social stability increasingly threatened, Barack Obama urged Morsi to call for a national dialogue.¹⁵¹ On 6 December, in a mindboggling speech that astonished Egyptians of all political trends, the president pontificated for over an hour in a language few Egyptians understood. Seemingly oblivious to the reality on the ground, he kept insisting that the protesters were “hired thugs, that they possessed weapons and that they had received money to attack the presidential palace.”¹⁵² He contended that he would not under any circumstances rescind the 21 November decrees and that the referendum was to go ahead as planned. It was clear to many that Morsi, rather than being conciliatory, used his speech to address the Brotherhood base. Liberal and secular online activists poured scorn over the president, with Tweets typically reading: “wake me up when this *khara*’ (shit) ends”, or simply “Bla bla blaiaaaaaa”.¹⁵³ Under pressure from the United States and faced with an unprecedented popular backlash, Morsi was forced to issue a new constitutional declaration that, while rescinding the restrictions placed on the judiciary, kept the constitutional assembly immune from dissolution.

Having burned all bridges to the opposition, the revolutionary forces and the judiciary, Morsi’s only remaining option was to equip the SCAF with emergency powers in order to keep the streets calm. On 26 December, the supreme electoral commission announced that the constitution had been endorsed by 63.8 per cent of the vote. The fact that only thirty per cent

¹⁴⁷ *al-Hurriyya wa ‘l-‘Adala*, 7 December 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Badi‘, Mohammed, “Khitāb Muḥammad Badi‘ min al-Jām‘at al-Azhar” (Speech of Mohammed Badi‘ from al-Azhar University). 7 December 2012. Accessed 20 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=l65YoJd6vw4&feature=youtube_gdata_player

¹⁴⁹ Quran, 9:52.

¹⁵⁰ Fieldnotes, 6 December 2012.

¹⁵¹ Kirkpatrick, David and el-Sheikh, Mayy. “Morsi Spurned Deals, Seeing Military as Tamed.” *The New York Times*, 6 July 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.nytimes.com/2013/07/07/world/middleeast/morsi-spurned-deals-to-the-end-seeing-the-military-as-tamed.html

¹⁵² Morsi, Mohammed. “Khitāb al-Ra’īs Muḥammad Mursī” (Speech of the President Mohammed Morsi), 6 December 2012. Accessed 10 August 2015.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jScbDgnZBxQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player

¹⁵³ Tweets of 6 December 2012.

of registered voters participated in the referendum provided this document with a dim margin of legitimacy. In a televised address, Morsi announced that he would reshuffle the cabinet for the upcoming negotiations with the IMF over a \$4.8 billion financial injection. But the trust between Morsi and the Egyptian population was broken. The second half of the Brotherhood's year in power resembled a chaotic exercise in trouble-shooting and damage control rather than any sort of pro-active governance. The constitutional decree of 21 November, and especially the decision by the Guidance Office to mobilise its rank and file and attack a small gathering of demonstrators, turned out to be the beginning of the end of the Brotherhood's short experience in governance.

Emergence of Tamarrud

The turmoil on the political front coincided with a severe aggravation of the economic situation. In the two years since the revolution of 2011, Egyptians had witnessed a sharp deterioration of their standards of living, visible in the high levels of congestion and dirt in the streets of Cairo and a sharp spike in fuel, electricity and commodity prices. In cities across Egypt, clashes erupted against what was increasingly perceived as a dictatorship in the making. In the midst of the troubles, Morsi called for another round of national dialogue. But few would take the president seriously.¹⁵⁴ When after weeklong clashes in Port Said and other Canal cities the president declared a curfew (*ḥaẓr al-tajawul*), nightlife in Cairo seemed to take off at an exponential pace, with an unusually high number of falloukas cruising the Nile and blasting *sha'abī* tunes until late into the night. On 22 March, large crowds of revolutionary activists and soccer fans besieged the Brotherhood's headquarters in the upscale Cairo neighbourhood on top of the Muqattam hills. The Central Security Forces guarded the building while rank-and-file members from throughout the city were bussed in, with a small group gathering at the nearby Hani al-Ithi mosque, located a few hundred meters from the headquarters.¹⁵⁵ A tense atmosphere dominated the gathering, with Brothers preparing themselves to defend the headquarters at any point should they receive the order from the senior command.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ When Morsi received an honorary doctorate from a university in Pakistan, he was ridiculed by TV celebrity host Bassem Youssef in "al-Layla ma'a Mūrsī – Ḥalaqa 18" (The Night with Morsi – Episode 18). *el-Bernamej*, 22 March 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=bd_ye80X2I0

¹⁵⁵ Group interview, Hani al-Ithi Mosque. Cairo, 22 March 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

A few days later, the Brotherhood angered the judiciary again when Morsi insisted on reinstating the People's Assembly, announcing elections to be held in April. An administrative court immediately overturned this decree. When top Brotherhood voices demanded a "purge" of the judiciary, the Brotherhood-allied Justice Minister Ahmed Mekki resigned. The president's advisor for legal affairs, Mohammed Fuad Gadallah, who was the architect behind Morsi's November decrees, equally tendered his resignation – the twelfth advisor to do so. With little other option left, the president met with his last remaining ally, General 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, to discuss the increasingly unstable security situation. On 12 April, he promoted several top officers to underline the strong relationship that existed between him and the new class of army generals. It was a miscalculation that would cost him his head.

By May 2013, the situation had turned into such a mess that the social and economic dislocations caused by Morsi's policies could be tangibly felt on the streets of Cairo. General unemployment figures increased by 3.5 million in the first quarter of 2013, equal to 13.2 per cent of the labour force, 77 per cent of whom were young people between fifteen and twenty-nine. The crime rate had almost tripled since 2010 while food and beverage prices increased by 8.9 per cent in one year since May 2012. With inflation skyrocketing, the average Egyptian family spent approximately 40 per cent of its income on food.¹⁵⁷ While none of this can be attributed solely to the rule of the Brotherhood, the incompetence of Morsi's governing team certainly compounded the effects. With a government unable to cover the country's electricity needs and a cynical security apparatus doing everything it could to aggravate the situation further, Cairo's residents suffered electricity cuts, fuel shortages and long traffic lines, engulfing entire sections of the city in a cacophony of honking and raising the nervousness levels of cab drivers to dangerously high points.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the most ugly phenomenon of this transition was the spike in sexual harassment, with 99.3 per cent of women reporting that they had been sexually assaulted in some form during their lifetimes.¹⁵⁹ In June, Morsi's approval ratings hit a low-point. 32 per cent still approved of the president's performance, down from 78 per cent six months before.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Fieldnotes, 15 June 2015.

¹⁵⁸ "Morsi Meter: 9,427 Protests and Counting One Year Later." Accessed 14 August 2015.

www.wilsoncenter.org/islamists/article/morsi-meter-9427-protests-and-counting-one-year-later

¹⁵⁹ "99.3% of Egyptian Women Experienced Sexual Harassment: Report." *Daily News Egypt*. 28 April 2013.

