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A New Approach to Islamism:

The Example of the Muslim Brotherhood Group in Egypt

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A New Approach to Islamism:

The Example of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

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Master of Arts

Advisor: Dr. Devin Stewart

An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

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Abstract

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This study offers a three-stage approach to Islamism. The first stage is an analysis of MBG discourse through three historical phases. At each phase, MBG discourse is analyzed in its relationships with the discourses of the modern nation-state and the economy. The three phases are labeled consolidation, polarization and modularization-discourse, respectively.In the second stage, MBG discourse is deployed between the two conceptual structures of Habermas: systems and lifeworld, which represent objectivity and intersubjectivity. This deployment explains the reversibility of the discourse power. The study proceeds to reflect on some MBG structures and texts, to show how they mediate lifeworld and systems and how they articulate power and reversibility. The third stage focuses on the textuality of the discourse. After a discussion of the notion of truth, the study introduces the concept of *ghayb*, which refers to unseen reality, and substitutes the dialectic reason with the logic of the dual. Then, the study reflects on pieces of MBG texts to explain a number of textual techniques and to show the centrality of the *style* to the analysis of MBG discourse.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER …..PAGE

INTRODUCTION …..1

CHAPTER ONE: Before the Brothers …...29

CHAPTER TWO: Consolidation Discourse …...44

CHAPTER THREE: Polarization Discourses …...108

CHAPTER FOUR: Modularizing Discourse …...154

CHAPTER FIVE: Discourse Deployment …..199

CHAPTER SIX: Discourse Textuality …..232

CONCLUSION…………………………………………………………………….275

BIBLIOGRAPHY…………………………………………………………………282

Introduction

The objective of this study is to synthesize a new approach to Islamism. In my opinion, earlier scholarship that has attempted to analyze Islamism has fallen into three traps. First, it has mainly approached Islamism from a single angle, whether cultural, economic or political, and, therefore, has framed the phenomenon in terms of ideology, class conflict or political competition. Second, it has contrasted Islamism to modernity and recognized Islamism either as a modernist response or as a traditionalist reaction to modern social changes. Third, it has focused more on the unique formation of Islamist discourse, concepts, and structures and less, if at all, on the genres and rhetorical strategies of the Arabic language, especially its local and contemporary societal use. In all these endeavors, scholars have proceeded by isolating Islamism in order to define and analyze it. In my view, these acts of isolation are artificial, arbitrary, and do undue violence to the evidence on the ground; they necessarily produce skewed and incorrect understandings of Islamism.

Contrary to the above strategy, I advocate an approach that *reconnects* Islamism with its socio-cultural and political environment. Therefore, I, first, recognize the emergence of Islamism, the foundation of the modern nation-state of Egypt and the unfolding of capitalism as the interrelated parts of one social and historical phenomenon. Second, I see Islamism – and the nation-state and the economy – as a good site to study the continuity of what earlier scholarship theoretically separates as *traditional* and *modern*. Third, I argue that it is impossible to analyze Islamism as a *discourse*, and in this

regard any other discourses in Egypt, including the discourses of the nation-state and the economy, if we take it out of its Islamic and Arabic linguistic context.

Significance of the Muslim Brotherhood Group in Egypt as an Example

Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood Group, MBG, has been considered by both researchers and politicians as the largest and most influential Islamic organization in the world throughout the twentieth century, and until now. "The New York Times" Newspaper called MBG: the most powerful political force in Egypt.[1] In the 2011/2012 parliamentary elections, "the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party was the clear winner in the first voting held since the ouster of Mr. Mubarak, taking almost half the seats."[2] Members of MBG have spread their mission from Egypt to both the Arab and Islamic Worlds, and far beyond them to Africa, Europe, Australia, and the two Americas, creating chapters in seventy-two different countries. The Group won twenty percent of the seats in the Egyptian parliament in the 2005 elections, has a membership in Egypt that is estimated, by the Ruling Party itself, to be seven hundred and fifty thousand members, and has businessmen members whose economic activity is estimated at twenty billion Egyptian Pounds [= US-$3.6 billion]. According to the World Public Opinion, sixty four percent of Egyptians express positive views of MBG, and even sixty nine percent believe that MBG favors democracy. Nonetheless, the State of Egypt has never recognized the Group since 1954, tens of thousands of its members have been detained during Mubarak's regime (1981-2011), and hundreds of them have been tried in

[1]Moises Saman, "Muslim Brotherhood: Egypt," *The New York Times*, September 7, 2012.
[2]Saman, "Muslim Brotherhood."

military courts.

Size, influence, and longevity, nevertheless, are not the most important factors behind selecting MBG as a test case for my approach. The most important factor in selecting MBG is that it is an appropriate example, not of an Islamic movement, but of Sunni Islam in general. MBG has three characteristics that support this claim. First, it has a comprehensive scope of action. Unlike *salafi*, *jihadi*, *sufi*, missionary, educational, or charity-oriented Islamic groups, MBG has prided itself of being a reflection of comprehensive Islam itself, *al-Islām al-šāmil*. Second, exactly as mainstream Sunni Islam, MBG has been very reluctant to embrace a radical, or at least a clear-cut choice, confining itself to middle-ground ambiguous opinions, which MBG, much like both al-Azhar and the Egyptian state, calls middle-way Islam, *al-Islām al-wasaṭī*. Third, MBG has also been in favor of a pragmatic, not an ideological attitude, driven by principles such as *maṣlaḥa* (public interest), *'urf* (custom) and *ḍarūra* (necessity), promoting what it calls reform Islam, *al-Islām al-iṣlāḥī*. In fact, I am arguing that comprehensiveness, moderation and reform are the three characteristics that have shaped both the state and economy, and which may label the three archaeological layers of Islamism, state and economy I am articulating in this work.

Review of Secondary Literature to Date

Islamism has been approached from cultural, ideological, economic, and social movement angles. In 1985, Theda Skocpol considered these approaches, in the introduction to *Bringing the State Back In*, as excessively society-centered, and called for

a recognition of the role of states in relation to economies and societies in discussing social reality.3 Since then, a growing number of works has taken a statist approach.4 Three different trends may be identified in this approach. First, there is the trend that gives primacy and autonomy to the state. For instance, Colin Beck, in a recent study, argued, “Regimes adopt religious symbolism and functions that legitimate the role of Islam in the public sphere. State incorporation of religion thus creates Islam as a frame for political action, with increased access to mobilizing resources and better able to withstand repression and political exclusion.”5 This is the same picture that had been adopted earlier in the famous work of Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 1998. Starrett’s thesis is that it is in fact the government that politicized Islam through mass education policies, and that it is this very strategy that is Islamizing the society, and creating a need for a specific form of Islam.6

The second trend is one that recognizes the central role of the state, but sees it as essentially contested with the society. Successful states are those that gain autonomy, and unsuccessful states are those that are constrained or dominated by societal forces. A representative of this trend is Robert Lee’s study *Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. Lee writes, “The State was needy, and religion responded to this neediness. It evolved in response to changing political opportunities, gaining influence and authority along the

[3]Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” Peter B. Evans, editor, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985),, 7.

[4]I was informed with these three directions by the study of karen Barkey, and Sunita Parikh, “Comparative Perspectives of the State,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 17, (1991),, 523-549.

[5]Colin J. Beck, “State Building as a Source of Islamic Political Organization,” *Sociological Forum*, vol. 24, no. 2, (June, 2009),, 337-356.

[6]Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to work: Education, Politics and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (California: University of California Press, 1998.),

way. The state fought back by limiting and altering those opportunities, trying itself to exploit the pluralistic structure of Egyptian Islam, and the result was ever greater intermixture of politics and religion."7

Whether hegemonic or contesting for its power, the state is recognized in these two trends above as an independent body. I am, however, in favor of the third trend that examines the state in its socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts. Foucault maintained that social discourses create and configure the state, and not the other way round. Therefore, I recognize the state as the globally embedded, locally extending, modern association of institutions and processes which reflects the interests, conflicts and tensions of different social groups in Egypt, as well as a number of social discourses, and creates spaces to articulate both modern and traditional economic, political, social, cultural and legal spheres.

A good example of this trend is provided by two studies by Nathan Brown, in which he reflected on the role played by both the elite and the general population, as well as the effect of local culture and traditional institutions in creating the modern state of Egypt. Brown analyzed the authority and intention of the state and argued that although the colonial power in early 20th-century Egypt affected the formation of the positivist laws, it was the Egyptian elite that shaped those laws to increase the administrative power of the state as a way to preempt the imperial intervention. He further argued that this

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[7]Robert D. Lee, *Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Identity, Ideology, Institutions, and Attitudes* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2010),, 115.

shaping was influenced by the general population and their culture.8 In a later study, he elaborated on the effect of the population and raised the curious question of why creating civil courts and laws did not elicit more substantial debate and turmoil in Egypt. He answered this question by arguing that Sharia derived, not from text, but from pre-modern institutions and practices, which both continued through modernity. Law, in this regard, was understood as commentaries, which are mediated by educational institutions. Instead of putting emphasis on the authority of the state to impose laws, he shifted the focus to the social process of the production of knowledge.9

Another important study in the same vein is *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State*, by Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen. He shed light on the crucial role played by another Egyptian social group, the *ʿulamāʾ*, in the formation of the modern state of Egypt**,** arguing that "In their endeavour to serve the state, uphold the authority of high ʻulamā and fight godlessness and secularization, the State Muftis were contributing to a reformulation of Islam as simple, rational, just and easily applicable – a vision of Islam that has been highly influential in the 20th century."10 Here, we find *ʿulamāʾ* as an integral part of the formation process of the state.

In addition to these two works above, we should draw on the work**s** of Talal Asad, for they illuminate the state's articulation of both the religious and the secular within its

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[8]Nathan J. Brown, "Law and Imperialism: Egypt in Comparative Perspective," *Law and Society Review*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1995), 103-126.

[9]Nathan J. Brown, "Sharia and State in the Modern Muslim Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3 (August, 1997), 359-376.

[10]Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of Dār al-Iftā* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1997), 29.

spaces. The modern state, he argued, is not a cause, but an articulation of secularization.11 It gave birth to specific social spaces in which the secular grew. Asad also argues that in those same social spaces, Islam too had to grow. The religious and the secular not only meet and interact, but also, and more importantly, they are redefined. In "Secularism, Nation-State, Religion," Asad explains that Islamists had to be statists, and to engage with politics, because all spaces are now political, and governed by the state.12

Asad also explores the effect of modern state on the space of family, and studies how a new configuration is based on the articulation of the modern and the traditional. In his study "Reconfigurations of Law and Ethics in Colonial Egypt," he reflects on the work of Skovgaard-Petersen, in which he argues that the new social, and political developments from the late nineteenth century enabled Islamic reformers to advocate a more "rational and ethical" Islam, especially through the institution of *fatwa*, in which the idea of self-regulation is crucial. Asad rejects the assumption that modernity introduced subjective interiority into Islam, for it has always, Asad contends, been recognized in Islamic tradition. He states, "What modernity does bring in is a new *kind* of subjectivity, one that is appropriate to ethical autonomy and aesthetic self-invention —a concept of "the subject" that has a new grammar."13 Asad furthers this argument by exposing both continuities, and change within the new moral discourse. For instance, technical devices, such as *maṣlaḥa* (public interest), *'urf* (custom), or *ḍarūra* (necessity) could be used to

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[11]Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 209.

[12]Talal Asad, "Secularism, Nation-State, Religion," in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 281-204.

[13]Talal Asad, "Reconfiguration of Law and Ethics in Colonial Egypt," in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 225.

back up the overriding of the Qurʾānic permission of polygamy. That does not leave the situation without contradictions. However, they are not the religion-politics contradictions. They are contradictions rooted in the new grammar. For instance, the separation of the traditional law into two parts: one legal, and one moral, the first to be situated in the public sphere, and the latter to be pushed to the private sphere, does not work quite well when the state has to administer the space of the family, or when the law has to publicly rule over "personal matters."14

In studying state and religion Asad raises the question of how the spaces of the modern state, whether schools, courts, laws, or otherwise, display their power in configuring and redefining the religious and the secular in their relation to each other. Here, the state is neither autonomous nor a mere reflection of its context. The state is a *capacity* built into the architecture, and mechanics of its spaces. However, he never speaks about the configuration, change, and modification of those spaces themselves. Asad's argument is insightful, but incomplete.

What Asad has left out is the unfolding of modern discourses, how they were being written. It is not enough to call them *discursive*. We need to study and understand this discursiveness carefully: what competing discourses were around; what was included; what was excluded; what was ignored or celebrated; what problems were created; how were they solved or unsolved; how contradictions were contained, justified, or just wrapped within the folds of those discourses; what enclaves were opened within

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[14]Talal Asad, "Law, Ethics and Religion in the Story of Egyptian Modernization," in Heike Bock, et al, editors, *Religion and its Other: Secular and Sacral Concepts and Practices in Interaction*, (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 2008), 23-39.

those discourses; and what inhabited them? To study not only how the religious and the secular are redefined, but also how their authorizing discourses are created and unfolded is to study, among other things, the bureaucracy of the state, the formation of the cultural, economic and military elites, the militarism of the state, the agrarian aristocracy, the *ʿulamāʾ*, the emerging petite bourgeoisie, as well as traditional practices and institutions.

My point here is that the assumption of a western, secular and modern state in conflict with a traditionalist culture, an assumption that is adopted by a plethora of studies and has frequently been used to explain Islamism, has no foundation. There was no ideally-structured and politically-enforced state imposed on the people. There was a Western-inspired modernist project that has always been handled and negotiated by a number of social groups.

The state-approach is also appropriate to articulate culture and political economy and put them in their right context. On the one hand, numerous studies of modern Islam or Islamism have taken culture as their framework of analysis, whether culture in the social sense, as a tradition, or in the ideological sense, as an ideology. For instance, relying on modernization theory, Zack Kertcher argued that MBG is a local traditionalist reaction to post-industrial globalization.15 Ideologically, Islamism has come to be seen as a response to cultural imperialism. From this perspective, the most important societal strain is the growing influence of western culture, as supported by an assortment of foreign and international political, economic, and military instruments [Burgat and

[15] Zack Kertcher, "Globalization and Traditionalist Politics," paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Aug 16, 2003).

Dowell, 1993; Keddie, 1994; Esposito, 1998].16

The serious theoretical flaw of these studies is that they focus on the assumed essence of an isolated culture. On the contrary, the state provides one of the best sites to study this culture in its engagement with modernity and the modern politicization of reality. Instead of contrasting an essential culture to an ideal and ruptured modernity, it is more fruitful to examine their real encounter and their redefinition in the spaces of the state, to use Asad's phrase. In addition, instead of isolating Islamism, it is better to reconnect it to its birthplace, the project of the modern nation-state, to define it as a modern discourse *of* Islam that has developed through the foundation and changes of the modern nation state. Moreover, a study of Islamism as a discourse interrelated with the discourse of the modern state does not eliminate the role of ideology. Ideology, as Foucault put it, is a non-discursive formation articulated on the surface of the discourse. Foucault attends to an important aspect of discourse-ideology relationship in writing, "By correcting itself, by rectifying its errors, by clarifying its formulations, discourse does not necessarily undo its relations with ideology. The role of ideology does not diminish as rigour increases and error is dissipated."17 Therefore, to study Islamists' ideology is to study it in its relation to the discourse of Islamism; and to study the discourse of Islamism is to study it in its relation to the discourse of the modern nation-state.

Since the 1970s, innumerable socio-political studies have rooted Islamism in

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[16]Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory: A New Direction for Research," *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002), 187-211.

[17]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 186.

economic grievances, which explain why individuals join an Islamic movement.18 Bryan Turner, for instance, wrote, “Political Islam or Islamism is the consequence of social frustrations, articulated around the social divisions of class and generation that followed from the economic crises of the global neoliberal experiments of the 1970s and 1980s.”19 This is also what Asef Bayat argued: that economic liberalization led to problems for the middle class, one of the manifestations of which is Islamism.20 The same argument is reiterated by Michael Fischer in “Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie,” where he characterized fundamentalists as typically urban poor petit bourgeois.21

The serious flaw with this appealing approach is that it has a western bias by giving primacy to capitalism over the state. Moreover, its narrow perspective constrains Islamists in their class affiliation, ignoring the multitude of other factors. Interestingly, Ziad Munson argued that the deprivation, anomie, strain, and class arguments all fail on the ground**s** of the *empirical* evidence. To make his point, Munson offered four tables that cover the period from 1930 to 1950 which clearly show how the high days of the Muslim Brotherhood coincided with lower urbanization rate, low representation of the assumed marginalized traditional class in the ranks of MBG, lower population growth, lower GDP and GNP, and more equitable distribution of income in society.22 Besides ignoring the complex relation of state control and management of economy, this approach even

[18]Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory,” 187-211.

[19]Bryan S. Turner, “Class, Generation and Islamism: towards a global sociology of political Islam,” *British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 54, no. 1 (March 2003), 139-147.

[20]Asef Bayat, “Activism and Social Development in the Middle East,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, (February, 2002), 1-28.

[21]Michael M. J. Fischer, “Islam and the Revolt of the Petit Bourgeoisie,” *Daedalus*, vol. 111, no. 1, Religion, (The MIT Press, Winter, 1982), 101-125.

[22]Ziad Munson, “Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,” *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 4, (The Midwest Sociological Society, 2001), 487-510.

ignored both the complexity of economy itself: having the coexistence of simultaneous socialist, liberal and shadow economies and the relationships between those economies and state's centers of power, on the one hand, and Islamic movement structures, on the other hand.

My Approach

I cannot agree more on the significance and centrality of the state in studying Islamism. The symbiotic relationships between the State and the Brothers, both as individuals and as representatives of their Group, are so extensive. It is embarrassing that those relationships have been researched only as ones of constant conflict and bitter competition. Nor was the crucial and integral function of MBG in the state's project has been seriously studied either. I attended to these two aspects, but my main point was, in fact, different.

I aimed mainly at downplaying the notion of *agency*, whether that of the state or the Group. Influence, cooperation, competition and the rest of concepts that have been called to characterize MBG-state relationships were downplayed too, for relationships in my work are not relationships between agents; they are relationships between discourses. To be accurate, they are relationships drawn by a researcher, who is trying to draw comparisons among discursive discourses. Those are comparisons among archaeological formations of the studied discourses. In my work, I am stepping back to see the archaeological formations of the three discourses of the state, the economy and Islamism in three different phases. I am attending to the *interesting* similarities and comparable

differences among their formations, to their emergence and their change. I am examining those discourses in their simultaneous presence, or *positivity*, as Foucault would have put it, not in their mutual functional relationships.[23]

It is quite startling that the Brotherhood has usually been studied only as an *organization*, mostly political, but sometimes social as well. This attitude in research would ultimately result in an interest in power, ideology, agenda, political competition, leadership, etc. I had to balance this distorting framing with an interest in *brotherhood* itself. I wanted to rescue the spirituality and fraternity of the *Group*. I wanted to shift emphasis from objectivity –the study of the Group as a structured organization, and from subjectivity –the study of the Group in terms of agency, decisions, attitudes, etc., to the study of the Group as intersubjectivity.

My interest in the economy goes beyond proving or disproving the marginalization argument. I wanted to compare formations of the economy and formations of Islamism. It was quite tempting to examine the economies of the Brothers and their obvious relationships to their attitudes and discourses. I had to struggle to avoid, as much as possible, this economist and orthodox Marxian approach. In addition to using the archaeological approach of Foucault, I de-economized my approach by resuming the old and forgotten project of Baudrillard, in which he relied on the pre-capitalist concept of *potlatch* to explain consumption, not as capitalist accumulation, but as destruction and

[23]Frankly, I am trying to de-politicize the Foucauldian approach. The abusive and shallow politicization of the Foucauldian project, not the least by Foucault himself, especially in his later works, such as Discipline and Punish, and in his several interviews, has deprived the project of its creative value. I have to admit that it was quite difficult to de-politicize the Foucauldian approach while studying the most important political structure to date: the state.

sacrifice. Furthermore, I tried to breathe new life in his forgotten work, *Seduction*, to do away of the hegemonic notion of *power* that has unfortunately come to be the sole and convenient solution to all sociological questions. I wanted to *reverse* power, capitalism, development, structures, logic, laws, etc., not by resistance, but by a qualitatively different concept that dates long before capitalism. In short, I wanted to balance the linear unfolding of the discourse by a circular return, so that continuity is not less dynamic than change is.

Unlike all those studies that compared and differentiated MBG discourse from other discourses, I showed how similar MBG discourse is to both Islamic discourses that had flourished before the emergence of MBG in 1928, and the discourse of al-Azhar. I stated clearly that al-Bannā has made his legacy by his actions, not by his ideas. His distinguished accomplishment is the translation of all those circulating Islamic discourses into an organization on the ground. I paid attention to the MBG practicality and characterized it as *fatwa*, not *pragmatism*. Unlike the too rigid *ideology* and the too flexible *pragmatism*, I rooted MBG *practicality* in *fatwa* that has two aspects: *mṣalaḥah* and *ḥudūd*, or interest and limits. Ideology and pragmatism, like power, unfold perpetually forward. *Fatwa* swings back and forth between *mṣalaḥah* and *ḥudūd*, between accumulation and sacrifice, by power and seduction.

There have been recently many works that aimed to articulate *a change* in MBG discourse and politics. The sudden change is basically liberal, making MBG more open to democracy, constitutionalism, cultural and social plurality and perhaps some grades of

secularism. There is always the question of whether this change is genuine or mere opportunism. In my study, I pay more attention to the assumed homogeneous past. I sketch out three layers of MBG discourse, reflecting on the different concepts that make the core knowledge of each discourse. More importantly, I reflect on their *rules of formation* –those that are shared by the two other discourses of the state and economy. I also reflect on the *system of dispersion* of those concepts: the juxtaposition of those concepts and how their arrangement mediate power and create specific choices. I trace back MBG discourse and root it in older discourses of Islamism that emerged with the emergence of the modern nation state in Egypt and the creation of an *economy*. More importantly, I study *changes*, not as reflections of attitudes, decisions, rational choices, not as grounded in new opportunities or new dynamism of political or economic power, but as archaeological changes that happen simultaneously in three different discourses. I pay more attention to the description of these changes, and less attention to rationalizing or explaining their occurrence.

Avoiding the conventional wisdom that Islam's interest, much like that of Judaism, is in *orthopraxy* not *orthodoxy*, I considered Islamic theology as central in understanding MBG discourse. I did not centralize theology by emphasizing statements of faith. Nor did I pay attention to how the Brothers described the society, whether as Islamic or as *Jāhilī.* Nor did I repeat the endeavors of creating analogy between MBG and other Islamic groups or sects, such as the medieval *Khārijī* or the modern *Salafī*. I centralized theology by reflecting on the notion of truth –its absence, since it is neither incarnated in flesh and blood, nor promised in a hopeful future, and, therefore, its

avoidance as well. I used *ghayb* as the domain that communicates the contingency of the truth, and accommodates the excess of meaning. I aimed to create a new approach to articulate *meaning* as a central theme of any discourse analysis.[24] I related this understanding of truth and the concept of *ghayb* to the *logic of the dual* that maintains the dynamism of the discourse, the swinging back and forth of its statements, the ambiguity of its meanings, the intentional indeterminacy of its choices. I proposed the *logic of the dual* to substitute the dialectic logic that moves the discourse perpetually forward. I hope that my work will be useful in studying other textual, historical and social phenomena within Sunni Islam.

It is very unfortunate that recent studies of *discourse* pay minimum attention, if at all, to its linguistic aspects. Recycling tired concepts and exhausted academic approaches of power, dominance, hegemony, marginalization, etc., those studies forget that *discourses* are textual phenomena. To study discourses is to study their grammar, their semantic or syntactical aspects, their style, their techniques, metaphors, etc. I aimed to study the MBG, whether as a structure or intersubjectivity, knowledge or practice, power or seduction, etc. as a textual phenomenon. I had to find within the text, not in its meaning or indications, but in its very forms those techniques and dynamics that create and maintain the phenomenon of the MBG. Therefore, I studied the *style* of the discourse, an empty and transparent form that mediates intersubjective conventions, while assuming values and ideological references. I also studied several *textual techniques* that are

[24] I hope to further develop this approach in the future by studying both Muslim semioticians and the structures of *fiqh*.

frequently used to reflect the *logic of the dual* and the strategy of *jamʿ* –mere collection, gathering or grouping that avoids consensus, *ijmāʿ*.

The approach I built in this study is one that aspires, not to transcend, but to bring together a number of methodological binaries, for instance, subject and object, structure and agency, ideology and economy, accumulation and sacrifice, *langue* and *parole*, etc. It does that by showing how those binaries dynamically interact within the text. It does that, not by referring the reader to mere conceptual spheres, be they *discourse*, *habitus* or *practice*, but by seriously articulating this interaction, this dualism, in its textual manifestation.

Moreover, this study aims to transform the famous methodological binary of the insider/outsider. Here, I am not relying on any participant-observant technique, where internalizing the native point of view would supposedly change something, perhaps psychological or intellectual, inside the researcher, so that s/he would rationally and scientifically write *as* a native. Nor am I pretending to re-present interesting findings that provide new insights of the native's perspective. Nor am I focusing on using native's concepts to create a new language that better articulates the native's knowledge –though I am using such concepts, for instance, *ghayb* and *jamʿ*. All those approaches have eventually to use *our* theories and *our* methodologies. I am solving this problem by integrating the native's knowledge in manufacturing that methodology itself. I am using my knowledge as a Muslim, my sociological observations as an Egyptian trained in US schools and lives and teaches in US, my earlier knowledge of the MBG from long years I

had spent as a member and a leader of this Group, and my knowledge of the Arabic Language, being my mother tongue, to make an approach that reflects this knowledge. It is the approach itself, the methodology, its industry that has to translate the native's knowledge. I aimed to develop a new approach that is built on semiotic, grammar, rhetoric and theological assumptions of the MBG in Egypt. Theories of meaning and semiotic analyses, I argue, are culturally specific and theologically related.

Translation has never been impossible. I built my approach using Western theories. I extensively used especially the works of Foucault, Habermas and Baudrillard. I understand the major differences, in fact, contradictions among these works. However, I integrated fragments, pieces and blocks of them with pieces of knowledge from Arabic Language, Sunni theology and Egyptian reality. I hope that this work will contribute to the second stage of human dialogue, where mutual differences are not only understood, but they are understood well enough to make good translation possible.

In the following three chapters, I will focus on the interrelationships between three discourses in modern Egypt: Islamism, nation-state and economy. Then, I will discuss their change and transformation. It is necessary to examine two aspects of MBG discourse. The first is the unfolding of numerous statements such as, the Quran is our Constitution, the Islamic identity, the Islamic State and its borders, the necessity of scientific planning, the periodization of the strategy, consultation, the organizational unit of family, the brotherhood, the Islamic economy, the pedagogical methods in building the Group, *al-Umma*, independence, social justice, we are practical people, and the ethics of

soldiery among others. We should ask why those statements, and not others, show up in the discourse, and what purpose do they serve? We should also examine, for instance, the rules of scientifism, economism, and pragmatism that spread among statements about the organization, law, politics, and family relationships, which make what Foucault calls the *rules of formation*. In addition, we should examine what he calls the *system of dispersion*, as, for instance, in putting the individual Muslim, *al-fard al-Muslim*, next to the family, next to the society, next to pedagogical curricula, next to political participation, next to Sufi ethics and the ethics of soldiery.

The second aspect is that we have also to examine MBG discourse in comparison with other discourses, of which I chose the discourses of nation-state and economy. This is what Foucault calls *interpositivity*. I will apply the five tasks which Foucault sets out for himself: 1) to show how quite different discursive elements may be formed on the basis of similar rules, that is *archaeological isomorphisms*; 2) to show to what extent these rules do or do not apply in the same way, that is an *archaeological model*; 3) to show how entirely different concepts occupy a similar position in the ramification of their system of positivity, that is, *archaeological isotopia*; 4) to show how a single notion may cover two archaeologically distinct elements, that is *archaeological shifts*; and 5) to show how from one positivity to another, relations of subordination or complementarity may be established, that is, *archaeological correlations*.25

To study the MBG discourse, therefore, is to study, for instance, the rule to unify and consolidate. Studying this rule, I showed how different discursive elements in the three

[25]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*," 160-1.

discourses of MBG, the nation state and the economy are organized to transcend differences and close gaps. I explained how contradictory elements are brought together by opposing reality to ideology and favoring the first over the second. That is what Foucault calls *archaeological isomorphisms.*

One can also show *archaeological model* by reflecting on the modernist *rule of progress* and the extent and the way of its application in discourses of MBG, the nation-state and the economy. It should not be surprising, then, to find Sayyid Qutb's (1906-1966) works woven around the rule of progress, even though they have consistently been described by the state-run media as *reactionary*. As a matter of fact, and because Qutb, at least from his own point of view, considered himself to be *progressive*, he also consistently described the state as *jāhiliyyah*, which has strong connotations of being *reactionary*.

There are many examples showing what Foucault called *archaeological isotopia*. For instance, one can compare *jihād*'s position in MBG discourse to employment's position in state's discourse. A pedagogic curricula, whether in MBG organization or in government schools, must result in an objective at the collective level that meets the MBG's or the state's strategic plans. This objective could manifest in one discourse as *jihād* and in another discourse as *employment*. In addition, one can notice parallel changes in those two discourses. The Nasserist (r. 1954-1970) state's discourse that emphasized its essential role in planning for its needs, its right to send students to schools that meet those needs, and its duty to find enough jobs to the graduates has dramatically

changed during Mubarak's (r. 1981-present) years. Nowadays, students have a number of alternative education systems in public and private schools. After receiving their high school diplomas they can either go to public universities, according to the universities' *capacities*, or they can go to private universities, according to their own budgets. The government does not guarantee any jobs to either group of students. Similarly, one finds two different *jihāds* in the 1960s and the 1990s, one that is presumably required by all trained members through the organization of MBG, and one that takes the form of *civil jihad* and is carried on individually.

Foucault's remark of a single notion that may cover two archaeologically distinct elements, which he calls *archaeological shifts*, may be found in the notion of *openness* that one finds in the economy discourse of liberalism, in the state's discourse of initiating relationships with the West, as well as in MBG discourse of plurality. I discussed this notion in detail, while exploring the polarization-discourse.

An important aspect of my study is what Foucault calls *archaeological correlations*, where relations of subordination or complementarity are established between two discourses. Here, we have to differentiate between the two discourses of MBG and nation-state, and the two *subjects* of the MBG and the state, which are, themselves, products of their corresponding discourses. Earlier scholarship focused only on the subjects of the state and MBG, characterizing their mutual relationship as mainly one of competition and struggle.[26] If we pay attention to the discourses, we immediately

[26]In fact, this assumption itself is false, as cooperation and, at least, understanding and division of labor have characterized their mutual relationships for many decades.

find a relationship of symbiosis. There could simply be no discourse of Islamism without a discourse of nation-state; and a discourse of nation-state could have never developed without articulating Islam, something that is continuously achieved through the discourse of MBG and is continuously absorbed and used by the nation-state discourse. I elaborated on this aspect throughout the three stages of the three discourses. Downplaying the numerous personal relationships among agents of MBG, the state and capitalism, I explained how related concepts that made the core-knowledge of the three discourses developed simultaneously to the extent that changes in MBG organizational structures have always paralleled structural changes in both the economy and the state.

It is also crucial to study the change and transformation of those discourses, including their emergence and disappearance. Here too the Foucauldian approach is useful, because far from being indifferent to change in his "archaeological stage," as repeatedly claimed, Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, only ignores the linear succession of events that mounts to a developmental or evolutionary logic. He writes that "What it (archaeology) suspends is the theme that succession is an absolute: a primary, indissociable sequence to which discourse is subjected by the law of its finitude."27 What Foucault objects to is the special status granted to change as a universal law. He replaces this attitude with an emphasis on analyzing the *system of transformations* that constitutes the change: how the different elements of a system of formation are transformed; how the characteristic relations of a system of formation were transformed; how the relations between different rules of formation are transformed; and how the relations between

[27]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*," 169.

different positivities are transformed.28

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Foucault does not consider a comprehensive rupture between two phases, a rupture that results in a *unity of change*, and in spite of his refusal to recognize the period as a unity that imposes an empty form on all discourses, he recognizes rupture as "the name given to transformations that bear on the general rules of one or several discursive formations."29 In other words, he recognizes both rupture and the period, but only as a coincidental result of several, complex, describable groups of transformations that have different effects on different positivities.

In an attempt to apply this theory of discourse to the modernity of Egypt, I argue that we can identify three layers, in each of which there is an interpositivity of the three discourses of MBG, nation-state, and economy. The first layer stretches from the reign of Mehmet Ali (R. 1805-1848) to Nāsser's regime (R. 1954-1970). One finds the emergence and establishment of a discourse of a central, hegemonic, and inclusive national state. The same inclusiveness could be found in the emerging discourse of comprehensive and systematic Islam, which the founder of MBG, Hasan el-Banna (1906-1949) called *al-Islām al-šāmil.* Contemporary with first two discourses, there was a third, related discourse of national political economy that aims to connect a multitude of social, political, scientific, educational, medical and economic activities.30

A second layer is characterized by a bipolar socialist-liberal state discourse,

[28]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*," 172, 3.
[29]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*," 177.
[30]A good example here is cotton, which had been introduced by the political leadership and continued to influence much of Egypt agricultural, industrial, economic, local and international political, research, social and class activities for almost two centuries.

double state corporatist-privatized economy and dual conservative-reformer Islamist discourse. While compromise and moderation characterized the first two discourses, Islamists called their discourse *al-Islām al-wasaṭī*, or the middle-way Islam. This layer has been detected from the mid-1970s until the present.

The third layer has gradually been emerging since mid 1990s. While current scholarship either theorizes the conflict or predicts a winning of this or that end of the bipolar spectrum, I argue that compromise and moderation of the three discourses are being substituted for functional redistribution and *modularization* at the institutional level. A multitude of functional *modules* are being continuously created to carry out different functions. Alliances and networks are continuously formed and dissolved to accommodate different and, sometimes, contradictory functions.

After exploring the three stages of the discourse, I end my dissertation by two crucial chapters. The first chapter of these two final chapters is *Deployment*. In this chapter, I explore the making and unmaking of the discourse. If the earlier chapters question was *what* is the core-knowledge of the discourse, this chapter raises the question of *why*? Why this knowledge has contradictory concepts and formations? Why the rules of classification and systematization of the consolidation-discourse are joined with the rules of unity that aim to fuse and confuse? Why openness is juxtaposed to resistance in the polarization-discourse? Why two contradictory agendas are carried on by two different modules of the same Organization in the modularization-discourse?

If the Foucauldian post-structuralist approach stepped away from structures to

propose *discursive formations* –formations that we are supposed to describe their archeology, their positivity, not to explain their occurrence, I try in this chapter to examine the internal dynamics of the discourse that give the discourse its discursiveness. I do that by focusing on intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity restores the *brotherhood* within the *organization*. It balances the objective structures and, in fact, de-structure them. It reverses the discourse's power without relying on *resistance*, another form of power as Baudrillard correctly claimed.

I construct my approach at this stage with elements taken from two heterogeneous works: Habermas and Baudrillard. I use Habermas' conceptual spheres of *systems* and *lifeworld* as the objective and intersubjective spaces. I also take advantage of Baudrillard's concepts of *seduction* and *reversibility* to create an intersubjective mechanism that seduces power and undoes its effects. Power, or accumulation, the sole spirit of both structuralist and post-structuralist approaches is balanced by seduction, or sacrifice, the spirit of intersubjectivity. It is this internal ongoing *reversibility* that is sorely lacking in the Foucauldian approach, and which is central to any analysis of MBG discourse. This deployment of the discourse, I argue, helps us overcome a number of methodological dualities, for instance, parole and langue, insider and outsider, traditional and modern, agency and structure, as well as intersubjectivity and objectivity. We will be able to study their mutual relationships and coexistence within the discourse.

After introducing and critiquing the works of Habermas and Baudrillard, I reflect on the three foundations of MBG: *tarbiyah* or cultivation, *da'wah*, or spreading the word,

and *iṣlāḥ*, or reform, to show how they mediate lifeworld and systems, and how they articulate power and its reversibility. I follow this reflection with a discussion of the juxtaposition of *discipline* and *brotherhood* within the Group. I explain how these two central organizational concepts reverse each other, maintaining the discourse's characteristic dynamism. I move on after that to explain this reversibility in the three layers of the discourse. I revisit the consolidation, polarization and modularization-discourses to explain their internal dynamics and the way their heterogeneous knowledge works.

In the last chapter, I attend to the textuality of the discourse. Here, I explain how the discourse conducts its knowledge and mediates its dynamics at the textual level. I examine the rhetorical and semantic aspects of the text. I aim to explore the interaction between objectivity and intersubjectivity, the power-seduction encounter, the practice of the discourse, and the creation of meaning at the level of the text, its sentences and its grammar.

I start with a discussion of the notion of *truth*. I emphasize the intersubjective and conventional nature of the truth over its claimed objectivity. I also point to its accumulative nature in the work of Habermas. However, critiquing Habermas, I push his thesis forward to deny its possible reification in the future. Not accepting the postmodern reluctance to consider the notion of *truth*, I open a space for its possibility. I situate this space, not in the future, but completely outside, though in communication with, history. It is this space that accommodates the abundance of meaning that goes far beyond any

semiotic capacity. I call this space *ghayb*, an Islamic concept that refers to the unseen or unknown reality. I argue that *ghayb* is necessary to complete the semiotic square of objective, subjective and intersubjective, by providing the negation of negation.

Avoiding both structuralist binaries and Foucauldian post-structuralist *points of diffraction,* I explore a textual strategy of no-choice, where ambiguity is intentionally created to avoid the two binary choices. I argue that this strategy revolutionizes language –that is supposedly based on classifications, differentiation, oppositions—and makes it an impossible host of *truth*. I propose a *dual reason* in place of the dialectic reason, one that maintains reversibility, avoids choices and accommodates a space of *ghayb*.

Arguing against rational consensus, *ijmāʿ* in Arabic, I advance the Islamic concept of *jamʿ*, which refers to mere gathering, as the basis of conventional agreements around norms and meanings. I also use Baudrillard's *rules of the game*, which he proposes in place of logic, grammar and rational laws. I, then, argue of the necessity of a pure form that can accommodate the dual reason and the reversibility, that is devoid of meaning or depth, empty, but can still mark its discourse. I conclude that this form, which should be the focus of further analyses of MBG discourse, is the *style*.

I end this chapter by an applied study on different pieces of MBG literature. I start with an exploration of the strategy of *jamʿ* within the text. Then, I turn to show how *ghayb* is situated in the folds of this discourse, explaining how it works to leverage the meaning into unattainable spaces. After that, I study in details nine textual techniques that can be identified within MBG literature. Those techniques reflect and maintain all the

aforementioned internal dynamics of the discourse. Here, I demonstrate the formation and dynamics of the discourse, not at its conceptual level, but at its syntactic dimension. Eventually, I reflect on a number of features of the style of MBG discourse.

Chapter One

Before the Brothers

Numerous studies rooted the emergence of MBG in the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, and the dramatic effects it had on Muslims. Other studies explained this emergence as a reaction to the liberal and secular character of the Egyptian State at that time. Intellectually, the conventional wisdom put the Founder's discourse in continuity with three successive scholars: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897,) Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905,) and Rašīd Riḍā (1865-1935). Without downplaying the significance of these events and intellectual works, the MBG discourse has to be traced back to the French Campaign against Egypt (1798-1801) and the establishment of Mehmet Ali Paşa's State in Egypt (1805-1842.) Intellectually, al-Bannā's discourse is better understood as a continuity of other scholars, whose works were more integral to the emergence and development of the modern Egyptian state, for instance, Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (1766-1835,) Rifāʿah al-Ṭahṭāwī (1801-1873,) ʿAlī Yūsuf (1863-1913) and ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz Jāwīš (1876-1929.) I will summarize these events and those works in the following background. I will also organize them in three successive historical stages.

First Stage

In Egypt in the early nineteenth century, a medieval state, ruled by a foreign, tax collecting, military elite, that is subordinated, at least nominally, to a pan-Islamic caliphate, whose Sultan resided in Istanbul, was converted by a persistent and decisive at first Ottoman governor, Mehmet Ali Paşa (1769-1849), into a consolidated modern nation

state. The newly emerging state had its own mighty army, to which the Egyptians were drafted by the late 1820s. Mehmet Ali

> established state control over the land, giving his government the power to determine what the peasants sowed, to supply their seed, tools, fertilizer, and irrigation water, and to set the prices it would pay for their produce. … a new irrigation system came into being, enabling the peasants to raise three crops each year on lands where formerly they had grown only one. Cash crops, such as indigo, tobacco, sugar, and especially long-staple cotton, replaced those raised mainly for the peasants' subsistence.[31]

The Pasha supported his agricultural reforms by an extending "network of barge canals, river ports, and cart roads, together with grain weighing and storage facilities, cotton gins, sugar refineries and other capital improvements."[32] He launched an industrial revolution of sorts, introducing modern factories for the manufacture of soap, paper, cotton textiles, warships, and armaments. A modern education system was also established. He founded schools of engineering, medicine, midwifery, languages, administration, and arts and crafts. An overarching bureaucracy was extended to administer and regulate all these state operations. Finally, by threatening the Ottomans, he forced them reach agreement with him, recognizing the hereditary rule of his family

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[31]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt: The Formation of a Nation State* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988),, 17-18.
[32]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 18

and clearer borders to his country.