Accessed 11 August 2015. www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/28/99-3-of-egyptian-women-experienced-sexual-harassment-report

¹⁶⁰ Osman, Magued. "The President's Approval Rating after one Year in Office." *Baseera*. Cairo, June 2013. www.baseera.com.eg/pdf_poll_file_en/President%20approval%20rating%2012%20months%20-%20en.pdf

Under growing pressure from both the judiciary and the street, Morsi finally approved a new cabinet to finalise the negotiations with the IMF. Choosing once again Brotherhood loyalists over technocrats, the ministry of investment was given to Yehia Hamed, a thirty-four year old former marketing manager for Vodafone with a master's degree in public administration from the Arab Academy for Science and Technology. 'Amr Darrag, who had a Ph.D. in "soil mechanics and foundations" from Purdue University in Indiana took over the ministry of planning.¹⁶¹ The same month, the two dignitaries showed up at a World Economic Forum meeting at the Dead Sea in Jordan, where they insisted that Egypt was close to securing a deal with the IMF and suggested that tourism would be "the black horse that is able to pull the wagon of the Egyptian economy out of the slump". Pointing to Tahrir Square, Darrag lamented the international media's obsessive focus on "one square kilometre in Egypt" and encouraged participants to pay more attention to the country's "success stories". The Egyptian ministers were grilled (and privately lampooned) by investors and businessmen, specifically by one gentleman from the U.A.E.¹⁶²

At about the same time, flyers for a campaign called Tamarrud started to appear at every street corner in Cairo.¹⁶³ Tamarrud was a grassroots movement initiated by members of the Kifaya and 6th of April movements, having as its objective to force Morsi out of office by collecting more signatures than the numbers of votes he had earned. Morsi dismissed all calls for early elections as "farcical and illegitimate"¹⁶⁴ while Brotherhood members insisted that the Tamarrud organisers enjoyed high-level support "from behind the curtain".¹⁶⁵ Indeed, these links were real. Tamarrud organisers later confessed that they had taken orders from senior army and security officials in return for logistical and financial backing.¹⁶⁶ It was here where the marriage of convenience between some of the revolutionary activists of 25 January and the forces of the counter-revolution started to take shape. Having initiated a grassroots movement that hit the nerve of the time, Tamarrud was gradually co-opted into the network of interests related to the SCAF and the forces of the old regime.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹ "Profiling Egypt's New Ministers." *Atlantic Council*. 7 May 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015.

www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/profiling-egypts-new-ministers

¹⁶² "Egypt Economic Outlook – Session Summary". *World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa 2013*, 25 May 2015. Fieldnotes, 25 May 2015.

¹⁶³ Online Archive. "March 2012 – September 2013: Anti-Morsi & Anti-Brotherhood." 7 October 2015.

www.victorjwilli.com/march-2012-september-2013-anti-morsi-anti-brotherhood/

¹⁶⁴ *al-Ahram*, 6 June 2013.

¹⁶⁵ (13). Interview. Cairo, 16 September 2013.

¹⁶⁶ "How Egypt's Rebel Movement Helped Pave The Way For A Sisi Presidency." *BuzzFeed*. Accessed 4 January 2015. www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/how-egypts-rebel-movement-helped-pave-the-way-for-a-sisi-pre

¹⁶⁷ "Tasrīb Jadīd Min Maktab 'Abās Kāmil" (New Leak from the Office of 'Abas Kamil). *al Jazeera Arabic*, 1 March 2015. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1vWU_XpXec

Attempting to score some sort of foreign policy victory, Morsi in early June tried to leverage the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile project as an opportunity for a diplomatic push. *Al-Hurriyya wa'l-Adala* proudly proclaimed this as evidence for the government's bold foreign policy action. At the start of the meeting, Morsi pontificated for twelve minutes to a group of cabinet members, providing a glimpse as to the degree to which he was out of touch with the reality on the ground.¹⁶⁸ Things turned into a diplomatic nightmare when a Salafi cabinet member, unaware that the discussion was aired live, engaged in bellicose rhetoric, proposing to use *mukhabarrāt* agents for covert operations inside Ethiopia to subvert the government.¹⁶⁹ Two weeks later, Morsi doubled up with another disastrous decision when he appointed 'Adel al-Khairat as the new governor of Luxor. Khairat was a member of the Jama'at Islamiyya, whose members had killed dozens of locals and tourists during a terrorist attack at the temple of Hatshepsut in 1997.

The move sparked new ruffles and led to a deepening split, not only between the president's supporters and his outraged opponents, but also within the cabinet. Among a growing polarisation in the streets, Sisi announced that the military would intervene to broker a compromise. The moment that convinced senior members of the SCAF, hitherto unsympathetic to enter the fray of politics, to reverse their decision came on 10 June 2015. At a mass rally in the fully-packed Cairo International Stadium, Morsi was greeted like a rock-star by a raucous crowd of over 20,000 supporters. Senior Brotherhood officials openly advocated going to war with Syria. Enthralled by the triumph of this historical moment of which he found himself to be the main protagonist, and perhaps anticipating what was inevitably going to come, Morsi gave a long-winded speech, most of which he screamed into the microphone. The objective was clearly to intimidate the opposition ahead of the 30 June protests.¹⁷⁰

In all of this, the president kept an unwavering faith in the SCAF, which he preserved as his "personal file". Having cultivated the minster of defence for some time, Morsi was convinced until the very last minute that his relationship with Sisi was rock-solid and based on fundamental mutual values. Morsi may have seen in the young, soft-spoken general a fellow Brother who was convinced of the Islamist reform project and with whom he could talk in "religious terms". Surely, the former spy must have played his game with great skill

¹⁶⁸ Morsi, Mohammed. "Kalima al-Ra'īs Mursī li'l-Ijtimā' al-Waṭanī" (Speech of President Morsi in the National Meeting), *Hafez TV*, 3 Juni 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015.

¹⁶⁹ "Egypt President Politicians Plotting against Ethiopia's Dam". *MEMRI TV*, 3 Juni 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_mpiU2qIdc&feature=youtube_gdata_player

¹⁷⁰ Morsi, Mohammed. "Khitāb Mursī fī'l-Istād" (Morsi's Speech in the Stadium), 10 June 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLZ3Yv8wiRc

and ability. Morsi was convinced that Sisi would not dare to turn against him as long as he respected the autonomy and privileges of the army. The illusion of being in control over the powerful military network was further bolstered by the support he obtained from the part of the U.S. Ambassador in Cairo, Ms. Anne Patterson, who was rumoured by Egypt's incendiary anti-Islamist press to be a "Brotherhood stooge" who entertained close relations with Khairat al-Shatir.¹⁷¹ The Guidance Office shrugged off an offer from the Nur Party to mediate last-ditch negotiations with key opposition figures. Leaders of militant Islamist groups showed their solidarity with the Brotherhood while Sisi consulted with the senior military command on the prospects of a showdown in view of the Brotherhood's stubborn unwillingness to engage in any sort of compromise.

At this point, the vanguard leadership started to mobilise the Society's rank and file on an unprecedented scale. On 22 June, the National Alliance for Legitimacy Support – a coalition of Islamist political parties led by the FJP that included hard-line Islamist groups, ultraconservative Salafi parties as well moderate Islamist parties – announced a large demonstration in front of the Raba'a al-Adawiyya mosque and Cairo University. The slogan they proclaimed was: "Legitimacy is a red line" (*shar'iyya khaṭṭ aḥmar*).¹⁷² Tens of thousands of supporters from the countryside were bussed into Nasr City and Nahda Square, transforming these localities into gigantic sites of Islamic activism. Morsi's supporters had simple and powerful arguments in favor of the legitimacy of their cause. As the first freely elected civilian president, Morsi was the bearer of "constitutional legitimacy" (*shar'iyya dustūriyya*). The rank and file was also convinced that Morsi had the backing of the majority of the people. An older man from Beni Sweif explained:

We have elected a president and we contracted with him for the duration of four years. At the end of his term we can make him accountable – but not after the first year. There have been twenty-four million-man marches, thousands of protests and the blockage of roads, and yet the production wheel is still turning. So there is reform happening!¹⁷³

The villager accused the opposition of having failed to win any elections and pointed out the alliance between the *fulūl* and the "liars against legitimacy and against Egyptians".¹⁷⁴ His

¹⁷¹ Ibrahim, Raymond. "U.S. Will 'Pressure' Egypt on Behalf of Brotherhood, Says U.S. Ambassador." 4 July 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/u-s-will-pressure-egypt-on-behalf-of-brotherhood-says-u-s-ambassador/

¹⁷² See Figure 9.

¹⁷³ (18). Interview, 30 June 2013.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

voice was indicative of that of many Egyptians who supported the president, not necessarily because he was from the Muslim Brotherhood, but because he represented the aspirations of a recognisable part of Egyptians who preferred stability and constitutionalism over chaos.

Showdown

At the end of June, things were heading into their final showdown. During a national Security Council meeting on 27 June, Sisi warned his president:

The Islamists are playing with fire and it will burn them. Their decision to take to the field on Friday, two days in advance of the forthcoming Tamarrud protest, is effectively a declaration of war against the other side and a sure sign that they will initiate violence, as was confirmed in last Friday's 'Kandahar III' demonstration at Raba'a al-Adawiyya mosque.¹⁷⁵

But Morsi would not pay attention, while events in Egypt started to take on the unique dynamism that can perhaps best be described as "history in the making". The intersection in front of the Raba'a al-Adawiyya mosque in Nasr City turned into a packed and lively event where ritualistic prayers and religious activities competed with lively discussions and celebrations late into the night.¹⁷⁶ Makeshift tent villages were set up while salespeople harnessed the demand of the Islamic revolutionary economy to sell their goods. Brotherhood youths, armed with wooden sticks and protective helmets, guarded the admission points and checked visitors' identification cards. At night, ragtag groups of young and old Brothers jogged around the perimeter, chanting Full Metal Jacket-like running cadences: "*al-Dustūr hwa al-Qur'ān, Hasan al-Banna qalha zamān*. – The Constitution is the Quran. Hasan al-Banna said it long time ago."¹⁷⁷

By Friday, well above 50,000 supporters had assembled at Raba'a al-Adawiyya and Cairo University to express their unconditional support for their president. "[We will stay] until the problem is solved", one participant said: "We won't do anything to [the other side]. We don't do anything to peaceful protests, but storming the presidential palace or trying to

¹⁷⁵ Eleiba, Ahmed. "With 30 June Rallies around Corner, All Eyes Turn to Egypt Armed Forces." *al-Ahram Online*, 27 June 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/75116/Egypt/Politics-/With--June-rallies-around-corner,-all-eyes-turn-to.aspx

¹⁷⁶ Online Archive. "30 June 2013 – Rabia al-Adawiyya – Prayers." Accessed 7 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/30-june-2013-rabia-al-adawiyya-prayers/

¹⁷⁷ Online Archive. "29 June 2013 – Rabia al-Adawiyya – Morsi Supporters." 8 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/29-june-2013-rabia-al-adawiyya-morsi-supporters/

discriminate against the president is a red line for us.”¹⁷⁸ From the stage, Mohammed al-Beltagi and Sawfat Hegazi whipped up the crowds with speeches where the theme of an attack on Islam served as a powerful leitmotiv. “You are here today defending God’s religion”, Beltagi roared from the stage. “Today, we have come for the sake of martyrdom, for the sake of defending Islam, by defending Dr. Mohammed Morsi against the illegitimate coup”.¹⁷⁹ Another inciting speaker warned: “it is a war against Islam, and if it is a Crusader war, then we have 1,000 Saladdins”. The crowds responded: “*Bi-ruh, bi-damm, nifdīk yā Islām* – With our souls, with our blood, we submit us as a sacrifice for you, O Islam”.¹⁸⁰ When on 29 June Tamarrud announced that it had collected over 22 million signatures, the Brotherhood leadership called on its supporters to prepare for the inevitable standoff. Base supporters gathering at Cairo University hurriedly came up with a campaign of their own, labelled Tagarrud (“impartiality”), to counter the effect of Tamarrud.¹⁸¹ That evening, the Brotherhood’s headquarters came under attack by a fierce mob armed with petrol bombs and shotguns (see Figure 10). There was no doubt that elements of the security apparatus had infiltrated the crowds of revolutionaries. The Bothers, bunkered down inside like in a medieval fortress, shot back at the protesters outside, most likely with live ammunition.¹⁸² Islamist and secular TV channels incited citizens to join the demonstrations while the army kept pressing Morsi to concede to the formation of a new cabinet. Meanwhile, U.S. President Obama urged him to be more “constructive”. But Morsi held on to the righteousness of his cause and, in his very last interview, re-affirmed his unwavering confidence in the military.¹⁸³

On 30 June in the morning, marches from different areas all over Cairo headed towards Tahrir and Ittihadiyya. By the early afternoon, hundreds and thousands of people had descended on the Square and other *midans* in Egypt. Watching over this packed space from atop of one of the tall buildings at the eastern perimeter, the witness to such epic events was gripped by a quasi-spiritual sensation. Below ones feet, a mesmerising ocean of hundreds and thousands of people moved in rhythmic flow, forming one large mass that was beautiful and terrifying at the same time. Among a sea of voices and whistling, firework explosions filled the air while the hammering of drums and the monotone honking of hundreds of vuvuzelas

¹⁷⁸ Group interview, Raba’a al-‘Adawiyya (1). Cairo, 28 June 2013.

¹⁷⁹ al-Beltagi, Mohammed. “al-Duktūr Moḥammad al-Beltajī: Khitāb al-Beltajī min Munaṣṣa Rāba’a al-‘Adawiyya” (Dr. Mohammed al-Beltagi: Speech from the Stage of Raba’a al-‘Adawiyya). *Youtube*, 30 June 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s1VDqUmlhg

¹⁸⁰ Fieldnotes, 29 June 2013.

¹⁸¹ Online Archive. “November 2012 – July 2013: Pro-Brotherhood.” Accessed 7 October 2015.

www.victorjwilli.com/november-2012-july-2013-pro-brotherhood/

¹⁸² Online Archive. “June 30 Moqattam”. Accessed 25 September 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/research/protest-scenes/june-30-moqqatam/

¹⁸³ “Mohamed Morsi’s Last Interview as Egypt’s President.” *The Guardian*, 29 June 2013. Accessed 10 August 2015. www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/jul/04/mohammed-morsi-last-interview-egypt-president-video

endowed this revolution with its symptomatic undertone: “*Yasquṭ, yasquṭ, ḥukm al-Murshid* – Down, down with the rule of the Murshid!”, “*Irḥal!, irḥal!, irḥal!* – Leave!, leave!, leave” and “*al-thawra mustamirra, al-thawra mustamirra* – The revolution will continue, the revolution will continue.”¹⁸⁴ At around 4 p.m. seven army helicopters turned up above Tahrir Square, hovering above the crowds that greeted them with ecstatic joy: “*al-gaysh wa’l-sha‘ab ‘iyd waḥda!* – the People and the army are one hand!” Despite the evidence of a massive popular backlash against their rule, top Brotherhood figures remained delusional. ‘Issam al-‘Arian appeared on television claiming that the crowds at Tahrir Square were a “Photoshop revolution”.¹⁸⁵

Pressure was ratcheted up a final time on the president. Ten cabinet ministers submitted their resignations while Sisi gave Morsi a 48-hour ultimatum to “fulfil the people’s demands”.¹⁸⁶ If he failed to comply, the army would exert its “responsibility” to protect national security. But the president declined to give way. Western capitals were urged to counter any support for the impending *coup d’état* and assumed that Morsi was safe as long as his administration had U.S. support. “The conviction within the presidency is that [the coup] won’t be able to move forward without American approval”, a presidential aide affirmed.¹⁸⁷ It also suggested that the president to the very last minute banked on the likelihood that the army would not risk upsetting America. Ambassador Patterson spent her days trying to persuade opposition figures to engage in a dialogue with Morsi.