It is important here to emphasize the centrality of the army in Ali's project. It was the core, around which the project evolved. In fact, and as Ṭāriq el-Bišrī argued, there was no complete distinction between the military and civil service. It was one military-civil institution that gave the civil service a military character. Civil servants had to dress in military uniforms and acquire military ranks. In 1847, for instance, a midwife was hired in a midwifery school as a lieutenant.[33] This administrative and military *project* transformed "Egypt" from a geographical concept into a political one.

In politics and economy, the emphasis was on using *new* techniques to centrally administer scattered resources. In politics, there was the creation of extensive bureaucracy and the administration of population. The Bedouins had to settle down, and to work either in the army or in agriculture. If Egyptian Muslims will have to be conscripted to the army, the Copts will be assigned the financial administration of the state. The health and the education of the *people* are the business of the government that should also be organized and administered centrally. Economically, the land had to be surveyed and rationally distributed. Cash crops are to be introduced and compulsory administered by the state. Local industry is rationally founded and protected by tariffs and other measures of the state. To fulfill these political and economic objectives, Ali realized the need to import the new European *technologies and techniques*, whether in governmental administration, medicine, schooling, industry, weaponry, etc.

[33]Ṭāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ fi Iṭār al-Jamāʿah al-Waṭaniyyah*, (Cairo: Al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li-Al-Kitāb, 1980),, 21.

Like “Egypt,” a political concept that is yet to be developed, “Islam” was a mere name of the religion of the people. It had yet to be developed as a separate and reified ideological concept. Ali, in his speeches, instructions and statues used what we see now as “Islamic” rhetoric. Islam had yet to be separated and at that time this *religious* rhetoric was used by the Pasha in an ordinary sense that reflects no specific ideological choice. Ali ordered his officers to begin their military training of the newly conscripted Egyptian soldiers with reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, for inspiration and blessings. He used scholars and preachers to recruit the young peasants to join the army, and called its function *Jiāhd*. He even asked some scholars to join the army and its campaigns.

Contemporary to Ali, and working with him, was a scholar from al-Azhar, whose name is Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār. ʿAṭṭār encountered the French scholars who accompanied Napoleon in his campaign against Egypt. He learned from them their new European arts and sciences in exchange of teaching them Arabic language.[34] After years of touring Albania, Turkey and the Levant, he came back to Egypt to be a consultant of Ali. Declaring that “Our countries must change their conditions and acquire the sciences unavailable to them yet,” he emphasized, once and again, the need to the sciences and technology that empowered Europe.[35] Though failing to reform al-Azhar, he urged Ali to proceed in creating a modern educational system and to found a number of technical high schools, like those of medicine, engineering, pharmacy, linguistics, etc.[36] According to Muḥammad ʿAbdul-Ghanī Ḥasan, ʿAṭṭār’s scholarship had two characters: an interest in

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[34] ʿAzzām Tamīmī, “Islam and Democracy from Tahtawi to Ghannouchi,” *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2007),: 39-58.

[35] ʿAzzām Tamīmī, “Islam and Democracy.”

[36] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār*, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1993),, 75.

precise definitions, and being encyclopedic.[37] In his commentaries on earlier works, he moves freely from grammar to logic, history, geography, literature, etc. Failing to convince al-Azhar scholars to teach new sciences, he had a group of his students with whom he read and translated French books. In this sense, ʿAṭṭār may represent an Arabic version of the Enlightenment French philosophes.

In a conversation between ʿAṭṭār and his friend, the famous historian al-Jabartī (1756-1825,) the latter thought that focusing on legal questions and Šarīʿah sciences is better than getting busy with other sorts of knowledge. ʿAṭṭār rhetorically asked him, "Why? Is not religion protected and observed?"[38] For both Jabartī and ʿAṭṭār, there is no "Islamic" science opposed to non-Islamic science. Those are just "Šarʿī" sciences. For ʿAṭṭār, astronomy comes before Ḥadīth, since it is the science that is badly missing. Like Ali, he is interested in importing European new technology and has a very utilitarian approach to the Western Civilization. In addition, like Ali, he is interested in organizing scattered *resources*: Ḥadīth, Qurʾān, Fiqh, literature, astronomy, medicine, geography, history, etc.

Second Stage

Ali's reign ended by a collapse of his economic project. The rest of the nineteenth century witnessed a change in politics, economy and the socio-cultural spheres. The Europeans decided to dismantle his monopolies, and Ali's mercantilism would not stand the power of the expanding European capitalism. The land had to be put in the free

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[37]Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār*, 77.
[38]Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār*, 73.

market and the cotton should be subject to the global market dynamics and the manipulation of private traders. The embryonic Egyptian industry could not fight back the European products. Economically, Egypt had to be integrated into a global and capitalist market, in which its position was definitely at the *periphery*.[39] In addition, the Egyptian territory was opened to the European and especially the British-Indian trade. Rail lines were stretched and the Suez Canal was dug out. Cash crops, especially cotton, and raw materials to the European factories became the core of the Egyptian economy. Between 1815 and 1850 British exports to the eastern Mediterranean countries increased 800 per cent.[40] That was accompanied by a large European influx into Egypt. Professionals and entrepreneurs settled in Egypt protected from local laws by special treaties and capitulations.[41]

Economically, Egypt now is not merely seeking *means* of production from Europe. Egypt is adopting, and getting integrated into, the European model of production. That came with acute contradictions. By 1878, Alexandria, Cairo and all the new towns on the Suez Canal, along with the railroad stations, hotels, restaurants, and department stores came to resemble Marseille or New Orleans, if not Paris or New York.[42] Proudly, Khedive Ismāʿīl (1830-1895) announced that "My country is no longer in Africa; we are now a part of Europe."[43] However, not everyone benefited from these economic changes. The new policies favoured merchants engaged in trade with Europe, who played an

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[39]Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, (New York: Warner Books, 1991),, 273.
[40]Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 267.
[41]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 27.
[42]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 29.
[43]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt,* 29.

increasingly important role in shaping the economy of the country, and who were largely Europeans merchants.[44]

Politically, "Egypt" was gradually turned into a political concept, and seeds of nationalism were growing up. Khedive Ismāʿīl financed the earliest newspapers, set up government schools, convoked the first representative assembly in 1866 and established the Mixed Courts to try foreigners in Egypt. These changes nurtured a class of educated Egyptians that came to be involved in the political life of the country.[45] Furthermore, those Egyptians found their way to be army officers and state officials and to eventually form Egypt's first nationalist movement. That, however, was paralleled with an increase in foreign intervention in Egypt's affairs. As Hourani put it, "Behind the merchants and ship-owners of Europe stood the ambassadors and consuls of the great powers, supported in the last resort by the armed might of their governments."[46] The financial crisis and the huge debt made the Khedive to accept a British-French "Dual Financial Control" over Egyptian state revenues and expenditures.[47]

In this politico-economic context, Ṭahṭāwī (1801-1873) wrote his works. A disciple of ʿAṭṭār, he was recommended to Ali, by ʿAṭṭār himself, to be commissioned as a guide and *imām* for the select group of army cadets who had been dispatched to learn the French sciences and acquire modern military technologies.[48] Neither spiritual guidance, nor technologies seemed to be the interest of Ṭahṭāwī in France. He was

[44]Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples,* 276.
[45]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 30.
[46]Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples,* 268.
[47]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 29.
[48]ʿAzzām Tamīmī, "Islam and Democracy."

interested in and acquired “a precise knowledge of the French language and read books on ancient history, Greek philosophy and mythology, geography, arithmetic and logic and, most importantly, as Hourani emphasizes, the French thought of the 18th century – Voltaire, Rousseau’s Social Contract and other works.”[49] In his famous book about the description of Paris, he recorded the customs and manners of the French people. Ṭahṭāwī here is not writing about French technology; his concern is the French *civilization*. He writes about *al-ʿulūm al-ḥikmiyyah*, the philosophical knowledge and its essential significance. He writes about the French philosophes, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, and translates and comments on pieces of the French Constitution in his book.

Ṭahṭāwī was aware of the serious contradiction between the urgency to adopt a new mode of life, and the necessity to maintain essential traditional values and structures. To solve this problem, he set out some rules and tried some techniques. For instance, he set out *Šarīʿah* as his limits. Reason should not precede revelation. That is being said, he writes about the significance of *ijtihād* and *taʾwīl*, or interpretation. He also announced the essential harmony between cosmic laws and the rulings of *Šarīʿah.* Ṭahṭāwī aims at translation in its general sense. He finds out analogies between Islamic and European civilizations, and use *šarʿī* terms to express French concepts. For instance, he writes about the similarity of French civil law and the rulings of *fiqh*, stating that “what we call *ʿilm al-usūl*, or the science of foundations, they call natural rights. Those are rational priciples of knowing the good and the ugly, on which they base their civil rulings. What we call *furūʿ fiqhiyyah*, legal subjects, they call civil rights. What we name *ʿadl wa iḥsān*,

[49] ʿAzzām Tamīmī, “Islam and Democracy.”

justice and grace, they call freedom and equality."[50]

He creates new Arabic words to translate concepts like citizenship, which he calls *muwāṭanah*. He also uses the same root in *waṭan*, country, and *waṭaniyyah*, nationalism, to cleverly root nationalism in the land not the people. Furthermore, he finds out a report of *Ḥadīth*, in which the Prophet expresses his longing to Mecca, to religiously justify nationalism. More interestingly is his careful conceptual translation of freedom. Instead of using *ḥurriyyah*, he uses *ʿadl*, justice. He justifies that by writing, "What they call freedom, and motivate people for it, is exactly what we call justice and fairness, *ʿadl wa inṣāf*, for the meaning of ruling by freedom is equality before rules and laws. Thereby, the ruler can not do injustice to anyone. They are the laws that rule and be considered."[51] Here Ṭahṭāwī is fully aware that he is translating, not two pieces of text, but two civilizations. He understands that the functional value of freedom in European civilization should be related, not to *ḥurriyyah*, which merely marks in Islamic literature the difference between the free and the slave, but to *ʿadl*, justice. He does not deny the value of freedom, for he elaborates on it in his book and writes, among other things, about religious freedom and the freedom of expression. He just anchors freedom in justice to bridge two different cultural structures. He cleverly avoids the trap of *laïcité*. He wants to anchor freedom in a concept that is rooted not merely in reason, but in revelation. If ʿAṭṭār is willing to import the techniques, but not the civilization, Ṭahṭāwī is willing to import the civilization, but not its foundation.

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[50]Rifāʿah Rāfiʿ Al-Ṭahṭāwī, *Al-Muršid al-Amīn fī Taʿlīm al-Banāt wa al-Banīn*, Al-Majlis al-Aʿla li-al-Thaqāfah, 2002, p. 124.

[51]Rifāʿah Rāfiʿ Al-Ṭahṭāwī, *Al-Muršid al-Amīn*, 185.

Before moving to the next stage, I want to highlight the foundation of Dār al-ʿUūlm in 1872. This school was founded to bridge the gap between two kinds of knowledge, one of them is modern and European, the other is traditional and Islamic. In 1875, its curriculum included Quranic exegesis, Islamic law, literature, history, geography, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geometry and calligraphy. In 1885, the school of languages was included into Dār al-ʿUūlm, and in 1944 a curriculum of pedagogy was added. This school was founded with the sole purpose of creating Islamic knowledge that is authentic and yet modern. It had to focus eventually on teaching Arabic Language and Islamic sciences. Today, its published *Vision*, reads, "Working on making Dār al-ʿUūlm an institution of spreading Arabic Languages and Islamic sciences, protecting the Arabic and Islamic legacy through a diversified and scientific system, and *creative integration*, in which authenticity is mixed with modernity, for the purpose of preserving the Islamic Arabic identity, catching the global progress movement and founding the suitable conditions for the contribution of Islamic Arabic culture in reaching and making dialogue with the Other in a framework of non-extremism and moderation, *wasaṭiyyah wa iʿtid*āl*.*"52 Two graduates of this college are Ḥasan el-Bannā and Sayyid Quṭb.

Third Stage

This stage starts with the removing of Khedive Ismāʿīl from power in 1879 as a result of the economic crisis. It goes through the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and ends with the first World War. It was characterized by a number of splits. First, there was

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[52]http://darelom.cu.edu.eg/Roaia.htm, (accessed July 3rd, 2012).

the split between the ruler and the nationalist movement. Ismāʿīl's son, Kedive Tawfīq, had been involved in a secret society formed by Afghānī. However, reaching power, he decided to be careful from both the Europeans and the Muslim Egyptian nationalists. Egyptian army officers, who used to be members in the nationalist movement, challenged his authority in a sequence of events that ended with what is called ʿUrābī Revolution in 1882, led by Colonel Aḥmad ʿUrābī (1841-1911.) Tawfīq had to side with the Europeans to regain control, and the Revolution ended with the British occupation to Egypt in 1882. From this moment and up to the establishment of the Wafd Party in 1919 and the writing of 1923 Constitution, three powers will be gradually distinguished and will form the power triad that will control much of the political life until July 1952 Revolution: the Ruler, the nationalist movement and the British.

The second split is a split between Egypt and the Ottoman Caliphate. In 1906, Khedive ʿAbbās II, along with the British claimed Taba, a small port on the Western side of the Gulf of Aqaba, which the Ottomans had occupied. In this clash, the nationalists, led by Muṣṭafa Kāmil, sided with the Turks against their own government. They thought it was Britain that was served by claiming Sinai for Egypt.53 A group of Egyptian landowners and intellectuals, opposed to Muṣṭafa Kāmil's pro-Ottoman and pan-Islamic position during the Taba Affair founded a newspaper named *al-Jardīah* and a rival party, Ḥizb al-Ummah that will include many of future political leaders.54

The split that distinguished Egypt viz-a-viz the Ottoman Caliphate was paralleled

[53]Arthur Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 49.
[54]Arthur Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt,* 50.

by another split that distinguished Islam as an identity separate from Egyptian nationalism. A number of factors expedited a process in which the Other was framed as Christian, rather than European. Economically, the crisis hit only the natives, while the Europeans, along with Christian Arabs, mainly Syrians, and local Christian communities; Greek, Armenian, Italian, etc. suffered less, if at all. Politically, the nationalist resistance, whether by the Khedive or the National Party of Muṣṭafa Kāmil, sought assistance and support from the Ottoman Sultan being the head of the Islamic Caliphate. In addition, Western culture, in terms of modes of socialization, dressing, language, consumptions, newspapers and books, etc., was sweeping Egypt, especially in cities and among the elites. That was accompanied by increasing missionary work, hoping to convert the natives to Western Christianity.

Moreover, the very reason Britain gave to officially justify its occupation was protecting minorities. If Muslims were offended by this reason, the Copts were provoked by the actual practice of Britain in Egypt, which they saw as clear bias to the Muslim majority. On top of that, an emerging Muslim Christian conflict took an ugly turn from 1908 to 1911. An article published in *al-Waṭan* Newspaper, on June 15th, 1908, provocatively insulted the Islamic history in Egypt. Both Alī Yūsuf, the editor of al-Mūʾayyad Newspaper, of the Constitutional Party that works closely with the Khedive, and ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz Jāwīš, the editor of al-Liwāʾ Newspaper, of the National Party, replied al-Waṭan promptly and harshly. Soon, an exchange of arguments fueled by a number of articles and crowned by the assassination of the Coptic Prime Minister Buṭrus Ghālī in 1910 led Coptic leaders to hold the First Coptic Conference in 1911. In this conference,

they announced their political demands that had to be met in the constitution, the parliament, educational curricula, etc. The Muslims responded by holding the "Egyptian" Conference in which they refused to accpt the Copts as *political* minority.55 During this conflict, Sheikh ʿAlī Yūsuf, a close ally and friend of the Khedive, maintained his pro-Islamic attitude. The Nationalists were disappointed, however, from Sheikh Jāwīš, since he is the editor of the Nationalist paper. This event, the pro-Ottoman attitude of Kāmil, the position of the National Party in Taba Affair, among other factors, made the Nationalist movement grow later on wary from the potential risk of using Islamic rhetoric.

At this time, however, nationalism and Islam were still blended together the way Ṭahṭāwī had articulated them. The editor of the Nationalist paper, al-Liwāʾ, deserves some attention, for his writings and ideas seem identical with those of al-Bannā. Jāwīš graduated from Dār al-ʿUūlm in 1897 to work as a teacher. He was sent to England to study modern pedagogy and came back to Egypt to work in the Ministry of Education. Back to England, he worked as a professor of Arabic at Oxford from 1904 to 1906. Recommended by the famous orientalist Margoliouth, he taught also at Cambridge. In 1908, he resigned from the Ministry of Education to be the editor of al-Liwāʾ from 1908 until 1912, when he was deported to Turkey. During these years, he wrote vehemently against the British occupation, called for resistance and was determined that the Ottoman Caliphate must be defended by all means. He was involved in a number of secret organizations, but his public work was mainly support to the foundation of schools and

[55] Ṭāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 59-114.

improvement of education. He called to the foundation of a national bank and wrote about the significance of historical context in applying the Islamic law. He had to flee Turkey after the end of WWI to Germany. He later on came back to Turkey and worked with Ataturk. In 1923, he secretly traveled back to Egypt after a dispute with Ataturk, as he rejected the demolition of the Caliphate.56 In Egypt, he worked back in Ministry of Education. From the autobiography of al-Bannā, we know that they met during the foundation of the Society of Young Muslims. The moral discourse, the focus on education, the feeling of urgency to *defend* Islam, the involvement in mobilizing the people and organizing them, the understanding of the need of a renewal of Islamic law and the emphasis on the caliphate are all common grounds between them. Jāwīš died in 1929, one year after the foundation of MBG.

Before moving to the post-first World War phase that witnessed the birth of the Muslim Brotherhood Group, I have to highlight one important point. The three splits I explained above resulted in reorganization of political and cultural agendas. On the one hand, the ruler strengthened his relationships with the Ottomans and embraced "Islam" as its legitimizing ideology. Islamic discourses and structures would be nurtured and protected by this ruler. On the other hand, the nationalist movement distanced itself from Turkey, emphasized Egypt as its ultimate reference and, though not converting to secularism as sometimes claimed, had to seriously downplay its Islamic rhetoric. By 1919, the Nationalist popular motto will be "Religion for God; the Country for

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[56]Ṣalāḥ Zakī Aḥmad, *Aʿlām al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth*, (Cairo: Al-Ḥaḍārah al-ʿArabiyyah, 2001),, 103-109.

everyone!"

Chapter Two

Consolidation Discourse

This is the first of three layers I am studying in this part. In this phase, I will analyze the three discourses of the nation-state, economy and Muslim Brotherhood Group, MBG, during the time between the end of WWII and the death of President Nasser in 1970. Each of these discourses was in a state of being gradually consolidated. As I will explain later, none of these discourses could eventually be seriously consolidated. Gaps, ambiguities and unsettled compromises were always there in spite of the continuous flow to presumed consolidation. In addition, we can notice three chronological *stages* of this phase. The *logic* of these stages is neither a logic of conscious subjects who animated this discourse, nor is it the objective logic of a structured and isolated discourse. It is what *we* as researchers may deduce and claim to better analyze the discourse and articulate its assumed stages. Like their phase, none of these stages could be completed.

First Stage-Identity

Discourse of Economy

Just before the first World War, "The economy was largely geared toward the production and export of a single crop, cotton, which accounted for 93 percent of exports."[57] Credit, foreign trade and shipping were in non-Egyptian hands. Even during

[57]Joel Beinin, and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class. 1882-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987),, 9.

the two decades that followed the War, the economy was by and large an agricultural economy. There was one, but important exception to this case. In 1920, Ṭalʿat Ḥarb (1867-1941,) a nationalist Egyptian, decided to found an Egyptian bank, by the Egyptians and for the Egyptians. Ḥarb, on the one hand, met the interest of the agrarian bourgeoisie to diversify their investments and, on the other hand, answered the desire of the Egyptian masses to see an industry that is owned and run by their hands. He insisted that the founders and the board be only Egyptians. Ḥarb succeeded in his mission. After 1930, the state protected his work by imposing tariffs. However, Ḥarb relied on a Western model and capitalist structure. He, in fact, supported capitalism by divesting small savings that had either been not *used* or used in traditional economy, and investing them in his huge capitalist projects. In addition, "There was as yet no state planning, let alone any coordinated policy."[58]

Discourse of the State

This movement for further independence is certainly noticed in the political sphere as well. Saʿd Zaghlūl (1859-1927,) a graduate of al-Azhar and a student of Muḥammad ʿAbduh, came to be the most popular nationalist leader in Egypt after the first World War. After being saved from execution shortly after the British occupation, on a charge of belonging to a terrorist group, he traveled to France to study law. Supported by Princess Nazli, and getting married to the daughter of the prime minister, his upward mobility was expedited to be the minister of education in 1906, with a recommendation from the High Commissioner Cromer, and the justice minister in 1910. After he failed to

[58]Arthur Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 68.

negotiate an independence with the British, a popular revolution erupted in 1919. Three years later, Britain announced Egypt an independent state in 1922 with four reservations. Soon, in 1923, a constitution was written and parliamentary elections were conducted in 1924, in which al-Wafd, "the Delegation," the party founded by Zaghlūl, won a comfortable majority. As a result of a confilct with the British, Zaghlūl had to resign in November 1924, and King Fuʾād (1868-1936) appointed a caretaker cabinet of his own men.

The triangle of power I mentioned above became even clearer with the long and open dispute and competition over power between the King and the Wafd or, structurally, between the head of the state and the parliament. In this context, and while al-Bannā was a student at Dār al-ʿUlūm, the King typically defended the Islamic identity of the state, while the Wafd adopted the nationalist character of this identity. Islam was emerging now as *ideology*. and we may agree with James Whidden that "By 1924 the monarchists had introduced Islamist ideology into politics, transforming Egypt's political and cultural landscape."[59] The exaggeration of his statement can be understood when we consider that he is writing about Islam as a *modern political ideology*. In fact, the tons of writings that assume that it is the Muslim Brothers who revived the idea of the Caliphate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire are simply mistaken. Immediately after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, al-Azhar called for an Islamic conference in Cairo to declare Egypt as the center of the caliphate and King Fuʾād as the new caliph. This call was supported by al-

[59]James Whidden, "The Generation of 1919," in *Re-Envisioning Egypt, 1919-1952*, ed. Arthur Goldschmidt et. al. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005),, 19.

Ittiḥād Party, “Union.” In March 1924, the Islamic Religious Scientific Supreme Front[60] was formed to turn this call into a fact on the ground. The Front had a number of prominent scholars, the directors of the religious schools and institutions, Sufi masters, judges and some members of both the Senate and the Deputies Council. They announced that

> The Caliphate is a general authority over religious and secular matters, *fī al-dīn wa al-dunyā*, … The Imam is a deputy of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in protecting religion and executing its rules, and in managing people’s secular affairs, *šuʾūn al-khalq al-dunyawiyyah*, according to the religio-legal perspective, *al-naẓar al-šarʿiyy*. … Since the Imam has the sole authority over the people’s affairs, all authorities have to be derived from him, for instance, the authority of ministers, governors, judges, army commanders, border guards … [61] [Tāriq al-Bišrī, 1980.]

The Front had to legally articulate the legal situation with the ousted Caliph. They had to deny him the right to be a caliph to be able to pass it to the Egyptian King. They argued that he was never a legal caliph because he did not have authority over secular affairs; he had it but could not exercise it; or he had it and exercised it, but then lost it. More importantly, the Front founded an *organization* to establish the caliphate. “Caliphate

[60]In Arabic it is *hayʾah* not *jabhah*. I preferred front, however, over, say, institution, which is used frequently to translate *hayʾah*, for the latter has a more academic and less activist sense.
[61]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 296, 297.

Committees” were founded in cities and regions all over the country, creating a serious political organization that was supported by the King, al-Azhar and a number of governmental officials. On top of that, the King supported the foundation of a political party, al-Ittiḥād, or the Union, that had explicit Islamic ideology and used his power to invite retired army officers, notables, officials, religious leaders and others to join it.[62] In 1925, the King had to get personally involved in fighting ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Rāziq and refuting his famous book, *al-Islām wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm*, in which he argues that the caliphate system is historical, not religious. The King and monarchists “went against the westernizing trends” and in January 1926 they supported students from al-Azhar to sign “a petition for the universal application of *shariʿa* (Islamic law) instead of civil law.”[63] These are events that happened when al-Bannā was still a student in Dār al-ʿUlūm, a school that had been founded by the state to create knowledge that is at once Islamic and modern.

That was certainly not the only attitude of the Egyptian state at that time. Al-Wafd, the most popular political party, adopted a nationalist discourse that downplayed “Islam” for an Egyptian identity that unites the two religious communities. It emphasized constitutional democracy and the authority of the parliament. It tried to abolish the religious endowment system. In 1936, it rejected the religious character of the crowning ceremony of the new king Fārūq, and then objected to the religious phrasing of the military oath. They prided themselves on securing many key positions in the Party, and in the government offices for the Copts. In addition, they blocked Fuʾād’s decision to

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[62]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 304.
[63]James Whidden, *ibid*., 38.

incorporate Dār al-ʿUlūm and the Šarʿī Judiciary School into al-Azhar.[64]

That is being said, it is important to emphasize that neither did al-Wafd deny the Islamic identity of the state, nor did the King ignore the nationalist aspect of it. Each of them stressed a central aspect of the political discourse in Egypt at that time and used it to get advantage over the other. In addition, they both moved a long way toward adopting Western Civilization. Nationalist, or Islamic, they both were already working through a given Western understanding of how a future state should be. They use Islamic terms such as *jihād* or *ummah*, but meant militancy or the people. The time of translating freedom into ʿ*adl* had already gone.

Conservative or progressive, the political discourse by now comes as rational, objective, analytic and scientific. It speaks of a country and its people *as* objects set out there for examination and analysis. It speaks of culture as a continuous body that stretches In the two dimensions of time and space. The Egyptian culture is this; the Egyptian culture is not that. It speaks of problems in terms of *diseases* that have symptoms and need diagnosis and proper treatment. *Organization* is a cherished concept in this discourse. Resources have to be carefully organized. Activities have to be conducted through organizations, committees and clear plans that have defined objectives.

In this discourse, there are two sets of what Foucault calls *rules of formation*. They work together, though they frequently seem contradictory. The first set can be

[64]*Tāriq al-Bišrī, Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 557-560.

detected when we examine, for instance, the discussions of the Constitutional Committee that was assigned the task of writing the 1923 Constitution after the British unilateral declaration of Egyptian independence in 1922. There were two issues in the intersection between religion and politics: the religious judiciary system and minority rights. There was a proposal to unite both the religious and the civil judiciary systems into one national system. The proposal could not pass since an application of the Islamic law within the civil law would be unfair to other religious minorities. The Committee members decided to spare the constitution from this issue and let the laws deal with it. They decided to ignore it and wait for a hopeful change in the future. They also decided that the interest of society *now* is to restrict the sphere of the religious law and to cancel it completely sometime in the future when it is socially appropriate.[65]

The issue of minority rights came into the discussion twice. First, there was a discussion about the principle of equality among all citizens; second there was a discussion about the political representation of the religious minority. Like unifying the judiciary system, the issue of equality did not take much time to be discussed. A proposal of stating *minority* rights as an article of the constitution was swiftly rejected to avoid using the word *minorities*. Instead, the members decided to put a general article about the equality among all citizens regardless of their religion, sex, etc.[66]

The discussion that took a long time and had finally to move to the public media was the discussion around the political representation of the Copts. There were two

[65]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 174-176.
[66]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 175, 176.

different points of view. First, there was an opinion that the Coptic minority has to be politically represented in both the Parliament and the government. Politically, this policy would cut off any future foreign intervention in national affairs on the pretext of protecting minorities. Legally, it was the only guarantee that a law would not be issued without taking the minorities' point of view into consideration. Belgian and Spanish parliaments, it was argued, recognize the representation of minorities. In addition, democratic theories should not preclude our understanding of our own reality, a reality that takes the religious affiliation seriously during the voting process. Second, there was an opinion that refused any political representation based on religious affiliation. To refute the former perspective, it was argued that in reality the Europeans would not intervene in internal affairs on the pretext of protecting minorities, especially since equality among all citizens before the law will be guaranteed in the constitution. Legally, if the minority must be represented, how would it be possible to represent a majority that is composed of a number of racial, denominational, cultural, professional and otherwise minorities in itself? As for the Belgian and Spanish parliaments, the represented minorities there are political minorities not religious ones. What brings people together, it was argued, is not religion; it is the common interest, be it social, economic or ideological. Yes, religion is taken now seriously in political elections, but this attitude is doomed to diminish and disappear in the future once we started moving forward to a democratic society. If we turn to confessional representation, we will, in fact, nurture the current ugly division.[67]

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[67]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 175-180.

In all these discussions, we can detect a specific set of *rules of formation*. These rules aim to classify, schematize and map out knowledge. They aim to create, organize and precisely define concepts. Spatially, they create within the text a crossroad with signs and directions, instigating the reader to find his or her way. Temporally, they create time that goes progressively forward, time that has to be caught or otherwise the reader will slip backward and fall into a dark past. The discussants put *religious* vs. *political*, and not secular, by the way. They put *political* next to *legal*, assuming two different spheres. They tolerated *diversity*, but rejected *minority*, not as a social reality, but as a *political* concept. This national map is embedded in a global map. This conceptual map instigates the reader to *choose*. The reader must take this or that direction, and not the other way round. There might be no return; and return, if possible at all, might be too expensive. Choices have to be made, or otherwise a movement forward, a movement toward the modern world, will be impossible.

There is also an understanding that this is only the *map*. The *territory* itself is not as clear and organized. It has to be paved. In addition, modifications on the map might be necessary according to the accurate projection of the real land. Not every bump has to be paved immediately. Some of them could be paved only in the future. Furthermore, those local features separate national land from global lands. National choices can, in fact, must be *different*. Temporally, yes, the movement is forward and toward a modern world that is definitely Western, be it Belgian or Spanish, but it is a movement *from* a specific departure, where the past definitely matters. Choices, differences and borders create political *independence* and national *identity*.

We can also detect a different set of those *rules of formation*. The second set aims to *unify* and *consolidate*. It aims to transcend *differences* and close *gaps*. It always speaks of a *collectivity*; its character, history and aspirations. Statements should be made as inclusive as possible. They promise the possibility of bringing together a variety of aims, some of which are quite contradictory. It favors *reality* over any claimed ideology. This set overlooks techniques, maps and a progressive time for a total reality that exists in an eternal presence. It *integrates* and creates a *comprehensive* perspective. Here, concepts, such as *ummah*, are never defined. They do not need to be defined. They have been known by everyone belonging to this collectivity for a longer time than anyone can remember.

One of the discussants argued that people do not live together with laws and rules, but by understanding and tolerance, *al-tafāhum wa al-tasāmuḥ*. Another discussant argued that what is important for the people to maintain their unity is their common *interest*, not any sort of *identity*. Gaps and differences will eventually be bridged and closed. The support of *equality*, the admission of *diversity* and the clear rejection of *a different minority* that splits the collectivity parallel *inclusiveness* as a rule of formation. Moreover, there is no separation of the religious for a recognized secular. On the contrary, there has to be a *comprehensive* perspective that spares nothing outside it, that leaves nothing dis-articulated. “Islam is the religion of the State”; that was a clear article of the Constitution. The discussion was solely about a political representation of a religious community. In fact, the members of the Constitution Committee, themselves, were representatives of the three religious communities. Setting the parliamentary elections on

a confessional basis was the problem. For it would create, according to the discussants, divisions not unity. An interesting case was recited in this discussion: the four successful candidates for the parliament from Asyūṭ were all Muslims. The last one of them decided to withdraw his candidacy to let a Coptic candidate take his seat. It is through *al-tafāhum wa al-tasāmuḥ* that people live together. Comprehensiveness is a prominent *rule of formation*. Egyptian identity is both a nationalist and an Islamic one. Egypt is a democracy where the parliament has the power, but that should not preclude the supreme power of the King. Liberalism is as important as conservatism. Modernity is the future, but tradition will be an essential part of that future. Diversity is celebrated, but only to emphasize equality and unity. The whole project attends to all aspects of life, be they social, cultural, educational, political, economic, or otherwise. Every piece, module or fragment of this *whole* is well-integrated into one comprehensive project.

Discourse of Islam

In this context, a 22-year old graduate of Dār al-ʿUlūm, Ḥasan al-Bannā, founded the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. Contrary to the narrative of both Muslim Brothers members and Western researchers, that al-Bannā created a *new* discourse, it seems that his organization emerged in a context very rich of popular, political and modern Islamic writings that had circulated the same ideas, concepts and subjects of interest that al-Bannā articulated. I want to briefly explore this intellectual context before reflecting on al-Bannā’s writings. To mention just the names of the Islamic newspapers available at early twentieth century and the date of their first publication, we find *al-*

ʿUrwah al-Wuthqā in 1884, *Makārim al-Akhlāq* in 1887, *al-Muʾayyad* in 1889, *al-Azhar* in 1889, *al-Manār* in 1898, *al-Ḥayāh* in 1899, *Makārim al-Akhlāq al-Islāmiyyah* in 1900, *al-Liwāʾ* in 1900, *al-ʿĀlam al-Islāmī* in 1905 and *al-Hidāyah* in 1910.[68] After WWI, we find a number of other editorials, for instance, *al-Fatḥ* in 1926, *al-Azhar* in 1930, *al-Šubbān al-Muslimūn* in 1929, *al-Šihāb* in 1931, *al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī* in 1935, *al-Iʿtiṣām* in 1939, *al-Hidāyah al-Islāmiyyah* in 1928, and *al-Hadyu al-Nabawīī* in 1937.[69]

In *al-Hidāyah*, that Sheikh Jāwīš founded in 1910, there was an interest in covering the conditions of Muslims worldwide: in Bulgaria, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Persia, India and China. Interestingly, Jāwīš wrote that the Qurʾān is the *constitution* of two sorts of happiness.[70] "The Qurʾān is our constitution" came later to be a slogan of the Muslim Brothers. In *al-Manār,* Sheikh Rašīd Riḍā used to refer to the "Islamic Reform Movement." It seems that this was not only an intellectual movement, for Lord Cromer, the British Consul-General in Egypt, mentioned it in his 1905 report as a political party.[71] In fact, Riḍā himself used *ḥizb*, party, instead of *ḥarakah*, movement, a number of times. He wrote about "*fahm al-Islām fahman ṣaḥīḥan*,"[72] or the correct understanding of Islam, a phrase that will be extremely centralized in al-Bannā's discourse. He also emphasized an Islamic uprising grounded in a *return* to the Islamic foundations, applying *Šarīʿah*, founding one Islamic society that is protected by a caliph

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[68]Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah al-Islāmiyyah: Vol. One, al-Manr, 1898-1935* (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1983),, 5, 6.
[69]Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah*, 10, 11.
[70]Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah*, 9, 10.
[71]*IAnwar al-Jundī, Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah*, 110.
[72]Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah* , 110.

and has branches in each Islamic country, etc.[73] He classifies people into three parties: stiff and traditionalist jurists, materialist politicians, and moderate reformers; and he classifies the path to reform into two ways, either popular, like in Europe, or authoritarian, like in Japan, concluding that the obstacles are religious leaders and political leaders.[74]

In 1926, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīab (1886-1969) founded *al-Fatḥ* Magazine. Before that, he had founded a publishing house naming it: *al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah*, the Salafi Bookshop. The editorials of 1926 were concerned with some moral issues, for instance, the official permission of prostitution in Egypt, modern songs and modern dress. He also paid attention to Ṭaha Ḥusayn's book about pre-Islamic poetry, in which he challenged many traditional convictions about linguistic formation of Qurʾān. In 1927, he invited a number of famous Islamic writers to contribute to his editorial and paid his attention to global Muslims' issues. He waged a campaign against cultural westernization and opposed the educational policies in Egypt. In addition, he co-founded the Society of Young Muslims. One year later, in 1928, he invited more authors, one of them was al-Bannā, who wrote about *al-daʿwah*, or spreading the word of Islam. More importantly, he introduced the concept of *hijrah*, literally migration. The concept, which is cherished by Muslims, since it is a reminder of the *hijrah* of the Prophet and early Muslims from Mecca to Medina, was used to indicate a modern *hijrah* toward *Allāh wa Rasūluh*, God and His Messenger. Writers and readers of his editorial were called *muhājirūn*. He stated

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[73] Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah* , 111.
[74] *Anwar al-Jundī, Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah*., 112.

that *al-ummah* is still fine; the problem is the leadership. He also announced that there are only two *hijrahs*: one of them to God, the other to pride and fame! In 1929, we find an interest in the issue of Palestine, and in 1931, the editorial takes on a global character by having on board a number of Muslim writers belonging to different Islamic countries. *Al-Fatḥ* was also being distributed worldwide. In the same year, he published the six principles of Al-Fatḥ

1. *Al-Fatḥ* is for all Muslims; the Islamic World is one country.

2. Muslims are good; their leadership is weak.

3. You are a border-guard of Islam; be careful Islam is not attacked from your spot.[75]

4. Work so that God, only Him, sees you!

5. *Al-Fatḥ* is the message among all Muslim countries.

6. *Al-Fatḥ* is a spiritual bond among its readers![76]

Khaṭīab, much like Riḍa, is writing an editorial, but dreaming of, or perhaps working on, a movement.

It was in this time that al-Bannā started his organization in 1928, the same year he published his first articles in *al-Fatḥ*. In the beginning, his Society was a religious society focusing on preaching. His articles in *al-Fatḥ* addressed *daʿwah* and were concerned with

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[75]This principle was used by al-Bannā, and has been used by Muslim Brothers extensively.

[76]Anwar al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāfah al-Islāmiyyah: Vol. Two, al-Fatḥ, 1926-1948* (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1983),, 8-20.

a number of moral issues, for instance, fighting gambling and drinking, and demanding sound religious education in public schools. Al-Bannā, however, was not unaware or uninterested in the significance of the state. He emphasized once again the essential role of the state in protecting religion and spreading *daʿwah*. In 1933, al-Bannā published his own newspaper, *aL-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, which was directed by Khaṭīb, and in it he developed his political views. A review of his writings during the 1930s reveal an emphasis on two basic themes: the political society and the legislative system.[77]

In 1933, he wrote an article rejecting both *al-qawmiyyah wa al-ʿĀlamiyyah,* nationalism and universalism, favoring *al-Ukhuwwah al-Islāmiyyah*, the Islamic brotherhood.[78] He rejected nationalism, for it instigates wars, and universalism, for it is used by colonizers to soften the resistance of the oppressed people. Nonetheless, he emphasized the centrality of the Arabic Language as a component of the Islamic identity. In fact, he attributed Muslims' backwardness historically to the shift of political power to non-Arab Muslims.[79] He proposed *qawmiyyat al-Islām*, Islamic nationalism. By this, he referred to a bond of faith, not blood, race or geography. He also emphasized that Muslim Brothers have no problem with *waṭaniyyah*, patriotism, since they are the most loyal to their country. *Waṭaniyyah* is never a problem unless it conflicts with Islam. Nonetheless, he stated repeatedly that the Islamic World is *waṭan wāḥid*, one homeland; and that Islam is both *waṭan wa jinsiyyah*, a homeland and a nationality.[80]

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[77]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 499-516.
[78]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 500, 501.
[79]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil al-Imām al-Šahīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Daʿwah, 1990),, 144-156.
[80]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 3-18.

The second theme al-Bannā emphasized was the legislative system. He seems to see legislation as an important state tool for controlling culture and social life. With the right legislation, that complies with *Šarīʿah*, all symptoms of westernized culture can be eradicated. Entertainment, movies, theatre, newspapers, etc. will all be regulated with the Islamic law. Education, too, will emphasize Islamic rules and ethics. Economy, in terms of its transactions, the banking system, the products and their consumption, etc. will all be regulated with Islam. Al-Bannā is aware that Islam is already a source of legislation. However, he sees this as a manipulation of Islam to justify reality superficially. He calls for manipulating reality itself to comply with Islamic foundations. Islam should come first, not last. At the same time, he states that he does not call for strict traditionalism. He calls for a revival of *ijtihād*, a serious *ijtihād* that does not overlook the basic foundations and principles of Islam in its struggling to justify reality. Al-Bannā states repeatedly that Islam and its *Šarīʿah* are a comprehensive system that regulates all aspects of life. He also points to a list of social, political, legal and economic practices that contradict Islam and demands their eradication. However, he does not seriously, at least in this stage, articulate any detailed *ijtihād* to offer an alternative practice. It is the ideological attitude of the nation, its very identity, based on a number of recognized principles and foundations, that he is concerned with. It is colonization, the oppressive West and all those false ideologies, be they Socialism, Communism, Nazism, Liberalism, etc. that are responsible for social degradation and national backwardness. To solve all those problems, there is a need for *al-manhaj*, the method or the path. For this *manhaj* to be a reality on the ground, there is a need for faithful agents and trusted leadership. If *manhaj*

is to be found in the *Qurʾān* and the *Sunnah*, the actors and leadership are to be found in the Muslim Brotherhood Group.[81]

In the following pages, I will carefully dissect al-Bannā's discourse to explain how its structure is archaeologically related to the two discourses of the state and the economy. I will focus on four of his treatises that were published in 1934 and 1935, namely: *Ilā Ayyi Šayʾin Nadʿū al-Nās*, *To Which Objective We are Calling People?*, 1934, *Bayna al-Amsi wa al-Yawm*, *Between Yesterday and Today*, 1934, *Hal Naḥnu Qawmun ʿAmaliyyūn*, *Are We Practical People*, 1934 and *Daʿwatunā*, *Our Mission*, 1935.

In *Daʿwatunā*, he writes,

> For Muslim Brothers, people are of two kinds. There are those who share with them their belief in God, His Book, Messengers, Prophet, and the teachings of this Prophet. Those are bonded to us by the holiest bonds: the bond of faith, which is for us is more holy than the bond of blood and land. Those are our close people, for whom we long, for whom we work, and whom we protect with our souls and money, no matter in which land they live, or to which ethnicity they belong.[82]

AL-Bannā is interested here in defining an *identity*, one that is separate from, but related

[81]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil, 3-18.*
[82]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 12, 13.

to, other identities. *Independence* starts from an independent identity that is not rooted in the two sources of nationalism: ethnicity and land. He uses the word nationalism to emphasize the true *nation*, according to MBG. It is a nation that is bound by its faith, not by its ethnicity or its land. In *Ilā Ayyi Šayʾin Nadʿū al-Nās*, he warns against deviation and imitation. Muslims' uprising must be based solely on *Islam*. Other ideologies or systems are corrupt and will not last for long.[83] In *Bayna al-Amsi wa al-Yawm*, he elaborates on the harmful effects of Europe's materialist civilization on the Islamic World. He concludes that Muslims need to achieve two objectives: political liberation, and the establishment of an Islamic state that provides an Islamic life in all its dimensions.[84] Economic Egyptianization and political independence seem here logically connected to cultural authenticity.

The theme that is most central in al-Bannā's discourse is the *comprehensive* nature of *Islam*. He writes that

> The best to describe our Call is to call it *Islāmiyyah*. This word has a meaning that goes far beyond the limited meaning people understand of it. We believe that "Islam" is a comprehensive meaning that includes all affairs of life. It regulates every aspect of life and puts for each aspect an accurate and perfect system. It does not stand with tied hands before vital problems or necessary systems for the

[83]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 30.
[84]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 66-70.

well-being of people.[85]

In addition to stating repeatedly that Islam is a system that includes all aspects of life, he also states that *daʿwatunā* includes "every good part of each *call* in the world."[86] This inclusiveness and comprehension of Islam's *systems* mirror the same type of theoretical proposals about the economy and the state. *Economy*, a modern construction, is not about the trade or the numerous business transactions people conduct daily. It is about this whole that regulates, not only their economic, but also their political and social life. The modern state, as well, is not proposing itself as a special structure that has a specific administrative or military function. It is, again, that whole that controls *all aspects of life*. A modern understanding of *cosmos*, as formed of complementary systems and regulated by rational laws, radiates into al-Bannā's discourse of *Islam*.

In addition to the above, the *rules of formation* of this discourse, much like those of the economy and the state, *unify* and *consolidate*. Islamic economic, political, social, cultural, educational, etc. systems are integrated into one comprehensive system. Identity, ideology and independence may differentiate and separate, but these *rules* reunify. They state that all good aspects of other ideologies are already included in this one, be they patriotism, nationalism, socialism, capitalism or otherwise. The rules of unification politicize Islam, not because its discourses include politics, but because it is proposed as a comprehensive system of regulation and *control*. The progressive consolidation of pieces

[85]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 7.
[86]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 8.

of texts, fatwas, histories, commentaries, insights, etc. into one *system* that is called *Islamic* certainly politicize Islam, even when the discourse speaks of the prayer or charity. The consolidation and centralization of power, and the organization of all those historical and modern fragments as scattered resources that have to be put into action, into one national project definitely politicize Islam, even when the discourse articulates spirituality or a ritual like pilgrimage. Political Islam is not political because it confuses and fuses the secular and the religious. Islam is political in the moment when its discourse moves to consolidate its power and create a system of control and regulation.

In addition to those who see political Islam as political simply because it speaks of *politics*, a sphere that is absolutely heterogeneous to that of *religion*, there are those who justify the *necessity* of modern Islam to be political as a result of the creation of the modern hegemonic national state. According to these writings, Muslims, or rather Islamists, had to concern themselves with politics because of the centrality and extreme significance of the modern state in any project of social reform. It is because of the rise of the state as a huge and hegemonic structure that Islamists had to be engaged in its politics and tactics. These writings ignore the fact that the modern state, the economy and *Islam* – in its modern sense- were all formed as central power structures simultaneously. They ignore that those structures, those discourses, were being created and developed next to other *positivities* of medicine, chemistry, astronomy, etc. These discourses existed next to a discourse of medicine that recognizes the human body as one objective body formed of a number of complementary *systems*, be they digestive, respiratory, or otherwise. They existed next to a discourse of chemistry that understands the world elements, not as

elements in the world, but as elements of a classificatory table, where each of them lies exactly in its proper place. In fact, there were places waiting for their elements to be discovered and assume their logical positions. In other words, the table came before its very elements. They also existed next to a discourse of astronomy that organized, classified and grouped a multitude of planets and stars. To summarize this point, we should say that it is not that the knowledge of Islam became political and systematized as a result of the central, systematized and hegemonic state; it is that both Islam and the state took this specific formation because knowledge itself, no matter what field it articulated, was being formed with specific *rules of formation* that favored classification, unification, and consolidation.

In light of the above, we can understand al-Bannā's strategy of articulating disputes. In *Daʿwatunā*, he writes about the essential unity among Muslims and the significance of consensus. Then, he moves to admit the impossibility of having such consensus. Eventually, he concludes that differences should not preclude unity or develop into discord. The one objective and the clear method must unify all Muslims.[87]

In *Ilā Ayyi Šayʾin Nadʿū al-Nās*, al-Bannā writes about the need to power to protect the truth and the integration of spiritual and material powers. He then moves to argue for the necessity of authority for social reform, authority that is displayed politically by the state, or legally by the laws. He writes,

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[87]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 13-15.

> Reform social manifestations! In every nation, there are manifestations of social life that are supervised by governments, regulated by laws and protected by authorities. Every Islamic oriental nation has to make these manifestations harmonious with religious ethics and Islamic legislation and commandments. Officially recognized prostitution is a shame on every nation that values virtue, let alone the Islamic countries the religion of which requires fighting prostitution and severely punishing adulterers.[88]

From this point, al-Bannā moves to call for fighting the drinking of alcohol and the spread of bars. He then emphasizes the central role of the state in reforming education as a cornerstone of keeping the morals of the nation and producing good Muslims.[89]

In *Hal Naḥnu Qawmun ʿamaliyyūn*, al-Bannā lists a number of methods to restate Muslims' civilization and bring forth an Islamic uprising. In a treatise in which he makes the argument that Muslim Brothers are practical, he lists prayer, charity, Jihad, in its generic not militant sense, and reciting the Qurʾān. He elaborates on each of them in pages. He writes about each of them in a very traditional way. He recites the same verses and reports of *Ḥadīth* a traditional scholar would recite. There is neither reformation nor deformation of the statements and their sentences. He does not argue, as others had done, that Muslims' prayer is good for general health, the function of lungs and the flexibility of joints. What makes all those statements about *ṣalāh* and *zakāh* different is their placing

[88]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 31.
[89]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 31.

inside the discourse. It is the laying down of statements about prayer next to statements about civilization or *society*. It is the coexistence of statements of charity and *national* morality. It is exactly what Foucault called *the system of dispersion*. Every trade transaction, no matter how peripheral or small it is, must be monitored, taxed and integrated into the *economy*. Every baby born has to be issued a birth certificate, monitored, and vaccinated by health systems, disciplined by educational systems that reproduce children into citizens, and has eventually to be employed as a productive individual in a developing *state*. Similarly, every ritual, even every spiritual intention, has to find its ultimate meaning within a bigger and national *project*. In this sense, he writes,

> The general means of different *daʿawāt*, ideologies[90], neither change nor go beyond these three points: 1. deep faith; 2. accurate formation[91]; and 3. continuous work. Those are your general means Brothers! Believe in your idea; gather around it; work for it and stick to it![92]

Here, we find the startling coexistence of spiritual *faith* next to pedagogical *formation* and political *activism*. This specific *dispersion* is what turns *faith* into a political means.

One more *rule of formation* within al-Bannā's discourse is *classification*.

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[90]*Daʿawāt* literally mean “calls.” however, I translated it into ideologies as it better reflects the ideological form and political content of it.

[91]The phrase in Arabic is *takwīn daqīq*, by which he refers to pedagogical techniques of forming the *self*. “Formation” and “being” have the same root in Arabic, and he takes advantage of this.

[92]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 70.

Proposals are always introduced in relation to other proposals. The same spatial concept of the map that is used in the discourse of the state is applied here. The reader is asked to follow the right direction and avoids the wrong and misleading ones. Al-Bannā writes,

> Four Types! All what we need from the people is to be one of those four types before us:
>
> **A Believer**: If he is someone who believes in our *daʿwah*, trusts our claims, and admires our principles, finding in them the goodness that makes his soul trusts and his heart rests, then we invite him to join us and work with us, so that the number of *mujāhidūn* increases and the voice of the activists raises up. There is no meaning in faith not followed by action. There is no benefit in belief that does not motivate its holder to make it come true and to sacrifice himself for it. This is how the first generation Muslims were, whose hearts God opened to His guidance, so that they follow His prophets, believe in His messages and truly struggle for His sake. …
>
> **A Hesitant Person**: This is someone who cannot see the truth, or recognize in what we say the meaning of good intention and good action. This person we leave him in his hesitation and advise him to closely contact us, to closely or remotely read about us, to read our writings, to visit our headquarters and to know our brothers. That will make him trust us, God willing, and this is how it was with the hesitant people and their prophets in old times.
>
> **An Opportunist**: This is someone who will provide his help only when he knows

> what benefit he will gain back. We tell him we have no reward except the reward of God, if you have the right intention, and Paradise if He knows you are good. We have neither prestige nor money. …
>
> **An Unfair**: This is a person who is skeptic about us. His doubts surrounds us. He sees us only through dark glasses and speaks of us only with a skeptic voice. … We ask God to show the truth clearly to him and us and to fend off falsehood from him and us …[93]

In the piece above, al-Bannā classifies people and assigns specific approaches for each of them. The categorization of people facilitates their administration by his followers. The methodology seems rational, objective and scientific. The logic is clearly causal. He used these *rules* in forming his statements repeatedly. For instance, he uses the medical metaphor to speak about the diseases of the society, the symptoms, the accurate diagnosis and the appropriate treatment.[94] As in the discourse of the state, he opens a linear space of time, in which history goes through clear and steady laws. In *Bayna al-Amsi wa al-Yawm*, he explains the movement of history from the first Islamic State until today. He lists the "causes of degradation" and elaborates a little on each of them: political disputes, religious disputes, luxurious life, transferal of power to non-Arabs, neglect of the natural sciences, arrogance and negligence of the rulers, and the imitation of non-Muslims. He writes neither in the digressive Arabic style, nor in the meditative French style. He writes

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[93]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 4,5.
[94]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 15-18.

in a British style reminiscent of Egyptian high schools books. *Organization* is observed not only in the style, but also in the work itself. He sees the Brothers as modern preachers, who should be nothing less than modern missionaries. He writes that today's missionaries are "cultured, prepared, trained and specialists."[95] He also stresses the importance of media and advertisement.

I want to pose a question here. Researchers who emphasize the significance of al-Bannā's creative and revolutionary ideas simply overlook reading his contemporaries and predecessors. However, if al-Banna was indeed recalling and recycling ideas, statements, concepts and rhetoric of ʿAṭṭār, Ṭahṭāwī, ʿAlī Yūsif, Jāwīš and Khaṭīb among others, what, therefore, was so unique about him that has made him assume such a historical significance? The answer to this question should not be sought in what he said, but in what he did. Al-Bannā's essential significance is in the organization he founded, not the ideology he repeated. He condensed, and probably reduced, writings that had been around for some time into a concise, clear and highly marketable ideology. His writing's creativity lies in its journalistic simple and attractive style, the dancing between pseudo-objectivism and evoking emotions and sentiments, and the coining of attractive slogans and principles. His serious legacy, however, is the organization he established.

In fact, the idea of founding a similar organization goes back long before al-Bannā. Afghānī and ʿAbduh tried to establish an organization. Rašīd Riḍā tried to create an organization, which he called the Reform Party, out of his editorial. Khaṭīb too wanted to create an organization around his *al-Fatḥ*. King Fuʾād likewise wanted to establish an

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[95]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 6.

organization that would work to reestablish the Caliphate. They all failed. Only al-Bannā succeeded where they failed. Only he turned this idea of an organization into a reality. Only al-Bannā turned earlier and contemporary ideas into a simplified ideology that could be easily absorbed and embraced by numerous members of his organization.

Al-Bannā, himself, emphasized quite frequently his own practicality and the practicality of his organization. One finds this especially clearly in his diaries. He writes, for instance, how he responded to a religious dispute, in his early years in Ismāʿīliyyah, around the wording of the call to prayer by stating that the call to prayer is recommended but the unity of Muslims is obligatory! In another place, he describes that instead of giving a lesson about ablution, he took the attendants to the water taps to watch and imitate him doing it.[96] In fact, he wrote a treatise, which he titled: *Are We Practical People?* In this treatise, he tells his audience that the best way to know the MBG is not to read about it, but in fact to join it. If they like it, they can stay; if they do not like it, they can simply leave![97] After that, he lists a number of chapters that MBG opened and a number of projects it initiated. He mentioned the fifty chapters that had been opened by that time, in 1934. He also mentioned the many mosques, institutions, factories, workshops, charity organizations, committees for resolving social conflicts, clinics, newspapers, printing shops, and so on and so forth. He wrote explicitly that has grown bored of talking and is now interested only in action.[98] Al-Bannā then mentioned an interesting point. He stated that the most important *product* of MBG is, in fact, the

[96]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Mudhakkarāt al-Dāʿī wa al-Dāʿīyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawzīʿ wa al-Našr al-Islāmiyyah, 2001),, 60, 61.
[97]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 38, 39.
[98]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 36-42.

prepared men. Building characters and preparing agents is the essence of the Group. They are the men who will bring forth the objectives of *al-ummah*![99]

Before leaving the notion of practicality, I have to briefly reflect on an associated and significant point: pragmatism. Many researchers and commentators have been frequently engaged in a nonsignificant debate, where they question whether the Muslim Brothers are ideologues or pragmatists. Those who see them as ideologues inform us that their rigid ideology will obstruct a flexible response to reality and a movement to *change*. The others, however, confirm the Brothers' pragmatism, which continuously downplays their ideology in favor of adaptation to that reality. Pragmatism is sometimes used to indicate *opportunism*. The Brothers, in my opinion, are neither ideologues, who stick forever to their unchanging ideology, nor pragmatists, who ignore their ideology to achieve their more important objectives of gaining political power or initiating social change. To understand the Brothers' attitude, we have to relate them to Islam itself, a religion, in which focus slides from theology to law. In Islam, the emphasis is not on dogmas or theology; it is on the practice. To understand their attitude we have to consider the concepts and methodologies of *fiqh*. Their decisions are more like the *fatwā*, where the situation is central, and the *maṣlaḥah*, interest, is a guiding principle. It is the daily practice itself that creates both the objectives and the means to achieve them. This being said, I should stress that, like *fatwā*, there are *ḥudūd*, limits, to flexibility and interest. *Ḥudūd* may be negotiable, but they exist and have to be articulated seriously. Ideology also exists. However, it exists as Foucault would put it: a reified formation articulated on

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[99] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 42, 43.

the surface of the discourse! Unlike Marxism, Islam is not based in ideology and political programs. Unlike Ford Corporation, it is not controlled by objectives and means. It is a religion that shows interest in the two concepts of the allowed and the prohibited. Ideology and political programs, as well as objectives and means, emerge from situations, are guided by a number of legal principles and are limited by the *allowed* and the *prohibited*. This is the cultural background of the Muslim Brothers, who are neither ideologues nor pragmatists, but who are *practicals*, in the words of al-Bannā, *qawmun ʿamaliyyūn*.

Before I move to the next stage, I have to state that al-Bannā's emphasis on objectivity and rationality is sometimes balanced by statements in which he highlights emotions and sentiments. For instance, in spite of writing in *Hal Naḥnu Qawmun ʿAmaliyyūn* that *ʿāṭifah*, sentiments[100], and *tasarruʿ*, rushing, should not drive us away from the known rational steps to achieve our project, he uses the same word, *ʿāṭifah*, favorably in *Daʿwatunā*. He writes,

> We love that our people know that we love them more than we love ourselves; that we love to sacrifice ourselves to protect their dignity; and that we offer our lives to save their glory, dignity, religion and aspirations, if that what it takes. We stand in this position before them only because of this *ʿāṭifah* that took over our hearts and our feelings, depriving us from sleep and making our eyes flow in tears. It is too hard for us to see what our people are living in and give up to

[100] *ʿĀṭifah* is used in Arabic as both sentiment and emotion. *Infiʿāl* is used only as emotion, however.

> oppression, surrender to humiliation or stay in despair. We work for people, in the sake of God, more than we work for ourselves. We are only yours beloved! We will never be against you in any day of days![101]

This language of love, devotion and sacrifice interrupts statements that strongly claim objectivity and rationality. It is definitely a reminiscent of *al-tafāhum wa al-tasāmuḥ*, understanding and tolerance, that were proposed in the discussion of 1923 Constitution as the basis of social integration. This swinging back and forth between reason and *ʿāṭifah* will be discussed in more detail in the next part of the dissertation.

Second Stage: Structures

This stage starts at the late 1930s and ends by July 1952 Revolution. The *consolidation* discourse does not change, in terms of its concepts, statements, as well as its *rules of formation* and *system of dispersion*. However, internal contradictions obstruct the movement to consolidation. There is a shift of emphasis from *identity* to *structures*, whether of the state, economy or Islam. Instead of providing a practical outlet for the conflict around identities, it aggravates the crisis, since final choices have to be made. In this stage, the three discourses have to accommodate a newly emerging international system. Changes and modifications avoid problems and create others. I will explain this dynamism in the following lines.

Discourse of the State

[101] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 3.

The year 1936 witnessed two major events in modern Egyptian history. First, there was the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in August 1936, which "was then regarded by most Egyptians and foreigners as the final step toward Egypt's political independence."[102] In 1937, it was decided to abolish both the Capitulations and the Mixed Courts over a thirteen-year period. The second major event was the death of King Fuʾād and his succession by King Fārūq (1920-1965.) Fārūq came to be known as the Pious King. He befriended Sheikh Marāghī (1881-1945) the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, and was frequently accompanied by him. The Pious King used to attend meetings of Islamic societies and excessively used Islamic rhetoric in his speeches. In fact, in his speeches, he would preach to the people, urging them to pray and fast regularly. Moreover, encouraged and supported by al-Azhar, he revived the idea of reestablishing the Caliphate in Egypt, with Fārūq as its Caliph.

The split of power between the popular al-Wafd Party and the Palace took a dramatic turn. In 1936, Fārūq was only 16 years old. Al-Wafd decided that the replacement of their strong foe, King Fuʾād, with inexperienced and extremely young Fārūq would pave the way for them to consolidate State's power in the Parliament. However, Fārūq might be young and inexperienced, but his court was quite capable of reversing al-Wafd's plan and moving to consolidate the State's power in the hands of the new King. Fārūq was also supported by both al-Azhar and a number of political parties, one of which was the Saʿdyyūn. The Saʿdyyūn Party was founded by leaders who had defected from al-Wafd. Instead of getting resolved, this structural conflict would get only

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[102]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 67.

worse, all the way to the July Revolution in 1952.

It is important to highlight here the strong support of MBG for King Fārūq during his early years. In 1938, al-Bannā sent a letter to the King asking him to "unify all political parties into one institution that has a reform program based on Islam's rules and teachings."[103] They demanded that ʿAlī Māhir (1882-1960,) a strong supporter of the King, be appointed as the prime minister. Once Māhir occupied the office, they enthusiastically supported him, praised the Islamic character of his rule, and argued that it would pave the way to the establishment of a comprehensive Islamic regime in Egypt.[104] Excited by the King's leading the Friday Prayer with a number of Arab princes following him, they wrote,

> Amīr al-Muʾminīn, the Prince of Believers, recited the Qurʾān in a clear voice and beautiful tunes … His Royal Highness means by this leading of the prayer his receiving the allegiance to be the Caliph, which all Muslim World see as a glory past that Islam has lost since its destruction by the Kemalist Movement. In following him, there is an explicit recognition of allegiance, and they are delegates of their governments.[105]

A playful and womanizing attitude of the King in the later years would deprive him from

[103]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 574.
[104]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 575.
[105]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Aqbāṭ*, 575.

moral support, for the advantage of al-Wafd. The unresolved conflict would, however, take a dramatic turn during WWII. On 4 February 1942, to ensure Egyptian cooperation, Britain's ambassador objected to the appointment of ʿAlī Māhir as a prime minister. He went ahead and surrounded the King's palace with British tanks, "demanding that he appoint a cabinet that would uphold the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. This, in reality, meant an all-Wafdist ministry under Mustafa al-Nahhas."[106] This move revealed the ugly face of Britain, damaged the image of the King as a capable ruler, and ruined al-Wafd's reputation as a nationalist party, since its accession to power relied on British tanks. Things got even worse after the WWII, and post-war Egyptians lost faith in liberal democracy and the pre-war parties and moved on to join militant movements, such as MBG and Young Egypt.

In this stage, we find an increasing Arab Nationalist element in the State discourse. One major factor in this rise is the Palestinian issue that became an acute concern for the Egyptians beginning in the late 1930s; "By the late 1930s the Jewish community made up about 30 percent of Palestine's population, up from some 7 percent in 1917."[107] In 1945, this rising Arabism with, in fact, British support resulted in the foundation of the Arab League. The League vowed to resist the creation of a Jewish state in predominantly Arab Palestine. Concern over Egypt's eastern borders was paralleled by concerns about its western and southern borders. In addition, Egypt's diplomacy had to fight for keeping Sudan. A UN Security Council decision in 1947, however, denied this

[106]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 75.
[107]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 71.

proposed unity. The following year witnessed a shameful defeat of the Egyptian Army, among other Arab armies, in the 1948 War. As Goldschmidt mentioned, "Late in 1946 Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin and Prime Minister Ismaʿil Sidqi drafted a treaty that would have provided for the complete withdrawal of British forces from the Suez Canal base by 1949."[108] The Treaty was opposed by nationalists for not stating clearly that Sudan would remain a part of Egypt's crown. Meanwhile, many short-lived governments failed to bring unity or prosperous to Egypt. On January 26, 1952, downtown Cairo was set on fire and the severely shocked Egyptians realized that this was the end of Egyptian politics as they know it.

Discourse of Economy

In *Al-Ḥarakah al-Siyāsiyyah fi Miṣr, 1945-1953*, Ṭāriq al-Bišrī writes that post-war Egyptian capitalists realized that socioeconomic reforms should have priority over political and national issues.[109] They thought that reform had to start internally and structurally. Long before that, however, successive Egyptian governments had advanced Egyptianization economic policies to nationalize business projects and their capital, directors, and employees. In 1927, it became necessary that two Egyptians at least be on the board of each corporation, that one fourth of the employees have to be Egyptians, and that one fourth of the stocks be offered to the public and four-fifths of them be owned eventually by Egyptians.[110] In 1947, a post-war prosperous national capitalism advanced a new Corporation Law that made it obligatory for any company to be legalized to have

[108]Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt*, 77.
[109]Ṭāriq al-Bišrī, *AL-Ḥarakah al-Syāsiyyah fi Miṣr, 1945-1953* (Cairo: Dār al-Šurūq, 2003),, 258, 259.
[110]Ṭāriq al-Bišrī, *AL-Ḥarakah al-Syāsiyyah*, 266, 267.

at least 51% of its capital offered by Egyptians, and to have 75% of its white-collar workers and 90% of its blue-collar workers be Egyptians. Robert L. Tignor writes that "A combination of the steady Egyptianization of joint stock companies, a rising indigenous bourgeoisie, and legislative enactments designed to enhance Egyptian control over the economy had had their intended effect: diversification, industrialization, and Egyptianization."[111] He also informs us that "the Egyptian economy of 1945 had a larger industrial sector and relied less on the export of cotton than it had in 1914."[112] This picture is incomplete, however. Foreign businesses simply moved their headquarters to Egypt, appointed Egyptians as directors and relied on a number of businessmen who were foreigners resident in Egypt. European financial and trading involvement in the country was substantial. Heavily capitalized industries, banks, land mortgage companies, export-import firms, cotton ginning companies, the tobacco and cigarette firms, the oil companies, and most food processing companies were all controlled by foreigners.[113]

If politically Egypt had to be involved in and integrated into a newly emerging international order, economically it had also to be more integrated into a post-war global capitalism. National capitalism seemed a naivete for most Egyptian capitalists. In fact, Banque Misr itself deviated from its initial rhetoric, and the founder had to accept European partnerships in order to advance his local operations. The 1947 Law that was issued by the Parliament was severely opposed by Ṣidqī, the Prime Minister at that time. He, among a number of other capitalists, realized that a prosperous capitalist economy

[111]Robert L. Tignor, "Decolonization and Business: The Case of Egypt," *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 3 (Sept. 1987),: 480.
[112]Robert L. Tignor, "Decolonization and Business, 480.
[113]Robert L. Tignor, "Decolonization and Business, 479, 480.

had to be open to the international market and had to encourage, not discourage, foreign investments. On their part, foreign businesses, contrary to all nationalist rhetoric, "sought to persuade British diplomats and military planners that military withdrawal was a reasonable policy and that overseas influence could be maintained through their economic sway."[114] Robert Vitalis studies the case of an Egyptian entrepreneur, ʿAbbūd Bāšā, who had been considered by many researchers as Egypt's comprador par excellence. Vitalis writes,

> The case of ʿAbbud provides further, compelling evidence of the need for rejecting the class model of competing and antagonist comprador- and national bourgeois fractions. Applied to the interwar years in Egypt, the model proves empirically untenable. Those members of Egypt's business community commonly identified as the core of the progressive national industrial bourgeoisie maintained close and mutually profitable ties with foreign interests in ways that are indistinguishable from Egypt's so-called leading compradors. Those most commonly characterized as compradors were actively promoting the development of new industries in Egypt and the Egyptianization of existing sectors. Comprador capital and national capital are empty categories.[115]

This is the contradiction of the economy: the consolidation of *nationalist* capitalist

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[114]Robert L. Tignor, "Decolonization and Business, 479.

[115]Robert Vitalis, "On the Theory and Practice of Compradors: The Role of Abbud Pasha in the Egyptian Political Economy," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no. 3 (Aug. 1990),: 292.

economy could be advanced by un-prioritization of the nationalist issue, inviting foreign investments and pushing for more integration into global capitalism.

The above contradiction is not the only one. The economic elite of Egypt was as divided as the political elite and, in fact, along almost the same lines. Egyptian capitalists had to fight against their national foes: the agricultural bourgeoisie of landlords. The latter had traditionally allied themselves with the palace and its supporting parties, and had adopted a conservative and Islamist discourse. On their part, Egyptian capitalists could not advance their reform, that would supposedly bring forth economic prosperity, without confronting the landlords. To support nationalist industrialization, they had to increase the purchasing power of Egyptians. For this to happen, they had to reform the unfair relationships between landlords and the peasants who rented their lands. They demanded a limitation of land ownership and called for supporting small ownerships. These policies could not pass the approval of the parliament and were severely resisted by the King and his supporters, including al-Azhar, which, issued a *fatwa* prohibiting the limitation of land ownership.[116] In vain had gone all Egyptian capitalists' efforts to change tax policies by either lowering taxes on industry and trade or increasing them on land ownership.[117] On top of these problems, Egypt witnessed an increasing number of workers' movements that organized many strikes and demonstrations demanding justice and fair distribution of national wealth. Once again Egyptians realized that this was the end of Egyptian economic policies as they knew them.

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[116]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *AL-Ḥarakah al-Syāsiyyah fi Miṣr*, *ibid.*, 271.
[117]Tāriq al-Bišrī, *AL-Ḥarakah al-Syāsiyyah*, 275.

MBG Discourse

A reading of al-Bannā's writings during the late 1930s and 1940s finds an unmistakable change. In *al-Muʾtamar al-Khāmis*, 1938, for instance, we find an urgent call to his members to get *prepared* for a change that he felt so imminent. He announces that there are specifically three stages of change in MBG: *al-taʿrīf*, *al-takwīn* and *al-tanfīdh:* introducing the mission to the public, forming the MBG members and rebuilding their character, and the execution of the mission![118] He announced that it was then the second stage and lists three methods of this stage: *al-katāʾib*, *al-jawwālah* and *al-taʿālīm*, or brigades, scouting, and the Teachings. The first is a spiritual meeting of forty members; the second includes all physical and para-military training; and the third is an unpublished treatise that has to be taught to and memorized by elite MBG members. Denying uncalculated rushing to effect a real change on the ground, he announces that this Group has no place for those who are not patient enough to walk the designed steps, get prepared and wait the right moment. He tells MBG members that

> When you, Muslim Brothers, are 300 brigades, each of which has been psychologically and spiritually prepared by faith and belief, intellectually prepared by knowledge and culture, and physically prepared by training and sports, you may ask me to get you into plangent oceans, get with you through the highest of skies, or invade each stubborn tyrant. I will do it, God willing! … I

[118]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 81, 82.

estimate for this to happen a delay time that is not quite long.[119]

Al-Bannā, in this speech, addresses the question of *revolution* as a legitimate method of change. After elaborating on the use of power and its feasibility, he ambiguously concludes that power could be used as the final solution and when non-violent means fail to achieve the change. He also states that, taking into consideration the deteriorating conditions of Egypt, a *revolution* may happen without any contribution of the Brothers.

In 1939, al-Bannā wrote the Teachings, *al-Taʿālīm*.[120] In it, he listed in short, precisely-written sentences the ten cornerstones of giving an allegiance to MBG. He follows that by listing the duties of each Brother. We find neither his usual traditional Arabic rhetoric, nor his preaching style. The treatise aims the least to convince. Its audience are the elite who need no persuasive arguments, but clear instructions. He asks them no less of than to give themselves up completely to the mission and expects from them complete obedience and absolute trust. Here, we find al-Bannā getting prepared for a change in reality, which he sees as urgent and imminent. Al-Bannā is also turning to his organization to build its core structures and secure its internal operations. In this treatise, he draws a clear line between recruitment works, in terms of lessons, public lectures, newspapers, ceremonies, etc., and *takwīn* work, the development of a perfectly controlled hierarchical organization. Here we find al-Bannā not as a demagogue speaking to the masses, but as an authoritarian leader indoctrinating his cadres. If the state is moving to

[119]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 84.
[120]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 225-234.

consolidate its power, reform its internal structures and getting ready for an expected change, if capitalism is consolidating its power, reforming laws and policies of trade, taxes, land ownership, etc., and getting ready for a new era, al-Bannā too is consolidating the MBG power, reforming its hierarchical structures and getting ready for *al-tanfīdh*!

A remarkable change in al-Bannā's writing in this period is the seriousness of his articulation of internal, national problems. Instead of the general statements about "Islam" as the authentic way to solve all political, economic, social and otherwise problems, he focuses on specific issues that were the concerns of political life at that time. In *Niẓām al-Ḥukm*, he addresses specific questions about the political system of the state. He writes that "The government in Islam is based on a recognized and known rule, which is the basic structure of the system of rule in Islam. It is based on: the responsibility of the ruler, the unity of the nation, and respect for the nation's will."[121] Instead of contrasting an Islamic system to a secular one, he tries to bring them together.

He writes that the constitutional system is based on the responsibility of the ruler, the authority of the nation and respect for its will. Avoiding a discussion about the authority of the nation or contrasting it to the authority of God, he swiftly highlights the two common principles and states that the unity of the nation can easily be one of the principles of the constitutional system. He also states clearly that "There is nothing in the representational system that contradicts the rules put by Islam for the system of ruling."[122] He also praises those who wrote the constitution for their work either matches

[121] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 202.
[122] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 205.

Islam or can match it with some interpretation. He admits that laws, not the constitution, have problems, but insists that the bases of both the constitution and the representational system are in harmony with it.[123]

Al-Bannā sees the ruler as the sole agent responsible for the state. He understands, however, that there are presidential states and parliamentary states. He also admits that both of them could be traced to Islam's political thought, in terms of *wizārat tanfīdh* and *wizārat tafwīḍ*. For him, however, the ruler is not just a symbolic figure. He is indeed the source of authority, whether he presides over the government or delegates his authority to it.[124] Al-Bannā, however, is unhappy with the ambiguity of the constitution. Interestingly, he quotes here, not a holy text or historical literature, but modern writings about this problem. Quoting Ibrāhīm Madkūr and Mirīt Ghālī, he elaborates on the ambiguity of the constitution, especially when it comes to the relationships among and the authorities of the King, the parliament, and the government. In this stage, it seems, al-Bannā is seriously engaging in contemporary discourses of the state. He knows that he has to articulate them and that his project has to go through these specific discourses and their modern concepts.

When it comes to the unity of the nation, he expresses his great dismay at the current multi-party system. For him, the multitude of political parties has never been an essential feature of democracy and the parliamentary system. There are democracies and parliaments that are based on one political party. He accepts the plurality of opinions and

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[123]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 205.
[124]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 206.

perspectives, but he believes that the best way to present these perspectives is through one political body. The multi-party system is too divisive and too shallow. It divides the nation instead of uniting it, and most of those parties are based not on serious and distinct programs, but only on different personalities. The fragmentation of political life shatters the will of the nation and distracts it from achieving its national objectives. Here too, he quotes contemporary experts. He refers to ʿAllūbah Bāšā, Ḥasan al-Giddāwī and Sayyid Ṣabrī to conclude that most parties evolve around an ex-minister, not a serious program, and that this division serves the occupier, not the nation.[125] Boldly, al-Bannā calls for an immediate dissolution of all political parties and their integration into one political body headed by the King. Different opinions can be presented by different individuals and discussed in one body, not presented by political parties that are fighting for power and positions.

Al-Bannā articulates the third point, respect for the nation's will, by reflecting on the election system. He uses statistics offered by Sayyid Ṣabrī to prove the lack of real representation of the people by the parliament. The system is defective. However, he supports the idea that candidacy for parliament must be restricted by several conditions. Those are the conditions that make it possible to identify *ahl al-ḥall wa al-ʿaqd*, the qualified people to represent the nation. He also puts forward several suggestions to reform the current system. Interestingly, in spite of his call to dissolve all political parties, he dislikes individual candidacy and prefers standing for elections through the lists. He believes that this is the only way to protect the candidate from the local demands of his

[125]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 298, 209.

constituency.[126]

Al-Bannā was also engaged with socioeconomic problems and their solution. The Marxist discourse and activities that flourished during this time had a definite effect on his writings. In the Sixth Conference, which was held in 1941, he speaks in details and in clear figures and statistics about the miserable economic situation of the Egyptian people. He speaks at length about the peasants, the workers, the monopoly companies, the spread of diseases, the illiteracy, crime rates and wide-spread immorality. In fact, he includes the landlords among the oppressed by stating that they too are constantly indebted to the banks. He makes interesting calculations to prove that four million peasants each of them lives indeed on less than the cost of the food eaten by one donkey. He is clearly against privatization policies and wants the government to own the companies that provide basic needs, such as power and water. He offers statistics about different diseases and their spread in Egypt.[127] In *Al-Niẓām al-Iqtiṣādī*, he writes about economic corruption and chaotic planning. He proposes ten principles that he considers to form the basis of an Islamic economic system. Moreover, he articulated in detail a number of reforms. Interestingly, they seem very much like the reforms advanced by Egyptian capitalists. He called for an independent monetary system, Egyptianization of companies, support for industry, reforming ownership of lands, reforming the tax system and supporting domestic industries. He also called for fighting usury, taking advantage of national

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[126]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 209-211.
[127]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 133-135.

natural resources and moderation in consumption.[128]

It is important here to notice that al-Bannā is not just preaching Islamic systems and promising a good life. He is, in fact, demanding a serious change on the ground. He is not satisfied with the deteriorating situation in Egypt, and he tries to pressure politicians and reformers to shift immediately to Islamic reforms. He writes,

> The Egyptian Government, the Egyptian institutions and the Egyptian parties have no choice but to stand for their covenant with God and His Prophet when they pronounced *al-Šahādatayn* and so became committed to Islam, and to their civil covenant before the people when they issued the Constitution, in which they announced that the official religion is Islam. If they do not do this, then they are betraying their covenant with God and the rights of the people. They have to announce this betrayal in public so that people know what to do. There is no space today for deception or lying.
>
> Loyalty will protect the country from immanent social dangers and will bring back security and peace in souls and hearts. We have however to immediately change all attitudes and positions, and to publicly announce that the Nile Valley is where the message of Islam is embraced, announced and applied.[129]

Al-Bannā writes frequently in this stage about applying *Šarīʿah* and bitterly criticizes

[128]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 213-223.
[129]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 193.

different governments for not immediately shifting to an Islamic legal system, recognizing this as a clear contradiction of being a Muslim government in a Muslim country.

It is interesting here to find that the focus on internal affairs is paralleled, especially in the after-war years, with a desire to accommodate the newly emerging international system. He speaks of treaties, international laws and negotiations, not *jihād*, and of global peace, not war! In fact, the Caliphate occupies now a surprisingly humble space. In 1938, al-Bannā does not deny the importance of the caliphate system, but it does not seem an urgent demand in his speech. He writes,

> The Muslim Brothers give priority to the idea of the Caliphate and its reestablishment. They, however, believe that many steps are needed to pave its way, and that the final step has certainly to be preceded by many other steps. There must be complete cultural, social and economic cooperation among all Muslim peoples. Besides that, there should be treaties and alliances, and forums and conferences among all those peoples. The Islamic Parliamentary Conference for Palestine and the invitation of delegates from different Muslim countries to London to call for Arab rights in the Holy Land are two good phenomena and two big steps in this direction. After that, there should be a league of Islamic Nations. Then, there could be a consensus on the Imām, who is the intermediary of the allegiance, the meeting point of all Muslims, the beloved by all Muslims and

God's shadow on earth![130]

This reluctance to establish the caliphate is paralleled by seriousness and rushing to articulate the newly emerging international system. In the Sixth Conference, he declares that we do not count on power, for little of it we really own. The world has also suffered enough from the use of power. We count on the fact that this is our natural right. He continues,

> We also count on our contribution with our money, blood, children, land, transportation system, subsidiaries and all infrastructures. We exposed everything to immanent danger and stood beside the United Nations, contributing to the final victory. We did not want to bargain during the hard times, demanding a right of our rights, or raising a demand of our demands, but we left all this as a trust in the hands of the global human conscience, counting on the nobility of our allies and their honesty.
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> We count on those promises and oaths given by the Allies, one of which is the Atlantic Charter, and on all those declarations, speeches and announcements, in which they declared that they fight, as governments and peoples, for justice and freedom, that they want to support the oppressed, to rescue humanity from slavery and tyranny and to raise a new world, based on cooperation, guaranteeing

[130]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 96.

freedom, laws and justice.[131]

Al-Bannā seems acutely aware of the horrible consequences of wars. In 1948, he writes in a humanist tone and announces that "Islam is the religion of peace!"[132] He also writes that war could sometimes be a necessary evil. He then quotes Qurʾān and Ḥadīth to restrict its use and concludes that peace has to be preferred over war by all means. He finishes his piece, *Ittijāh al-Nahḍah*, by stating that "There is no meaning of a third world except the demolition of the Earth and whatever is on it. It is the age of the atomic bomb!"[133]

Al-Bannā pays considerable attention to the borders of Egypt. He writes at length that Sudan has to stay as a part of Egypt. Then he writes about securing Egypt's southern borders at Eritrea. He also writes about Libya and its independence, highlighting its importance in securing Egypt's western borders. When he writes about Palestine, he writes, "We need to secure our eastern borders by solving the Palestinian question in a way that responds to the Arabs' perspective that prevents the Jews from dominating this country."[134] In all these cases, he seems to be concerned with *Egypt* and its security in a framework of international relationships and treaties. Those were indeed the same concerns of Egypt's politicians of all backgrounds and public debate.

In 1939, al-Bannā founded *al-Niẓām al-Khāṣṣ*, literally the Special System, a

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[131]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 165.
[132]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 308.
[133]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 320.
[134]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 166.

secret and militant organization. The System came to be involved in a number of operations against the British soldiers in Egypt and the Jewish community in Cairo. A number of its individuals were involved in political assassinations as well. It seems that al-Bannā himself lost his control over the system, which was led by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sanadī (1918-1962.) The extreme secrecy of the System and its structure of isolated clusters, with no direct and clear chain of command, made it both extremely powerful and extremely uncontrollable. Sanadī challenged the authority of both the first and the second General Guides of MBG. The System contributed, among other volunteers of MBG, in 1948 War in Palestine. By the end of the War, prime minister Maḥmūd Fahmī al-Nuqrāšī (1888-1948) banned the Group, detained thousands of its members, and confiscated its properties. Nuqrāšī was assassinated by a member of the Special System, and soon after that al-Bannā was assassinated by the secret police in 1949.