But the curtain started to close. Security forces arrested fifteen bodyguards of Khairat al-Shater after an exchange of fire at his home. The army now started to take over of local government headquarters in the governorates. When the Ministry of the Interior announced its “complete solidarity” with Egypt’s Armed Forces, Morsi’s position was becoming ever more untenable. An army spokesman denied that the military was capable of a coup, affirming that it only acted in the will of the people and that the ultimatum showed that the army respected the “principles of democracy and the will of the nation as a source of power”. On 2 July, the different political parties started to prepare for a post-Morsi scenario. Intense meetings were held between the representatives of Tamarrud, the military, the intelligence services, officers from the Ministry of the Interior, the judiciary and the clerical institutions. The army called on

¹⁸⁴ Online Archive. “30 June 2013 – Tahrir – Talateen Sitta.” 8 October 2015. www.victorjwilli.com/30-june-2013-tahrir-talateen-sitta/

¹⁸⁵ “Ḥiwār ma’ ‘Issām al-‘Ariān” (Interview with ‘Issam al-‘Arian). *MBC*, 2 July 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-1BD0ia700

¹⁸⁶ “Statement of the General Command of the Armed Forces.” 1 July 2013. Accessed 15 September 2015. www.facebook.com/Egyptian.Armed.Forces.Admins?hc_location=timeline

¹⁸⁷ “Egypt’s Supreme Administrative Court Suspends Embattled Constituent Assembly.” *Ahram Online*, 10 April 2012. 11 August 2015. english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/38936/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-High-Administrative-Court-suspends-embattle.aspx

the president to transfer his powers to a new prime minister who would be tasked with assembling a caretaker cabinet of technocrats to administer a transitional phase. At the same time, the army launched a propaganda operation to assure concerned Western capitals that it was not planning to rule. It also sent a message to the Muslim Brotherhood leadership to come to terms on an agreement in order to avoid a bloody confrontation.

In a conversation between Morsi and Sisi, the general told the president that the army stood on the side of the people and that the military was not going to allow the Brotherhood to destroy the nation. He advised Morsi to “try to leave with your dignity and tell those whom you call supporters to go back to their homes in order to prevent bloodshed, instead of threatening the people.” – “But this way it will be a military coup, and America won’t leave you alone”, Morsi insisted. Sisi replied: “It is the people who concern us, not America”. Learning that he was under arrest, Morsi threatened: “Don’t think the Brotherhood is going to stand by if I leave office. They will set the world on fire”.¹⁸⁸

That night, Morsi made a last public appearance as the president of Egypt. The speech was a fascinating testimony of the delusional state of mind of a man who was completely isolated, yet desperately tried to appeal to the common sense of the Egyptian people. Perhaps caught in a state of anxious anticipation about the magnitude of his impending fate, he kept clinging on to the argument of legitimacy (*shar’iyya*), a word he repeated dozens of times during this speech.¹⁸⁹ He insisted that any attempt to overthrow democratic legitimacy would fail and vowed to defend it with his own blood. “Keep protecting Egypt”, he pleaded his fellow countrymen and women in a sentimental appeal:

Keep protecting the revolution, which we gained, with our sweat, and the blood of our martyrs in two and a half years. Keep it safe, all of you. O you who are with me, O you who are against me, don’t let the revolution be stolen from you. With any excuses! There are so many magicians, and the challenge is huge.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ “al-Waṭan tanfarid bi-ākhir Hiwār bayna Wazīr al-Difā wa’l- Ra’īs al-ma’zūl” (al-Watan Possesses the Last Interview between the Minister of Defense and the Deposed President),” *al-Watan*, 5 July 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/219627

¹⁸⁹ “Murāfa’a al-Ra’īs al-Ma’zūl Muḥammad Morsī ‘an Nafsuhu” (The Pledge of the Deposed President Mohammed Morsi on Himself). *Egyptoon*, 9 July 2013. Accessed 5 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=elnW_XG1bUk

¹⁹⁰ Morsi, Mohammed. “Kalima sl-Ra’īs Mursī li’l-Sha‘ab al-Maṣrī 2 Jūlī” (Speech of President Morsi to the Egyptian People on 2 July). *ON TV*, 2 July 2013. Accessed 5 September 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0Uqap-cX8Y

The next day at 4.30 p.m. the military's ultimatum expired. Tanks started to roll into the streets of Egypt and the Islamist encampments were besieged. State Security forces began arresting senior Brotherhood members and reports emerged that Morsi has been put under house arrest. The Brotherhood's fourth ordeal began on 14 August 2013, when the army and the Security Forces moved in on the Islamist sit-ins with overwhelming force, killing well over 1,000 of Morsi's supporters and wounding many more. The forces of the counter-revolution closed the cycle of protests that began in January 2011. As the Muslim Brotherhood was driven underground, a clique of army officers took over the reins of power, bringing Egypt's democratic experiment to an end.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to understand the complex dynamics of ideology, internal organisational politics and the individual experiences of key actors of the Muslim Brotherhood, in an effort to show how the interaction between these elements can help us understand why the Society failed so disastrously after one year in power. In turning to Brotherhood members to answer this question, many explained the fall by pointing at outside forces. During a cabinet meeting in March 2013, Morsi speculated: “There are two or three fingers messing in Egypt [...], from among the most trivial people” and threatened that he would “cut off the fingers of anyone meddling in Egyptian affairs”.¹ A related argument – and one that certainly had more truth to it – was that a network of conspiring remnants of the old regime was responsible for the Society’s failure. “Rumours” spread by “tricksters” in the secular-liberal media elite were said to have caused the massive popular discontent that materialised in the 30 June demonstrations, thus enabling the coup by the Armed Forces.²

It is clear that the military and the various elements of the security apparatus played a central role in the campaign to depose the Brotherhood. As shown in Chapter 5, the Tamarrud organisers had forged an unholy alliance with the counter-revolutionary forces and it is likely that they received financial support from certain governments in the Gulf.³ Moreover, the history of the Brotherhood was to a large extent shaped by national and international developments, compelling it time and again to arrange itself within a shifting web of alliances. The regime, with its monopoly on power, always had the upper hand to crack down on the Society. However, external factors are only part of the story. The Brotherhood is ultimately a political actor in its own right and therefore endowed with its own agency. Portraying it as simply a pawn of history whose fate is determined by the machinations of larger forces does little to advance our understanding of the internal mechanics that shaped its history during this critical juncture.