Third Stage: Policies

State and Economy

The third stage begins in the early 1950s and ends by mid 1970s. It starts with stagnation and impending failure in economy, state, and Islamism. In July 1952, a group of young army officers ousted the King and took over power. The group that came to be known as the Free Officers had strong relationships with the MBG, who participated in their coup, which changed its name later on to the Blessed Movement and eventually to the Revolution. In fact, both President Nāṣir (1918-1970) and President Sādāt (1918-1981), among other members of the Free Officers, were members in MBG. Nāṣir was a

member of the Special System.[135]

President Gamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir dissolved all political parties and created one political body, the Liberation Institution, in 1953. In 1956, he produced a new constitution and replaced the Liberation Institution with the National Union, which, in turn, was replaced by the Arab Socialist Union in 1962. Economically, he nationalized foreign projects, the most important of which was the Suez Canal. He also advanced agricultural reform policies that put limits on the ownership of lands, and therefore fragmented the political and economic power of important, land-owning families. Nāṣir created what he called state-directed capitalism by launching many industrial projects. In 1954, he banned MBG, put thousands of the Brothers in prison and executed six of its leaders. Rather than being the achievements of one leader, a group of political elite or even a great revolution, those changes were in fact the culmination of dynamic discourses that had emerged in the early nineteenth century. They were the product of a complex of concepts, such as unity, reform, progress, authenticity, independence, rationality and organization, and their *rules of formation*.

Though Nāṣir's regime definitely witnesses the high water mark of consolidation, this consolidation was never complete. If we put rhetoric and announced ideology aside, what we find is a discourse and reality full of ignored contradictions and intentional compromises. Economically, it is quite simplistic to call his regime *socialist*. Even in the very moment that he declared Egypt a socialist country, capitalism was included. In *al-Mīthāq*, the Charter, which he announced on May 21, 1962 as the official ideology and

[135]Ex-President Mubārak mentioned in an interview that he too was a member of the MBG.

strategy of future Egypt, he wrote,

> The private sector has its effective role in the development plan for progress. It has to be protected to play its role. The private sector is required now to renew itself, and to struggle its way by creative work without depending, as it did in the past, on parasitic exploitation. The crisis of the private sector before the Revolution erupted from its being an inheritor of the foreign adventurers, who worked to deplete Egypt's wealth abroad in the nineteenth century. Private capital grew accustomed to the high walls of protection, which was provided to it by the people's subsidiaries. It also grew accustomed to dominating political rule in order to keep its exploitation. It was a useless burden for the people to pay to protect it and to increase the profits of a handful of capitalists, who were but a local façade of foreign interests that worked to keep exploitation behind the scene.[136]

Nāṣir here had no problem with the private sector. His problem, as he explained later on, was that global capitalism is so powerful that to fight it one has either to impose excessive tariffs, which are paid by the people, or accommodate it and get integrated into it, which is against the national interests. Nāṣir was equally unhappy with giant national capitalists, for they will seek their personal interests and gain unwarranted political power. For him, the solution is to create strong state capitalism that can compete globally,

[136]Gamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, *Al-Mīthāq* (Cairo: Ministry of Information, 1962.),

on the one hand, and to support private capitalism that does not exceed an appropriate size. My point here is not to discuss his economic wisdom. My point is that there has never been a moment in the discourse that enjoyed absolute consolidation. The traditional trend of inclusion characterized his discourse as much as it had characterized the discourses of the previous stages. Statistically, "In the late 1960s, private businessmen and entrepreneurs controlled 40 per cent of the manufacturing industry, 86 per cent of domestic trade, 48 per cent of transport and communications, 78 per cent of personal services and 95 per cent of tourism and recreational activities."[137]

Nāṣir creates gaps in the same moment he is consolidating his discourse. He calls for a strong *public* sector, but the *private* sector has to be encouraged as well. He denies that he calls for a public *ownership* of the means of production and states that he wants public *control* of those means. He wants the state to own *heavy* industry, but opens the space for private sector to own *light* and medium industry. He rejects *exploitative* capitalism, but praises *non-exploitative* capitalism. He declares that he never planned to *nationalize* the land. He only wants to *redistribute* it among private citizens. In the Charter, he gives those who own more than they should eight years to sell their lands, since he has no intention to redistribute it immediately. He does not find a problem in *unconditional* foreign investments. Then, he says that under certain conditions, even *conditional* foreign investments can be acceptable.[138]

The *mixed economy* Nāṣir created had led to "a special pattern of amalgamation of

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[137]Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism: A Study in Employment and Income Distribution Policies in Urban Egypt, 1952-72* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 111.
[138]Gamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, *Al-Mīthāq*.

the interests of the numerous middle strata in the society with various patterns of capitalism."[139] Those *numerous middle strata*, not Nāṣir, are the ones who shaped the economy. As Mahmoud Abdel Fadil argues, it was the strong and articulate petty bourgeoisie who helped Nāṣir to check the power of big capital and to liquidate the landed aristocracy. Abdel Fadil concludes, however, that Nāṣir could not be independent since he had to satisfy and balance all those social groups.[140] Wisely, Abdel Fadil states, "Such a confusion between the core ruling elite and the reservoir from which they came has led to an exaggerated picture of the political role of the petty bourgeoisie in Nasser's Egypt."[141] Abdel Fadil also moves to blur the lines between the military people and the civilians, between the new military elite and the landed aristocracy, and between the private and public sectors. He blurs these lines by highlighting three insightful observations: the movement of ex-army officers to work in the private sectors, the intermarriage between army officers and the landed aristocracy, and the regular corruption between the bureaucrats and private sector entrepreneurs.[142]

In *al-Mīthāq*, Nāṣir displays two attitudes similar to those of al-Bannā. First, he has an attitude of *practicality*. It is an attitude that situates strategies and policies in the *real* situations, not in any presumed theory, philosophy or ideology. He writes,

> The acceptance that there are natural laws for social work does not mean the

[139]Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism*, 107.
[140]Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism*, 108.
[141]Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism*, 109.
[142]Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, *The Political Economy of Nasserism*, 111.

> automatic acceptance of ready theories or replacing them with the national experience. The real solutions of the problems of any people can not be imported from the experiences of other peoples. Any popular movement cannot afford to ignore the experience, when carrying the responsibility of the work. The national experience does not assume in advance the faulting of all previous theories. It does not reject in principle all the solutions that others found. This is a fanaticism that the national experience can not bear with its consequences, for the will of social change goes in the beginning of its practice to its responsibilities through a stage of intellectual adolescence. It needs in this stage all intellectual nourishment. However, it needs to digest this nourishment and to mix it with the secretions produced by its own living cells. It needs to know about its world, but its central need is practice real life on its ground. The trial and error in the lives of nations are exactly like the trial and error in the lives of individual: the path to maturity and comprehension.[143]

Nāṣir stresses the significance of *real* experience over theories and ideologies. He is making this statement in the very document that has to serve as the state's ideology. He follows that by making a statement that the forms of democracy and theories of socialism can not create *real* political freedom and *real* social freedom. Both of these are grounded in the heart of practice and national experience. Nāṣir here, much like al-Bannā, is creating policies *as* fatwas.

[143]Gamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, *Al-Mīthāq*.

The second attitude Nāṣir displays in *al-Mīthāq* is his surprising statement that there is an urgent need to "create a new political system inside the Arab Socialist Union to recruit good cadres for leadership, to organize its works, to identify the revolutionary incentives of the masses, to explore its needs and to help finding the right solutions to these needs."[144] In this short statement, he expressed his intention to create a *special system* inside the main organization. Sure enough, the next year, in 1963, Nāṣir founded *al-Tanẓīm al-Ṭalīʿī*, the Vanguard Organization, a secret organization made up of 30,000 members spread throughout the country who reported to the Minister of the Interior. Most important here is to state that if it was the *situation*, not ideology, was responsible for designing the strategies and policies, *trust*, not ideology, the basis of recruitment. According to the names listed in the interesting book of Ḥamādah Ḥusnī, *ʿAbd al-Nāṣir wa al-Tanẓīm al-Ṭalīʿī al-Sirrī*, members of this secret organization had ideological backgrounds in Communism, Arab Nationalism, Socialism and indeed the Muslim Brotherhood Group.[145]

The above notion about the existence of Muslim Brothers in the secret and elite organization of Nāṣir invokes a central remark before I move to write about the MBG in this period. *Officially*, Nāṣir was never against the MBG. Nāṣir was against the new leadership of MBG and those members who either followed this leadership or resorted to violence and extremism. For Nāṣir, the MBG was the noble and progressive ideas and works of al-Bannā and those who maintained his line of thinking and work. In his

[144]*Gamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, Al-Mīthāq*.
[145]Ḥamādah Muḥsin, *ʿAbd al-Nāṣir wa al-Tanẓīm al-Ṭalīʿī al-Sirrī* (Cairo: Maktabat Bayrūt, 2008.),

movement to consolidate power, he could not tolerate a competing force. Those who challenged him were punished, but that happened after two years of negotiation and persuasion. Visiting al-Bannā's grave on the fifth anniversary of his assassination, Nāṣir said in his speech,

> I remember those years and those hopes, for which we were working! I remember them and see among you those who can remember with me that history and those days. Those who remember at the same time the great hopes that we aspired to and thought of as far dreams. Yes, I remember in this time and in the like of this place how Ḥasan al-Bannā was meeting with everyone, so that everyone would work for the superior principles and noble goals, not for people, individuals, or this world! God is my witness that I work, if I work at all, to achieve these principles, die for it and fight for its sake![146]

Not only Nāṣir, but Sādāt too, on January 15, 1954, wrote,

> A resentful person can accuse the leaders of the Revolution with any charge. … Only one charge, no matter how resentful, rude or bold this person is, can not be thrown at us. It is the accusation of denying our religion, Islam, that is deep in our veins, rooted in the depths of our souls and hearts. We as Muslims understand the

[146]"ʿAbd al-Nāṣir ʿala Qabr Ḥasan al-Bannā," http://www.ikhwanonline.com (accessed August 15, 2011).

> truth of our religion and understand its commandments and teachings. … This is why we have been the most careful to keep the Muslim Brotherhood Group because of our conviction that it is a righteous group that spreads the word of God's religion and Islam's noble morals, raising the power of Muslims and supporting their glory. Those are the same principles that we embraced in comprehension and certainty. We embraced them not because they are the principles of the Muslim Brothers, but because they are the principles of Islam itself that each Muslim has to grasp. If this day comes, when a handful of people tries to divert this righteous Group from its righteous goals, claiming that we fight Islam as we fight them, they will find no one to believe their claim. We are not those who sell their religion for this world. We are not those who desire money or prestige, not after we offered our heads and our necks as a sacrifice for our country, Egypt![147]

Here and there we find acceptance of the mission of the MBG and admiration for its Founder. The problem, according to the Free Officers, is the *new* leadership and those who follow it. "Islam" as represented by MBG is not a problem for the new rulers, not only because of their former membership in the MBG, but because al-Bannā had created an organization, not a new discourse. This is why Sādāt put simply that way: "We embraced them not because they are the principles of the Muslim Brothers, but because they are the principles of Islam itself that each Muslim has to grasp." Abdel-Fadil's insightful notion about the significance not only of the core-elite, but also, and equally

[147]"Naḥnu wa al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn," http://www.ikhwanonline.com (accessed August 15, 2011).

important, the *reservoir* from which this elite comes is significant. The officers, bureaucrats, intellectuals, professionals, etc. who made the “new middle class,” NMC, move to the systems of the state with a discourse of Islam that had been developing for a hundred and fifty years.

As I wrote above, MBG discourse, its call for a modern, but yet authentic Islam, its call for unity of the nation and its representation by one political body, its call for reforming al-Azhar, its call for independence and fighting the imperialist power, its call for reforms in taxes, land ownership and the creation of new industry, its call for social justice and the redistribution of the national wealth, etc. have already been absorbed by the new State. Can we then assume that Egypt had become an Islamic State similar to that long desired by al-Bannā? The answer is no! The Free Officers were the product of a complex of diversified discourses, debates and movements that had emerged long before the Revolution and of which the MBG was only one. After dissolving all political parties, they counted in their rule on the administrative and bureaucratic system of the state. Even their one political body relied on the bureaucratic system of the state, not on any ideological conviction, in recruiting its members. The members of the the Arab Socialist Union represented all the ideological backgrounds of that time, and the majority of them had no specific ideology at all. The unified state that emerged with July Revolution, I argue, was based on three dynamics: inclusion, negotiation, and compromise.

Yes, it is true that the state had always to adopt a sort of ideology, be it Arab

Socialism of Nāṣir or *al-ʿIlm wa al-Īmān* of Sādāt.[148] This ideology was neither clear and consistent, nor central in shaping the policies. Policies and strategies were always *fatwas*, practical solutions based on historical situations, not central plans emerging from ideology, philosophy or theory. The people, the *numerous strata* as Abdel-Fadil put it, moved to the bureaucratic system and to the political body of the state made collectively these *fatwas.* Inclusion was a central dynamic of the state. An examination of the leadership of the Egyptian State at any moment in its history will reveal a heterogeneous structure that reflects a complex of different ideas, attitudes and cultural backgrounds. Nationalists, Marxists, Liberals and Islamist existed side by side in all state bodies and structures. Their policies and the strategies of the state came out of a long process of negotiation. Their decisions, the final decisions of the State of Egypt, have always been a sequence of compromises.

Muslim Brotherhood Group

With the appointment of Ḥasan al-Huḍaybī as the General Guide of MBG, we find an increasing interest, not in stressing the Islamic identity or reflecting on the basic structures of the state and economy, by an engagement in the details of Egypt's policies and strategies. A good example of this is the work of ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿŪdah (1906-1954.) ʿŪdah, an Egyptian judge and later the Deputy of MBG, wrote two nearly 1600-page volumes *Al-Tašrīʿ al-Jināʾī al-Islāmī Muqāranatan bil-Tašrīʿ al-Waḍʿī*, *Islamic Criminal Law in Comparison with Positive Laws.* In this detailed work, ʿŪdah rewrites the criminal law, modifying it according to Islamic rules and regulations. The book is

[148]Mubārak and his people were too bored with ideologies to bother inventing one.

indexed, not according to *fiqh* books, but according to regular positive laws. The style of the writing is also technical in every modern sense. ʿŪdah gives insightful comments on the philosophy between this or that article and the philosophical background of both laws. The book is still studied in many schools in Egypt till today. ʿŪdah, a close friend of Nāṣir, became a member of the committee that was appointed to compose the first post-Revolutionary constitution. He also wrote a draft of the Libyan constitution. In 1954, ʿŪdah legally studied and criticized the agreement that was signed between the British and Nāṣir. In the same year, Nāṣir executed him. Leaving aside Nāṣir's reasons of executing ʿŪdah, his project could not be applied in a future Egypt that its policies have to be a sequence of compromises.

In post-Revolution time, however, we can speak of *two* kinds of the Brothers. First, there were the Brothers who were integrated into the project of the state and engaged in its work. Those are the majority of the Brothers, taking into consideration that MBG membership in 1948 reached nearly 500,000.[149] A number of those MBG members occupied the highest ranks in Nāṣir's regime. For instance, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Kāmil, a member of the highest board of MBG and the president of *maktab al-tarbiyah*, that was responsible for putting the curricula of MBG and supervising their pedagogical programs, came to be the minister of religious affairs. This same position, was also occupied twice by Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bāqūrī (1907-1985.) Bāqūrī was also appointed the president of al-Azhar University. Before the revolution he was the Interim General Guide, after the

[149]Robin Wright, *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of Militant Islam* (New York: Touchstone Rockefeller Center, 1985), 179.

assassination of al-Bannā and before the appointment of Huḍaybī.

There is also Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1917-1996). A graduate of al-Azhar, Ghazālī joined the MBG and came to be a member of its Guidance Council. He sided with Nāṣir during the 1954 crisis and was not jailed. He was appointed to different positions in the ministry of religious affairs and was involved in many public activities and debates. Because state's decisions are always compromises, intellectuals and public figures of all backgrounds are traditionally *opposition;* Ghazālī is no exception. *Within* the Egyptian State, he played the role of the Islamist opposition. For instance, in 1962, he was one of the main figures to participate in the Nationalist Conference of Popular Forces, and with other Islamists, such as Khālid Muḥammad Khālid (1920-1996,) he pushed for Islamic changes and an Islamic interpretation of the Charter. Ghazālī and his group were working against a Leftist group that was pushing the interpretation closer to Marxism. He wrote and published almost sixty books in nearly fifty years.

Ghazālī is well-known as a rationalist. He pays enough attention to the Scripture. However, reason for him is as important and he rejects a correct tradition if it contradicts reason or science. Interestingly, his first book was about the economic situation in Egypt, and he followed this with two more books on the same issue. He was especially interested in social justice believing Islam can offer a better solution than Marxism does. He wrote about democracy, human rights, and women's rights as well. Arguing against Khālid Muḥammad Khālid's book *Min Hunā Nabdaʾ*, he published in 1965 *Min Hunā Naʿlam*, in which he insists that a separation between Islam and the state is simply impossible. He

also argued in this book that though freedom is a cherished value in Islam, it can not preclude the duty to command the right doing and to object to wrong doing, *al-Amr bil-Maʿrūf wa al-Nahy ʿan al-Munkar*. He wrote frequently against imperialism, warning from its diverse forms that the military aspect is only one of them. He also wrote extensively about the formation of the Muslim in modern times. Ghazālī wrote in the 1960s *Kifāḥ al-Dīn*, in which he reflected on two of Nāṣir's concepts in the Charter: *Arab Nationalism* and *positive non-alignment*, rooting them in Islam, and warning against other ways of interpreting and using them. Ghazālī wrote against the Salafi attitude, and especially its literalist tradition. His closeness to the authorities did not stop him from taking a number of controversial positions. For instance, he surprisingly testified in the case of the assassination of Farag Fūdah for, not against, the defendant.

Unlike Ghazālī's position, there was the second attitude of MBG members that worked *outside* the framework of the state and, in fact, against it. No one would serve as an example in this time better than Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966.) A graduate of Dār al-ʿUlūm, Quṭb was more interested in literature than in religion. He was also influenced by Marxism and showed concern with social justice issues in the beginning of his career. He joined MBG only after the assassination of al-Bannā and soon became one of its most important intellectual figures. Unfortunately, after the crisis between the Free Officers and MBG, he spent most of his time in prison, where he wrote most of his Islamic works. Though his most important work is an exegesis of the Qurʾān, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*, his most influential work was a small book titled *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq*. In it, he wrote a concrete ideology that inspired thousands of militant activists after him. Muslim Brothers

have usually provided a moderate reading of his radical writings, claiming that they were written in a poetic style that must not be understood literally. A few MBG members politely denied it altogether, claiming that it does not match the original ideas of the Founder and must be rejected. In my opinion, they do match the ideas of the founder, not his 1930s ideas, but his later ideas, especially those that settled the basis on which he founded the Special System.

In *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq*, Quṭb states that before *šuhūd*, witnessing on the world, Muslims need in fact *baʿth*, resurrection. Quṭb, however, is not writing this book for all Muslims, who presumely need resurrection. He is writing it for a particular group of special people, whose function is to effect this resurrection in the *ummah*. This group, this small special group, he calls sometimes *ṭalīʿah*, vanguard, and sometimes *al-nawāh al-ṣulbah*, the hard core. The book is aimed only at this *ṭalīʿah*. The role of this *ṭalīʿah* goes far beyond the *ummah* to all of humanity. Humanity is living in *jāhiliyyah*. What is *jāhiliyyah*? Simply put, it is anything and everything that is not correct Islam. Humanity needs to admit *ḥākimiyyah*, that is submission to God in both belief and practice, individually and collectively, privately and publicly. The way to recreate this *ṭalīʿah* is known and tried. It is the same way the first generation of Muslims was produced. It is through the Qurʾān, *only* the Qurʾān! This Book is *minhāj ḥayāh*, a way of life. It is not a book to be read; it is a book to be *practiced*.

Getting attached only to the Qurʾān is one side of the coin. The other side is to be separated from the world, to be isolated so that you are not contaminated by the world, to

be in a state which he calls *ʿuzlah šuʿūriyyah*, emotional isolation. In the same practical attitude of al-Bannā and Nāṣir, he too writes that *jāhiliyyah* is not a theory; it is a movement. This is why it has to be encountered with a movement, not a theory. There have to be stages and corresponding means. There have to be different kinds of *jihād*, each of which fits in a specific stage. The periodization of the movement does not preclude the stable rules and goals of Islam that do not change. The *ṭalīʿah* must feel superior to the world. It must not feel defeated before non-Islamic civilizations or their material advancement. It must not feel inferior before their tyranny, their power, their arrogance, or their pride! They and all they have is simply dust! *Ṭalīʿah* must maintain *istiʿlāʾ al-imān*, faith-based superiority. Apologetic rhetoric is only for the weak, not for the *ṭalīʿah*. There is nothing Muslims need to apologize about or justify. Quṭb states that "no God but God" is in fact a way of life. It designs the path to the Muslim group and explains its relationships with other groups. It determines what is civilization and what may be considered as culture. It creates harmony among man and the universe, for the universe is subject to its Creator, and man is obeying the *Šarīʿah* of the Creator. It liberates man, once and for all, from all systems and structures of *jāhiliyyah*; it is a comprehensive revolution![150]

The Special System of al-Bannā, the Vanguard Organization of Nāṣir and the Hard Core of Quṭb are the discourse desperate trial to achieve its consolidation. Instead of consolidating the discourse, they created islands of reified ideologies. However, they never lived long enough to develop and expand. Soon, the dynamic and turbulent

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[150]Sayyid Quṭb, *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq* (Cairo: Dār al-Šurūq, 1979.),

discourse swept them away and continued its path.

Chapter Three

Polarization Discourses

This second phase of MBG discourse starts from the mid 1970s and goes all the way to the mid 1990s. It is preceded by dramatic political, cultural and economic crises. Politically, Egypt suffered from a humiliating defeat in 1967 War. ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm ʿĀmir, the Supreme Leader of the Armed Forces committed suicide, or was poisoned, and President ʿAbd al-Nāṣir announced his resignation. Culturally, Arab Nationalism as a social ideology could not withstand the 1967 defeat and had already failed to bring its ideals into reality. Economically, Socialism and its industry and public sector could neither compete globally nor succeed locally. An economy that was built on political ideology, not market dynamics, could not survive; and the welfare state could not provide the quality services it had promised the people of Egypt. Nāṣir led military operations against the Israeli occupation in Sinai for two years, from 1967 to 1969, which had even worse consequences on the country. Egypt witnessed the migration of all its population on the Suez Canal to the heart of the mainland, the largest migration in the popular memory, creating severe social and economic problems in many Egyptian cities. The operations backfired and Nāṣir had to stop them. In 1970, Nāṣir died and was succeeded by President Sādāt.

Sādāt created a new constitution, removed most of the political elite and announced the Revolution of Correction. After a swift war in 1973, in which the Egyptian Army deployed its forces on a narrow strip on the eastern bank of the Canal, Sādāt

declared and celebrated victory. The next year, in 1974, he took a decision that would dramatically change the economic, political and cultural life of the country. He announced *siyāsat al-bāb al-maftūḥ*, the Open Door Policy. It came later to be known as *siyāsat al-infitāḥ al-iqtiṣādī*, the Economic Openness Policy, or simply *al-Infitāḥ*, the Openness. As I will explain later, *openness*, would prove to be one main concept in the three discourses of the state, the economy and Islamism.

The Economy

A shy turn to private capitalism in the 1970s was boosted in the 1981 with the New Company Law, which "provided a straightforward way for enterprises to be established with national capital."151 A new private sector shortly unfolded, with an increasing rate of private industrial projects. Since the 1990s, the state has gone further in privatizing the public sector, including two of its four banks. This turn was accompanied socially by a flourishing consumerist culture that had sprung up. Enid Hill writes,

> With a beginning made to raise the structural restraints of the socialist years on private incomes a commercial culture suddenly developed. Money-making through importing, representing foreign companies and hard currency manipulation became the order of the day, together with its counterpart, conspicuous consumption, which in turn further fuelled the import trade. Norms

[151]Enid Hill, "Norms and Distributive Processes in Egypt's New Regime of Capitalist Accumulation," in *Politics from Above, Politics from Below: The Middle East in the Age of Economic Reform*, ed. Eberhard Kienle. (London: Saqi, 2003),, 82.

> of a commercial culture became widespread and a 'new *infitah* class' appeared.[152]

Relli Shechter observed a cultural conflict between the new *openness* culture and that of the past. He rooted the older culture in the Egyptian concept of *effendi*, which loosely points to middle class men, who have some education and adopt a relatively modern style in their life. In the social imagination, they are the ones who were responsible for moving Egypt forward to be modern, while preserving its authenticity and protecting its independence. Shechter wrote,

> The *infitah* was ferociously contested from day one. Apart from official voices defending government policies, there was little in public discourse supporting it. An intellectual canon developed that lamented the transition and found it detrimental to Egypt's present and future. I discuss this opposition as *effendi* and argue that for the the critics the threat to the *effendi* productionist paradigm amounted to the destruction of society and culture at large because *effendism* was taken to represent the soul of the nation. It was often mooted that a new, consumerist paradigm was being created, and that the emergence of the local consumer society was tantamount to the loss of indigenous values, identity and national independence.[153]

[152]Enid Hill, "Norms and Distributive Processes," 81.
[153]Relli Shechter, "The Cultural Economy of Development in Egypt: Economic Nationalism, Hidden Economy and the Emergence of Mass Consumer Society during Sadat's Infitah," *Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 44:4 (2008),: 572, 3.

This intellectuals' opposition was not universal. There was a synergy between openness and *freedom*. After years of Nāṣir's oppressive regime, there was a popular demand for freedom. Political freedom was conjoined with economic freedom, the free market and the joy of consumption. Nazih Ayubi wrote that "the GDP had grown at an average rate of 8.4 percent per annum in the period from mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, compared to an average of about 6.6 percent per annum during the period from the mid-1950s and 1960s."[154] Ayubi admits, however, that where most of the growth achieved in the 1950s and 1960s was due to expansion in industry and other productive sectors, "most of the 'growth' under 'infitah' was derived from foreign, rentier-type, resources over which the Egyptian state has had very little control, and which are in any case known to be dwindling."[155]

Ayubi observes, in fact, a higher level of commercialization of the public sector itself. Public enterprises are made "more market-oriented and eventually more specifically profit-oriented."[156] Ayubi contrasts *development* to *profit* as a key concept in the newer discourse of economy. He explains this change by writing,

> The open door policy has developed more because the state bourgeoisie has opted for alliance with international capital, rather than from any pressure from the

[154]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization: the Case of the Public Sector in Egypt," *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, no.56: 89 (1990),: 101.
[155]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization," 101.
[156]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization," 89.

> local industrial capitalists. This means that the Egyptian state bourgeoisie has simply chosen new ways to continue to dominate the state and to benefit from its economic resources.[157]

Ayubi's Marxian analysis seems to me too ideological. He identifies the benefits that state's bureaucracy gained from the new policy as the reason for its creation and refers to this bourgeoisie as conscious subjects, not a product of the newer discourse itself. He ignores the *real* economic crises that dominated Egypt before this policy and uses an orthodox Marxian analysis that puts emphasis on *production*, in its industrial sense and ignores neo-Marxian analyses that shift the emphasis to *consumption*, the other, and more important, dimension of the market.

The post-colonial concept of *development* was associated with another political concept: *independence*. It is interesting to notice that the shift from development to profit was accompanied by a gradual disappearance of *independence* and its replacement with *openness*. *Openness* here invites communication with, not isolation from, the world, and especially its capitalist center, the West. The West is recognized in this discourse of openness, not as tanks, soldiers, and oppression, but as jeans, cars, and air-conditioners, among other joys behind the door that has to be opened. In this new discourse *Egyptianization* is still used, but in a completely different sense. It is not used by statesmen who are willing to nationalize capital. It is used by those who stand at the open door, the marketers, whose work is basically *translation*. Shechter studied two marketing

[157]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization," 91.

companies in this period. He calls them *glocal mediators* and studied how local marketing “authenticated imported goods, keeping them modern while “Egyptianizing” them at the same time.”[158] Shechter refers to the work of Walter Armbrust in highlighting “code switching” and writes,

> Walter Armbrust, who works in the field of visual anthropology, noted that Nour's [an owner of one of the two marketing companies] advertisement juxtaposes cultural codes. “Old” and “new” (“traditional” and “modern” codes are brought together to create an attraction to the novelty, the advertised commodity, but at the same time anxiety over the unknown product is relieved by its being attached to a local icon.[159]

In addressing the consumer, *openness* provides a taste of authenticity that provokes nostalgia. The product is double original: originally modern and originally traditional![160] We find similar duality in a study conducted by Americana, the company owned by Tāriq Nūr, on young Egyptian smokers. In it, two subjectivities are identified in the research,

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[158]Relli Shechter, “Glocal Mediators: Marketing in Egypt during the Open-Door Era (*infitah*),,” *Enterprise and Society*, no. 9: 4 (2008),: 763.
[159]Relli Shechter, “Glocal Mediators, 781.
[160]As an example, riq Nr produced an advertisement for a brand of butter that was called *Samnit al-Hānim*. Al-Hānim is a word that was used before July, 1952 Revolution to mean “lady.” all the images and the music of the ad are modern. The cover of the container is red. The girl who sings the song of the ad is very modern, but on her head there is *ṭarbūš*, a red hat that was used by men before 1952. she was wearing also rounded eyeglasses reminiscent of the early 20th century. It is this mix of modern and traditional images that create the double-original value of the product.

one of them stresses *qanāʿah*, being satisfied with one has, the other *šaṭārah*[161]. *Šaṭārah* personality is more aggressive and selfish; *qanāʿah* is more resigned and family oriented. These two character traits seem to be related to the openness of the consumerist and the authenticity of the *effendi,* respectively.[162]

The above cultural duality is paralleled by an economic duality. *Infitāḥ*, the liberalization of economy and privatization policies did not amount to a complete change of the Socialist economy or to an abandonment of its public sector. The liberal changes proceeded very gradually and have never been completed. If the 1960s Socialist economy was in fact *mixed*, as I wrote earlier, the Liberal economy of the 1980s and 1990s was also *mixed*. Resistance from intellectuals, political activists, the state bureaucracy, the state bourgeoisie and, in fact, statesmen as well made the move gradual and quite reluctant. Hamza Ateş et al state that "Despite the dominant discourse of the *infitah*, which largely focused upon the importance of the private sector, the public sector continued to play an effective and wide-ranging role in the Egyptian economy until the early 1990s."[163] In fact, in spite of announced privatization policies the state's bureaucracy also increased in size during the same period.[164] The public sector has not given away to the private sector. The "state has merely chosen to cooperate with

[161] *Al-šuṭṭār* in classic Arabic literature are groups of thieves who attach passing caravans and take their goods and money. *Šaṭr* is half, or a cut, and *yašṭur* is to divide or cut out. In modern Arabic, *al-šāṭir* means the clever or the resourceful. The Egyptian idiom goes: *al-tijārah šāṭārah*, or trade is cleverness.

[162] Relli Shechter, "Glocal Mediators, 781.

[163] Hamza Ateş, Mehmet Duman and Yüksel Bayraktar, "A Story of Infitah: Egyptian Liberalisation under Stress," *Yapi Kredi Economic Review*, no. 17: 1 (2006),: 69.

[164] Hamza Ateş, "A Story of Infitah," 72.

international capital,"[165] as Ayubi put it. Ayubi highlights the continuously central role of the state. He writes,

> privatization in Egypt is still basically a public policy pursued by the state for its own purposes. The state's continuing dominant role has meant that privatization has not necessarily involved deregulation but rather regulation. Thus a 'public authority for investment' was created in the 1970s and 'holding public corporations' were reintroduced in the 1980s. The state's continuing dominant role has also meant that the privatization policy has not yet included any large-scale plans for dismantling the public bureaucracy.[166]

In fact, until today, it is quite noticeable in any public debate that the state's responsibility for providing welfare services is not subject to discussion. The question is always how to rationalize this function so that services will go only to those who need it; how to support the state to be able to perform this function; or how to redistribute state's budget further to accommodate this function.[167]

This seeming contradiction, this dual public-private economy, is further complicated by the emergence of a third economy: the shadow economy. The *shadow* economy in Egypt is estimated to produce 68% of the GNP, making the country's shadow

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[165]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization," 90.
[166]Nazih N. Ayubi, "Etatism versus Privatization," 90.
[167]As an Egyptian living in U.S., I do not see here citizens and government, in the Egyptian sense. I see consumers and market brokers.

economy the third in the world next to Nigeria and Thailand.[168] In *Informal Economic Activity*, J. J. Thomas defines shadow economy according to its *nature* and its *legality*. He specifies four types of shadow economy: the household, the informal traditional like agricultural activities, the irregular, and finally the criminal. He further classifies them according to the legality of both the product and the production process. The first two types are legal in terms of their product and the way it is produced. The last type is illegal in both terms; and the third type has a legal product that is produced illegally.[169] Most of the Egyptian shadow economy belongs to the third type, which he calls the irregular sector. Thomas lists fifteen different names for this sector: black, clandestine, hidden, informal, invisible, irregular, non-official, parallel, second, shadow, subterranean, underground, unobserved, unofficial, and unrecorded.

The hesitation between two economies, one socialist and one liberal, created this huge shadow economy. Shechter wrote that

> In reality, the broad structural transitions envisioned by both promoters and critics of the *infitah* would never fully materialize, partly because the basic tenets of economic nationalism remained intact throughout the period. Egypt could not continue with (or go back to) strict ISI policies, nor could it make a clear break toward an alternative either. Instead, a huge hidden economy emerged alongside the official one, which will provide ad hoc solutions to many unresolved

[168] Friedrich Schneider and Dominik H. Enste, *The Shadow Economy: An International Survey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002),, 31.
[169] J. J. Thomas, *Informal Economic Activity*, (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1992),, 1-7.

> economic matters. Being thus caught betwixt and between has largely shaped Egyptian economic history in the last three decades.[170]

Representatives of both official economies could not recognize the significance of this shadow economy and considered it a transient disease. However, the shadow economy spread rapidly and established a huge network of enterprises and finances that controlled large sectors of socioeconomic activities, such as education, health services, technology, construction business, small and medium-size industry, etc.

There is an important mutual relationship between shadow economy, on the one hand, and social structures, on the other hand. Yes, the shadow economy feeds on the duality between two economies each of which is quite official. However, it could not be that huge without relying on specific organizations within the Egyptian society. The shadow economy in Egypt relies on a number of social structures, through which it networks its activities, recruits its labor force, and creates its markets. In her study *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*, Diane Singerman drew carefully and thoroughly on many Egyptian social networks. Singerman's point was to show the multitude of informal social channels that are used in political participation. Singerman's illuminating study is equally important for the investigation of the shadow economy. Singerman describes these networks in terms of their both independence and penetrative capacities writing,

[170] Relli Shechter, "The Cultural Economy," 573.

> Networks are concrete manifestation of extra systemic political participation not controlled by formal political institutions or the political elite. Neither state institutions nor the political elite dominate the informal networks, although the *sha'b* "people" consciously strive to incorporate local state bureaucrats and political elites into their networks to facilitate access to public goods controlled by the state. Informal networks are penetrative, efficient flexible, and encompass a diverse membership. They fill a political need in the community by representing and furthering the interests of *sha'b*, which have little access to, the formal political system. Formal and informal networks permeate daily life and are a critical, though ambiguous and concealed, arena of micro and macro political processes in Egypt.171

We are talking here about networks of families, neighborhoods, mosques, professions and, not the least, local cafes. Those networks are grounded in religion, culture, common values and mutual trust. Singerman wrote about one of the most interesting geographically-based social phenomena in Egypt: the *gam'iyyaat*. They are interest-free saving associations that work as credit institutions. Singerman wrote,

> Among the most important of the informal financial networks, with a great

[171]Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995),, 133.

> influence on the political economy of Egypt, are informal saving associations, or *gam'iyyaat*. In the previous chapter *gam'iyyaat* were discussed as a primary mechanism for accumulating savings for marriage. Individuals save large sums of money in these savings associations not only for marriage but also for purchases of land, housing, machinery, and other investments. Egyptians from all segments of society participate in these associations, but the *sha'b*, who lives in financial insecurity, are particularly drawn to *gam'iyyaat* because they are a source of interest-free loans in times of financial crisis. Many of these people cannot fulfill a bank's requirement for collateral or a long-standing credit record.172

The shadow economy, therefore, not only embarks on *real*, though informal, social organization, it also reproduces social relationships and social organization.

Singerman, however, is alluding to an insightful notion: the continuous communication between the formal and informal economies. Shechter, among others, supports the same point of formal-informal communication. He, however, denies any *duality* and, in fact, argues for *synergy*. He writes that

> Because the formal economic institutions would not allow a significant enough transition to take place, they facilitated the alternative spread of informality. This, however, did not mean duality between formal and informal economies with little contact between the two; it meant myriad synergies that served both sides. … The

[172]Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation*, 154.

state found it convenient to let informal employment and services cushion structural changes and its own retreat from earlier 'social contract' and commitment to its citizens.

In fact, state bureaucrats benefited from keeping informal economy hidden, since they worked as gate keepers and be personally rewarded for their expedition of the informal work. Shadow economy actors also enjoyed the distance that separates them from the heavy hand of the bureaucratic government and its complicated rules and regulations.

The State

President Sādāt started his reign by launching the Corrective Revolution in May 1971. he announced that a police state, in which people are spied on, will no longer exist in the country. He also stressed that the liberation of Sinai is a priority that can not be ignored. He declared that it would be liberated either by peace or by war. To pursue the peace path, he supported the Rogers Peace Plan that had been proposed in 1969 by U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers to President Nāṣir. To pursue the war path, he demanded that the former Soviet Union update his army's weaponry. Neither of these two paths proved to be successful. He took a surprising decision to expel Soviet technicians, 20,000 technicians working in the Egyptian Army. Those who would stay would have to work under Egyptian command. The number was reduced immediately to only 1,000 technicians. Unexpectedly, the former Soviet Union decided to update the Egyptian Army. In 1973, Sādāt waged a surprising war against Israel, a war that he was

determined, against the will of his army commanders, to make short and swift. The Egyptian Army crossed the Suez Canal and deployed its troops on a narrow strip on its eastern bank. Sādāt announced glorious victory.

The 1973 War ended, in fact, with an Egyptian-Israeli treaty mediated by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Kissinger continued his efforts to conclude a complete peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. In November 1977, in a speech given before the parliament, Sādāt surprisingly announced that he was prepared to go to Israel in search of peace. Two weeks later, he was received by Israeli leaders in Tel Aviv. The historic visit gave peace negotiations a dramatic boost and soon, in 1978, the two parties signed their final peace treaty.

In addition to shifting alliance from east to west, Sādāt domestically converted the political system to be more pluralistic. He started this path by creating three *manābir*, pulpits, within the Arab Socialist Union. Soon, the three pulpits of the Left, Right, and Middle became recognized as three political parties, and the Arab Socialist Union was dissolved. This change further augmented the liberal initiatives of the Corrective Revolution, and opposition journalism spread through the country. Sādāt presided over the Middle Party, which he named the National Democratic Party.

The above-mentioned events and changes reflected changes in the discourse of the state. *ʿUbūr*, or Crossing, which refers to "the Crossing" of the Suez Canal in 1973 War, came to be a central concept during the 1970s and well into the 1980s. For instance, Sādāt was called *Baṭal al-ʿUbūr*, or the Hero of Crossing. A new city was founded and

called Madīnat al-ʿUbūr, or the City of Crossing. Authors and historians would write about Maṣr al-ʿUbūr, or the Post-Crossing Egypt. The generation of the young people was also called Jīl al-ʿUbūr, or the Crossing Generation. In fact, *ʿUbūr* was symbolically used to indicate not only the crossing of the Canal, but also multiple assumed crossings in the social, political, economic and cultural life of Egypt. *ʿUbūr* continuously announced a new era, a dramatic *change. This change* became a pretext for more changes in all aspects of life. *Change* augmented and furthered other concepts that emerged within the newer discourse. For instance, it became justified, even conventional, that Egypt had to change its alliance from east to west; its economy from socialism to liberalism; its political system to a pluralistic one, etc.

The other central concept in this period is *infitāḥ*, openness. To distinguish it from the economic *infitāḥ*, it was sometimes called *al-infitāḥ al-siyāsī*, or political openness. This *infitāḥ* would refer to liberalism in politics, freedom of expression, and freedom as a cherished social and cultural value. Sometimes, it would be used as *al-infitāḥ ʿala al-gharb*, or openness to the West. In this context, the West was associated usually with freedom and prosperity, not imperialism and oppression.

Because *change* and *openness* are less ideological concepts, or at least have no specific ideological content, for one does not know exactly what is the content or objective of this change or openness, they were associated with some interesting *rules of formation*. A statement or a proposal inside the discourse had to be *new*. This *newness* was different from the newness of the older discourse. Where the discourse of

consolidation associated the *new* with the *modern* and opposed it to the traditional, the discourse of polarization associated the *new* with the *different* and opposed it to *al-marḥalah al-Nāṣiriyyah*, the Nasserist period. Political Liberalism, the free market and peace, for instance, were introduced as *new* and *different* from Nassir's dictatorship, socialism and war.

Equally interesting is the centralization and redefinition of *maṣlaḥat al-balad*, the interest of the country. *Al-maṣlaḥah*, the interest, became closer to *profit*, the economic concept that replaced *development* in the discourse of economy. *Al-maṣlaḥah became* related, not to a struggle for independence, but to prosperity and peace. Technical solutions are more important in bringing *Al-maṣlaḥah* than an overarching ideology. Increasingly, especially during Ḥusnī Mubārak's (1928-) regime, cabinets would be occupied and presided over by technocrats. Furthermore, *independence* was being acutely marginalized, since there was a need to cooperate with the West and get seriously open to and engaged in a global market. Independence was associated with *al-imkāniyyāt al-dākhiliyyah*, internal potential or national capabilities. It was proposed that Egypt was strong. It was not developed because of the colonizer and the imperialist powers that were exploiting the country. The objective of the economy in this discourse was *al-iktifāʾ al-dhātī*, or self-sufficiency. The political objective in the same context was independence. The newer discourse was reversing this relationship. Egypt was not developed because it is internally weak. The problem was definitely inside. The outside, the West, was a possible solution, a provider of assistance. To solve the national crises, one had to turn to the internal problems and change them.

As in the economy, where Egypt maintained a *mixed* economy, and where public and private sectors existed side by side, in politics too, Egypt maintained *mixed* politics, where contradictory concepts existed side by side. In the following lines, I will explain the sociological basis of this observation.

Frequently, economic liberalization, a too ambiguous concept to have one definition, is meant to indicate the liberation of economic actors from the influence of political actors. That was definitely not the case in Egypt, if it was ever elsewhere. Eberhard Kienle, for instance, wrote that, "it has been argued convincingly that President Sadat sought to create a new class of entrepreneurs able to enrich themselves yet dependent on the state and thus forming a constituency for his regime to rely on."173 There has been no independent new economic power that could challenge the state. The *new* power was manufactured and regulated within the state apparatus. In *State and Public Policies in Egypt since Sadat*, Nazih Ayubi wrote about the composition of this new class. "The social base for this change in orientation was a realignment of classes that brought to the fore an alliance between elements from the pre-revolutionary semi-aristocracy, the state bourgeoisie of the sixties, and the commercial/financial cliques of the infitah era."174 Ayubi, however, does not naively take this alliance as a homogeneous structure. He clearly points to the internal contradictions and writes,

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[173]Eberhard Kienle, "Domestic Economic Liberalization: Controlled Market-Building in Contemporary Egypt" in Eberhard Kienle (ed),, *Politics from Above, Politics from Below: The Middle East in the Age of Economic Reform*, (London: Saqi, 2003),, 148.

[174]Nazih N. Ayubi, *The State and Public Policies in Egypt since Sadat*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1991),, 225.

> It should also be clear that the commercial bourgeoisie has already started to acquire a life of its own. Although the state machine is amenable to the interests of the newly-emerged class conglomeration of infitah, it does strive to play the role of the arbiter between the various fractions of the evolving bourgeoisie, and even to maintain a certain degree of 'relative autonomy' vis-à-vis the conflicting class interests in the society.175

Ayubi follows this analysis by stating that "political power in Egypt is still basically in the hands of the state bourgeoisie."176 Ayubi's analysis is thoughtful and insightful, but there are three problems in it. First, the "state" is used awkwardly, for it denotes different competing sectors as well as their arbiter. Second, it portrays a struggle, or a balance of power, between what he calls the commercial bourgeoisie and the state bourgeoisie. The state bourgeoisie is a unified sector that, though in alliance with the commercial bourgeoisie, has enough autonomy to seek the interests of the other social classes. I will argue against this assumption later on. Third, in his analysis, the commercial bourgeoisie is quite fragmented. I will critique this assumption as well, but I want first to reflect on James Mayfield's work.

In his work *Local Government in Egypt*, Mayfield pointed to the difficulty of reforming what he called a mixed economy. He identified three sources of tension and resistance inside the governmental bureaucracy to the neo-liberal reforms. First, there are

[175] Nazih N. Ayubi, *The State and Public Policies*, 226.
[176] Nazih N. Ayubi, *The State and Public Policies*, 226.

the high-ranking civil servants who have occupied comfortable positions in the management of the state sector and parapublic enterprises, and who are now worried about privatization, restructuring, or liquidation of the public portfolio. Second, there are the private suppliers of the state-owned enterprises and the government, as well as everybody benefiting from rent-seeking situations derived from excessive regulations and who now dread the elimination of the lucrative field of public contracts and other artificial, uncompetitive situations. Third, the public sector employees, who reach almost six million, also worry about these changes that are always accompanied by both high unemployment rates and an inadequate social security system.177 Mayfield draws a picture of a *central* neoliberal government whose policies are resisted by a *peripheral* governmental alliance. In Mayfield's bipolar situation we find, using Ayubi's categories, *specific* state bourgeoisie and *specific* commercial bourgeoisie allying with each other.

To shed more light on Mayfield's alliance and to bring forth an essential element which he and many other researchers forget, I must refer to Robert Springborg's work: *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order* in which he highlights the competition between President Mubārak and the Minister of Defense ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Abū-Ghazālah (1982-1989). Abū-Ghazālah, who was also the Deputy Prime Minister, extended the operations of the Army beyond the military limits. Springborg wrote,

> The patronage network that he has established in the military and that tails off

[177]James B. Mayfield, *Local Government in Egypt: Structure, Process and the Challenges of Reform*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1996),, 8-9.

> into the public and private sectors, for example, makes it very difficult for anyone to undermine his authority. Presumably it would require a much broader move against elements of the *infitah* bourgeoisie to ensnare Abu Ghazala, but the continued strength of that group/class and the military and of the alliance between them militates against such a move. By tying his fate not only to the military but also to the fate of a sizable socioeconomic group or class, Abu Ghazala has raised the stakes to such a level that anyone who wants to move against him has to contemplate a 'corrective revolution' of at least the magnitude of the one that Sadat launched in May 1971.178

This passage shows that besides high and low rank state bourgeoisie and their crony private suppliers who make up the bulk of the *infitah* bourgeoisie, there is also the Army and its extensive network.

Mayfield's contemplation of this bipolar situation is correct, but it is not a central peripheral opposition. Nor is it a state bourgeoisie versus commercial bourgeoisie power competition. What has developed in Egypt, what the state has become, is two clearly distinguished politico-socio-economic *networks*. Each of these networks is based on a different economy, ideology, and set of state institutions. There is a well-established network that includes the traditional political elite, the bureaucrats, whether high or low ranking, the lucky private suppliers who have been enjoying public contracts in situations Mayfield correctly described as uncompetitive and who benefited from *infitah* policies to

[178] Robert Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order*, (Westview Press, 1989),, 124-125.

develop their activities, and the army. There is also a *new* network of commercial bourgeoisie who have benefited from the economic reform policies of Mubarak, a new state bourgeoisie that is bitterly competing for sites of power and influence inside the regime, and all those social groups who are engaged in activities rooted in the new economy.

The changes in the names of the prime ministers and their ministers, the candidates who represent the ruling party in the parliamentary, municipality, or other elections, the governors, or those who occupy high positions in the ruling party's organization during Mubārak's regime reflect both the new network's push to replace the old one and the sturdy resistance exercised by the old network. It is interesting that the only state institution that makes the balance now is not "state bourgeoisie" as suggested by Ayubi, but the Presidential Institution.[179] Springborg expected that Mubārak Abū-

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[179] It was in cooperation with Mubārak's first son, 'Alāʾ, that the new commercial bourgeoisie was constructed and consolidated; and it was through Mubārak's second son, Gamāl, that this group could find its way to positions of political power in the ruling party. The cases that reflect the sometimes bloody conflict between these two networks, both of which are affiliated with the state, are numerous. In one incident, in August 2004, a prominent Egyptian Professor of Engineering, Mamdūḥ Ḥamzah, was arrested in London by Scotland-Yard police on suspicion of conspiracy to assassinate four top ranking Egyptian public figures, including the President Mubārak's Chief of staff, Zakariyyā ʿAzmī, Speakers of the Parliament, Fatḥī Surūr, and two other Cabinet members, M.I. Sulaymān, and Kamāl al-Šazlī. The Egyptian State's pressure to release Ḥamzah was notorious, but more interesting was the TV show in which he appeared and exchanged accusations and arguments with Sulaymān, the Minister of Housing. Ḥamzah enumerated a number of contractors, including himself, who could not have one deal with the

Ghazālah competition would undermine the power of the President. Mubārak did not wage a corrective revolution; he helped the creation of a *new* commercial as well as state bourgeoisie. The struggle was left to this new group to carry on, while the President stepped back to play only the role of the arbiter. State decisions are, once again, a series of compromises.

Muslim Brothers

If MBG discourse in the previous stage was a discourse of *al-Islām al-Šāmil*, comprehensive Islam, their discourse of this stage could be called *al-Islām al-Wasaṭī*, Islam of the Middle-Path. The emphasis here is not on *šumūl*, the comprehensiveness of Islam and its inclusion of well-integrated systems, but on its *wasaṭiyyah* or moderation. Islam is *wasaṭī* because it keeps a middle path between two supposed extremes. *Al-Islām al-Wasaṭī*, much like Mubārak's policies, is in fact emerging as a compromise in a bipolar discourse that is evolving around two opposite concepts of *infitāḥ* and *muqāwamah*, or openness and resistance. In the following lines, I will write about, first, *openness*, second, *resistance*, third, structural changes and, fourth, *al-wasaṭiyyah*.

Ministry of Housing. More interestingly was the supporting phone call to Ḥamzah. The speaker was another contractor, who was not only a ruling party-member of the Parliament but also the president of Housing Committee in the Parliament. The complaint was the same; that he could not win one contract, when all contracts went to the cronies of the Minister. The change of the minister of housing that had shortly preceded the show shifted the contracts from one state network to a newer state network.

1. Openness

In 2002 and 2003, I conducted interviews with MBG members working at Islam On Line Website as a part of my MA dissertation.[180] In these interviews, I was constantly reminded that they are *open*. They used to reiterate that openness is the way; that they have to be more open; and that their mission is to present an image of *al-Islām al-Munfatiḥ*, Open Islam. They translate this deep desire to openness by presenting different and contradictory views for every issue they cover. They invite writers from the entire spectrum of Egyptian intelligentsia. They told me that they "even" hired a female editor who was non-Muslim and a heavy smoker. They mentioned repeatedly their extensive covering of the tragic death of the actress Suad Hosni.

Interestingly, their openness had to be contrasted with *inghilāq*, closedness; a position that they always claim was that of Islamists of the generations before them. Unlike other Islamists, we hire 50% of our workers from females; unlike them, we listen to different kinds of music; unlike them, we are interested in covering sex issues and explaining how one can enjoy sex. Those are some statements they made. They checked whether I know that they covered both Marline Monroe and Anthony Kuwain. Statements of this type are highlighted and brought to the front in every discussion. Un-closedness is an integral part of that openness; it is not only that we are open, but also that we are not closed; we abandoned the limiting ideology of the past, and now we are free.

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[180] Mohamed M. Abdelaziz, "Islam and Postmodernity: The New Islamic Discourse in Egypt" (MA diss., American University in Cairo, 2003).

In my study "The New Trend of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt,"[181] I wrote that MBG activists and ex-activists, whom I interviewed then, expressed their deep frustration with their Group. They criticized their Group on both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, they resented the adherence of MBG to an old-fashioned, dated, rigid, shallow, and monotonous ideology. They frankly said that they no longer read MBG literature or the boring articles of their General Guide. They thought those writings had nothing to do with *reality*; they were just rhetoric. They preferred to get their information from Internet, satellite channels, and opposition newspapers. The Group, in their opinion, was becoming *isolated* from the surrounding world. A doctor informant called it "autism," for they fight wars and solve problems that only exist in their imagination. What MBG has to do, according to them, is to get engaged in everyday reality and to develop a pluralistic discourse that offers many views without getting stuck in only one of them.

Practically, they did not admire the "Islamic" social, educational, and business projects of the 1980s and early 1990s. They emphasized their shallowness and pretension, in terms of claiming Islamic *authenticity*. They ridiculed, for instance, the Islamic schools, saying they are basically regular schools, but the students have to memorize more chapters of Qurʾān and sing an Islamic song in the morning. Above all, they stressed two shortcomings which they considered dangerous. First, they were not *professional* projects. Business and brotherhood are mixed together, so that they fail in

[181]Mohamed M. Abdelaziz, "The New Trend of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt," in Amel Boubekeur and Olivier Roy (ed),, *Whatever Happened to the Islamist? Salafis, Heavy Metal Muslims and the Lure of Consumerist Islam*, (London: Columbia/Hurst, 2012).

both aspects. Second, and more importantly, they were *politicized*. Even an "Islamic" grocery store was presented as an Islamic alternative to what the state offers. The relief work after the Cairo earthquake of 1992 was frequently cited as an obvious example. They complained that the social work, which had to come, in their opinion, before any political work, was badly hindered because of political activism. Most of them thought that the idea of standing for parliamentary elections was mere nonsense. Winning the elections was simply impossible and only created animosity with the state. Some of them proposed "advisory politics" in place of "competitive politics." Others proposed that those who are interested in practicing politics should be allowed to do it away from the Group and its organization.

One more interesting feature is the interest in *globalization*. Here, we do find writings that warn against negative impacts of globalization. However, they, first, call for more engagement in, not isolation from, globalization to counter those effects. Second, some writings point to the tremendous opportunities for communication, networking, activism and solidarity that globalization offers. On an Islamic website called OnIslam,[182] we find an article titled "Globalization and Dialogue in the Thought of Ṭāriq Ramaḍān." In it, Amal Khayrī wrote,

> [He] does not stop calling the Muslims in the West to get integrated in their societies instead of rejecting them. He calls for dialogue among cultures and

[182] OnIslam has the same board of editors who used to run IslamOnline. They refused to move to Qatar, from which most of IOL budget used to come, and preferred to stay in Cairo with a new name. The newer website is financed by Saudi donors. The two websites were founded by al-Qaraḍāwī.

> civilizations; and refuses the isolation of anti-globalization movements. He calls them to dialogue Muslims and demands mutual respects among all religions. (…) Ṭāriq Ramaḍān believes that all Heavenly religions come out of the same source, so that there is no need to project differences among them. The entire world has to transcend all disputes and find a common way of living together in love and mutual trust among peoples and civilizations. Ramaḍān stresses the need for honest self-critique, critical thinking and the commitment to the same global principles. He emphasizes that religions themselves call for mutual respect among all humans, regardless their beliefs. This dialogue needs an understanding of the other peoples. Its success is bound to three necessary conditions: intellectual sympathy, deep faith, and more of rationality and spirituality.[183]

This enthusiastic celebration of globalization and dialogue is echoed in many other articles. More significant is the adoption of global civil society agenda, such as, human rights, women rights, environmentalism, minority rights, etc. The pendulum is swinging back, it seems, from *authenticity* to *openness*. In *Invidious Comparisons: Realism, Postmodern Globalism and Centrist Islamic Movements in Egypt*, Raymond William Baker wrote,

> But it is also important to recognize that the Islamic revival, in its moderate and peaceful expressions (such as the New Islamic Trend), is quite explicitly and

[183] "Al-ʿAwlamah wa al-Ḥiwār fi Fikr Ṭāriq Ramaḍān," http://www.onislam.net/arabic/madarik/culture-ideas/108513-2008-08-12%2011-30-39.html (accessed July 20, 2012).

> courageously engaged in re-creating itself, rejecting a narrow and closed identity, and struggling to enlarge its consciousness to find its place in dialogue with an emerging global society -and in these ways refusing the limitations of its political environment.184

Baker is pointing, not only to engagement in an emerging global society, but also to transcending the limitations of the political environment. In fact, in my earlier work "The New Trend of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt," I found that

> A radical transformation of the political system is not thought of as far as social, economic and cultural reform is concerned. The state that used to be recognized by Islamists as a mere agent of the West is seen now as a national defender against American hegemony. (…) They see the State as less important than before. In a global political context, the state has less to do. Therefore, they not only re-legitimize the State, but also decentralize it.[185]

If globalization is the hope in this discourse, it is also the main challenge. Islamist are acutely aware of the political, economic, technological and sociocultural challenges. They speak and write about them extensively. However, those are not the Western challenges of

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[184]Raymond William Baker, "Invidious Comparisons: Realism, Postmodern Globalism and Centrist Islamic Movements in Egypt' in John Esposito," (ed),, *Political Islam*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1997),, 129.

[185]Mohamed M. Abdelaziz, "The New Trend of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt."

the past that should be resisted by political independence, cultural authenticity and economic self-sufficiency. Those are global challenges that have to be encountered, according to them, with *active* engagement and more openness. The US War in Iraq is encountered by joining forces and coordinating efforts with US anti-war movements. Cultural challenges are encountered by engaging in a global agenda of multiculturalism that protects national difference, technological and economic challenges are encountered, not only by *global* anti-globalization movements, but also by creating joint-projects and redistributing assets and resources.

The *new* Islamists are engaged in mass *consumption* as an expression of *activism*. Mike Featherstone in his book *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* sheds light on the cultural aspect of the economy. He writes,

> To use the term 'consumer culture' is to emphasize that the world of goods and their principles of structuration are central to the understanding of contemporary society. This involves a dual focus: firstly, on the cultural dimension of economy, the symbolization and use of material goods as 'communicators' not just utilities; and secondly, on the economy of cultural goods, the market principles of supply, demand, capital accumulation, competition and monopolization which operate *within* the sphere of lifestyles, cultural goods and commodities.186

[186]Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (New York: SAGE Publications, 1991),, 84.

We should attend, therefore, to the cultural aspect and the meaning of consuming specific goods as much as we attend to the production and consumption of cultural symbols in our inquiry of the new Islamic discourse. Here, we find that the consumption of specific CDs, websites, head scarves, Qurʾān software downloaded on mobile phones, laptops, blue jeans, casual shirts, or audiocassettes of the Muslim British singer Sami Yusuf, is an indication of being a new Islamist –a religious bourgeois, a class that is determined, not by the ownership of means of production, but by consumption.

One has to ask, therefore, what then would make this discourse *Islamic*? In other words, if openness is spreading from end to end, contradictory opinions are not only tolerated, but in fact encouraged, and concepts, campaigns, and activities are all based on an emerging global civil society and its agenda, what, then, would make *Open Islam* different, authentic? A review of this discourse would reveal a significant redefinition of the *Islam*. Islam in this discourse does not refer to well-integrated concepts, activities, and structures that make up a whole; it does not refer to a system or a comprehensive narrative. Islam in this discourse is dramatically reduced to *borders*. Its logic is reduced to the allowed and the not-allowed. This is the negative definition. Positively, the new definition of Islam revolves around *maṣlaḥah*, or interest. *Maṣlaḥah* itself is unnecessarily the public interest. It is just the interest. In short, anything that is useful and not prohibited is automatically Islamic.

A wife sent a message to IOL asking about oral sex. She said that she finds it abnormal and disgusting and learned of it only from her demanding husband. The

Consultant recited in his first part of the answer the *fatwa* of Qaraḍāwī. Qaraḍāwī said,

> It was in America and Europe when I was asked this question for the first time in the 1970s. We are not asked such questions in our Islamic and Arabic countries. People there are used to nudity. Therefore they need an unusual excitement. … Now in this matter if it were only kissing there would be no problem. … But if it is for ejaculation there would be some *karāhah*, dislike (something less than prohibited.) I can not say it is prohibited for there is no definite proof on categorical prohibition. … There is no specific text about this. But it is something man would see as disgusting. If someone enjoys it through the mouth it would be an abnormal behavior. Nonetheless, we can not say prohibited, especially if the woman is satisfied and enjoying it.187

The Consultant, then, started to put his own answer. He wrote,

> For the legal side, as you see, there is no prohibition… Most of things are like this. Basically everything is allowed unless proved otherwise. … Second is the psychological and sexual side… The emotions here are the most important thing and people's natures differ a lot. … The point for each partner is how to satisfy the other. This is the natural introduction to a harmonious sex making love

[187]"Al-Jins al-Famawī," http://www.islamonline.net/QuestionApplication/Arabic/display.asp?hquestionID=15150 (accessed January 1, 2008).

> stronger. No one should mute his/her desire. On the other hand s/he should not mute his/her offense. The third side is the cultural one. … We became embarrassed from our sensitive organs even though Allah created them in our bodies. Allah provided these organs with very sensitive nerves to be a way of enjoyment… Thus, manipulating these organs with the hand or the tongue is a way to excite the sexual drive and to complete the pleasure for those who like it. … What you ask about is neither abnormal nor prohibited; it is only our cultural and educational background that makes us embarrassed from it.[188]

Islamic law classifies acts as mandatory, preferred, allowed, disliked, or prohibited. Though Qaraḍāwī, who is considered a relatively progressive scholar, said oral sex is disliked, as he could not find something textual to prohibit it literally, the Editor of the page gently pushed this fatwa and emphasized only the un-prohibited-ness of oral sex. He stated that it is our culture that obliterated such a natural thing. Further, in his answer he said the Westerns are not as bad as Qaraḍāwī said; they are only culturally different. He added that this difference makes neither us nor them better or worse. In another reply of another consultant, the consultant said, "The wife must go back to the bedroom asking her husband to draw a map of excitement for her body. Then they should share together the creation of new ways to reach climax. Discovering the areas of excitement and how to excite them, the wife will reach a state of enjoyment so that the husband will only need to

[188] "Al-Jins al-Famawī."

touch the clitoris with his hand or tongue to make her reach the climax."189

In fact, the above approach to Islam changed their articulation of political and social problems. Instead of referring to a grand-solution, they give particular solutions to particular problems. Solutions need not be meshed together into one comprehensive solution; they need not relate to each other. Solutions are mostly *technical*, definitely not ideological. It is an understanding that resonates with the change from development to profit. In his book *In Search of Politics*, Zygmunt Bauman wrote,

> Cornelius Castoriadis asserted in one of his last interviews that the trouble with our civilization is that it stopped questioning itself. Indeed, we may say that the proclamation of the demise of 'grand narratives' (or, in case of Richard Rorty, of the retreat from the 'movement politics', one that used to evaluate every step in terms of shortening the distance to an ideal state of affairs, in favour of the resolution of problems at hand, which is the principle of the one-issue-at-a-time 'campaign politics') announces the disengagement of the knowledge classes, the grand refusal of the modern intellectual vocation.190

On the one hand, one-issue-at-a-time ignores *truth* as an overarching logic or law. On the other hand, this strategy, or the lack thereof, perfectly meets the consumer's expectation and desire of continuous renewal of the products in the market.

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[189]"Istišārāt," http://www.islamonline.net/QuestionApplication/Arabic/display.asp?hquestionID=14713 (accessed January 1, 2008).

[190] Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics*, (San Francisco: Stanford University Press, 1999),, 125, 126.

2. Resistance

Openness was simultaneously paralleled with resistance. The dissociation of the discourse, its giving up of consolidating itself, permitted this apparent contradiction. Articles that call for e-Jihad are accompanied by articles that call for real Jihad in Iraq or Afghanistan. The neoliberal discourse had too many problems to continue its progress. The promise of the openness discourse was no longer possible with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, provocative statements and comics in Europe, the banning of the *ḥijāb* in France, double standard nuclear policies when it came to Iran, and more. Leaving political crises aside, the very people who were engaged in the new economy had discovered how difficult, if possible at all, it is to compete globally. The promise of welfare proved to be unrealistic. In other words, the warfare welfare questions, which are the bases of the modern nation state, were left unanswered, albeit some rhetoric writings of fighting local autocracy and corruption. This was a setback for a discourse whose beginning was a global framing of both the challenge and the solution. Moreover, the more this discourse became open, the less it could claim an Islamic identity.

In 2007, MBG released a draft of a political party platform. Many observers, researchers, and MBG web-loggers expressed their shock at the conservative nature of the draft. Two specific issues were highlighted: that a woman or a non-Muslim cannot be the President; and a council of religious scholars had to be formed to examine the conformity of government decisions and laws to the Islamic law. Given the open and fierce opposition of MBG web-loggers to the document, one may assume that it was

authored and approved by a small group of high-ranking members to be imposed on the bases of MBG. However, that was not actually the case. Before its release, the document had gained the acceptance of the majority of MBG members. In fact, many voices protested the too-progressive nature of the document, fearing that this could threaten its Islamic nature. The above incident is not difficult to explain. It is only the unfounded research, writings, and media celebration of the neoliberal Islamic voices and their potential for changing MBG that make an incident like this difficult to explain. Marc Lynch, whom the draft convinced to travel all the way from Washington to Cairo and to meet with the General Guide and a group of MBG web-loggers, wrote enthusiastically, "These online discussions are a manifestation of a new trend among young Muslim Brothers and a dynamic new force inside the organization."191 Many newspapers, including *Al-Maṣrī Al-Yawm* and *Al-Dustūr*, covered the MBG web-loggers frequently and at length. TV satellite channels, from *Al-Arabiya* to *Al-Jazeera*, among others, have interviewed ʿIṣām al-ʿIryān and ʿAbd al-Munʿim Abū al-Futūḥ, featuring them as the liberal, reform voices coming from the heart of MBG leadership. Those voices are appealing to the media, but that does not give them any undue weight inside the hierarchy of the Organization.

When it comes to the official structure of MBG, those who have influence are the ones marginalized in the neoliberal network. It is those members, not the neoliberal "reformers," and certainly not the one hundred and fifty web-loggers, who were responsible for getting eighty-eight MBG members into the Parliament in 2007. It is

[191] Marc Lynch, "Young Brothers in Cyberspace," *Middle East Report*, no. 245 (Winter 2007).

those hundreds of thousands of MBG members, whom the neoliberal discourse long ignored, whose Islamic sensibilities t never attended to, for whom it could not fulfill any of its ambitious promises, and whom it could not tolerate in its network, who make, not a specific rigid leadership, but, in fact, the substance and hierarchy of a growing MBG organization. Commenting on the controversy and protest that the Draft had faced, the General Secretary of MBG said clearly and simply, “We do not bargain on principles. We cannot abandon our principles, for if we abandoned them we would no longer be Muslim Brothers. And Muslim Brothers will be but Muslim Brothers! We listen to everyone, even the secularists. However, abandoning Šarīʿah, or bargaining on principles, is rejected.”192

3. Structures

The polarization of the discourse is reflected in the MBG structure. Like resistance, MBG’s hierarchical organization does exist. Weekly meetings, monthly financial contributions, as well as all the geographical and action chapters are still there. However, this structure is being emptied of its traditional content and gradually decentralized. A structure through which daily instructions that must be blindly obeyed, and that tell members what kind of sports they should practice, what kind of schools they should attend, and whether the spouse they have chosen is the right one, certainly does not exist. The collective project fragmented into a plethora of individual projects which absorbed all the energy of the old structure. Moreover, a new structure came out of the

[192] “Interview with Maḥmūd ʿIzzat,” http://www.egyptwindow.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=7335, (accessed December 15, 2007).

old one.

The stagnation of the movement, the rigidity of its regulations, and the ambiguity of its vision pushed the initiative and active core of members of MBG to the margins. At the margins of the Group, not outside it, those active members persistently created their own social or business projects. They relied on the resources of the MBG to build up their new careers. New social, cultural, and business units, such as publishing houses, multimedia companies, human rights organizations, law firms, polyclinics, advertisement agencies, research centers, schools, charity organizations, orphanages, and others, evolved. These are not the institutions of the 1970s and 1980s, which were founded by the MBG as a part of Islamizing society and providing an Islamic alternative. These are individual projects that belong to MBG members. The founders, nonetheless, would rely on their Group affiliation to raise capital, recruit employees, and create markets.

These newly emerging units became gradually independent. They are well-established enough in the socio-economic market that they rely less on their previous affiliation. Parallel to this, they network with each other. A multimedia company will print its packages at a printing shop owned by a brother and advertise its products through an agency belonging to another brother. Moreover, such a company will find agents and distributors nationwide who are or were MBG members. The more each unit does its social, cultural, or economic work, the more the network gets established and extended and the more these units depend on the network, not the Group. Money, workers, activism, research, contracts, information, activists, workers, and new

knowledge flow through this newly emerging network. In addition, this network is embedded in a similar and more extensive global network of business and activism. The multimedia company can create projects that are financed by workers in the rich Gulf countries, manufactured in Egypt with technical support from North America, finally to be distributed worldwide. The dynamism of this new structure is high, but it is economically regulated. MBG hierarchy, once again, is still there; a nice place to frequent once a week, during the weekly meeting, and to support by paying the modest monthly fee.

New protocols and ethics maintain this network that weaves together business and activism. First of all, competitive politics is strictly prohibited. The same multimedia company will, for instance, produce CDs of the *fiqh* lessons of Sheikh Qaraḍāwī, but not his political ones. An orthopedist will allow one or two religious pictures to be hung in his clinic, but not the MBG calendar. MBG members are welcome to work in these units, but they are not allowed to conduct their MBG meetings or exchange MBG leaflets in the workplace. *Professionalism* is the key word of this network. Workers are hired, contracts are signed, and relations are extended according to professional standards. If the printing shop asks for higher prices, or provides lower quality, it will not be contracted. If the most pious person does not have the right qualifications, he will not find a place in this network. Someone's position inside the MBG hierarchy, or outside it, if he has already quit, should ideally have nothing to do with his/her position within the network, or its units. Salaries, prices, project management, promotions, and other everyday conduct are all regulated by professional and market ethics.

Brotherhood is appreciated, but consciously and continuously quarantined, so that it does not disturb work relationships. In some cases, MBG members filed cases against other members because they did not honor their contracts. This behavior is always understood, if not appreciated. Twenty years ago, typically, MBG leadership would intervene to solve personal and business conflicts. Now, it is not even invited.

Some MBG members suggested that the hierarchy itself should marketize its operations. After transforming MBG internal relations within the new network into economic ones, they want to extend this transformation to the MBG hierarchy itself. The best speaker, not the most pious or the highest in the hierarchy, should be the Imam of Friday Prayer. Besides, he must get paid for his work. Volunteerism is appreciated, but it should not be the rule. Similarly, the young people who organize public activities or help children memorize the Qurʾān must all be fairly paid.

The new network is open to the public. Not every worker in this business unit or that social organization is necessarily an MBG member, or ex-member, an Islamist or even an observant Muslim. Nor is every unit linked only to similar units. Because the network is rooted in the open market, it must be open to everyone. The network is actively weaving interrelationships with different social, cultural, economic, and political bodies and includes people of all walks of life. To give just a one example on this meshing with other institutions, I will quote Muṣʿab Suʿūdī, the son of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Suʿūdī, commenting on the detention of his father, a famous figure of MBG and a wealthy contractor, and his being turned over to a martial court for charges of financing

terrorism and money laundering. Muṣʿab said,

> My father's company executed many projects for governmental institutions; on top of them is the Ministry of the Interior. We are building the Police Tower for them. Besides, we built twenty two hospitals for the Ministry of Health, some sports clubs for Ministry of Youth, university educational buildings for the Ministry of High Education and other projects for the Ministry of the Exterior.193

The point he makes is clear: it is preposterous for the government to claim that it discovered, after lengthy police investigations, that they were a suspicious company, only six months after contracting them to build the Police Tower.

An Islamic discourse of openness produces this network as much as it is reproduced by it. It has an internal economic logic that regulates its dynamics on bases of profit and loss, demand and supply, high mobility, initiative and creativity, and produces a number of concepts and ethics that carve out the new discourse. Expectedly, this discourse, by mediating power, gives advantage to some people while marginalizing others. The nature of the newly created units, the accepted inter-relationships among them, the character of the subjectivity that is produced by such a discourse, the questions that may be raised, and those that may not be thought of, as well as the issues that are

[193] Muḥammd ʿAlī Abū Himailah, "An Interview with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Suʿūdī's Family," *Ṣawt al-Ummah Newspaper*, March 5, 2007.

raised and those that are downplayed, if they exist at all, are all shaped by this neoliberal discourse. Bauman chose the metaphor of the consumer co-operative to capture the nature of post-modern cultural labor. He wrote,

> Things that happen inside the ideal consumer co-operative are [like culture] neither managed nor random; uncoordinated moves meet each other and become tied up in various parts of the overall setting, only to cut themselves free again from all previously bound knots. Spontaneity here does not exclude, but, on the contrary, demands an organized and purposeful action, yet such action is not meant to tame, but to invigorate spontaneity of initiative.194

Likewise, the freedom and spontaneity of action in the neoliberal network is organized and regulated. After all, the network of openness is not very open to everyone.

An Azharite scholar who gives *fatwa* substantiated by texts and quotations collected from traditional writings is not welcome unless he dresses, speaks, rephrases his *fatwa*, and transmits it *differently*. A pious preacher will have no audience interested in his speeches until he becomes a TV star. There is no specific elite that conspires to produce this discourse, weave this network, or marginalize some people. Power is embedded in the network itself, so that different individuals willingly modify themselves to fit into its influential sites. Nancy Fraser writes in *Justice Interruptus*,

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[194]Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997),, 134-135.

> Discursive interaction within the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status inequality. … Here we are talking about informal impediments to participatory parity that can persist even after everyone is formally and legally licensed to participate.195

Like the State, MBG also divided into two conflicting and communicating structures. This is not a generational conflict, old guard versus new guard conflict, or even a self-explanatory difference in *attitudes*, as shallow assessments have characterized it.196 Those are two structures that are rooted in two different economies and produce two different discourses. To frame it as an age issue is to deny the fact that old and young people exist on both sides. To make it a conflict between business-oriented versus ideological-oriented people is to neglect the fact that, as in the state, business people exist on both sides. The difference here is that one contractor makes deals with Ministry of the Interior, while the second made his capital in Saudi Arabia and came back to build homes for MBG members.[197] Likewise, there are MBG workers in software companies and

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[195] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*, (New York: Routledge, 1997),, 78.

[196]See, for instance, Diaa Rashwan, "Muslim Brothers in Egypt: Distinctions of Generations and Attitudes," *Al-Iqtiṣādiyyah e-newspaper*, 5177 (December 14, 2007),, http://www.aleqt.com/article.php?do=show&id=764 (accessed December 14, 2007.

[197]In a letter sent by ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Milījī, a member of the Consultation Council of MBG at the time, to the General Guide of MBG, which he later published in *Al-Karama* Newspaper, and of which an

others who work in the governmental bureaucracy. Such people have increasingly bifurcated views.

On July 30, 2007, ʿIṣām al-ʿIryān, the famous member of the Political Bureau of MBG, published an article on the MBG official website commenting on the Turkish elections and the victory of the Justice and Development Party, which has strong Islamic roots. al-ʿIryān was responding to a question that had been obsessively raised by the MBG: could what happened in Turkey happen again in Egypt? In his answer, he listed the lessons that could be concluded from the Turkish experience. Basically, he emphasized that Islam and democracy can get along in complete harmony and that for an Islamic party to make it to power it has to be open to all national social groups and ideologies, and invite everyone to come along and participate in fighting corruption and autocracy. He also emphasized the necessity of encouraging openness to the west and making the Muslims participate in building a global human civilization.198

Three days later, on August 2, 2007, Gumʿah Amīn published a counter article on the same website, signed with his title: a member of the Guidance Office of MBG. His article was titled "The Turkish Question: Clarifying the the Concepts." In his article, he

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electronic version could be read on *Al-Karama* website: http://www.al-karama.com/index.php, he complained about the unjustified influence of a group of businessmen on the decisions of the Group. He mentioned, as an example, Khayrat al-Šāṭir, the Deputy of the General Guide. Interestingly, he stretched a line between those people who aspire their wealth through their MBG affiliation, and others, like Abdel Rahman Su'ūdi, who have their accounts transparent to the public and the State.

[198]"The Turkish Question," http://www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ArtID=30042&SecID=0 (accessed December 15, 2007).

briefly congratulated the Turkish Party and then made a clear statement that such an experience would not be repeated by MBG in Egypt. His point was that, yes, the Islamic Turks had made it to power, but they had to stop being Islamic to do so. MBG's objective, according to him, is not to be in power; the objective is to Islamize the society. The West will tolerate Erdogan because he is no longer really an Islamic politician; the West will not tolerate MBG because the Group will always hold fast to Islamic principles.199 Here, we find two contradictory points of view. We find it over and over again, whenever an MBG leader is invited to comment on an event or to respond to a question about their agenda.

4. *Wasaṭiyyah*:

Wasṭaiyyah, or the Middle Path[200], is a term that has been used quite frequently since late 1970s, especially among scholars like al-Qaraḍāwī, al-Ghazālī, al-ʿAwwā, and Abū al-Majd. The concept was used in the Qurʾān, 2: 143, "Thus We have made you a *Wasaṭ* nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you." In an article "Features and Spaces of *Wasaṭiyyah*," that is published on the Kuwait-based International Center of *Wasaṭiyyah*, the editor, realizing the ambiguity of the concept, denies this ambiguity and states that it does not always mean a compromise between two opinions. With difficulty, s/he defines it mostly as what is just or fair. The

[199]"The Turkish Question: Clarifying the Concepts," http://www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ArtID=30131&SecID=0, (accessed December 15, 2007).

[200]I prefer to translate it as the middle path and not *moderate*. Moderate is better translated as *muʿtadil*. *Wasaṭī* usually relates to two other alternatives, between which the *wasaṭī* alternative is situated. In addition, *wasaṭī* is closely related to another Qurʾānic concept, *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, or the straight-way, which is supposed to run in the middle of right and left deviations.

just is supposed to go straight without deviation to the right or the left. It is neither *ifrāṭ* (extremism or excessive-ness) nor *tafrīṭ* (negligence or abandonment.)[201]

In this phase, MBG discourse circulates this concept as frequently as it used to circulate *šumūl*, or comprehensiveness, in the earlier phase. Whether *al-Islām al-Šāmil* is a concept that aims to consolidate, *al-Islām al-Wasaṭī* is a concept that aims to find a middle path between *openness* and *resistance*. Excessive openness would be associated with *tafrīṭ*, while excessive resistance is associated with *ifrāṭ*. From mid-1970s to the mid-1990s Egypt witnessed the emergence and flourishing of many Islamic group that competed with MBG. Liberal or progressive Islamic voices, fsuch as that of Egyptian philosopher Ḥasan Ḥanafī, also appeared in this period. Using *Wasaṭiyyah*, MBG attempted to situate itself presumably in the *middle-path* as the correct choice for future members. In other words, the concept served to solve internal problems, that is the conflict between openness and resistance, and external problems, that is the competition with other groups over recruitment and dominance. In his book *Islamic Pedagogy in al-Bannā's School*, Qaraḍāwī wrote,

> Among the characters of Islamic pedagogy, as taught by al-Bannā to his men, is moderation, or what you may call balance or *wasaṭiyyah*. If Muslims were *wasaṭ* among nations and traditions, and if the people of Sunna are *wasaṭ* among the sects, then the Brothers are *wasaṭ* among Islamic groups. They balance between

[201]"Maʿālim al-Wasṭaiyyah wa Majālātuhā," http://wasatiaonline.net/news/details.php?data_id=498 (accessed July 31, 2012).

> mind and passion, the material and the spiritual, thought and action, the individual and the society, *šūra*, consultation, and obedience, rights and duties, and the old and the new.[202]

Qaraḍāwī here situates the Brothers right in the middle of different and competing Islamic groups. He is also solving internal problems of his own discourse. Since his Islam is *wasaṭī*, he does not need to select one of two choices. Islam, the Brothers' Islam, is both rational and passionate, material and spiritual, etc. *Wasaṭiyyah*, however, has a bitter crisis, which is in the heart of the newer discourse. Its definition can be made only by displaying its competitor alternatives. The concept is unsettled because it contains all the tension of the polarized discourse.

This *rule of formation*, this style of writing, spreads throughout this period's literature. For instance, a review of Qaraḍāwī's book *Our Islamic Discourse in the Age of Globalization*, would immediately reveal this attitude. In this book, he listed fifteen characters of this Discourse. It believes in God, but does not deny the Human; it believes in revelation, but does not deny the mind; it calls for spirituality, but does not ignore materiality; it concerns rituals, but does not ignore ethics; it proudly holds its beliefs, but also calls for tolerance of the Other; it points to the ideal, but does not ignore the real; it motivates action and integrity, but does not forget play and entertainment; it adopts universality, but does not abandon locality; it concerns modernity, but holds on to

[202] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *AL-Tarbiyyah al-Islāmiyyah wa Madrasat Ḥasan al-Bannā*, (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1992),, 78.

authenticity; it looks forward to the future, but does not deny the past; it adopts a restrictive position when it comes to the foundations of Islam, but adopts an easy one when it comes to *fatwa*; it calls to *ijtihād*, but does not transgress *thawābit*, or the unchanging essentials; it is against terrorism, but supports *jihād*; it is fair with women, but is not unfair with men; and it protects minorities, but is not unfair with the majority.[203]

It is important here to highlight an interesting fact: al-Azhar adoption of this concept and its official espoused by the Egyptian state. In addition to the alliance of MBG and the state of Egypt against extremism and terrorism, which shaped much of the politics of the 1980s, the state of Egypt needed this concept in its own competition. Four Islamic countries compete globally over the right to speak of correct Islam, namely, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. Iran offers Shiite Islam, Saudi Arabia offers *salafī*, or conservative Islam, and Turkey represents liberal Islam. Egypt was left out without a definite or clear identity for its claimed Islam. Moderate or modern would make it less authentic and more like a pale version of Turkish Islam. Authentic or traditional would be less suitable to this age and, once again, a pale version of Saudi Islam. Al-Azhar and Egypt have always prided themselves on having the correct compromise of modernity and tradition. *Wasaṭiyyah*, with all its ambiguity, came as the right solution. It granted Egypt an identity for its Islam.

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[203]Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Khiṭābunā al-Islāmī fī ʿAṣr al-ʿAwlamah*, (Cairo: Dār al-Šurūq, 2004).