In our attempt to understand the developments internal to the Brotherhood that led to the fall, the picture that emerges is one of an organisation that, on the eve of the revolution,

¹ “al-Ra’īs Mursī: fīhu Ṣabā’īn thalāthahu biyal’abū jawā Maṣr” (President Morsi: There Are Two or Three Fingers Meddling in Egypt). *Sawt al-Aqbat*, 13 March 2013. www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QYbflfTXoU

² Fieldnotes, 20 June 2013; “Dangerous Information: Tamarrod Campaign Asks the Military to Execute Massacre at the Republican Guard.” *Ikhwanonline*. Accessed 17 March 2014. www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.aspx?ArtID=156266&SecID=230

³ Ikhwanonline claimed that Tamarrud had received \$125,000 from Saudi-owned al-Arabiya news channel: “Ḥaqīqa Tamarrud” (The Truth of Tamarrod.” *Ikhwanonline*. Accessed 17 March 2014. www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.aspx?ArtID=176654&SecID=344

was in a deep crisis. The Brotherhood's history since its second founding was shaped to a large degree by the internal political competition of two rival factions, each eager to advance its specific vision of the kind of organisation the Brotherhood was supposed to be. This power struggle unfolded to a large extent along generational lines and in essence was a contest over the intellectual heritage of Hasan al-Banna. In competing over the valued "prize" of the *tanẓīm*, different interpretations of the Brotherhood's role and *raison d'être* were advanced, leading to growing divisions in terms of organisational identity that would eventually tear the Society apart.

This conflict was not pronounced when the Brothers came out of prison in the early seventies. Back then, the leadership faced the gargantuan task of rebuilding the ranks of an organisation that barely existed. They were able to leverage the popular forces of the Islamic Awakening by providing the diffuse Islamist sentiments with a coherent organisational and ideological framework, charting a roadmap for the students who were driving religious activism at Egypt's universities. It was largely thanks to 'Omar al-Tilmisani's vision and leadership that the Society was able to do so. While the student organisers initially resisted the Brotherhood's claim for legitimacy, Tilmisani's appeal managed to eventually convince them to join the Society's ranks. The sheikh's personal charisma provided the Society with the religious and political credentials necessary to lead the Islamic project. This attitude was captured by Abu al-Futuh after his meeting with Tilmisani:

I have been in front of a man who had spent twenty years in prison and yet left jail while still preoccupied with the cause of Islam and preaching for God. [...] He was bursting by enthusiasm as he spread his ideas, [encouraging us] to continue the path that the Society had started. His words were magic to me. He was an idol that I found in my own consciousness, the people we read about in the biography of the Prophet (*sīra nabawiyya*), who were tortured all for the sake of preaching God's method, but who remained steadfast.⁴

Amidst the radicalisation of the Islamist scene in the late seventies, Tilmisani's insistence on non-violence had the added effect of drawing the students away from radical *takfīrī* and jihadi ideals promoted by their extremist peers. The opening of the political scene in the eighties under Mubarak led to the series of electoral victories in the syndicates and in parliament, giving further fair wind to those of the Tilmisanian bent who were eager to mould the Brotherhood into an open organisation based on principles of meritocracy and transparency.

⁴ Abu al-Futuh. *Witness*, p. 75.

But once the third Murshid passed away in 1986, the ideas promoted by the Qutb-educated leadership became more dominant. Operating first in the shadow of the “puppet-Guide” Hamid Abu Nasr, these former Special Apparatus officers eschewed the younger cadres’ flirtation with party politics as a dangerous precedent that would increase the risk of government repression. Instead, the men around Mustafa Mashhur, ‘Abbas al-Sisi, Gum‘a Amin and Mahdi ‘Akif were focused on reconstituting Brotherhood as a purely *da‘wa*-focused revivalist group. The process of rebuilding the *tanzīm* culminated in the adoption of the General Statutes of 1982. At the same time, the vanguard leaders charted a more internationalist direction through the establishment of the International Organisation, with the idea of setting up a supra-national structure that would provide an institutional framework for national Brotherhood franchises to unite under the banner of an Islamic caliphate once the respective societies in each country had been Islamised. These efforts collapsed, however, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, showing the discrepancy between the utopian vision of the Brotherhood’s global project and the reality of country-specific nationalist aspirations.

After the death of Hamid Abu Nasr in 1996, and under the direction of the fifth Guide Mustafa Mashhur, the vanguard leaders increasingly exerted direct control on the Society’s ranks. This new leadership now embarked on an aggressive course of expanding its influence in key administrative positions by spreading its *tanzīmī* ideals among the rank-and-file membership. This development was compounded by larger transformations in the Brotherhood’s ideology and organisational culture. Faced with repression in the urban centres, the Society to a growing extent focused its recruitment efforts on the countryside, which entailed the rise of a rural and conservative culture alongside the growth of Salafi-inspired doctrines among the rank and file. This transformation of values and culture led to a growing confrontation between the rural ethos of the newly recruited base and the middle-class values of the urban elite. The ruralisation of the base was reflected in the Society’s top institutional bodies, exacerbating the political conflict between the two rival visions of the Tilmisanians and the vanguard leaders. In a parallel development, the rise of the businessman Khairat al-Shatir to become the Society’s Deputy Guide in 1995 led to a growing capitalisation of the Society, forging a strange syncretism between the neoliberal business ethos of the modern corporation, the rural culture of a newly urbanised base, and the Salafi doctrines of its value system.

The attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent “democratisation” agenda of the Bush administration made it necessary for the Brotherhood to portray itself to the outside world as a

group that was committed to Western-style democracy. This boosted the Tilmisianians, who conquered the international media spotlight in their striving for internal reform, leading to the 2004 initiative and the electoral victory of 2005. This seeming “metamorphosis” was applauded by an American political (science) elite, which was enthralled with the notion of an Islamist group apparently becoming democratic. But when, in the wake of the electoral victory of 2005, Mubarak cracked down on the Society, the vanguard leadership saw a vindication of their arguments that the Tilmisianian strategy was doomed to fail. What followed was a rolling-back of the reformists around Abu’l-Futuh, who were stripped of their privileges bit by bit over the coming years, first by the scrapping of the two articles dealing with the rights of women and Coptic Christians in the 2007 party programme, and then during the palace revolt of the 2009 and 2010 Guidance Office elections. Although the Qutbist faction reasserted its control on the *tanẓīm*, this was also the point when they lost their authority among a young and increasingly critical group of politically oriented members who firmly believed in the ideas espoused Tilmisani and represented by Abu al-Futuh.

At the eve of the Arab Spring, the Brotherhood was a dysfunctional organisation, characterised by internal dissonance between rebellious professional cadres, and an obstinate leadership. With the heretics of the Tilmisan school of thought isolated, a clannish group of devotees now controlled the joints of the *tanẓīm*. Most of the top decision makers in the Guidance Office adhered to an inward-focused worldview that was distrustful of anyone who was not part of their inner circle. The self-conception of the vanguard leaders was based on the doctrine of the revolutionary vanguard (*ṭalī’a*), which saw itself as the head of an “active, harmonious and cooperative group” that operated “like the limbs of a human body”.⁵ During the Society’s forty-year history, this group had managed to establish itself as a “parallel system” that operated alongside and competed with the Brotherhood’s formal structure.⁶ The Society under the Qutbists resembled a “total institution”, designed as a pyramidal, top-down command-and-control structure where the base was subordinated to the leaders through the principle of “listening and obedience” (*sam’a wa ṭā’a*), to the exclusion of any opportunity for learning and critical reasoning.⁷ Rank-and-file members were compelled to execute the decisions of the leaders “without hesitation, turning back, doubt or discomfort”.⁸ The imperative of total obedience was not in the first place of organisational, but of theological nature. Mashhur wrote: “The individual learns that his pledge and his oath to the leadership is

⁵ Qutb. *Milestones*, p. 58.