Chapter Four

Modularization Discourses

After a shy beginning at late 1990s, modularization discourses have intensified in presence and size since 2004. What we observe here is a collapse of the polarizing situation in the three discourses of the state, the economy and Islamism, followed by dynamic redistribution of power and the emergence of new *rules of formation* and *system of dispersion*. Functionally centered, semi-independent units, or modules, are being formed. These modules have no common logic; each of them has its own functional logic. Their statements, structures and functions are quite diversified and frequently contradictory. However, they maintain a great capacity of coexistence. Their integration is more like a puzzle and certainly not like the integration of the subsystems of the consolidation discourse into a holistic system. There is no holistic system. There are only a number of replaceable and functional modules. Each module is highly dynamic. It continuously changes its position within the discourse, and its shape to fit its new adjacent modules. Groups of modules stay together for sometime, to be disintegrated later on, join new modules and form new groups. In addition, these new modules are being continuously formed, while others die out and disappear. With this new *dispersion* both power and internal tension is divided and distributed in numerous sites throughout the discourse.

The Economy

After the Gulf War in 1991, Egypt signed a "structural adjustment" agreement

with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. International financial institutions had been urging Egypt to take this step for more than a decade. The privatization of national enterprises started off, and from 1992 to 2000, the market share of the private sector in cotton spinning grew from 8 percent to 58 percent.[204] It was in July 2004, however, that privatization policy was extremely boosted by the appointment of Aḥmad Naẓīf as the prime minister of Egypt. Mandated to accelerate the neoliberal transformation of Egypt, the Naẓīf government

> privatized a record 17 public sector enterprises during its first year in office. This policy was identified with the western-educated PhDs and businessmen in the cabinet close to the President's son and heir apparent, Gamal Mubarak. In December 2004, the Nazif government, after a 10-year delay, concluded a trade agreement with Israel and the United States creating Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZs), enabling quota and duty free access to US markets for commodities manufactured in a QIZ, if there is a significant percentage of Israeli input to the value added in the QIZ.[205]

This intensified policy of privatization was embedded in other and larger strategies to accelerate a *complete* shift to neoliberal economy. The transformation was backed by

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[204]Joel Beinin and Hossam el-Hamalawy, "Egyptian Textile Workers Confront the New Economic Order," *Middle East Report Online* 242, (March 2007),, http://www.merip.org/mero/mero032507.html

[205]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt: Neo-Liberalism and Class Struggle in 21st Century," *Social Movement Studies*, no. 4(Nov 2009),: 450-51.

Gamal Mubarak, who presided over the influential Policies Committee of the National Democratic Party, NDP, the ruling party of Egypt.

In a collection of papers produced in 2008, *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, papers of policies, the editor wrote,

> The policies of economic reform that are adopted by the Party depend on a group of strategic bases. On top of these bases, there are the dependence on the private sector, the enacting of market dynamics to push growth rates, the disciplined openness to the outside world and the attraction of foreign and local investments to deal with structural faults, from which the Egyptian economy had suffered.[206]

Supporting this statement with statistics that show the success of such a policy, the editor wrote that private sector investments increased from EL 33 Billion in 2002/2003 to EL 96 Billion in 2006/2007. he also mentioned the "unprecedented record" of the increase in direct foreign investments from US$700 million in 2002/2003 to more than US$11 Billion in 2006/2007.[207] At the end of the report, more statistics and graphs were added to indicate a 100 percent increase in commodities exports in three years, reaching US$29.4 Billion, an 80% increase in foreign currency reserves in three years, reaching US$34.8 Billion, and a 46% increase in bank savings in three years.

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[206] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, (Cairo: the National Democratic Party, 2008),, 18.
[207] *Awrāq*, 20.

Interestingly, the report cited 2.1 million new jobs during the previous three years. In September 2007, Ragui Assaad published a Ford Foundation and USAID-financed study of employment in Egypt, and confidently confirmed this fact, concluding that

> the employment outlook in Egypt has broadly improved since 1998. Despite continued rapid growth of the working age population since 1998, overall participation rates have increased, unemployment rates have decreased, and employment growth has been robust. In many instances, the levels of these variables have returned to or exceeded their levels in 1988, prior to the initiation of the 1991 stabilization and structural adjustment programs. The performance of the labor market in Egypt in the past eight years has been helped by favorable demographic as well as economic developments. The generation at the peak of the youth bulge, which was putting severe pressures on the labor market in the 1990s, has now completed its labor market transition, for the most part, and demographic pressures are easing.[208]

These celebratory statements run, not only against the conventional wisdom in Egypt at that time, but also against other academically sound studies.

The authors of *A Political Economy of the Middle East* showed the notorious and adverse results of liberalizing the economy, writing,

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[208]Ragui Assaad, "Labor Supply, Employment and Unemployment in the Egyptian Economy, 1988-2006," *Economic Research Forum: Working Paper Series*, no. 0701 (2007),: 2.

> Although the Washington Consensus view hoped that macro-stability and deregulation would stimulate export-led growth, in fact Egyptian growth was largely driven by investment in inventories and by public investment in huge infrastructural projects, such as the New Valley and Toshka Irrigation projects (ERF 2004). Second, the growth of exports -particularly job-creating manufactured exports- was unimpressive. Indeed, by one conventional measure, the Egyptian economy's integration with the global economy *declined* during the 1990s: Exports as a percentage of GDP fell from 46.6% in 1980 to 31.2% in 1990 and 24.6% in 2000. Merchandise exports as a percentage of GDP fell from 8.1% to 4.7% from 1990 to 2000.209

These startling figures show that though there has been an increase in industrialization, the manufactured products had to be consumed in the local market. That fails the simple rule of capitalism: accumulation or crisis. Eberhard Kienle exposed two other failures of this local market. First, there are "companies that enjoy monopoly status or other advantages without, normally, being publicly or by law granted any such advantages. The advantages simply flow from the special relationships between their owners and members of the regime or, if the latter consent, with higher civil servants in the relevant ministries and administrations."210 Second, Kienle points out that from a buyer's point of view, the

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[209] Alan Richards, and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008),, 250-251.
[210] Eberhard Kienle, "Domestic Economic Liberalization," 149-150.

multiplication of sellers is more limited than it may seem, for only a specific sector of the society has enough income to purchase the new products.211

The above conclusion invites us to examine the situation from the workers' point of view. If Kienle points out the limited power of Egyptian buyers to buy expensive products, Joel Beinin, in "Workers' Protest in Egypt: Neo-Liberalism and Class Struggle in 21st Century" calls attention to the extremely low wages of the workers. He writes that

> Even with two wage earners, the typical monthly wage of a textile worker (£E250-600, or about US$45-107) is below the World Bank's poverty line of $2 a day for the average Egyptian family of 3.7 people. Annual bonuses or dividends on profits, if and when they are paid, may add enough to lift a family above the poverty line. Working conditions in the neo-liberal era have, with some exceptions, deteriorated substantially. … According to the US State Department's 2007 Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices: 'Other than large companies in the private sector, firms generally did not adhere to government-mandated standards.'[212]

Growth rates or the size of investments might indeed be as true as presented by the NDP statistics. However, it seems that this economic *success* was paralleled by a severe problem of redistribution.

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[211] Eberhard Kienle, "Domestic Economic Liberalization," 149.
[212] Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 451.

The low wages of the workers did not go without protest. From 1998 to 2008 "some two million Egyptian workers participated in 2,623 factory occupations, strikes, demonstrations or other collective actions."[213] The December 2006 strike in Misr Spinning and Weaving Company, in al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā, marked a new era of protest in Egypt. More than 24,000 men and women workers marched towards the center of the plant, demanding a promised but never paid one month bonus. "More than 10,000 of the striking workers occupied the factory round the clock, forming a strike committee to organise logistics of the strike, speak to the media and negotiate with the workplace authorities."[214] The government had eventually to succumb to their demands. This strike was followed by a wave of strikes among other workers and white-collars employees as well. Most of them turned out to be successful. In the three months following the December 2006 strike, "about 30,000 workers in more than ten textile mills in the Nile Delta and Alexandria participated in protests ranging from strikes and slowdowns to threats of collective action if they did not get what the Mahalla strikers won."[215]

There are several important observations to make here. All those numerous protests were *local*, in terms of both their demands and their organization. There might be sympathy between textile workers in al-Maḥallah and Kafr al-Dawwār. However, each strike was initiated by a specific demand related to specific workers in a specific workplace. Those strikes were supported neither by workers unions, nor by opposition parties. The MBG hardly supported them either, except for a few sporadic statements

[213]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 449.
[214]Rabab El-Mahdi, "Labour Protest in Egypt: Causes and Meanings," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 38: 129 (2011),: 388.
[215]Joel Beinin and Hossam el-Hamalawy, "Egyptian Textile Workers."

here and there. In fact, in November 2004 the workers at Ora Misr factory went on strike, protesting the refusal of the owner to pay their wages since September and his desire to sell the factory. The owner was no one but the Muslim Brotherhood member ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm Luqmah.[216] Beinin observed that, "Rooted in informal, local networks in industrial cities and suburbs, the workers movement does not have a national leadership, organization or program. There have rarely been calls for democratization or regime change; more typically workers call on the government to rectify injustices."[217] In addition to being *local* and *independent*, it seems they have a new form of *organization*. Spontaneous organization and copycat actions following successful strikes are increasingly followed by the foundation of a workers union for this or that workplace. Those workers unions aim neither to form a national coalition, nor to have a common agenda. They aim, however, to undermine the officially-recognized workers unions by launching what they used to call *an independent parallel union*. Another observation is that these protests include workers of both public and private sectors. "Anti-privatization protest" cannot be a common slogan or program for these movements. In fact, Rabab El-Mahdi presented statistics that showed an increase of private sector protests relative to those of public sector from 2006 to 2008. Private sector protests made 29.7 percent of all protests in 2006, 34.8 percent in 2007, and 38.5 percent in 2008.

In spite of the tons of literature about Mubārak's regime that call it, among other things, oppressive, tyrant, dictatorship, police-state, etc., in all these strikes, the police

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[216]Joel Beinin, "Popular Social Movements and the Future of Egyptian Politics," *Middle East Research and Information Project,* no. 234, (2005).
[217]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 451.

never resorted to violence to restore order. In fact, in 2000, the Unified Labor Law made it legal for workers to strike if the strike was approved by the leadership of the General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions, ETUF. The government regularly accepted the workers' demands and positively responded to them. In the December 2006 strike, for instance, the workers asked for a one-month bonus. The government gave them a 45-day bonus. Moreover, in 2009, "the government recognized the first union not affiliated with the ETUF since 1957 –the independent General Union of Real Estate Tax Authority Workers."[218]

I want here to come back to the *discourse*. It is striking that throughout this period, and in spite of the increasing economic problems and crises, there was no alternative discourse to challenge neoliberalism. There were, of course, some voices, here and there, that called for Socialism for instance, the tiny movement of Revolutionary Socialists but they never had serious effect on the discourse of economy in Egypt in this period, or on the real workers' movements. There has always been anti-privatization writings and campaigns. However, they never amounted to alternative discourse, a different vision or new concepts. They merely called for an important role of the state in addition to the recognized and central role of the private sector. The basic tenets of economic neoliberalism, by and large, have never been seriously challenged. With the exception of the Communist party, al-Tajammuʿ, Most of the opposition discourse revolved around one concept: *al-fasād*, corruption. In other words, the free trade and open market policies were failing, not because of any internal contradictions, lack of

[218]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 452.

resources or otherwise, but because the people who are running them are corrupt. Had Egypt had the right people, those same policies would have been successful.

Al-Tajammuʿ Party, for instance in its program for 2005 parliamentary elections, merely called for a more substantial role of the state in the production process and for self-sufficiency. The Party also supported national planning for the economy and contrasted it to market dynamics. Nevertheless, challenging basic concepts, such as *growth* or *development*, studying the national resources carefully, proposing a model of life and economy that does not centralize capital or understanding the limits and contradictions of capitalism in its last phase has never been articulated by the discourse of economy. Professionals and representatives of opposition parties, when and if they stop talking about corruption, may propose some technical solutions, such as raising or lowering the rate of interest. In fact, NDP statistics are quite correct. NDP policy failed not mainly because of corruption, but because of reasons inherited in neoliberalism itself. The capital-intensive projects introduced into a mixed economy were paralleled by a serious redistribution problem. The lack of technological and military power were paralleled by low export capacity. The limitation of the domestic market strangulated all the achieved surplus. In fact, the serious economic problem before the fall of Mubārak's regime was not the lack of reserves; it was the excess of cash in the banks that could not be invested.[219]

[219]The fluid cash in Egyptian banks slid from US$30 to $9 in less than 14 months after the January Revolution. [*"Hal Tataarra al-Dawlah al-Miriyyah li-al-Ifls?*," http://www.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=12188&article=672234 (accesses July 10, 2012).

Rabab El-Mahdi argued that "the workers were moving away from solely trying to reinstate economic gains and privileges, to more directly *political* demands having to do with minimum wage and autonomous organisation."[220] On his part, Joel Beinin argued that the tremendous size of protests belies scholarly work proclaiming the death of class as an analytical category.[221] In my opinion, we do not need, and in fact, we should avoid, a transcendental interpretation of the sort of democratization proposed by El-Mahdi or class suggested by Beinin. Those are local and independent movements to achieve local and specific demands. To articulate them is to articulate them in their locality and in their specificity. Some of them are movements for a one-month bonus. Others demanded the ousting of their workers' union or the installation of a new union. Ora Misr workers demanded compensation for health hazards, since they were working in an asbestos factory. They do not lack a national leadership, organization, or program, for they need none of that.

What we see in these movements is not fragmentation, but, I argue, *modularization*. Each of these movements is a *module* of action. Like a puzzle, these modules may or may not fit with each other. Alliances are transient and are created for a particular reason. For instance, Kifāyah, a Cairene liberal opposition group, allied temporarily with the al-Maḥallah strike. About this alliance Beinin writes,

> These labor actions have been amplified politically, because they partly coincided

[220]Rabab El-Mahdi, "Labour Protest in Egypt," 392.
[221]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 449.

> with a campaign for democracy organized by Kifaya (Enough) – The Egyptian Movement for Change – and other groups comprised mainly of urban, middle class, intellectuals. However, there are only weak links between the workers' movement and such extra parliamentary opposition forces, whether secular, or Islamist.[222]

The alliance, therefore, between the two modules of al-Maḥallah strike and Kifāyah was transient and for a particular reason. Sometimes they fit with MBG modules. Sometimes, as in the case of Ora Misr, they conflict with each other.

A reading of *Awrāq* reveals a modularization policy embraced by the state. Under the rubric "Social Development and Fighting Poverty," the editor wrote that the development of social services centers should go through a restructuring process to create "a more flexible and effective organization." The centers should not be structured in the same way. Each center should be structured according to the size of population served, their backgrounds, the amount of the work needed, and the kind of services required. Jobs should be designed according to work requirements and the environment of this or that region.[223]

We find the same attitude under "Health Care and Population" as well. Here, the editor calls for implementing a strategic plan to encourage the creation of small projects that provide health-care services. In this section, the report invites young doctors to create

[222]Joel Beinin, "Workers' Protest in Egypt," 451.
[223]*Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 46.

small companies that create or *run* primary health-care units. In other words, young doctors are invited to create a small private enterprise, a *module*, that fits another governmental *module*: a primary health-care unit.[224]

One more example may be found under "Food Security and the Future of Agricultural Development." Here, we find neither a central government planning and managing agriculture as it did in the 1960s, nor a bipolar situation in which there are two distinct types of agriculture, one run through governmental agricultural cooperatives and one based on private investment. The report calls for a disengagement between the government and the agricultural cooperative movement, on the one hand, and for local partnership between those cooperatives and local capital. The bipolar situation is metamorphosed into a number of local modules of production and investment.[225]

The State

The late 1990s is marked by an aggressive expansion of the neoliberal center of power within the state. Gamāl Mubārak, the son of President Mubārak, assumed a prominent position within the ruling party to lead the change. To accommodate him and his new role, an influential committee, the Policies Committee was created and he presided over it. Surrounded by like-minded, western-educated, PhD holders and businessmen group, he proceeded to consolidate a new political elite. Shortly thereafter, they crowned their progress by forming in 2004 a new cabinet under the leadership of prime minister Aḥmad Naẓīf. Most of the offices were occupied by technocrats and

[224] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 167.
[225] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 97-98.

businessmen, not bureaucrats or traditional politicians. A gradual change within this government itself replaces ministers who belonged to the older elite with ministers who belong to the newer elite. For instance, the ministers of information, transportation, and irrigation were replaced by new ministers affiliated with the young Mubārak and his Committee.

More serious changes occurred within the structure of the ruling party itself. The General Secretary, Kamāl al-Šādhlī, was replaced by Ṣafwat al-Šarīf. This central change was followed by peripheral changes. New cadres were pushed forward to replace older leadership throughout the NDP chapters. These changes did not go without resistance and conflict. The internal problems were reflected in 2005 parliamentary elections. The young Mubārak selected more of his group to stand for elections. Those who had used traditionally to be the NDP candidates challenged him and stood for elections as independents. Supported by their families and traditional network of power, including local bureaucrats, landlords and traditional politicians, many of them won against official NDP candidates. Soon afterward, they rejoined the NDP and saved the Party the majority it had desired. The Committee pursued a larger and more extensive alliance. It invited to its subcommittees a large number of academics, young politicians, writers, media producers, journalists, non-governmental organization activists, and emerging young businessmen.

Included in this alliance, there was the MBG. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, MBG happily joined forces and the General Guide at that time, Muḥammad

ʿĀkif, hinted that MBG had no problem in principle with supporting the young Mubārak to succeed his father. In a symposium held in May 2009, MBG leaders, ʿIṣām al-ʿIryān and Muḥammad Ḥabīb, declared that a clash with the state was a red line they were determined not to transgress.[226] In fact, the State Security conducted negotiations with MBG prior to the 2005 elections, and made an agreement with the General Guide that authorities would allow 20 percent of the seats to go to MBG members. MBG did "win" 20 percent of those seats afterward.

A reading in *Awrāq* explains the details of the new state discourse and its ambitions. The Document clearly states that reforms have to be crucial and structural. Changes should affect the organization of the state, the constitution and the distribution of power within its structures. Thirty-four articles of the 1971 Constitution were changed. The President would not be nominated by the parliament. He would have to stand for free elections, in which voters will have to choose him among a group of other candidates. The parliament would have the power to change the national budget and resolve the government without having to hold a referendum. In addition, the second chamber will have for the first time more power, not only in legislation, but also in "approving proposals to change constitutional articles … and some international agreements and treaties."[227] Human and women's rights are highlighted and supported by a bundle of laws and centers devoted to protecting them. In addition, changes were introduced in the judiciary system in order to support its independence. Some judiciary structures, for

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[226] "Al-Ṣidām maʿa al-Niẓām Khaṭṭ Aḥmar," http://www.masress.com/shorouk/39112 (accessed July 30th, 2012).
[227] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 17.

instance, the Socialist Prosecutor, were canceled. Economic courts were created to deal with business conflicts. A supreme committee of elections was created to supervise elections instead of the Ministry of the Interior and judges were assigned the task of monitoring each individual ballot.[228]

The Document reveals its philosophy: a redistribution, in fact, dispersion, of power. Political power has to be neither central and consolidated nor divided and bipolar. It has to be dispersed throughout all the state's centers and units. The authority of the cabinet is shared by the parliament. The latter's authority is shared by the second chamber. Within limits, judicial authority supervises all of them. More important, the authority of the President is divided and shared for the first time.

In a startling statement, the Document declares that

> If constitutional changes that the Party has adopted came to support the civil identity of the state, they, in the same moment, came to support the foundations of the **semi-presidential republican system**. While the Constitution draws a clear form of the republican system, giving the president powerful authorities as the head of the executive authority, the historical initiative of President Mubārak of modifying article 76 of the Constitution has made a crucial change in electing the highest office in the state, which is the symbol and foundation of the republican system. It now depends on direct popular legitimacy. (…)

[228] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 15-18.

> In addition to the extension of the authorities of the cabinet, and the **restrictions** put on the authority of the President, the bundle of constitutional changes included important articles that reshape the relationship between the executive and legislative authorities on basis of equality. They granted the parliament new authorities … They gave a legislative function to the second chamber …[229] (Emphasis is mine.)

Again, contrary to all those reports that speak of an ossified, authoritarian regime unwilling to change, we find an active and serious movement to change the republican system in Egypt. It seems that a parliamentary republic was too much of a change for the Committee, and semi-presidential republic, following the French model, was the correct compromise. In 2005, President Mubārak said in a famous TV interview that came before the presidential elections that he selects only the minister of defense and the minister of the exterior. Otherwise, it is up to the prime minister to form his cabinet. The second chamber, which has more authority when it comes to international treaties or constitutional changes, represents the President's counter-balance to the power of the parliament. In fact, the President appoints one third of its members.

The Document announces explicitly that it aims to *decentralize* political power. Its editor writes that

[229] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 16-17.

> The Party has always assured the enacting of the principle of decentralization in all aspects of reform it proposes. This is why a complete vision of updating the local administration system [the municipalities] has been put forward. A careful reading of the reality of municipalities shows that they have a very limited role to play and, therefore, a weak participation of their constituencies. Accountability is not related to the local citizen. Monitoring their actions are conducted centrally away from the local level. The policy of the Party to meet this challenge would work through three dimensions: political, financial and administrative. Decentralization, which is the transfer of power from the center to the peripheries, grants a bigger authority to the local level, not only in planning the providence of services, but also in managing its financial resources.[230]

The dispersion of power, the decentralization, the empowering of numerous peripheral units and the reducing of the function of the center to the extreme would result in, again, modularization of politics and state structures. A diversity of functional modules, each of which is running a local function, to which it has been structurally adapted. This is, again, not a fragmentation of the system. It is a planned restructuring to increase its efficiency, on the one hand, and to avoid an impending clash between its two poles, on the other hand.

Interestingly, *Awrāq* speaks of empowering and enacting the role of political parties and civil society institutions. The undertone here is an assumption that NDP is not

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[230] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 17-18.

only a political party. It is the political system of the state, one function of which is to support political plurality in the present time, and perhaps make the transition to a serious plurality, in which NDP itself will have its functions reduced and absorbed into non-party state structures in the future. The editor of *Awrāq* wrote,

> The strategic attitude of the Party is to support the plurality of political parties and enhance the role of civil society. This attitude is based in a strong conviction of the importance of the role of political parties and civil societies institutions as means of practicing democracy and political and popular participation. It is important to support their role and to remove all obstacles that stand between them and their achieving these objectives. The recent constitutional changes included new articles that aim to expedite the nomination of presidential candidates by political parties and to adopt an electoral system that secures a better representation of political parties in the parliament.[231]

The redistribution of power, its decentralization, the modularization of state structures, and the separation of the two crucial functions of defense and foreign affairs to be run through the presidential institution, leaving only everyday politics to the parliament and its competing parties would make the transition a less risky one.

On December 26, 2010, Gamāl Mubārak called 4000 members of the NDP to

[231] *Awrāq al-Siyāsāt*, 227.

embark on

> a second wave of reform in the country on the economic, social and political levels, and to the completion of building the civil moderate state. He said, "We have to start off a second wave of reform, in which we support the foundations of a state based on principles of *wasaṭiyyah* and *iʿtidāl*, middle-path and moderation." He added that *wasaṭiyyah* and *iʿtidāl* are "of the characters of the Egyptian society that were carried by Egypt's prominent intellectual figures, such as Rifāʿah al-Ṭahṭāwī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn. … Gamāl Mubārak called in this regard all political parties to "participate with us in supporting reform. We agree with the parties, hold on citizenship and civil state, and refuse the confusion of religion and politics. We go forward so that the next stage will be one of building and modernization. We welcome each thought and attitude that goes with us for that building."[232]

In this speech, we cannot mistake an awkward attitude towards the MBG. On the one hand, he completely embraces *wasaṭiyyah* as an identity of the state. On the other hand, he clearly recognizes MBG, the organization, not the discourse, as a threat that has to be avoided. From the 1970s to the early 21st century, MBG played a crucial role in the formation of the Egyptian state. MBG provided the Islamic character of this state, if

[232] "Miṣr: al-Ḥizb al-Ḥākim Yadʿū al-Aḥzāb al-Siyāsiyyah lī-al-Mušārakah fī Tarsīkh al-Dawlah al-Madaniyyah," http://aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11717&article=601183 (accessed Jule 25, 2012).

frequently as opposition. It performed this role surrounded by other groups and parties that provided socialist, liberal, nationalist, etc. discourses. The modularization of the state, its new transformation, rendered this function, in this arrangement impossible. MBG had to be accommodated differently. The Group, however, was too big to be *a* module and had a hierarchy that was too rigid to be modularized.

That, however, never stopped the state from communicating with MBG. This communication used to be through Muṣṭafa al-Fiqī, when he assumed the office of the President's Secretary of Information Affairs. Later on, it was conducted through the State Security. MBG was offered, as I wrote above, 20 percent of the seats of 2005 parliament. Businessmen, like Suʿūdī, were granted economic deals, as I wrote in the last chapter. Academics were invited to serve on high governmental committees. For instance, Professor Muḥsin Rašwān was a member in a committee that compiled one of the strategic plans of the Ministry of Industry. Social service providers, as Dr. Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafa, the General Secretary of the Health Care Project of the Physicians Syndicate, were invited to partnerships. Muṣṭafa was invited to found a private health insurance company with the Minister of Health, a company that was supposed to get a significant share of national health insurance service once this service was privatized. In other words, political and economic integration was at least desired, if not achieved. Furthermore, MBG cooperated with the state at the international level. For instance, a cooperative effort between MBG and the Egyptian Intelligence was made in order to deliver relief assistance to Gaza Strip through the Arab Physicians Union, APU, which is dominated by MBG members. Although through the APU, another cooperative effort was

under taken to provide health services in Somalia and, therefore, support the current Somalian regime that is favored by Egypt.

These connections never amounted to a clear decision to cooperate fully with the regime. On the contrary, MBG maintained an extremely harsh discourse against the government. Surprisingly, information about the Group's relationships with the state was not shared among MBG members. In fact, MBG members of the 2005 parliament, themselves, were never privy to the information that there was a deal between the General Guide and State Security.[233] It is important to mention here that the state's invitation was not limitless. Clear boundaries and red lines have always been drawn. Muḥammad Ḥabīb, who was the Deputy of the General Guide, reported that MBG could not found a political party because it had always been told that this was a red line that should not be transgressed. He went on to quote the Minister of the Parliament Affairs as threatening that MBG would be bulldozed if it dared to found a political party. ʿIṣām al-ʿIryān confirmed this statement by narrating the MBG was told in 1987 that if the seats they won in the parliament exceeded a certain limit, the tanks will take to the streets![234]

Meanwhile, the Policies Committee was pushing full pace to replace the older center of power in each corner of the country. Ministries like those of Information or Tourism, which have always been given to officials with an intelligence background, were given to businessmen from the Committee. The Ministry of Housing, which had been always kept in the hands of the older center of power was also given to a

[233] "Muḥammad ʿĀkif fī Awwal Ḥiwār Ṣaḥafī Baʿda Azmat al-Insiḥāb," http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=230596 (accessed 23 July, 2012).
[234] "Al-Ṣidām maʿa al-Niẓām Khaṭṭ Aḥmar," *ibid*.

businessman. Eventually, the Minister of Irrigation was also removed and a new minister with a business background replaced him. If the minister of housing controls the major contracts on government and state lands, the latter is involved in the conflicts in the Nile Basin over the distribution of the Nile's water. He had to be someone who works in close relationship with the Army and the Intelligence. Governors too, who used to have a military background, were replaced by new ones who were professionals or technocrats.

These changes never went unchallenged. The older center of power struggled to keep their influence and positions. The 20 percent seats-gift to MBG was met by trying a number of MBG members in military courts. State Security was strictly prohibited from contacting the Group. The Army ignored a challenge from the Administrative Court that civilians should always be tried before a civilian court. The Military Court decided that only it has the power to determine the scope of its jurisdiction. The same MBG members were being tried simultaneously before two different courts and were eventually sentenced by the military court. Most of those who were tried were MBG businessmen, who were thought to be close to the Committee, or who at least could be possible allies in the future.

It was in 2010, however, that the Army and the older elite started to challenge the President and his son openly. A deal to buy a huge property in Aswān by a company owned by the the Minister of Housing and the former Minister of Transportation was canceled. The Army decided that all "border-governorates" had to have governors with military backgrounds and that these governorates would be under military jurisdiction. In

February 2010, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿUmar, the Deputy of the Defense and National Security in the Parliament, said that the Minister of Finance may be assassinated for his policies and announced that Egypt needs a security government to control the deteriorating situation. The new elite armed the police forces heavily expecting a future confrontation. According to Ayman Nūr, the President of al-Ghad Party and the only presidential candidate who seriously challenged Mubārak in the 2005 elections, the Army devised Plan-100 to take over power once the President dies, and Plan-101 to arrest his son and all members of the Policies Committee.[235]

Predictably, the 2010 parliamentary elections became a bloody confrontation between the two sides. The NDP General Secretary could not decide about the Party's candidates for elections. Almost in each constituency, the Party had two *official* candidates competing against each other. The police forces withdrew, leaving NDP candidates to settle their conflicts with thugs and weapons. The scandalous elections were bitterly criticized by the media, since the NDP won 90 percent of the seats, but that was not the point. The point was that most of those who won belonged to the older elite, and many of them were retired Army officers. Joking about it, the Speaker of the Parliament commented that it had become not the Assembly of the People, but the Assembly of the Military.

In December 2010, MBG and opposition parties announced their intention to found the Parallel Parliament. Responding to this announcement, the President declared that decentralization, not a parallel parliament, was the solution. He swiftly removed a

[235]"Ayman Nūr," http://elbadil.com/أيمن-نور-سنقدم-للنائب-العام-قائمة-بأسم/ (accessed July 30, 2012).

ban on professional syndicates' elections, paving the way for MBG to run for their elections and reoccupy positions of power. He also challenged the Army by announcing that a former decision that only the Parliament can rule on the legitimacy of its members had been abolished. All those whose victory in the elections was challenged would be turned over the court to reexamine the count and validity of their ballots.

On January 25th, masses of Egyptians took to the streets, chanting against the President and his regime. The peaceful demonstrations ended on that day with the killing of one police soldier. The police maintained a policy not to fire for the next two days. However, demonstrators were shot at, and some were killed. That was not the only unexplained event in those days. Almost two hundred police stations from Alexandria to Aswan were set on fire simultaneously. General Muḥammad al-Baṭrān, the Commander of al-Qaṭā Prison, was shot dead and the prisoners were set free, stimulating a dangerous wave of chaos and crime. ʿUmar Sulaymān, the Chief of Intelligence, whom Mubārak had just appointed Vice President, escaped an assassination attempt in which his driver and personal guard were killed. Eventually, the Cabinet of Naẓīf was resolved, the Army on January 28th took to the streets, which police forces had abandoned, and the members of the Policies Committee were rounded up and put in prison. The demonstrations continued, and Army officers let demonstrators write their graffiti on their tanks and armored vehicles, while posing to take smiling pictures with them.

Ewan Stein has made three insightful observations about the current state of Egypt. First, though the Army pleased that its economic interests are now safe, it is

limited by its despotic as opposed to infrastructural nature. “It is for this reason that it has come to accept, if not depend upon, more socially embedded Islamists as a link between state and society.”[236] Second, neither the military nor the MBG promotes a qualitatively new economic path; “Islamists, like the military, fiercely protect continued private investment in the economy.”[237] Third, he concludes that “Barring a major rupture, the nature of Egypt’s political evolution following June’s presidential elections may hinge on the complementarities of the military and Brotherhood economic portfolios, and the extent to which each side is willing to bargain economic for political privileges.”[238] The irony in his conclusion is that an MBG-military alliance is possible because of the structural changes introduced by those who were ousted from power and put in prison. Losing its economic privileges to the new elite, the Army built its own economic projects and dominated resource-intensive sectors, like oil, gas and mining. Ambitious MBG businessmen will be interested in consumer goods and services. Politically, modules of foreign affairs and defense will be left to the Army, while MBG members will be busy providing services and fixing the economy. It is the modularization of economy and the state that will make this alliance possible.

Islamism

As Carrie Wickham stated in *Mobilizing Islam*, “By the time Hosni Mubarak assumed power, a broad network of Islamic institutions had begun to coalesce in the

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[236]Ewan Stein, “After the Arab Spring: Power Shift in the Middle East?: Revolutionary Egypt: Promises and Perils,” *London School of Economics and Political Science Research Online*, no. SR011 (2012),: 24.
[237]Ewan Stein, “After the Arab Spring,” 26.
[238]Ewan Stein, “After the Arab Spring,” 27.

interstices of Egypt's authoritarian state. … Yet, despite their diversity, they can be thought of as forming a loose network, given the ties of family and friendship, resource flows, and ideological commitments that bound them together."[239] The network Wickham is referring to is formed of private mosques, several non-profit organizations, such as polyclinics and welfare societies, and a number of profit-making enterprises, such as publishing houses and investment companies. This loose network was a candidate for modularization. However, the over-politicization of MBG activities, on the one hand, and the lack of state tolerance, on the other hand, led to its collapse. The state implemented a plan to take each mosque under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. A restrictive law that regulates civil society organizations made it almost impossible for MBG to keep providing its services through their non-governmental organizations. From 1995 on, MBG private enterprises were subject to arbitrary oppressive measures by Mubārak's regime. In 2007, a number of wealthy MBG businessmen were tried in a military court, and the government shut down their businesses and prohibited them from disposing of their wealth. According to one estimate, the size of MBG economic activity at that time was about 20 Billion Egyptian Pounds, and the strike against this group resulted in a 2.54 point decrease in the index of the Egyptian stock market.[240]

State oppression made it impossible for MBG to create and secure functional units. What one observes from late 1990s until 2011 are two basic structures. First, there were some informal activities at the level of neighborhoods, which aimed mainly to

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[239]Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002),, 95.

[240]Magdī Mihannā, "," *Al-Maṣrī al-Yūm*, February 6, 2007.

preach, give religious lectures, and recruit new members. Second, there was the neoliberal network of business that emerged out of MBG hierarchical organization. Small and medium-sized units of this network could mostly escape state oppression, but the whole network, though providing a space for a new discourse to emerge, could not radically transform the main hierarchical organization. The hierarchical organization itself was busy recruiting, organizing, and indoctrinating members more than offering serious spaces of action. For instance, the Department of the Professionals has a subdivision for physicians. This subdivision organizes religious or entertainment activities for doctors to recruit new members. Their main function is to support MBG candidates when and if there are elections in the Physicians' Syndicate. However, they could create units of action that are locally grounded and professionally oriented. In fact, it was unfortunate that MBG members blocked other local initiatives for action that were started by independent, liberal, or leftist physicians and used the power of the Syndicate, which they dominated, to ban such actions.

From the late 1990s to 2011, many MBG members blamed the Group for the lack of serious social action. They demanded a de-politicization of the Group and support for individual initiatives.[241] This demand was paralleled by inspiring individual initiatives of either MBG ex-members or members who decided to keep their membership quite loose and informal to avoid both state oppression and the Group's restrictive regulations. An example of these initiatives is the work of the famous preacher ʿAmr Khālid. Khālid, about whom Asef Bayat wrote,

[241] Mohamed Mosaad Abdelaziz, "Islam and Post-Modernity."

> As the most popular preacher since Sheikh Shaʿrawi, Amr Khalid exemplifies a transformation of Islamism into a post-Islamist piety – an active piety which is thick in rituals and scriptures and thin in politics. It is marked and framed by the taste and style of the rich, in particular, affluent youth and women; and sociologically underlies a Simmelian 'fashion'.[242]

Khālid was one preacher of a proliferating group, whose members provide a variety of products to a pluralized and dynamic market.[243]

The consumers, on their part, use different preachers as *modules* that fit different situations. By and large, they are not the Muslim Brother versus *Salafī* versus *Jihādī* preachers, who address three different audiences. The product is neither ideological, nor comprehensive. It is modular. This is why we frequently see a *Salafī* Brother and a modern *Salafī*. Moreover, as modules, these products fit in mundane products to make them *Islamic*. Unlike the doll of the 1980s that prays, recites Qurʾān, and sings *adhān*, today's dolls, for instance Fullah, are replicas of Barbie with head scarves. Similarly, during the early 1990s, RDI, an Islamic software company, founded by two members of MBG, was developing a multimedia authoring tool called Arabware to compete with the well-known product Authorware. By the end of 1990s, RDI switched strategies and

[242]Asef Bayat, "Piety, Privilege and Egyptian Youth," *ISIM Newsletter*, no. 10/02 (2002),: 23.

[243]By no means I refer to a "real" difference among these products. The difference here is merely cultural and symbolic, more related to *lifestyles* than use-value. It is like the one hundred different kinds of potatoes fried chips on the shelves of the grocery store. They meet the expectations of a plural customers. At the end of the day, however, they are all potatoes!

decided to develop only software *modules*, for instance a module that supports the Arabic text, or the Qurʾānic font, that could be plugged into Authorware.

Even though modularization never became a wide-spread phenomenon within MBG prior to January 2011, we can still observe some activities and attitudes that could develop into a full-scale modularization in the future. In his article "Comrades and Brothers," Hossam El-Hamalawy reported a number of cases in which some MBG members would join independents and socialists to form action-units, or what I call functional modules. Hamalawy wrote,

> From campus fistfights in the 1990s to joint demonstrations in 2005-2006, relations between the Muslim Brothers and the radical left in Egypt have come a long way. In settings where the two tendencies operate side by side, like student unions and professional syndicates, overt hostility has vanished, and there is even a small amount of coordination around tactics. Still, the cooperation remains symbolic, and leftists and Islamist have yet to join forces to undertake sustained mass actions against their common foe, the regime of the President Husni Mubarak.[244]

Hamalawy is inspired by the alliance, but not with its transiency. He also speaks of the Islamists and the Leftists. There are some Islamists who work with specific leftists for a

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[244]Hossam El-Hamalawy, "Comrades and Brothers," *Middle East Report*, no. 242 (Spring 2007),: 40.

specific reason for some time. This is how modules work. There are two cases to be recited here. In one case, ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, an MBG member from Alexandria, "held talks with Revolutionary Socialists and independent leftists, resulting in the launching of the National Alliance for Change in June 2005."[245] This alliance was organized for a specific reason: to fight against the prospect of vote rigging in that year's presidential and parliamentary elections. Similarly, MBG students and leftists joined hands to form the Free Student Union, FSU, as a parallel union to the official one, from whose elections they were banned. Hamalawy wrote, "Following the rigging of the October 2006 student union elections the Brotherhood threw its weight behind the FSU, sanctioning new branches at universities such as al-Azhar, Mansoura and Alexandria."[246] In this case, the module stimulated the whole hierarchy to support the creation of new functional modules in similar places.

MBG bloggers, who have been active since 2005, represent a good example of modularization. They have been characterized in both media and academia as a split waiting to happen. They were also characterized as liberal off-shoots of the Muslim Brothers. Both the dissident and the liberal theses could not be farther from truth. MBG bloggers reflect a broad spectrum of views. Most of them, whether critics or supporters of the official statements and positions of MBG leadership, are still members in the Group. The more important aspect of this phenomenon, I argue, is the conditional emergence of smaller units of action of the Group that have the capacity to articulate new functions,

[245]Hossam El-Hamalawy, "Comrades and Brothers," 42.
[246]Hossam El-Hamalawy, "Comrades and Brothers," 42, 3.

make new alliances, and mediate or modify MBG discourse, its principles, and its strategies of action. A number of MBG bloggers have supported many rights issues. For instance, they campaigned against the imprisonment of ʿAbd al-Karīm Nabīl, who was sentenced to four years imprisonment on charges of making defamatory statements against God and insulting the President.[247] Some of their material came to be published in the regular media. A few of them, such as ʿAbd al-Munʿim Maḥmūd, became regular writers in a number of newspapers. They opened spaces at the periphery of the Group for internal critique and reform.

The continuous effort of the Group to contain them, either by inclusion or exclusion, resulted in developing a new tradition of negotiating power and authority between MBG leadership and its individuals. This new tradition contributes to the new disciplinary ethics of regulating the work of future modules. As Ḥusām Tammām has argued, by adopting the same interests of MBG, addressing the same issues that were being focused upon by the Group, speaking, not with an external and individual voice, but with an internal and collective voice, and referring back to MBG regulations and ethical principles to legitimize themselves and their writings, MBG bloggers opened spaces of internal critique and internal reform rather than spaces of protest and dissidence.[248]

I have to say, however, that MBG is a late-comer when we consider modularization. The pre-January 2011 repression –or illusion thereof, of MBG

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[247] Maḥmūd al-Zāhī, "Abd al-Munʿim Maḥmūd," *Al-Maṣrī al-Yawm*, Sept. 19, 2007.
[248] Ḥusām Tammām, "Al-Mudawwinūn al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn," *Al-Wasaṭ*, June 26, 2009.

contributed to the rigid stance of the Group's hierarchy and its resistance to change.[249] The post-January 2011 changes that have been accelerating intensive modularization of MBG. It is *modularization* rather than fragmentation or differentiation that will characterize the future of the Group. On the one hand, the increase in opportunities for social, economic, and political action will help the Group avoid future fragmentation. In the past, enthusiastic and active members would have left the Group because of the lack of action. Others would leave it to avoid governmental harassment when conducting their activities. It is the other way round right now. Staying in the Group provides more opportunities to work and get support. The new political situation made MBG a more convenient and a safer framework of action. On the other hand, the limited capacity of the current hierarchy will not be able to accommodate internal differentiation. It will have to be extremely huge and complicated to accommodate the countless opportunities for action and to organize all of them centrally. *Modularization*, not any internal differentiation, will be the ultimate solution. The creation of a multitude of functional units and the development of a newly creative structure that can coordinate them will make the future of MBG. As in politics and the economy, *decentralization* will be the heart of the new organization. In addition, a flexible structure that encourages the creation of new modules and their coordination will also save the Group from fragmentation. At the phase of *consolidation* discourse, generalizations of statements and ambiguity in

[249]In an interrogation in the State Security, I told the officer that it is in fact State Security oppression of the Group that blocks its reform and increases the strength and solidarity of its stiff hierarchy. He replied me back that it is indeed the desire of the State to protect the consistency of MBG hierarchy, since it does contribute to and defend an essential Islamic identity of Egypt, and keeps a delicate internal balance among other attitudes, parties and groups. He said that MBG has to be *maintained* and *contained*.

wording them saved the Group the pitfall of fragmentation. They were the two simultaneous structures, the official and hierarchical, on the one hand, and the neoliberal informal and network, on the other hand, that saved the Group from fragmentation at the phase of *polarization*. Currently, it will be the *modularization* of both the structure of the Group and its processes that will save it from this fragmentation.

I want here to call attention to an association between state structure and MBG structure. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, there was no real *structure* of the MBG. Individuals of MBG who were just released by President Sādāt were living in different places, spreading their mission as much they could, but always as *individuals*. The new General Guide, ʿUmar al-Tilmisānī, had an agreement with Sādāt that he could spread the *mission* of MBG but not its organization. That attitude was internally challenged by a number of MBG members, the most famous of whom was Muṣṭafa Mašhūr (1921-2002,) an ex-leader of the Special System, who became the General Guide from 1996 to 2002. MBG structure emerged mainly around universities, where a larger number of young members could be found, and to a lesser extent around some neighborhoods where an active older member recruited and organized new members. It was only in 1987 that all those scattered *groups* were organized into a coherent structure. That happened because of the decision of MBG to stand for the 1987 parliamentary elections. The MBG had to match and parallel the state structure in its campaigns. Members had to work in their own constituencies. Members of different universities who happened to live in the same region came to know each other and work daily with each other. Some regions were discovered to have no members at all. MBG had, therefore, to focus on them, both during the

elections and after them. Some regions, it was decided, had to be merged or divided. Active members in the universities had to be transferred to their neighborhoods and released from all their responsibilities in their original centers. A clear chain of command had to develop out from the very center to the far periphery to run national campaigns. Members were disciplined and taught how to obey orders and work in teams. The elections ended with a small number of MBG candidates winning seats in the parliament. The major achievement was the reorganization of the Group and the publicity it had enjoyed during the campaign.

The current attitude of *decentralization* of the state will definitely be reflected in the MBG organization itself. As long as MBG wants to conduct and organize political activism, it will have to match and parallel state structure. Currently, we see the division of the Group into at least three main structures: the Group, the Party, and the Presidential Institution. It is true that both the Party and the Presidential Institution came out of the Group. However, without complete separation, they are certainly getting increasingly independent. The relationship between the Group and the Party is a topic that has been widely discussed at all levels of MBG. For instance, on July 7th, 2012, the Šūra Council met to discuss once again this relationship. ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, a Šūra Council member, declared before the meeting that “This meeting will set policies and strategies of the future, for the Group is in a new stage. It has three institutions: the Ikhwān, the Freedom and Justice Party, and the Presidential Institution. The borders among them have to be

clear and precise."[250] He also added that "The meeting will not nominate a President of the Party to succeed Mursī, since this is the business of the Party institutions, not the Group."[251] Responding to a question about the new government, Muḥammad Wahdān, a member of the Iršād Office, answered, "The Group has no relation with the government. That is the business of the Party and the Presidential Institution."[252] On his part, President Muḥammad Mursī responded to a question about a photo published by a Saudi Newspaper of al-Bannā kissing the hand of King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Āl Saʿūd right before Mursī's visit to the Kingdom by simply stating that it is the business of the Group to respond to this picture.

ʿĀdil al-Anṣārī, an MBG writer, proposed three different kinds of a future relationship between the Group and the Party, none of which is a complete inclusion or a complete separation. He proposed a relationship that provides more independence to the Party, where the common base between it and the Group would be moral and ideological. He also proposed a relationship of alliance, where each entity would support the other in a number of situations. Finally, he proposed a more inclusive relationship, where the Party would be the political arm of the Group.[253] Members of MBG will discuss this topic for a long time. The future, however, will be shaped through the practical experience. In May 2011, Nathan Brown wrote an article about the relationship between the Group and the Party. The title, "The Muslim Brotherhood as Helicopter Parent," summarizes his

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[250]Hānī al-Wazīrī, "Šūra al-Ikhwān Yuḥaddid Šakl al-ʿIlāqah bayna al-Jamāʿah wa l-Ḥizb wa al-Riʾāsah," *Al-Waṭan*, July 6, 2012.
[251]Hānī al-Wazīrī, "Šūra al-Ikhwān."
[252]Hānī al-Wazīrī, "Šūra al-Ikhwān."
[253]ʿĀdil al-Anṣārī, "Iškliyyat al-Ḥizb wa al-Jamāʿah," *AL-Rāʾid*, April, 14, 2011.

message. Brown listed a number of pieces of evidence that the Group does control the Party.[254] In May 2011, there was no need for such evidence. The Group founded the Party, created its structure, set its agenda, and armed it with its cadres. However, once the Party is working, its members are assigned their special tasks and assume their different offices, and its structure is spreading throughout the country, it will be practically impossible for the leadership in Cairo to be involved in its everyday activities. By January 2012, Brown had become more cautious. In "Brotherhood Prepares for Power in Egypt," he wrote about the *challenge* MBG has to

> balance politics with their traditional concerns (charity work, self-improvement, proselytizing, education), especially at a time when politics seems so glamorous and has attracted the best people in the organization. Indeed, many of the movement's most dynamic and imaginative members have shifted their attention over to the political party—explaining its success but also leaving some of the movement's plans (to form labor unions, create sports leagues, reach out to students and so on) a bit adrift.[255]

Here, we observe the concerns of the Group shifting from the Party, that can take care of itself, to the Group's structure, agenda, and activities that could all be ignored because of

[254]Nathan Brown, "The Muslim Brotherhood as Helicopter Parent," *Foreign Policy*, May 27, 2011. It can be read online at http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/05/27/muslim-brotherhood-as-helicopter-parent/3ivn (accessed August 1, 2012).

[255]Nathan Brown, "Brotherhood Prepares for Power in Egypt," *Jewish Daily Forward*, January 25, 2012. It can be read online at http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/25/brotherhood-prepares-for-power-in-egypt/98xu (accessed August, 1, 2012).

the energy and resources drawn to the Party. In the near future, MBG will indeed have to redefine itself and its function.

In his sphere, the President has shown an increasing independence as well. Immediately after his election, he resigned from both the Group and the Party. He relies on his own circle of consultants and aides. He is currently forming the *Presidential Team*, a group of consultants that reflect the political spectrum in Egypt, to assist him in his decisions and in his work. It is quite interesting to observe the way he appointed the current Prime Minister, Hišām Qandīl. After a long time of waiting for the Group and the Party to nominate a prime minister, he surprised everyone, including the Group and the Party, by announcing Qandīl as his Prime Minister. MBG's leaders and the leaders of the Freedom and Justice Party, FJP, expressed their surprise and sometimes their *gentle* rejection of the decision. Qandīl was the Minister of Irrigation in the former cabinet. A little-known bearded man, who, like the President, received his PhD from a US university, he was better known as a technocrat, not a politician with a vision. Reporter, politicians, and academics have been puzzled about the reason behind Qandīl's selection. Two significant indications have been missing in their analyses. First, the President is playing his role fully without referring back to recommendations from either the Group or the Party. He took his decision after coming back from a trip to Ethiopia, on which Qandīl was his companion. Reports that Qandīl was chosen because of his affiliation with MBG are simply wrong. He is devout, but never had a relationship with the MBG. In fact, Khayrat al-Šāṭir, the Deputy General Guide of the Group, expressed his dismay at this selection. Second, the Ministry of Irrigation is one of the most important and critical

ministries in Egypt. Historically, the state of Egypt was founded thousands of years ago in order to distribute the Nile's water. In other words, the state was created around the function of this ministry, and its importance should not be underestimated. The Minister of Irrigation used traditionally to work in close relationship with both the Army and the Intelligence. This relationship is easily understood when we consider the immanent and frequent threats that Egypt will not receive its share of the Nile water because of the dams and agricultural projects flourishing nowadays in other Nile Basin countries. In Ethiopia, Mursī and Qandīl were attending a meeting of the Nile Basin countries to discuss a treaty to which Egypt has long objected. The last Minister of Irrigation before the events of January was the first Minister to have a business background and to not have affiliations with the military and Intelligence. Removing him, the military appointed Qandīl in the two cabinets that preceded the election of Mursī. By selecting him, Mursī has not only expressed his complete independence, but also his consideration of the military and his willingness to work closely with them. Mursī and his Presidential Institution, once again, are acting as a semi-independent functional module that may fit with other modules, here the military, to exercise its action.

The modularization of the Group after January 2011 was boosted by the unprecedented registration of numerous local societies. Almost in every town in Egypt right now, there is a non-governmental organization belonging to the MBG. In July 2012, this movement took a dramatic turn when MBG decided to register more of those societies as an alternative to the municipalities, which were abolished after January 2011 on the grounds that they had members belonging to the banned NDP. The objective of

these societies is to provide citizens with essential needs, such as bread and gasoline. Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Sayyāf, a member of the Šūra Council and the Director of the MBG Administrative Office in Banī Suwayf, announced that

> the Brothers have recently launched 70 community societies in the Governorate, to work in different fields of the service sector, such as providing bread and delivering it to the houses, providing gas or providing educational services to the students. He emphasized that 'the Group and the Party count mainly on these societies as alternatives of the municipalities that have been banned since January Revolution. It was necessary to find other alternatives.'[256]

Providing services is not the only objective of MBG. MBG after lacking official recognition for a lengthy period is losing no opportunity to gain legal legitimacy. In addition, MBG is working to train its cadres on *local work*. These are the ones that the Group will support as its candidates in future municipality elections. Charity organizations are being launched as well. For instance, in Aswān, MBG founded "Bayt al-ʿĀʾilah," a charity organization that supports 550 poor families, and provides social services and financial assistance.[257]

Non-profit organizations are not the only societies MBG is forming today. In

[256] Maḥmūd Šaʿbān Bayyūmī, "Qiyādiyyūn bi al-Ikhwān: Nudaššin ʿAšarāt al-Jamʿiyyāt al-Ahliyyah," *Al-Maṣrī al-Yawm*, July 6, 2012.

[257] "Ikhwān Aswān," *AL-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?SecID=211&ArtID=115039 (accessed Aug. 1, 2012).

January 2012, the Group announced the launch of a non-governmental organization for businessmen to encourage foreign investment, which they named The Egyptian Society for Business and Investment. Ḥasan Mālik, a famous businessman whom a military court sentenced to prison for three years on accounts of money laundering and one of the most prominent economic leaders of MBG, was elected president of this new society. Not everyone in this Society is a Muslim Brother. The Society has attracted a number of businessmen who are willing to cooperate with MBG in future enterprises. ʿIṣām al-Ḥaddād, an MBG businessman, who was also sentenced for three years by a military court on charges of founding "the International Organization of Muslim Brothers," is one of the founders of this Society. He declared that he has raised EL100 million from the Islamic Relief Institution in London to further developmental projects among slums in Egypt. Among the objectives of this Society are

> the support and cooperation among businessmen and existing organizations, discussing and proposing business-related laws, encouraging principled and value-based business, attracting foreign investment to Egypt, applying the regulations of business governance on companies, institutions and organizations that are involved in the private sector, the openness on international business environment, encouraging small and medium-sized projects, and marketing the developmental projects and the contribution in it.[258]

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[258]Nājī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, "Al-Ikhwān Yuʾssisūn Jamʿiyyah li-Rijāl al-Aʿmāl," *Al-Maṣrī al-Yawm*, January 10, 2012.

Six months after the launching of this Society, which they eventually called *Ibdaʾ*, "Start," a number of MBG businessmen in Alexandria announced the launch of an offshoot of *Ibdaʾ*. The new entity is a holding company, which they called Egypt's Opportunities Holding Company. The objective of this company is to develop agricultural, productive, and educational projects. An agricultural company was launched as an off-shoot of this holding company, named *Khayrāt Maṣr*, or Egypt's Goods. Saʿīd ʿAmmār, the Vice President of *Ibdaʾ*, declared that in addition to the agricultural company,

> another company for manufacturing bathroom faucets, sinks, etc. was launched. The Company bought a British company in al-Sādāt City, and its products will be exported. There will be another company for construction in the educational field that will be launched. The investments that have been pumped so far are about EL70 million. There will be another company for investment in the medical field that will build a large hospital in Alexandria. … The Holding company will start with a EL200 million capital. Each of its stock-shares will be sold in EL500,000. … We will found a huge real estate investment company as well, like the largest companies of the world to invest in lands and real estate projects. … We will hold a conference for Egyptian businessmen who live abroad to attract their

investments inside Egypt.[259]

This company is coordinating the work of a number of business organizations in Alexandria and the Chamber of Commerce. It invites to its meeting the *Salafī* leader Yāsir Burhāmī. Burhāmī should appeal to a large *Salafī* community in Alexandria and a larger one in the Gulf Countries.

The business work above proposes a *model* for MBG future action and organization. Functional modules are created to be followed by off-shoots and off-shoots of off-shoots. This multiplication and networking will most probably be repeated in other fields, such as charity and educational works. These emerging networks of business and activism connect, locally and globally, individuals, business enterprises, religious organizations, communities, and societies. They breed on a global sense of community and an infrastructure of global capitalism.

Will MBG, the Group, supervise all these activities? Is it even possible? I believe the answer is no! Would not these networks change the dynamics of MBG, redefine it, and recreate its ethics and protocols of action? I believe the answer is yes! More important than reorganizing the Group, this modularization is, in fact, reorganizing Egyptian society at large. The functional basis of each module, its openness to individuals, groups, and institutions that share the work-interest not the MBG-identity, and the subjection of each module to extra-MBG regulations, such as those of the market

[259] "Al-Ikhwān Yuʾssisūn Šarikah Qābiḍah," *Al-Arabiyyah*, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/07/14/226278.html (accessed August 1st, 2012).

or civil society, will eventually redistribute human and material resources and reorganize them.

I have to address the question of politics and its significance. Social service societies and business enterprises are not far from politics. As I wrote above, social service societies were created to *replace* municipalities. On its part, *Ibdaʾ* aims to discuss and propose business-related laws. This is a new, indirect approach to politics that had not characterized most of MBG activities before January 2011. In addition, there is no division of work between a hierarchy that is involved mainly in politics and a neoliberal network that pursues business and social activism. The two structures blend together to be metamorphosed into an extending network of functional modules. Those modules will conduct social activism, business, *and* politics. MBG's recently open main headquarter will still be there. Its function will be as important as it is today, but it will not be the same function. The State's redistribution of power, its decentralization, and the privatization of the economy will not leave much to the future members of the parliament, ministers, and prime ministers to discuss. The President, the Foreign Minister and the military will have their plate full with foreign affairs and defense issues.[260]

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[260]It may be important here to point out to the embarrassing performance of MBG members of the post-January 2011 parliament. MBG had been used to be *an Islamic opposition*. They could not understand that they *are* the majority and were busy criticizing the military-appointed government of Muṣṭafa al-Janzūrī. They escalated their criticism to the point of exercising the power of the parliament to dissolve the government. The military influenced the Constitutional Court to dissolve, not the government, but the parliament. This bitter open confrontation had a strange end. Once winning the presidency and forming his government, Mursī gave al-Janzūrī a medal for his performance and appointed him a Consultant of the President. Of 35 ministers in the government of Hišām Qandīl, there were only 4 ministers from MBG. Three of those ministers are related to activities of *Našr al-Daʿwah* Department of MBG: the Minister of Youth, the Minister of Media and the Minister of High Education. The fourth Minister is related to MBG interests in business. He is the Minister of Housing. His ministry is the one

Before concluding this chapter, I want to mention briefly the double explosion of religion and politics. In the past, they were theoretically called for separation or integration. In the near future, the minute particles of religion and politics will be spreading everywhere to the effect that every structure and every action in the most remote corner of the country will always have something to do with religion and politics. These will not be religion and politics of today. These are more like Fredric Jameson's *culture*. In his classical work *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Jameson saw late capitalism as involving a prodigious expansion of capital into hitherto un-commodified areas. Fusing the two Marxian structures of economy and culture, he saw the economy conquering culture so that everything became culture![261] The high capacity of the modules of adaptation, self-division, re-formation and agglomeration into clusters of alliances may render the recent demand of some MBG youth to join political parties other than FJP just an everyday reality.[262]

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that has the fat deals of state contracts. Surprisingly, ʿIṣām al-ʿIryān, the de-facto President of FJP, openly declared that the two Ministries of Health and Education were offered to FJP, but that they declined. When it comes to state politics and the management of the state's business, I argue, the MBG is *so far* not capable of handling it.

[261] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernity, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991),, 1-54.

[262] "Šabāb al-Ikhwān Yuṭālibūn al-Jamāʿah bi al-Samāḥ lahum al-Inḍimām li Aḥzāb Ukhra," *Maṣrāwī*, http://www.masrawy.com/News/Egypt/Politics/2011/march/28/ikhwan_youth.aspx (accessed Aug 1st, 2012).

Chapter Five

Discourse Deployment

In this chapter, I aim to reexamine MBG discourse in light of other theories that will modify Foucault's approach. I will draw on the theories of Habermas and Baudrillard, who suggested ways or concepts to overcome some problems inherent in Foucault's presentation. While Foucault focused only on discourse as a sufficient conceptual space to analyze social phenomena, Habermas and Baudrillard, as contradictory as their works might seem, have both downplayed the significance of language in today's reality and proposed a bipolar model, where one end represents the good old days and the other shows the sad reality of the present. However, while Habermas contrasted *lifeworld* to *systems,* Baudrillard contrasted *seduction* to *production*. In this part, and in spite of Foucault's persistent emphasis on denying any external origin of the discourse, I will *deploy* the MBG discourse between the two conceptual spheres of Habermas: lifeworld and systems. In other words, I will recognize MBG discourse as *mediating* between these two spheres of lifeworld and systems.

Situating the discourse in between these two spheres cannot be settled without *reversing* its *power*. This is why I will rely on Baudrillard's concepts of *seduction* and *reversibility*. This deployment of the discourse, I argue, helps us overcome a number of methodological dualities, for instance, parole and langue, insider and outsider, traditional and modern, agency and structure, as well as intersubjectivity and objectivity. We will be able to study their mutual relationships and coexistence within the discourse. I will, first,

start with a brief presentation of Habermas' model and its shortcomings. Second, I will draw on a number of Baudrillard's insights, which I will, third, use to explain the new dynamics of the deployed discourse. Finally, I will, fourth, reflect on some MBG structures and texts, to show how they mediate lifeworld and systems and how they articulate power and reversibility.

First, Habermas' Model

In *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas proposes an evolutionary model, in which societies are divided into four groups that represent four stages of development: archaic, tribal, traditional, and modern. He also introduces two concepts: *social systems* and *lifeworld*, where the latter refers to the totality of socio-cultural facts. In archaic societies, both lifeworld and social systems are unified in the *practice* of ritual. Habermas focuses on two functions: mutual understanding and action. The two of them are unified in ritual. He integrates Mead's and Durkheim's views of ritual, stating, "The religious consciousness that secures identity is regenerated and maintained through the ritual practice."263 The religious symbols of ritual, however, are disengaged from functions of adapting and mastering reality, as they serve "to establish and maintain a collective identity, on the strength of which the steering of interaction is transferred from a genetic program anchored in the individual organism over to an intersubjectively shared cultural program."264

[263]Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987),, 53.
[264]Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action,* 55.

Both the mutual understanding and consensual action reflected in ritual are grounded in a community of communication that has two cornerstones: *intersubjectivity* and *language*. The Saussurian approach to language, where a sign, like a page, has two faces, one for the sound, the other for the thought, is abandoned by Habermas, for his interest is not in a subject-object binary. His emphasis is on the neglected *intersubjectivity* and its crucial role in both linguistic and social formation. Reflecting on Mead's *Mind, Self, and Society*, he writes, "The structure of assimilation [*Aneignung*] differs from the structure of reflection [*Spiegelung*] by virtue of its opposite direction: the self relates itself to itself not by making itself an object but by recognizing in an external object, in an action schema or in a schema of relations, something subjective that has been externalized."265 The relation to the self comes after the relation to the other. In addition to breeding individual identity, intersubjectivity is also central in validating both meanings and rules. Therefore, meanings and rules are, we may conclude, social and conventional, not mental or ideal.

Habermas explains the central role of language by assuming first an archaic society, which is totally integrated through the practice of the ritual without strictly having a cognitive content; it is a state of social integration in which language has only minimal significance. From this point Habermas proposes what he calls the linguistification of the ritual, which results, because of the very structures and functions of language, in differentiation and rationalization of the social life. There are three basic structural components of speech acts: the propositional, the illocutionary and the

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[265]Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 9.

expressive. Habermas highlights the correlation of these three components with cognitions, obligations and expressions to conclude,

> When communicative acts take the shape of grammatical speech, the symbolic structure has penetrated all components of interaction; the cognitive-instrumental grasp of reality and the steering mechanism that attunes the behavior of different interaction partners to one another, as well as the actors and their behavior dispositions, get connected to linguistic communication and are symbolically restructured.266

In addition to the function of reaching understanding, the means of communication take on new functions: those of coordinating action and socializing actors as well. Those three differentiated functions: cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization *linguistically* differentiate three structures of the formally united lifeworld, namely culture, society and person.267

In addition to the differentiation, the linguistification of ritual results in a rationalization of the social life.268 Habermas points to the abstraction of worldviews, the universalization of law and morality, and growing individuation. He also states that the more lifeworld structures are differentiated, "the more interaction contexts comes

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[266] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 63.
[267] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 137, 8.
[268] Unlike the idealist rationalization rooted in the subject, or the conceptual rationalization rooted in the binary structures of language, his linguistic rationalization is rooted in intersubjectivity.

under conditions of rationally motivated mutual understanding, that is, of consensus formation that rests *in the end* on the authority of the better argument."269 Structurally, on the one hand, the experience of the holy is expressed in the form of propositions, and, therefore, stored as *cultural knowledge*, which makes of religion a *cultural tradition*. On the other hand, sacred knowledge has to be *connected* to profane knowledge in the domains of instrumental action and social cooperation, which makes of religion a *worldview*. Accordingly, neither do convictions rely on the authority of the holy, nor does social integration take place via institutionalized values. Both must be grounded in the intersubjective recognition of validity claims raised in speech acts; and the validity of action norms depends on reason.270

Habermas eventually argues that the change of the function of language, from transmitting consensus to reproducing it, increases the burden on language to reach consensus and the risk of conflict between social actors. Consequently, its function is carried over by delinguistified media of communication. Of the consequences of this shift, he writes,

> modern societies attain a level of system differentiation at which increasingly autonomous organizations are connected with one another via delinguistified media of communication: these systemic mechanisms-for example, money-steer a social intercourse that has been largely disconnected from norms and values,

[269]Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 145.
[270]Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 88, 9.

> above all in those subsystems of purposive rational economic and administrative action that, on Weber's diagnosis, have become independent from their moral-political foundations.271

It is worth mentioning here that Habermas makes a distinction between two types of integration: social integration and system integration. He writes, "In one case the action system is integrated through consensus, whether normatively guaranteed or communicatively achieved; in the other case it is integrated through the non-normative steering of individual decisions not subjectively coordinated."272 For Habermas, the distinction itself is not a modern phenomenon: "Actors have always been able to sheer off from an orientation to mutual understanding, adopt a strategic attitude, and objectify normative contexts into something in the objective world, but in modern societies, economic and bureaucratic spheres emerge in which social relations are regulated only via money and power."273 This serious consequence results in what Habermas calls the *uncoupling* of lifeworld and systems. Moreover, action oriented to mutual understanding is separated from action oriented to success; and the moral and the legal are no longer unified.

As we saw above, Habermas offers a fine balance between the ideal and the conventional, the purposive and the communicative, the action and the understanding, the worldview and cultural tradition, and, in short, the objective and the intersubjective.

[271] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 154.
[272] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 150.
[273] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 154.

Nevertheless, there are several problems with this model if we apply it to MBG discourse.

First, Habermas squeezes all social phenomena into language and, then, reduces language to grammatical speech. In this process, the *practice* of the *ritual* and its logic disappeared. What we are left with, therefore, is a limited and limiting, differentiated and rationalized social sphere produced by the grammatical speech. If we apply this to MBG discourse, the fortunate creation of a space of intersubjectivity turns out to be impotent, because, first, it is uncoupled with *systems*, and, second, it is too objectively structured to articulate non-structured subjectivity. In other words, in this political-economy-perspective, where power dominates, differentiates and rationalizes, it is impossible to recognize MBG except as a political organization interested in certain *action* in the *public sphere*. The spiritual dimension, the *brotherhood*, the interpretive community created by MBG, *al-usrah*, literally the family, which is the name of the weekly meeting of the smallest organizational unit and *tarbiyah*, or cultivation, among others, cannot be accommodated in this model except in political terms.

Second, Habermas opens two spaces, where actors use language to move back and forth. In modern life, however, these two spaces are even decoupled. This thesis is deeply rooted in an ideal concept of secularization, where two spheres, one private and one public, are conceptualized and separated. Once again, this thesis of decoupled spaces leaves us helpless in understanding the reality of an organization where the secular and the religious are always coexisting, as Asad had already argued above.

Third, Habermas' logic is entirely linear: the ritual is linguistified; its linguistification differentiates and rationalizes both lifeworld and systems; language is no longer able to manufacture consensus; systems are steered by money and power, and are uncoupled from lifeworld. If we push MBG through this production-line, the product that we receive from the other end is a politico-religious organization whose secularization is not complete *yet*. However, it is being secularized, pragmaticized and reformed. [Bayat, 1996, 1998, 2007; Roy, 1994, 2004, 2007; Kepel, 1993, 2003, 2006]. In other words, we can see MBG only in their past departure or their future destination, but never in their present, and always in a linear, imperative, and progressive historical process of secularization.

Indeed, Habermas was aware of his problems of dividing each social phenomenon between two uncoupled conceptual spheres. Methodologically, he contrasted hermeneutical approaches that focus on the symbolic structures of lifeworld, social integration, and the perspective of the insiders to those which focus on system integration, seek a model of a self-regulating system, and adopt the perspective of the outsider. Eventually, he stated, "The fundamental problem of social theory is how to connect in a satisfactory way the two conceptual strategies indicated by the notions of 'system' and 'lifeworld'."274 A decade later, he published *Between Facts and Norms* and pointed to the intralinguistic tension between objective facticity and intersubjective validity, a tension that is channeled to social systems through the medium of language. He explored *law* as a medium in which the two uncoupled spheres have to interact,

[274] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 151.

arguing, “law remains a profoundly ambiguous medium of societal integration.”275 Habermas’ rigid distinction between lifeworld and systems nevertheless made it difficult for him to *integrate* facts and norms in the law, so he could not go beyond some mechanical explanations, arguing only that facts and norms are *intertwined.* Eventually he had to admit the unresolved tension between them. This is, by the way, the same unresolved tension one finds in Abdullahi An-Naim's work *Islam and the Secular State*, where religion is denied entry to systems of the state, but is welcome in lifeworld culture. The two realms meet in *politics*, where religion is accepted in the *public space*. Because a religious argument is still not welcome in a civil discussion, the welcome religion eventually turns into mere *beliefs* and *convictions*. In other words, linguistically, it switches between the propositional and the expressive functions, but is denied, again, entry to the public sphere in its illocutionary function. This is why I propose discourse as a mediating and connecting conceptual sphere of Habermas’ concepts of lifeworld and systems.

Second, Baudrillard’s Seduction, Reversibility and the Game

Like Habermas, Baudrillard created a parallel space to counter the modern and capitalistic space of power and production. He turned to anthropology to find, not a different mode of production, but a different mode of socialization. He argued, “Strictly speaking, the humans of the age of affluence are surrounded not so much by other human

[275]Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, Massachusets: The MIT Press, 1996),, 40.

beings, as they were in all previous ages, but by **objects**.276 For Baudrillard, the intersubjective relationships are the place of meaning and symbolic exchange. The objects in this context are gifted and destroyed to create meaning. In a consumerist society, the consumer "no longer relates to a particular object in its specific utility, but to a set of objects in its total signification."277 The De Saussurian structure of signs becomes a structure of commodities.

If power is the driving force of production and the social, Baudrillard develops *seduction* as the driving force of intersubjectivity and the ritual. He writes,

> To produce is to materialize by force what belongs to another order, that of the secret and of seduction. Seduction is, at all times and in all places, opposed to production. Seduction removes something from the order of the visible, while production constructs everything in full view, be it an object, a number or concept.278

Central to his concept of seduction is the principle of *reversibility*, a principle that he had already emphasized in *Symbolic Exchange* to oppose to the linearity of power and capitalist production. Baudrillard's *potlatch* of *The Consumer Society* and *reversibility* of the *Symbolic Exchange* are his way to propose a *natural* pre-capitalistic, in fact, trans-

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[276]Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 1998),, 25.
[277]Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 27.
[278]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990),, 34.

historical dynamic that reverses power. Almost dogmatically, he writes, "Something in us disaccumulates unto death, undoes, destroys, liquidates, and disconnects so that we can resist the pressure of the real, and live. Something at the bottom of the whole system of production *resists the infinite expansion of production* –otherwise, we would all be already buried."279 Baudrillard theorizes a symbolic exchange, "another form of the circulation of goods and signs, a form far more effective and powerful than economic circulation,"280 at the heart of which resides sacrifice, not accumulation.

Like Habermas, Baudrillard also proposed *rituality* and used it as an opposite of *sociality*. Central to his world of rituality is the *game*, which is played with *rules* not *laws*. Unlike laws, rules rule by obligation, not enforcement, and they have no psychological, metaphysical or rational foundation. Passion, appearance, play, and destiny are what he attributes to rituality, the game and its rules. In the game, you escape meaning. He writes,

> The Rule plays on an immanent sequence of arbitrary signs, while the law is based on a transcendent sequence of necessary signs. The one concerns cycles, the recurrence of conventional procedures, while the other is an instance based in an irreversible continuity. The one involves obligations, the other constraints and prohibitions. … Given that the rule is conventional and arbitrary, and has no hidden truth, it knows neither repression nor the distinction between the manifest

[279]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 51.
[280]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 143.

> and the latent. It does not carry any meaning, it does not lead anywhere; by contrast, the law has a determinate finality. The endless reversible cycle of the Rule is opposed to the linear, finalized progression of the law.281

It is worth mentioning here that Habermas too emphasized obligation, not power, as the motivating force in lifeworld. I take Baudrillard's elaboration on rituality as a description of the unstructured, pre-linguistified lifeworld of Habermas.282 In fact, Baudrillard was also interested in integrating the two spheres of lifeworld and systems, which, in his terms, are rituality and sociality. He wrote, "Seduction's entanglement with production and power, the irruption of minimal reversibility within every irreversible process … this is what must be analyzed."283 Unlike Habermas, however, Baudrillard did not trouble himself with discourse. He focused on either the pre- or post-discourse formations of rituality and simulacra. In fact, he bitterly attacked Foucault for remaining in the realm of the supposedly obsolete discourse.[284] In this sense, Baudrillard, instead of making use of his concept of rituality as a component of today's reality, he uses it only to contrast it to

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[281]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 131, 2.

[282]Baudrillard recognized seduction, sometimes, as rudimentary and marginal, and, sometimes, as in the heart of power and power structures. This hesitant attitude of Baudrillard is confusing to his reader, and he would take the two opposite positions in the same book. Sometimes, he uses another term: *soft seduction* to overcome this problem.

[283]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 47.

[284]Baudrillard abandoned his earliest project, *The Consumer Society*, in which he related the capitalist *waste* to the extra-capitalist, premodern *potlatch*. That abandoned approach would have given him a stand to reverse capitalism from outside its paradigm. Unfortunately, he later on committed the same mistake of Marx and stepped *into* the capitalist paradigm to critique it, a mistake that he, with all his good intentions, could not survive to the end of his career. With the exception of *Seduction*, reversibility turned to be mere *consequence* of the unfolding of capitalism; seduction became soft seduction. In my opinion, the best way to profoundly critique capitalism is, first, not to make it the *prime-mover* of the modern social life and, second, to handle it from outside its paradigm. This is why we need to emphasize continuities over ruptures.

today's reality.

Third, the New Dynamics of the Discourse

I do not accept Habermas' thesis of two social worlds. Systems and all structures of power, be they grammar, logic or law, do not make the discourse; they are continuously secreted on the outskirts of the discourse. They are, as Foucault characterized ideology, non-discursive formations articulated on the surface of the discourse. In addition, intersubjectivity and seduction are continuously flowing inside the discourse, where they work to dissolve non-discursive formations and reverse them. Both power and seduction coexist in the discourse, but they exist as *unreified dispersed power* and as *soft seduction*. This point will be clearer when I discuss the formation of the discourse and its change in the next chapter.

Fourth, Reflections on some MBG structures and texts

In this section, I will examine a number of MBG structures and texts to trace down the two concepts of *intersubjectivity* and *reversibility*. I will conduct this discussion by focusing on three areas. First, I will explore the three foundations of MBG, namely, *tarbiyah*, or cultivation, *daʿwah*, or spreading the word, and *iṣlāḥ*, or reform. Second, I will examine the double-emphasis on discipline, systems, and organizational ethics, on the one hand, and love and brotherhood ethics, on the other hand. Third, I will discuss the significance of reversibility in understanding the three different kinds of discourse archeology: consolidation, bi-polarization, and modularization.

Foundations of MBG: There are three well-known foundations of the MBG, namely,

tarbiyah, or cultivation, *daʿwah*, or spreading the word and *iṣlāḥ*, or reform. They represent the three objectives of the Group and create its corresponding strategies and structures. This *differentiation* of three foundations and their *rationalization* are immediately blurred within the same discourse that produces them. In April 2004, Muḥammad Ḥabīb, then the Vice General Guide of MBG, wrote an article "*Al-Ikhwān bayna al-Tarbiyah wa al-Daʿwah wa al-Siyāsah*," or "The Brothers among Cultivation, Spreading the Word and Politics."[285] In this article, he wrote,

> There is no dispute among the Brothers that the Group has three main functions: *tarbawiyyah*, *daʿawiyyah* and *siyāsiyyah*, or pedagogical, missionary and political, and that these functions have to run in harmony and integration. … Nor is there a dispute that the pedagogical function is an essential prerequisite for the other two functions. Without the pedagogical function the Brothers would not be able to execute either the missionary or the political function properly. In the same time, we can consider the missionary and political functions as a significant and essential part of the pedagogical function itself. The political function as well is a necessary part in creating the right political and legal environment for the execution of the two other functions.[286]

[285]It is interesting to notice this significant, if unintentional, change of *reform* into *politics*. The reduction of reform into political action reflects, among other things, the marginalization of the Group by the State, the restrictions on its actions and its redefinition as merely an Islamic opposition.

[286]"Al-Ikhwān bayna al-Tarbiyah wa al-Daʿwah wa al-Siyāsah," *Nāfidhat Miṣr*, http://www.egyptwindow.net/Article_Details.aspx?News_ID=7686 (accessed August 2nd, 2012).

What we find here is two simultaneous and contradictory attitudes to both differentiate and fuse the Group's functions. Ḥabīb dissects three distinct functions in the same moment that he is reuniting them together into one holistic work. The pedagogical function is grounded mainly in *al-usrah*, literally the family, which is the basic organizational unit, formed of 4-7 members led by *naqīb*[287] *al-usrah*, or the family leader. This *family* has certain roles to play. Among these roles, according to Ḥabīb, are the participation in public work and the execution of assignments given by a higher leadership. Explaining public work, he writes,

> The *usrah* member should frequently attend lectures, conferences and symposiums. He should have an effective role in parliamentary and syndicate work as well. Through this participation, he presents himself as a role-model for others, in his culture, ethics and behavior. In addition, he should sincerely and seriously pursue the advancement of this work, showing how the Muslim is capable of good planning, excellent management and creative contribution in building the society …[288]

Clearly, public participation can belong to any of the three domains of *tarbiyah*, *daʿwah*

[287] *Naqīb* is a word used both in Qurʾān and Ḥadīth to refer to a leader *and* a representative of a group. For instance, the Qurʾān reads,"Allah made a covenant of old with the Children of Israel and We raised among them twelve *naqīb*, and Allah said: Lo! I am with you." Qurʾān, 5: 12. *Naqīb* here means chieftain, that is a leader of each of the twelve divisions, and a representative of each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

[288] "Al-Ikhwān bayna al-Tarbiyah wa al-Daʿwah wa al-Siyāsah," *Mudawwanat Duktūr Abū Marwān*, http://ikhwanwayonline.wordpress.com/2010/04/27/2-الاخوان-بين-التربية-والدعوة-والسياسة (accessed August 2nd, 2012).

or *iṣlāḥ*. Likewise, he defines the execution of the higher leadership assignments as "putting plans and executive programs for directions and instructions received from the leadership, and turning them into reality that matches the *usrah* capacity and skills, on the one hand, and the social environment, on the other hand …"[289]

The overlapping, the *reversibility* of differentiation into unity, is important to understand. An MBG member may take a position or a reaction that we consider unexpected, given his motivation to push for a practical reform. Neither rational choice nor *pragmatism*, which is frequently used to explain MBG actions, have the capacity clearly to explain this position or reaction. Nor is it helpful to refer to this given member as *ideologue* to understand his unexpected behavior. In 1954, the judge who was trying Ḥasan al-Huḍaybī, the General Guide at that time, asked him if most of the civil legislation is similar to the rulings of Š*arīʿah*. Huḍaybī answered that this is true. The judge wondered why then Huḍaybī insisted almost obsessively on applying Islamic *Šarīʿah.* Huḍaybī replied,

> Because Allāh said, "Judge between them by what Allāh has revealed." God did not say, "Judge between them by what is *similar* to what Allāh has revealed." Applying the Š*arīʿah* of Allāh, according to the Muslim's belief, is *ʿibādah*, a ritual, that is performed as an act of obedience to God. This is the reason of its *barakah*, blessing. This is the secret of its power in the hearts of those who

[289] *"Al-Ikhwān bayna al-Tarbiyah wa al-Daʿwah wa al-Siyāsah."*

believe in it and the soul of the believing *ummah*.[290]

It is tempting here to explain this answer as grounded in *ideology*. It *is* partly grounded in ideology and, indeed, the General Guide believes in these *ideas* of obeying God and seeking *barakah*. However, his position and attitude go far beyond ideology. It is a *moral* position, in which he is displaying a specific character, a certain subjectivity that is built and propagated through *tarbiyah*. It is a morality that centralizes *sacrifice*, not accumulation. In his reply, he is not only giving the correct answer. He is presenting himself as a sacrifice before God, as a Muslim who will not save himself by giving an answer that would have been accepted by the judge. Stories of prophets, companions, and good ancestors inspire his answer more than an ideology. Sacrifice is displayed again in his obedience to God. *Barakah* does not automatically mean material gain or accumulation. He would apply *Šarīʿah* even if it results in material loss, for it is an act of *obedience*.

This is also how we understand recent positions, such as nominating an MBG member as a candidate for presidency. The challenging of the military and the competition of other political parties and groups may not sound politically correct. However, once again, it is not *only* the accumulation of power that may explain this position, as frequently claimed by researchers and reporters. It is a whole set of moral characters that emphasize brevity, honesty, challenging the tyrant, struggling for the truth

[290] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ḥāmid, *Māʾat Mawqif min Ḥayāt al-Muršidīn* (Cairo: Arīj, year of publication is not known),, 24-5. An electronic version of the book can be downloaded freely from www.hassanalbanna.org (accessed July 20th, 2010).

and, above all, sacrificing the self that ground such attitudes. The swinging of explaining MBG positions between calling them once ideologues and once pragmatists can be understood this *reversibility* or the seduction of power, as Baudrillard would have put it.

The reversibility of differentiation can be detected when we examine the role of the *naqīb.* He is assigned three functions with respect to his *usrah*: *ab, šaykh* and *qā'id*, or a father, a spiritual leader and a leader. Those three roles correspond respectively to *tarbiyah*, *daʿwah* and *iṣlāḥ*. However, the three aspects are blended together in the subjectivity of the *naqīb*.

Because the Group embraces a vision of Islam as comprehensive to all aspects of life, *da'wah* is never confined to spiritual aspects. Whatever are thought of as activities of *islāh* are carried on in *da'wah* channels. Moreover, because members doing *da'wah* should be role models for outsiders, *da'wah* turns out to be a crucial aspect of *tarbiyah*. The same thing is found in *iṣlāḥ*. Reform is not only political, but also personal, social, educational, etc. All those aspects are anchored in both *tarbiyah* and *da'wah*.291

Conceptually, MBG has always been accused by the state's media and opposition parties of proposing concepts that have no definite meaning. In fact, *tarbiyah*, *da'wah* and *iṣlāḥ* themselves are ambiguous enough to accommodate whichever meaning MBG members may address to for the moment. If we take *tarbiyah*, for instance, as training, what can we conclude from a redundant context like this? What is the content of this

[291]Typically, an argument against standing for parliamentary elections because of certainty that it will be lost is encountered by an argument that the campaign itself matters more for *tarbiyyah* reasons of MBG members and da'wah reasons of outsiders.

training? What is its objective? They adopt the same approach in their slogans, for instance, *Allāh ghāyatunā*, or God is our ultimate objective, or *al-Islām huwa al-ḥall*, or Islam is the solution. The same approach is seen in their basic concepts of understanding and representing Islam, as in for instance *al-šumūl*, or comprehensiveness. My point is that *langue* may differentiate and rationalize, but *parole* always undoes this effect.