⁶ (2). Interview. Alexandria, 17 December 2012.

⁷ Goffman, Erving. *Asylums*. Harmondsworth Penguin, 1968.

⁸ (13). Interview. Cairo, 16 September 2013.

in fact a pledge and oath to God”. He staked a claim to legitimacy that would make any sort of compromise impossible:

The Muslim Brotherhood does not consider its goals realised or its works accomplished unless individual members listen and obey their leaders. This obeying to the order is to obey God. The failure of executing orders or even just hesitation in their execution exposes the work to danger and is considered a reneging of the *bay‘a*.⁹

Obedience was seen as an absolute value that defined the level of one’s very religiosity. The Society claimed for itself a monopoly over “true Islam”, branding any sort of criticism of its policies as religiously sinful.

The organisational culture of the Qutbists was decisively shaped by the collective experience of prison life, giving rise to a sectarian feeling (*ruh al-tā’ifa*) and a parochialism that eschewed engagement with outside forces. Indeed, they must have suffered dearly during the years of imprisonment and solitary confinement. The Society to them represented an “emotional community” that provided them with meaning and allowed them to make sense of their traumatic experiences of the past. It fulfilled an epistemic need, providing the leaders with a psychological mechanism to attain certainty, order and structure in an environment characterised by hostility and uncertainty. The ability to control the hearts and minds of the base further provided them with organisational control in terms of mobilisation and street politics. This highly committed rank and file could be mobilised at any point to defend the Society and thus guarantee its institutional survival. Salafi worldviews further served the purpose of interpreting reality in terms of a Manichaean dualism, where members were made to believe that the defence of the Brotherhood was a battle between truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*). They were condoned to practice “mental and emotional withdrawal”, not only from broader society but also from other members who were not part of the inner circle.¹⁰ Religious discourse and the writings of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb provided them with the conceptual and theoretical tools to justify their failed political experiment.

The close social, family and business networks of members of the vanguard leadership also explains notions such as the Special Apparatus or the “secret organisation” (*tanẓīm sirry*), as the Brotherhood’s inner circle was frequently called. Rather than an actually weaponised paramilitary wing, the “Special Apparatus” represented a closely-knit system of core loyalists characterised by a quasi-militaristic design. In this inner circle, legitimacy was conferred

⁹ Mashhur. *Jihad is the Way*, p. 78.

¹⁰ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

through the amount of pain and hardship suffered during different prison ordeals. Because of their physical isolation from broader society during many years, this leadership was clueless as to how to deal with the complex and dynamic political reality of the post-revolutionary situation. Having just subdued an internal mutiny, they had lost their authority among a large segment of younger, urban and politically oriented members, who were dismayed by their Machiavellian politicking. They suddenly found themselves thrust into a situation where the knowledge of those who might have had the competencies to govern Egypt – like Abu al-Futuh – would have been useful. The few politicians of the reformist school who remained – men like ‘Issam al-‘Arian, Helmi Gazzar, Gamal Heshmat, Mohammed ‘Ali Bish and Mohammed al-Beltagi – were either isolated or relegated to secondary positions.

Thus, the Brotherhood’s short-lived experiment in governance was plastered by one mistake after the other. The vanguard leadership failed to seize the historical moment of the 25 January revolution by stubbornly refusing to join the demonstrations, and did so only hesitantly and after being literally dragged into them by their own youths. If it had not been for the revolutionaries, including those from the Brotherhood, who defended the Square during the Battle of the Camel, it can be assumed that they would have turned their back on the revolution at an even earlier stage. Instead, they opted for negotiation with the SCAF, commanding their rank and file to leave the Square as soon as they had obtained the necessary assurances from the military. During the coming months, the Society got entangled ever deeper into the maze of politics. They supported the referendum of March 2011, voting in favour of a constitution being adopted *before* the holding of parliamentary elections – against the will of the revolutionary forces. When it became clear that the generals had their own political ambitions, the Society reverted to street politics. In urgent need of a party to win the elections, they took the Tilmisanian political project out of the drawer in an attempt to present themselves as an “inclusive” group committed to democracy. While emphasising their commitment to the revolution, they cowardly snubbed the national movement during the first and second Mohamed Mahmoud Street clashes, the Council of Ministers crackdown and the massacre of Coptic Christians at Maspero, where they accused the *fulūl* (and explicitly not the army) of having committed the crime.

Once they had conquered the People’s Assembly in late 2011, they set their eyes on the adoption of an Islamist constitution. This to them represented the only way of implementing the Islamic project. Guided through Banna’s seven-step blueprint, the vanguard leadership was determined to impose its own social agenda at any cost, to the exclusion of other national partners. This brought them into a growing conflict with the judges, who were

eager to preserve their prerogatives in the face of an increasingly aggressive parliament. The obsessive focus on empowerment induced the vanguard leaders to subordinate all national objectives to their religious imperative. They readily drew on suitable texts from Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb as rhetorical devices for mobilisation and street politics, ready to employ whatever reference suited them to justify their political manoeuvres.

Because of their stubborn focus on Banna's historicist political theory, the Brotherhood misread the revolution as the opportune moment for controlling of the state. By late June 2012, the men who had shunned politics for the larger part of their lives suddenly found themselves having to engage in the complex business of governance. From that moment on, the unravelling of the Brotherhood's "democratic experiment" materialised with almost predictable accuracy. The electoral promises Morsi had announced for his first hundred days in office remained unfulfilled, while the Nahda project turned out to be a sham (*kamūflāj*).¹¹ Against the promises he made to the opposition, Morsi did not appoint a woman and a Coptic Christian to his cabinet, staffing it instead with Brotherhood loyalists who had little experience in their assigned portfolios, considering this as a rightful claim of the spoils of their electoral victory. In his long-winded speeches, the president adopted a paternalistic and condescending tone towards Egyptians. It became increasingly clear that the Brotherhood's concept of democracy was defined by its leaders in the most narrow sense, and always within the confines of a conservative interpretation of Islam that served them to coerce, rather than liberate, Egyptian society (unless, of course, liberation was understood as "freedom of man on earth from every authority except that of God").

Morsi further failed to appreciate how deeply divided Egypt was after the revolution – societally in terms of fundamentally opposing visions on the emerging social contract, and politically in terms of the competition between the established centres of power. Rather than formulating an inclusive programme based on a national consensus and shared decision making, Morsi and the Brotherhood tried to maintain their hegemony over the state apparatus at any cost. The decisive turning point was the constitutional coup of 21 November 2012 and the events of Ittihadiyya, when the Guidance Office called on its rank and file to "defend" the presidential palace from a couple of hundred youths. The symbolism implicit in the events of Ittihadiyya convinced a large majority of Egyptians that they were witnessing a "dictatorship in the making".¹² It enraged whomever of Morsi's critics still believed in his democratic legitimacy. The decision of the Guidance Office may have been acceptable for an opposition party, but under current conditions was seen as an illegitimate assault on the state. Controlling

¹¹ Fieldnotes, 21 September 2012.

¹² Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 20 December 2013.

the government would have required the Brotherhood to employ the tools and institutions of the state, as opposed to the politics of the street. It was another proof of the Guidance Office's inability to differentiate between what it meant to be a governing party as opposed to an opposition movement.

But this was not how the Brotherhood saw things. In their conceptual universe, Morsi was the elected president, giving him an absolute authority for four years. Any protest against his policies was seen as an illegitimate assault on his "constitutional electoral legitimacy". Brotherhood members understood the office he had won by only a narrow margin as a mandate for absolute empowerment. Their understanding of democracy was focused on procedural matters while being oblivious to any appreciation of its implicit political values, including pluralism in political institutions, equality between men and women, and respect for individual dignity and freedom of expression. The Brotherhood did not understand that they should have used the trust put into them by the people to fulfil the demands of the revolution, which meant bringing the army under the wing of the constitution and pushing through vital security sector reforms.

Looking at Morsi's erratic, highly emotional and uncontrolled behaviour, both in terms of his speeches as well as in terms of the decisions he made, one could get the impression that the fact of having acquired power had gone to his head. The extent to which ineptitude may have caused the Society's fall would be part of a different study. What seems clear is that Morsi and the vanguard leadership were completely out of touch with the reality on the ground. Ideology buttressed the assumption that the Brotherhood's religious project was about to prevail, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary and despite the widespread rejection of the Brotherhood's rule by a large majority. The fact that Egyptians considered themselves to be religious did not imply that they agreed on religion governing political and public life.¹³

In the face of an overwhelming outpouring of Egyptians during 30 June 2013, 'Issam al-'Arian brushed this aside as "illusion" (*wahm*), insisting that that entire scene was fabricated by a "moviemaker" (*mukhrij sīnīmāī*).¹⁴ As for Mohammed Morsi, he until the very last minute held on to his belief that General Sisi would not let him down. Once the General told him on 3 July that he was under arrest, Morsi first insisted that the United States would

¹³ In a study conducted in June 2011, 80 per cent of Egyptians agreed that religion was a private matter that should be separated from political and social affairs, reflecting a preference for a civil state instead of a religious one. "The Arab Barometer Project: Arab Republic of Egypt." *al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies*, June 2011. www.arabbarometer.org/country-report

¹⁴ "Ḥiwār ma' 'Issām al-'Ariān" (Interview with 'Issam al-'Arian). *MBC*, 2 July 2013. Accessed 11 August 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-1BD0ia700

not let this happen, and then threatened that the Brotherhood would “set the world on fire” (*haywall‘ū al-dunyā*).¹⁵ A sense of overconfidence may have led the president assume that he was strong enough to snub national and revolutionary currents, instead putting his trust in the hands of the United States and the military. This tendency towards self-deception has been observed before in history. Barbara Tuchman has argued in *The March of Folly* that politicians can be prone to self-deception, insisting on a certain course of action regardless of any contrary evidence. They “[assess] a situation in terms of preconceived fixed notions [e.g., ideology] while ignoring any contrary signs. It is acting according to wish while not allowing oneself to be deflected by the facts”. What she observed in King Philip II could have easily been said about Mohammed Morsi: “No experience of the failure of his policy could shake his belief in its essential excellence”.¹⁶

By failing to understand their historic responsibility, Morsi and the vanguard leadership sold out the revolution in pursuit of their narrow-minded vision of an Islamic state. The Qutbist leadership was unable to grasp the goals of the revolution, which was ultimately a struggle of a young generation to rise up against paternalistic and corrupt elites in search of dignity, freedom and social justice. Once Mubarak had departed, the Egyptian masses believed that the objectives of the revolution had been achieved and withdrew from the Square. The fact that the Society was the only political force sufficiently organised and with a nationwide popular base would have made their engagement the only chance for this revolution to succeed.¹⁷ The fact that they did not do so opened the door for the military to come back against the battered security state, with the vanguard leaders negotiating to acquire power at all costs. The tragedy of the revolution was that it was squeezed out, first by the Brotherhood and, two and a half years later, by an emerging class of military men around ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi. Bolstered by the support of conservative Gulf petro monarchies, the counter-revolution directed its wrath first against the Brotherhood, and then against the revolution.

In a strange twist of irony, the tragedy of the revolution was also the tragedy of the Brotherhood. As in 1954, the Brotherhood made the same mistake again, which was to count on an army general in the belief that he would establish the necessary conditions so that the Society could implement its version of an Islamic state. One is reminded of the observation of Karl Marx that historical facts always repeat themselves twice: “The first time as tragedy, the

¹⁵ “al-Watan tanfarriḍ bi-āchir Ḥiwār bayna Wazīr al-Difā‘ aa’l-Ra‘īs al-Ma‘zūl.” *al-Watan*. 5 July 2013. Accessed 20 September 2015. www.elwatannews.com/news/details/219627

¹⁶ Tuchman, Barbara. *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. London: Abacus, 1997.

¹⁷ Ban, Ahmed. Interview. Cairo, 14 April 2014.

second time as farce”.¹⁸ Seemingly unreceptive to historical learning, the Brotherhood’s leaders single-mindedly focused on a theory that predicted that an Islamic state would inevitably emerge. At the very centre of the Brotherhood’s political reform project stood the notion pair of the caliphate and the “global guidance” of the world through Islam – constituting the eschatological end point of Banna’s historicist blueprint. The caliphate was understood to be an essential institution for Muslims and a symbol of unity and spiritual continuity. Indeed, Banna’s articulation of the caliphate as the ideal system of governance for the Muslim *umma* was his single most important contribution to the intellectual history of political Islam. Today, the ultimate objective of Islamist movements worldwide is to reinstitute an Islamic caliphate. The argument that is made to support this claim is that only a truly Islamic state that is based on the enforcement of Sharia law can ultimately guarantee true justice for Muslims.

But the assertion that Islam contained a political theory had been contested time and again, most notably from within the religious establishment itself. In his 1925 treatise *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power (al-Islām wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm)*, written one year after the abolition of the Caliphate, the Azharite cleric Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq mounted a critique that meant to challenge the narrative of the Muslim reformists. ‘Abd al-Raziq was a liberal and modern thinker who was opposed to traditional forms of government as defended by the ‘*ulāma*’. Quite in opposition to the accepted epistemological framework of his time, he presented a meticulous study of the Quran that aimed at a re-examination of Islamic religious traditions from a historical point of view. His methods were based on critical reasoning rather than reverting to religious authority. Against the Azharite elite, he held that the original caliphate had been established *after* the death of the Prophet and that political structures therefore belonged to Islamic tradition rather than religion.¹⁹ Like any form of authority, so the early Islamic state was made possible only because of the existence of a religious community. Originally, the caliph was simply the successor of the Prophet, without having any religious function. Abu Bakr had thus used his title in a political sense only, while the campaigns to fight the various insurrections against his rule were only gradually interpreted as a repudiation of the Islamic faith on the part of the insurgents. Thus, the erroneous view had gained ground that the caliphate was a religious office and that the caliph was, by delegation or religious law, the Prophet’s “shadow on earth”.

¹⁸ Marx, Karl. *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. London: Electric Book Co, 2001, p. 7.

¹⁹ ‘Abd al-Raziq, ‘Ali. *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*. In Translation, Modern Muslim Thinkers. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press in association with The Aga Khan University, 2012.

‘Abd al-Raziq aimed to show that the Quran neither mentioned the caliphate nor alluded to its necessity in any way, and that the institution had been ignored both in the tradition (*sunna*) of the Prophet and the consensus (*ijma’*) of the Muslim *umma*. Quite in opposition to the generally accepted view, the Quran showed that the Prophet did not have any worldly interests, and in fact explicitly forbade the Prophet to act as a custodian of men. In order to substantiate his findings, ‘Abd al-Raziq quoted various verses from the Quran, including 6:66: “Say: I am not over you a manager (*wakīl*)”, 42:48: “We have not sent you, [O Mohammed], over them as a guardian (*ḥafīẓan*); upon you is only [the duty of] notification”, and 50:45: “So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller (*jabbār*).” To the “charlatans”, on the other hand, who claimed that Islam’s holiest text contained an implicit political theory, he retorted:²⁰

We cannot find in the entire body of the above-cited traditions any evidence that the institution of the caliphate is a matter of religious dogma or entailed by religious belief [...]. One looks in vain to either the Quran or the Hadith for a simple allusion, implicit or explicit, which might give succour to the proponents of a political interpretation of the Islamic faith.²¹

He concluded his treatise with these powerful words:

Such is the crime committed by the despots and such are the consequences of their rule: In the name of religion, they have misled the Muslims, veiled the roads to truth from their eyes, and blocked the light of knowledge. In the name of religion they have usurped ownership over the Muslims. They have demeaned them and forbidden them to reflect on questions to do with politics. They have fooled them in the name of religion and set up obstacles, of all sorts, to intellectual activity. They have done all this to the point of depriving them of any frame of reference outside religion, even in purely political affairs, and in matters to do strictly with government.²²

But Raziq was derided and dismissed by his Azharite colleagues, never allowed to write again. Instead, it was a young schoolteacher who, three years later, would stand at the origin of a movement that was to govern Egypt one day. The methodology, organisation and idea Banna formulated was able to capture the imagination of the people, and became the acceptable framework to guide their struggle against imperialism and foreign aggression. The

²⁰ Quran, 4:59: “O you who have believed, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you”.

²¹ ‘Abd al-Raziq. *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, p. 40.

²² Ibid., p. 117.

Quran provided these believers with references that were widely understood among the masses and could be readily employed to justify political power, authority and control. It is perhaps this obsession with Islam as a political theory and the caliphate as a doctrinal *sine qua non* that has made it impossible for the Muslim Brotherhood (or any other Islamist party for that matter) to achieve a workable synthesis of a polity able to both guarantee a free social order while translating Islam into improvements in terms of the material wellbeing of Arab societies. With the exception of the hazy early days of Islam, buried under layers of discourse, mythology and collective memory, any attempt at building a viable “Islamic state” in the modern age has so far failed. All we are left with are governments like Saudi Arabia, where atavistic provisions of the Sharia are enforced by autocratic, corrupt and sclerotic regimes, or the criminal attempts by ISIL to forcefully impose their tyrannical and deeply cynical version of Islam on human societies.

* * * * *

EPILOGUE

On 15 September 2013, I sat in the small apartment of (13), located on the ninth floor of a high-rise building in Sayyida Zaynab. He was wearing his galabiyya and sat on an armchair, having just recently returned from the hospital, where he received a kidney transplant.

Talking about the massacre of Raba'a al-'Adawiyya the previous months, (13) showed me a picture of a deceased friend who died as a martyr. "Are you scared?" I asked. – "I am scared only of God", he replied with his typical warm, embracing smile.

"How do you feel about Raba'a al-'Adawiyya?" I asked. – "I feel that my God will help us, as He refuses injustice (*zulm*). But He needs to filter the Ikhwan, like gold. If you want to get pure gold nuggets, you have to filter the stones. [The Raba'a massacre] is a burning to us, to make us more pure".

After a while, his wife Iman entered the room, serving chicken, rice and molokhiyya. "She was also in Raba'a", (13) explained as she left, proud of the commitment of his family to the Brotherhood's cause. In fact, his whole family had been in Raba'a. But he had been in the hospital when the massacre happened.

As we were eating, we watched Al Jazeera Mubashir, with its typical split screen showing four marches at different localities in Cairo, with protesters holding banners displaying the iconic Raba'a symbol. "Raba'a means four", (13) explained. "It is a symbol for the place where the massacre took place". But there was also a deeper religious meaning: "Mohammed says in the Quran: 'My prayer, sacrifice, life and death are all for God'."

(13) flipped through the channels, briefly stopping at the pro-government ON TV to point out Yousri Fouda. "He is a trickster", he said. I asked him why the media was so much against the Brotherhood. – "Because secularism (*'almaniyya*) has deep roots in the Egyptian media. [Pro-state media anchors] believe in this. They were quiet when the Brotherhood was in power. But now they are back." He switched back to Al Jazeera.

After a while I wonder how the Brotherhood will operate now that its entire leadership is in prison. – "The Brotherhood doesn't depend on people", (13) explained.

It is a system. If one cell goes down, this doesn't mean that the entire system is down. [The military] was angry at the Brotherhood, so they cracked down on them in order to destroy them. This crackdown is stronger than the one of 1954, but the Brotherhood was not defeated. [...] The family meetings continue. This is the real secret of the power of the Brotherhood. The strength of the system cannot be destroyed. [The regime] cannot know all people in the base. They know only the leaders. There is no

new leadership, only alternative leaders – people who assist the leaders. They are leaders only temporarily, until the leaders go back to their positions. If [the military] imprisons the alternative [leaders], there are other alternatives to the alternatives.

After a pause, I tell him: “I am happy that you didn’t die”. – “I hope I would have died”, he replies. “But my God didn’t choose me”. – “Yet, I am glad that you’re still alive.”

Looking at me with his gentle, slightly withdrawn eyes, (13) explained: “We have another life in paradise, Victor. It is our goal to go to the paradise, but not through violence. We are a peaceful Society. Yet, the media tries to separate society into pro-coups and anti-coups [sic]”. – “Why are they trying to do this?” I ask.

Because if we are one unit, we are strong. We have one target, which is to remove the people who govern Egypt now. One reason is because of the notion of ‘divide and rule’ (*farriq tassud*). The other reason is because of Israel. If there are internal troubles, it will be easier for Israel to invade Egypt. So [Israeli leaders] encouraged Sisi to make a coup. They helped him by [providing him with] guns, bombs and other equipment for preventing a revolution. I heard about an Israeli a security expert who came to Egypt. I heard it and read it on Al Jazeera [...]. Also America. They appeared to let the people believe that they support freedom, but actually, they helped [the military] and gave them information, and supported them with money and people, and were helpful to Sisi and his group. We know that. Also, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the U.A.E. supported Sisi.

“So what is going to happen next?” – “We have to be strong. Everyone has his job. My wife doesn’t study, so she will protest. Even [my children] know that if they go [to the protests], they may be killed. But they are happy to go. They are not afraid”.

We continued eating and watching television. The voices of Al Jazeera anchors continued to debate. As night fell above the roofs of Cairo, the *mu’adhdhins* intonated the call to the evening prayers.

Victor J. Willi
Cairo, 19 September 2015

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Note: I have anonymised interviews with most current and former members of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as with members of other groups and institutions. Anonymised sources have been assigned a number in brackets. All interlocutors identified by their identity have given their full consent for their names to be made public. Special attention was given to protect my interlocutors from any harm that could be inflicted upon them by the current Egyptian regime.

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