Al-taʿrīf, *al-takwīn* and *al-tanfīdh* are three parallel concepts to *daʿwah*, *tarbiyah* and *iṣlāḥ* that refer respectively to introducing the mission and explaining it, forming the cadres and shaping their characters, and executing the mission. Those three concepts are practical and al-Bannā used them as steps or stages, for instance, in his treatise "al-Muʾtamar al-Khāmis," or "the Fifth Conference." In this conference, held in 1938, the Founder declared the completion of the first stage of *taʿrīf* and the present focusing on the second stage of *takwīn*. He insisted that members of MBG should not rush him into *tanfīdh* until the second stage is completed. He announced that the *takwīn*, formation, of 40,000 righteous members is the threshold of starting off the third stage.[292]

In "the Balance among *al-Taʿrīf*, *al-Takwīn* and *al-Tanfīdh*," Muḥyī Ḥāmid wrote,

> The Brother has to know these three stages and that they go simultaneously. The stage of *taʿrīf* is the foundation of spreading the mission and persuading people of it. The stage of *takwīn* and recruiting supporters is irreplaceable in building a solid faithful line. The stage of *tanfīdh*, work and production is the real extension

[292]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil al-Imām al-Šahīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Daʿwah, 1990),, 73-103.

> and natural product of the previous two stages. Therefore, the Brother should not focus on only one dimension, forgetting the two others, for it would be quite dangerous. …
>
> Al-Bannā explained this balance in beautiful words. He said, "Bridle the whims of passion with the insights of minds; light the minds with the flames of passions; restrain imagination with the truth of reality; discover the truth in the shining and colorful lights of imagination; and do not fight the laws of the universe, for they are *ghālibah*, hegemonic, but *ghālibūhā*, encounter them, use them, divert their current, use them against each other, and expect the moment of victory; it is not far from you!" (Are We Practical People?)[293] Therefore, the Brother has to create this balance among the three stages without either focusing or neglecting one of them.[294]

It is interesting here to observe both the making of his argument and the quotation he is inviting. Those are three stages, but should go simultaneously; each one of them is important, but can not exist without the others; one should concentrate on each one of them, but focus must be balanced among all of them, etc. It is the same tone in the quotation. Oppositions coexist to reverse each other: passion and insight, truth and imagination, and the hegemonic laws and their encountering. Each statement and proposal are reversed back and forth continuously. Power never proceeds eternally forward. It is always reversed. The reverse of power does not create static stability; it

[293]In fact, this quotation is taken from "The Fifth Conference."

[294]"Al-Tawāzun bayna Marāḥil al-Taʿrīf wa al-Takwīn wa al-Tanfīdh," *al-Šarqiyyah Online*, http://www.sharkiaonline.com/v_article.php?id=17296 (accessed July 23rd, 2012).

creates dynamic *balance*.

Discipline and Brotherhood: Structurally, the Group is divided into departments and regions. The differentiated functions of the departments are undifferentiated at the executive level of the regions, where every region is supposed to carry out all functions, turning the real function of departments into offering specialist support. The smallest unit of the Group, *al-usrah*, or the family, carries out functions belonging to the three foundations of *tarbiyah*, *daʿwah* and *iṣlāḥ*, for it is both a pedagogic and an executive unit. At the highest level of the Group, there are the Consultation Council and the Guidance Bureau. Where the first is expected to have consultative and legislative functions, and the second an executive function, in reality there is insistence on not separating these two functions. In Habermas' terms, each of them would have to perform both mutual understanding and action coordination.295

The Muslim Brothers have always had regulating bylaws. The one they are using now was instituted in 1990 and slightly amended in 2009. it speaks about five entities: 1. the General Guide, 2. the Guidance Bureau, 3. the Šūra Council, 4. the Governorates Šūra Councils and 5. he Governorates Administrative Offices. In twelve pages, it explains their authorities, responsibilities and the procedures of their elections. There are other bylaws that explain the different departments of the Group and its hierarchical units, for instance,

[295]After the 2010 internal elections of MBG, there were two opinions against the results. One opinion objected that the application of the guidelines had many legal faults. The other opinion objected that the voting of the members lacked the ethic of loyalty. Those two opinions that represent lifeworld and systems aspects created a discussion, in which language performed not only rationalization and differentiation functions, but also functions of un-differentiation and expansion of the horizon of reason behind bureaucratic and administrative spheres.

al-usrah, *al-šuʿbah*, *al-ḥayy*, *al-manṭiqah*, etc. They elaborate on their functions, meetings, qualifications of their members, etc.

From a different perspective, the Group is seen, not as a hierarchy and a group of structures, but as a space for intersubjectivity, a community of interpretation, validation and communication that serves to maintain what Habermas calls *lifeworld*. Bylaws and regulations are created, maintained and respected. However, they are used quite rarely and usually in a context of a conflict that could not be contained. It is the community, the brotherhood, that is crucial in understanding MBG. Missing this understanding has led many analyses to recognize MBG only as a political party that has an Islamic ideology. It is this brotherhood, however, that is emphasized and stressed, once and again, in *tarbiyah*, not the simple ideology of al-Islām al Šāmil or the bylaws. Even in the most instructive and most disciplinary text of al-Bannā, *Risālat al-Taʿālīm*, the Founder writes about *al-ukhuwwah*, the brotherhood, stating,

> By brotherhood I mean the binding of hearts and souls with the tie of creed. It is the most precious and most powerful tie! Brotherhood is the other side of faith; dissidence is the other side of blasphemy. The beginning of power is power of unity. There is no unity without love. The least of love is having a pure heart. The highest level of love is altruism. (They give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot. Qurʾān, al-Ḥašr: 9.) The faithful brother gives his brothers priority over himself. Without them, he is nothing. Without

him, they are still there![296]

It is striking how academic writings about MBG almost completely ignores this aspect of the Group. On the contrary, *al-ukhuwwah fī Allāh*, brotherhood in God and *al-ḥubb fī Allāh*, love in God, are among the first teachings a new member will receive in the Group. There are numerous writings, lectures and electronic material that address only this aspect of the Group. In *Wasāʾil al-Tarbiyah ʿInda al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm writes,

> it is brotherhood in God, in Islam and in *tawāṣī*, mutual advising, of truth and patience. It is noticeable that brotherhood is the sign of the Group, for it is the Group of Muslim Brothers. Brotherhood is also a *šarʿī*, religio-legal, requirement called upon in many pieces of text. God says, "Believers are but brothers" and says, "With His grace, you have become brothers!" The meanings of brotherhood will be emphasized in the hearts of the brothers by: a. practicing love in God …, b. strong knowing of each other, mutual advising and forgiving, c. supporting each other in truth and patience, d. mutual understanding, cooperation and symbiosis, e. pursuing each other's needs, and f. doing the religious duties of brotherhood completely …[297]

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[296] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 231.
[297] ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *Wasāʾil al-Tarbiyah ʿInda al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (al-Manṣūrah, Egypt: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 1996),, 76.

As we see above, brotherhood foes beyond a mere feeling to unfold into mutual obligations and rights. Quotations from Ḥadīth, Sīrah and Qurʾān are frequently used to ground this brotherhood in an earlier and continuous community of the believers that started with the Prophet and his companions, and in a Heavenly world, where God weaves this brotherhood Himself among them in this world and reward them for it in the world to come. In fact, the word *member*, in Arabic *ʿuḍw*, is hardly used. It is a *brother* of the Group, or a brother of the Brothers that is being used. To join the Group is to be completely integrated, in fact, assimilated, into this whole.

This brotherhood is frequently used to validate arguments, approve decisions or solve internal conflicts. Being committed and obedient to the choices of the brothers is a guarantee of success and blessing. Even if the Group missed the correct choice, God will avoid them harms and provide them solutions because of *barakat al-Jamāʿah*, the blessing of being a group. The wolf eats only the stranded sheep! This is a report of Ḥadīth that every member memorizes by heart. In this context, there is definitely less emphasis on written regulations and bylaws and more emphasis on brotherhood. *Al-jundiyyah*, the ethics of soldiers, is also emphasized. However, it has always to be *balanced* with *al-ḥubb fī Allāh*, love in God. ʿAbd al-Munʿim Abū al-Futūḥ, after losing in the internal elections of the Guidance Bureau, announced, "I demanded to be excused from the Guidance Bureau."[298] That was contrary to the truth, but he preferred an unfair treatment from his brothers to getting support from outsiders. Commenting on this event,

[298]"Abū al-Futūḥ: Ṭalabtu Iʿfāʾī min Maktab al-Iršād," *Islmīūn*, http://islamyun.net/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=84:-أبو-الفتوح-طلبت-إعفائي-من-مكتب-الإرشاد&Itemid=156&tmpl=component&print=1 (accessed June 2012).

Ḥilmī al-Jazzār said,

> The results (of elections) diverted from the spirit of brotherhood and tolerance that is supposed to dominate within the Group. The value of loyalty would have made it imperative not to oust Dr. Muḥammad Ḥabīb or Dr. ʿAbd al-Munʿim Abū al-Futūḥ from the Guidance Bureau since they had been there more than anyone else. However, it is price of *šūrā* and democracy and we have to accept it, even if it was cruel.[299]

Here, al-Jazzār finds it natural, in fact, expected, to ignore regulations for the sake of brotherhood and loyalty. Blending brotherhood and the ethics of soldiers seems possible. Ḥusām Tammām in “Taryīf al-Ikhwān,” wrote about the recent predominance of MBG leaderships that have a rural background, in contrast to those who have an urban background and who used to dominate the Group in the past. Tammām pointed to a new morale that is spreading in the Group, a morale based on personal relationships, loyalty, and trust, not protocols, regulations, and bylaws. According to Tammām, both brotherhood and the ethics of soldiers are blended together in a patriarchal paradigm that pushes away what he calls institutional ethics.[300]

The brotherhood, this intersubjectivity, the community of validation and

[299]“Abū al-Futūḥ.”

[300]“Taryīf al-Ikhwān,” *Islamism Scope*, http://www.islamismscope.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=204:q-&catid=38:researches&Itemid=68 (accessed July 20th, 2012).

interpretation grows up in the basic units of the Group, *al-usrah*. Interestingly, *al-usrah* was introduced into the system of the Group only in 1943 and for organizational reasons. The Founder was detained for one month and after his release he decided to reorganize the Group into small units that can meet regularly even in restrictive and oppressive circumstances. He called them *al-usar al-taʿāwuniyyah*, the cooperative families.[301] AL-Bannā put three foundations for *al-usrah*: *al-taʿāruf*, or knowing each other, *al-tafāhum*, or understanding each other, and *al-takāful*, or symbiosis.[302] By *al-taʿāruf*, al-Bannā means the mutual brotherhood and love. *Al-tafāhum* refers to both integrity and mutual advising. Al-Bannā instructs the Brothers to correct each other and to tolerate this correction. It is *al-tafāhum*, it seems, that creates and supports the community of validation, where norms are created, validated and maintained. *Al-takāful* refers to solidarity and mutual cooperation, where the needs of each brother should be met and taken care of by the brothers of his *usrah*. In the treatise of *Niẓām al-Usar*, al-Bannā lists three activities to be conducted during the weekly meeting. In the beginning the brothers should share their personal problems and help each other solve them. Next, they should reflect on Islamic affairs, and read the treatises and the instructions of the leadership. They are invited to *politely* discuss these treatises and instructions, and to refer back to their leadership to explain any ambiguities they may find. Finally, they have to read a useful book.

Al-Bannā, however, instructs them to achieve brotherhood in means that can not

[301] ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *Wasāʾil al-Tarbiyah*, 70.
[302] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 236.

be included in books and that go beyond instructions, such as visiting the sick, helping out the needy, etc. He also recommends eight other activities: 1. cultural trips to visit archaeological sites, factories, etc., 2. sport trips when the moon is full, 3. rowing-trips in the river, 4. mountain, desert or field-trips, 5. biking trips, 6. fasting one or two days weekly, 7. praying the dawn prayer together at the mosque at least once weekly and 8. staying together overnight once every one or two weeks.[303] The swinging between spiritual and physical activities is supposed to achieve the two dimensions of *takwīn*, which are "absolutely *ṣūfī* from the spiritual aspect and absolutely *military* from the practical aspect."[304]

Before moving to the next section, I want to highlight an important aspect of the creation of brotherhood. The Founder authored no books, except his published autobiography. The written material that he left behind are either short articles or speeches. One of his most important texts, *The Fifth Conference*, is obviously his speech of the fifth conference. He mentioned that he was concerned of *taʾlīf al-rijāl*, bringing men together, not *taʾlīf al-kutub*, authoring books. Though MBG, as an organization, would emphasize systems and disciplinary approaches, as a community of brothers it favors intersubjectivity and oral traditions over objectivity and written bylaws. The ideology of the Group is simple and extremely short. The lectures that the Brothers receive in trips and camps, etc. from older brothers are mostly *stories* narrated by those who either participated in them or heard them from those who participated in them. A

[303]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 236-237.
[304]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 229.

vast array of stories is what the brother receives. Those are stories that explain obedience, brotherhood, love, cooperation, patience, persistence, trusting the leadership, courage, honesty, etc. In fact, some books that are written are just collections of stories, such as, the books of ʿAbbās al-Sīsī. What a brother eventually knows about the Group is mostly *stories* that make flashes of MBG history, not a coherent narrative. To understand the balance between the ethics of solidarity and the passion of brotherhood, you hear a story about a brother who was punished by his direct leader in a summer camp. He was asked not to eat bread. Al-Bannā was there. He would collect bread to give it to him and then put it down. He would do this again and again. The listener visualizes al-Imām in this vivid moment of hesitation. His brotherhood pushes him to give the bread to the punished brother. The ethics of soldiers prohibits him from violating the orders. The second General Guide comes back to his cell to find a heater. Even though it was so cold he threw it away, refusing to enjoy warmth unless it were to be enjoyed by all his brothers. A brother standing in a line and receiving with his other brothers brutal torture sneezes. The prison soldier who is torturing them demands that the one who has just sneezed steps forward. Everyone realizes that this brother will be immediately killed. Surprisingly, the entire line simultaneously takes one step forward. Each one wants to be the one who dies to protect that one brother. Stories, thousands of them, are what make the community, fill its gaps, build its solidarity, create its common understanding and shape its character. They are stories, not statements of ideology.

Discourse Archeology: In the earlier chapters, I spoke about three different kinds of discourse archeology that showed up in three successive historical phases: consolidation,

bi-polarization and modularization. In my study, I try to modify two aspects of the Foucauldian analysis. First, Foucault considers *subjectivity* only as a *product* of the discourse. It is the Discourse that produces subjectivity, not the other way round. Here, I share him his reluctance to consider subjectivity as a conscious producer of the discourse. However, following Baudrillard and Habermas, I am shifting my emphasis toward *intersubjectivity*. I highlight the crucial significance of this whole, this community of interpretation and validation. That is what I have aimed to show in discussing the "foundations of MBG" and "discipline and brotherhood."

Second, Foucault studies the discourse at one moment in its history. The snapshot that he takes does not reflect a dynamic change. Change, if concerned at all, will come up in his analysis only when he compares two discourses that existed in two different histories. Even then, he will not be willing to explain it; he will just describe it. I am modifying this aspect by injecting reversibility in the discourse. I modify it by stating and explaining how reversibility is an integral part of the *rules of formation* and the *system of dispersion*. I do argue of a *behavior* or an *attitude* of the discourse, whether it is to consolidate, to bi-polarize or to modularize. However, I also argue that this *attitude* is always being reversed and is never complete. I will briefly reflect on this aspect in the following lines.

In the consolidation discourse, there was a proposal of *al-Islām al-Šāmil*, the comprehensive Islam. The plurality of the tradition and its fragmentation reversed this attitude. The more al-Bannā tries to tolerate differences, the less his discourse is

consolidated. He called for *unity*, but it is unity of differences he sees as insignificant. Al-Bannā wanted to build bridges with both the Shiite Iranian and the Wahhabi Saudis. Neither of these bridges was successful. In Egypt, he was rejected by the *salafī* movement, for instance, by Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, who was the editor of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn Newspaper itself. Al-Khaṭīb wrote that compromises in the creed is simply impossible. Except for some cooperation in Iraq and a number of ceremonial happy statements, there has never been any solid alliance between MBG and the Shiite activists. The discourse relied on general principles to avoid conflicts of choices. The practical movement of the Group reflected those conflicts since clear choices had to be made. MBG had to decide whether to have or to have not a military wing, to participate or to not participating in 1948 War, to accept or to not accept the Constitutional System, to support or to not support July Revolution, etc. At each of these moments, the consolidation discourse had to be challenged and reversed. The consolidation discourse aimed at *independence*, but it had to include nationalism, universal Islamism and eventually humanism. It aimed at open *dawʿah*, but had to have a secret *Special System*. It called for an immediate application of *Šarīʿah*, but emphasized the gradual path to Islam. It aspired to control the state, but had to reach it through the society and social change. It aimed to change non-Islamic governments, but moved on in this path by stretching alliances with those same governments.

This reversibility is observed in the bi-polarization discourse as well. Statements of openness and statements of resistance mutually reversed each other. Further more, *soft* resistance existed within the statements of openness. It is resistance by launching e-

groups, e-campaigns and e-petitions. It is resistance by competing even more in the global market. It is resistance as cultural identity, as reflected in *lifestyles* and consumer *choices*. It could be private, symbolic or fragmented resistance, but is usually fragmented enough not to drive a comprehensive project of resistance. Fragmented *openness*, likewise, exists within statements of resistance. For instance, Maḥmūd ʿIzzat, who is usually characterized as a representative of the MBG conservatives, had an interview a few years ago, when he was the General Secretary of MBG. The questions concerned the political platform of MBG that was being criticized for having too conservative elements. In this interview, ʿIzzat made two important statements. First, our choices are not the only valid *šarʿī* choices. Other choices are accepted as well. However, those are only *ours*. We do not support a woman to be the President. However, we do understand that there are other choices; and we do accept a woman's candidacy. However, she will not get our votes. Second, he announced that MBG sent copies of this *draft* to at least sixty different intellectuals, none of them is an MBG member, some of them are radically opposed to MBG and some of them are not Muslim at all. He said that MBG needs to *listen* to all different opinions before making its decisions.[305]

In addition to the above, *wasaṭiyyah* is a convenient cloak to cover up this bi-polarized situation and produce statements that serve only to expedite back and forth reversibility between the two extremes. Responding to a question about *al-Jihād* in Iraq, al-Qaraḍāwī, the figure-symbol of *wasaṭiyyah*, replied that it is legal to fight the

[305]"Ruʾyah Siyāsiyyah," *Ikhwān Sūhāj*, http://www.ikhwansohag.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=439 (accessed June 15, 2012).

Americans in Iraq and to take hostages from their soldiers, who should be treated in dignity as prisoners of war. However, he announced that this is allowed only under the leadership of *al-imām al-šarʿī*, the legal leader. This leader cannot be one of the ignorant Qaida members. Qaraḍāwī, then, stopped there. He never explained who is or who could be this *imām šarʿī*.[306]

Similarly, the modularizing discourse displays this reversibility. On the one hand, *semi* independent functional modules are formed and clustered around specific tasks. On the other hand, this clustering, these alliances, are always transient and bound only to local or specific reasons, not to any transcending ideology, loyalty or agenda. The dynamism of this discourse is rooted in the speed of both formation and dissolution of its modules. In addition, the decentralizing *rule* is reversed by a center that stays crucial for coordination and the exchange of resources. Furthermore, the modularization of the functional units is balanced by an over-arching loyalty that serves, among other things, in providing a general identity that is essential in making and organizing alliances. In fact, the recent decentralizing attitude of MBG, the Group itself and its hierarchy, created an increasing interest of the peripheries in occupying central sites of power. Cairo that used in the past to provide the majority of the Guidance Bureau members has now less seats than some other peripheral governorates, for instance, Daqahliyyah. In addition to the official MBG website, each governorate has, or is trying to have, its own website, on which its leaders and its members would display their views and address their concerns

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[306] "Limādhā Rafaḍa al-ʿUbaykān al-Jihād," *Muntada al-ʿAjmān*, http://www.alajman.net/vb/showthread.php?t=10930 (accessed July 14, 2012).

and activities. MBG does not have one TV channel. Peripheral governorates have their own channels as well. This increasing decentralization has created an increasing interest in influencing, or sometimes dominating, the center. A quick review of the current MBG leaders reveals a surprising increase of members who are not Cairenes. The current General Guide, the Speaker of the Parliament, the President of the Freedom and Justice Party, who became the President of Egypt, the General Secretary of the MBG, the Majority Leader in the Parliament, etc. are not from Cairo. However, they have succeeded in occupying most of the power sites in the center.

Chapter Six

Discourse Textuality

The above deployment of the discourse cannot be satisfying unless its formation, dynamics and transformation are all explained. My question is: what is there inside the discourse that makes it both stable and liable to change at once? I will answer this question in three steps. First, I will discuss the notion of *truth* in the theories of Habermas and Foucault and contrast their views to the concept of *ghayb*, which I will introduce. I will support my concept of *ghayb* with the work of Timothy Bewes, especially his insights on *reversibility*. Second, I will discuss the form and formation of the discourse. I will start by emphasizing a *dual* reason, which I will support with insights from Baudrillard. In addition, I will replace Habermas' concept of consensus with the Islamic concept of *jam'*. I will conclude this part by proposing *style* as the form of the discourse, and by making a list of textual techniques that manufacture the discourse and maintains its *dual* reason. Third, I will explain this theoretical discussion with examples taken from MBG texts.

A. Truth: I am drawing on Habermas' reflections on the notion of validity because it helps me to situate the notion of truth. Habermas makes an insightful distinction between *Gültigkeit* and *Geltung.* The first refers to validity, and the second to validity proven for us.307 Truth claims, therefore, are those proven to be true before a validating community of interpretation. He draws on Peirce to point to the historically accumulative quality of

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[307]Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms,"* 14.

truth. This accumulation assumes an ideal community spreading across space and time. Not an eternal moment, but a duration within this world that, according to Habermas, *objectively and rationally*, reifies truth. This balancing of *ratio* and *memoria* is made clear in *The Liberating Power of Symbols*. He contrasts Athens to Israel, Hellenized Christianity to Christianity rooted in Judaism and argues "in pushing aside its Jewish origins, a Hellenized Christianity has cut itself off from the sources of anamnestic reason. It has itself become one expression of an idealistic form of reason, unburdened by fate, and incapable of recollection and historical remembrance."308 *Memoria* and *ratio*, therefore, are needed to reach at the *objective* truth. The milestones of truth are the consequently achieved consensuses. In addition, consensus fixes meaning, but it fixes it only at the grammatical level of speech.

Habermas finds a theological basis of intersubjectivity in *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Buber* and *Negative Theologie der Zeit* of Michael Theunissen, who moves the focus of communication from the third person, he or she, to the second person of thou. In this theology of the between, "Theunissen understands that 'middle' of the intersubjective space which the dialogical encounter discloses, and which in turn enables self and other to become themselves through dialogue, as the 'kingdom of God' which precedes and founds the existing sphere of subjectivity."309 Habermas supports this notion with reflections on Jewish culture of loss and remembrance, Christian negative theology and the Kierkegaardian concept of

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[308]Jürgen Habermas, *The Liberating Power of Symbols: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusets: The MIT Press, 2001), 80.
[309]Jürgen Habermas, *The Liberating Power of Symbols*, 91.

anxiety. Unlike postmodernist strategies of getting rid of truth altogether, Habermas *hopes* for a historical truth in the future; and makes a fine distinction between hope and faith by writing, “The *hope* that ‘everything within time will be different’ must be distinguished from the *faith* that ‘time itself will be different’.”310 The burden of making consensus has been shifted from language to systems via delinguistified media such as money. Now, it seems that the burden of the system’s reification is shifted to an unknown future.

I find Habermas’ transfer of truth from objectivity to intersubjectivity, and from the present to the hopeful future is helpful, but not quite satisfying. I advocate a notion of truth, quite essential to the analysis of language, but one that exists neither in the domain of subjectivity, objectivity, nor intersubjectivity. We have to complete the semiotic square by adding a domain for the negation of negation, a domain I will call *ghayb*, which refers to the unknown, the unseen-reality not accessible to the individual through sense perception.311 To create a Sunni-Islamic-friendly notion of truth, it has to be neither objectively incarnated, nor historically glimpsing; it has to be altogether *suspended* to match Islam’s claim of the end of revelation.

To grasp this suspended truth, I will have to draw on Timothy Bewes’ illuminating book *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism.* Bewes writes, “The most important

[310]Habermas’ later writings, in which reification turns to be transient, hesitant and quite modes, are essential in understanding his earlier writings of communicative action theory.

[311]I am taking subjectivity as *assertion*, objectivity as *negation* and intersubjectivity as *non-assertion*. Jameson suggests that the negation of the negation is always the most critical position and the one that remains open or empty for the longest time, for its identification completes the process and in that sense constitutes the most creative act of the construction.

corollary of the 'religious' model is its affirmation of the concept of reification *in the name* of something that is unreifiable – something, indeed, which is *only provisionally nameable* as 'the freedom from reification'."312 Bewes' provisional linguistic reification of the known to be impossibly reifiable contradicts the theories of both Habermas and Foucault. Habermas embraces Durkheim's central break between the sacred and the profane and his rooting of the moral in the sacred, and modifies it by drawing on Mead's rooting of the sacred, not in collective consciousness, but in normative consensus. It is this consensus-sacred-moral series that is responsible for the illocutionary component of language, the one responsible for *obligation*, a result of the sacred attraction and horror, according to Habermas. Habermas' logic is linear; there is no excess; there is no lack; there is no reversibility; there is only an accumulation of truth and its possible linguistic reification in the illocutionary.

On his part, Foucault, in spite of his *post*-structuralism, creates a discourse of power, whose driving source is what he calls *points of diffraction*. These are points of incompatibility: two contradictory concepts or objects. Those contradictory elements are formed on the same basis and by the same rules, so they are also characterized as *points of equivalence*. Instead of constituting a mere defect of coherence, they appear as alternatives in the form of 'either … or'. Lastly, they are characterized as *link points of systematization* and on the basis of each of these equivalent is derived a coherent series of objects, concepts and statements with new possible points of incompatibility within each

[312]Timothy Bewes, *Reification or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2002), 202.

of them.313 Baudrillard critiques Foucault for this linearity that led him to productive logic and the centralization of power, whether in political economy, the clinic, or sexuality. In opposition to this, he advocated *reversibility*, but where from reversibility originates? Baudrillard's reversibility was posed dogmatically, unexplained, and ontologically framed.

Unlike Baudrillard, Bewes frames reversibility epistemologically; and he roots it in the ambiguity of the impossibly reifiable that is reified out of linguistic necessity. There is no clear distinction between the sacred and the profane. Nor are there points of diffraction and 'either … or' forms. Here, language's functions of differentiation, rationalization and fixation of meaning are never completely stabilized. Language is continuously revolutionized and destabilized by reversibility, which makes language an impossible host of truth. He writes,

> This 'religiosity', however, is an immensely complex claim, implying as it does the essential *reversibility* of all concepts – not only abstractions such as religion, reification, idealism, Christianity, marriage, but also more 'concrete' concepts such as table (which Marx knew all about) or spoon (an example from *The Matrix*). Reversibility implies a certain underlying assumption: that there is an other to language, something completely outside the text and inarticulable by it; that the text is as nothing, merely thinglike, in relation to this outside; and that to speak in the name of this inarticulable otherness is necessarily to elaborate, or

[313]Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 65, 66.

> simply to presuppose the contradictory aspect of everything that constitutes the here and now.[314]

It is this extralinguistic, this excess, this inarticulable, which I call *ghayb*.[315] It lies outside the text and turns the text into something that is merely thing-like. They are God, truth and meaning, the in-articulable, un-reifiable otherness in whose names language speaks.316

B. Form and Formation: The above ambiguity favored a no-choice attitude, which characterized Sunni Islam, and which, I argue, is reflected on the form and formation of the discourse. The Qurʾān is neither absolutely divine, nor completely historical; God's attributes are to be understood neither literally nor metaphorically; freedom of choice is neither absolutely granted nor completely restricted by God's destiny, etc. In my opinion, we should not only reject Foucault's choice and exclusion as a basic principle of the formation of discourse, but we should also be suspicious of dialectical reason itself. Instead of thesis and anti-thesis negating each other to produce a new thesis, which will eventually have the same fate, a process that unfolds perpetually through history, I

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[314]Timothy Bewes, *Reification*, 202, 3.

[315]I here do not oppose the post-modernist argument, but turn it around itself. In stead of recognizing truth as an illusion rooted in Lacan's lack, Baudrillard's seduction, Foucault's exclusion, De Saussure's gap, Derrida's differance or Sartre's nothingness, I see it as an excess rooted in *ghayb*.

[316]Were it not for the limited space, this discussion had to be supported by the following points: 1-a discussion of the name of God that must not be pronounced in Judaism, and the extensive debate around the names and attributes of God in Islam; 2-a discussion of the debate around the creation-of-Quran; 3-a review of *The Religion of the Semites* of William Robertson Smith, who kept the argument of the acute separation of the sacred and the profane, even when discussing *ḥ-r-m* as one root for both the sacred and the profane; 4-a discussion of the debate around secularization, where church and state have to be separated; and 5-a discussion of the views of Aḥmad ibn Taymīyyah (661-728 H,), especially *al-Ḥaqīqah wa al-Majāz* and *al-Iklīl fi al-Mutašābah wa al-Ta'wīl*.

support a *dual* reason, where speakers neither choose between two opposing theses nor integrate them, but rather find ambiguous paths in-between them. The ambiguous paths are neither true nor false; they are just propositions, and, therefore, speakers can not go perpetually forward; they have to reverse sometimes.

Lawrence Rosen, who conducted his fieldwork research in Morocco, proposed a similar argument that in Moroccan speech statements are neither true, nor false; they can only be considered as serious proposals. They aim only to establish a relationship of negotiation.[317] Baudrillard too rejected approaches based on oppositions of terms and advocated the *dual* instead. He wrote, "We are not, however, dealing with a new version of universal attraction. The diagonals or transversals of seduction may well break the oppositions between terms; they do not lead to fused or con-fused relations (that's mysticism) but to dual relations. It is not a matter of mystical fusion of subject or object, or signifier and signified, masculine and feminine, etc., but of a seduction, that is, a *duel*[318] *and agonistic* relation."[319] Baudrillard roots power in oppositional relationships, of which the opposition between the sacred and the profane is one. All other oppositions that differentiate, classify, and rationalize make structures of power. Baudrillard tries to find another relationship between the *different* terms, which is not opposition, to be the grounds of seduction. He rejects the integration of the two terms, or their fusion, and rejects their transformation, or their confusion. He advocates a relation of the *duel*, a perpetual and mutual challenge between the two *different* terms. He refers

[317]Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: the Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 117-9.
[318]*Duel* in French means both dual and duel and Baudrillard plays on this semantic coincidence.
[319]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 105.

masculinity to power and *femininity* to seduction and argues that *femininity* seduces, not because it is the opposite of masculinity, but because it is just different and its difference is secret that cannot be revealed.

The dual aspect of reason makes us modify Habermas' consensus as well, for consensus indicates a reification of truth in a new thesis. A normative *consensus* should either be replaced or redefined. Using Arabic concepts I advocate *jam'* in place of *ijmā'*.320 While the later refers to consensus, unification or integration, the former indicates mere collection, gathering, grouping or acceptance. *Ijmā'* is content-oriented; *jam'* is only formally-oriented. *Ijmā'* assumes homogeneity; *jam'* admits differences. Muṣṭafā Nāṣīf (1921-2008) argued also that the heart of Arabic language, that which distinguishes it from other languages, is *al-jam' bayna al-waṣl wa al-faṣl*, or the combination of continuity and rupture.321

If we remove differentiating grammar and dialectical reason and replace them with *dual* and *jam'*, how will we regulate the discourse? The answer to this question is that discourse is neither controlled by laws, nor left in chaos; it is regulated by *rules*, those of the game. Baudrillard argues that games are radically opposed to the economy and law, because they seek to recreate a ritual order of *obligations* that undermines the free world of equivalences. He also writes, "The probability that two sequences will never – or hardly ever – cross eliminates the game's very possibility … But so does the

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[320]It is in this sense, not one of consensus, that the Group, or *al-Jamā'a*, presents itself to its members, and also to the public to refute an accusation of claiming truth and constraining Islam to only those who embrace its principles.

[321]Muṣṭafa Nāṣif, *Dialogues with Arabic Prose* (Kuwait: 'Ālam al-Ma'rifā, 1997), 26.

likelihood that an indefinite number of sequences will cross each other at any given moment. For games are only conceived from the junction of a few sequences within a time-space frame limited by rules."322 In fact, Foucault too, in contrast to structuralist limited grammar rules/unlimited sentence formation, supports *a principle of rarity* and writes, "We must look therefore for the principle of rarification or at least of non-filling of the field of possible formulations as it is opened up by the language (*langue*)."323 324 325

Ghayb, *dual*, *jam'* and game rules would remove any notion of linear history as a form of the discourse. This is why Baudrillard proposes *destiny* in place of history. It is an argument that could easily be matched to the absence of linear history in Islamic theology, in which historical *salvation* is neither achieved nor expected. In addition, the Qurʾān presents scenes of stories that are thematically organized and repeated, rather than being teleologically narrated.326 The question is what form should the discourse take if it cannot be one based on structure, content, or narrative? What form can accommodate dual reason and the duel terms? We need a form that is shallow, devoid of meaning or depth and, in fact, a pure form that is almost empty. It has to have the capacity to mark its

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[322]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 145.

[323]Michal Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 119.

[324]Unlike my orientation, and Baudrillard's line of reason, Foucault advances this principle to support an argument of would-have-been-possible choices that have been excluded by power.

[325]Zygmunt Bauman used the same dynamic to characterize neo-liberal culture. He wrote, "Things that happen inside the ideal consumer co-operative are [like culture] neither managed nor random; uncoordinated moves meet each other and become tied up in various parts of the overall setting, only to cut themselves free again from all previously bound knots. Spontaneity here does not exclude, but, on the contrary, demands an organized and purposeful action, yet such action is not meant to tame, but to invigorate spontaneity of initiative." [Bauman: 1997.]

[326]Numerous consequences could follow this notion. For instance, Hamas *hudna* has unnecessary to be interpreted as bad faith and non-commitment to peace in the future, for even commitment to faith is questionable. Many Muslims frequently say: I am Muslim *in šā' Allāh*.

discourse, and accommodate its constricting, but not determining, rules, while indifferently giving access to both power and seduction. The one I advocate is *style*.

I take *style*, *genre* and *code* as the subjective, intersubjective and objective manifestation of the same textual phenomenon. However, I will use *style* to refer to all of them. I prefer to use *style*, as a relaxed concept, over the restrictive *code* or the classifying *genre*. In this sense, *style* accommodates both subjective influence and intersubjective conventions. Objectively, codes, like game rules, “do not *determine* the meanings of texts but dominant codes do tend to *constrain* them.”327 Similarly, of genres Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress argue, “Different genres, whether classified by medium … or by content … establish sets of modality markers, and an overall value which acts as a baseline for the genre.”328 They also wrote,

> Genres are ostensibly neutral, functioning to make *form* (the conventions of the genre) more transparent to those familiar with the genre, foregrounding the distinctive *content* of individual texts. Certainly genre provides an important frame of reference which helps readers to identify, select and interpret texts (as well as helping writers to compose economically within the medium). However, a genre can also be seen as embodying certain values and ideological assumptions and as seeking to establish a particular worldview.[329]

[327]Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: the Basics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 157, 8.
[328]Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988), 142.
[329]Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics*, 189.

It seems that genre, much like discourse, is mediating two functional spheres. On the one hand, it acts as the conventional *ritual* that provides familiarity and demands obligation and observance, not meaning and reason. On the other hand, it traffics values and precipitates ideology on its margins. Meanwhile, it provides *reference* for its audience.330

The only logic of *style*, if at all, would be *parody*. Baudrillard uses *parody* to articulate the organization of the game. He writes, "the rule functions as the parodic simulacrum of the law. Neither an inversion nor subversion of the law, but its reversion in simulation."331 The style of the discourse, the parody of the game, and the observance of the ritual are all unreflective practices rooted in obligation not meaning. In my opinion, it is neither narrative structure, nor conceptual content that has to be our *main* focus of analysis. It should be the mere *style*. Only in the form of *style*, only as *parody*, can the discourse accommodate *ghayb*, *jam'* and duality. Binaries such as modernity and tradition, religion and state, or literalist and interpretive may be found in different discourses. We can also find concepts like Jihad, Islamic State, or Sharia. However, what marks and shapes the transformation of the discourse is mainly the *style*.332

Once we have established *style* as form, we will need to investigate the internal formation of the discourse. I am proposing a number of techniques that are

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[330]Responding to the question of what kind of state MBG calls for: is it religious or secular, MBG declared that it is 'a civil state with an Islamic reference.' Here, Islam is proposed, not as a structure, not as a system, not as a conceptual essence, but only as *reference* that manifests only as a *style*.

[331]Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 149.

[332]For instance, Sayyid Qutb's style is radical, revolutionary, left and extremely modern, something that it shares with Nasser's socialist discourse. In my review of Ayman al-Ẓawahrī's writings I could detect different stages of his works that *style* is the most important feature of distinguishing them.

conventionally used to maintain the dual reason within the discourse.

1. *Wrapping*: Jameson defined wrapping as "one text is simply being wrapped in another, with the paradoxical effect that the first – a mere writing sample, a paragraph or illustrative sentence, a segment or moment torn out of its context-becomes affirmed as autonomous and as a kind of unity in its own right …"333

2. *Grafting*: the situating of a piece of discourse within a completely different discourse.

3. *Patching*: the filling in of discourse gaps, not with homogeneous textual material, but with heterogeneous material in order to create irony and distance, among other things. Unlike grafting, the new patch has no biography in a different discourse. It is especially created for the patched discourse.

4. *Parallelism*: the mere maintenance of two dissimilar streams within the same discourse.

5. *Intersectionism*: the emergence of the discourse between other discourses, so that pieces of unrelated discourses appear freely inside the new one.

6. *Coupling*: the continuous presentation of concepts in couples, and not in the singular form. Each couple may frequently have contradictory concepts.

7. *Analogizing the digital*: the continuous creation of in-between positions among the conventional binaries, turning them into continua.

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[333]Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism,* 103.

8. *Bridging*: the introduction of concepts that communicate, rather than integrate, heterogeneous discourses and concepts.

9. *Intentional Ambiguity*: the use of ambiguous concepts to confuse, not fuse, two alternatives.

All these textual techniques are frequently detected within MBG discourse. Like Foucault, I am avoiding the assumption of any depth to the analyzed discourse, be it subjectivity, ideology or otherwise. Unlike Foucault, however, I resist his assumption of the shallowness of the discourse. Those techniques, I argue, make the *convolutions* of the discourse. They create spatial relations between different parts of the discourse, so that discourse analysis is more than studying the *dispersion of statements*.

C. Examples from MBG Discourse:

In the following lines, I will study a number of MBG textual pieces to reflect on four aspects of the textuality of MBG discourse, namely, *jamʿ*, *ghayb*, textual techniques and style.

1. *Al-Jamʿ*: *Jamʿ* is an Islamic legal concept. It is usually used as *al-jamʿ bayna al-nuṣūṣ* **or** *al-jamʿ bayna al-ārāʾ*, where the first refers to gathering different pieces of texts together; and the second refers to the gathering of different opinions. The jurist here or there acknowledges an inherent contradiction among texts of Qurʾān and Ḥadīth or opinions of other jurists. His aim in the first case is to avoid an apparent conflict among revered texts. Instead of having to deny some of them and authenticating others, he prefers to find in language rules, roots of words, the order of the words in the sentence,

the historical condition of this or that text, etc. a reason to reinterpret one piece of text so that it eventually matches another piece, which he holds as more significant. Sometimes, the jurist does not reinterpret a contradictory piece of text. He just downplays a fragment of this text that is the source of the contradiction and highlights the rest of the text, since it repeats, explains or emphasizes the text, which he holds as more significant. In the second case, the jurist neither denies the difference among earlier scholars, nor does he try to offer a reinterpretation of their opinions. The jurist merely aims to find a common ground among them, on which he can propose his own opinion. In other words, he does not try to transcend their differences searching for a common and perhaps truer essence. He just tries to find a common ground, an area on which they have an agreement. Unlike *ijmāʿ*, consensus, where differences have to be carefully removed for the sake of one opinion, *jamʿ* always assumes irreconcilable differences that could just be ignored for the sake of having one practical position.

In his *Treatises*, al-Bannā explicitly speaks of the necessary dispute among scholars. He writes,

> We believe that the difference in details of religion (*furūʿ al-dīn*) is necessary. We can not unite in these details, opinions and schools for a number of reasons, among which is the difference in the soundness of mind, realizing the indications of the text or overlooking them, and the understanding of deep meanings and the associations among different facts. Religion is but *ayāt* and reports of *ḥadīth*, which are explained by minds and opinions within the limits of language and its

> rules. People are truly different in conducting this work, so they must always be different.[334]

Making this point clear, al-Bannā concludes that *consensus* is impossible. He writes,

> For all these reasons, we believe that consensus on one opinion in *furūʿ* is impossible. It even contradicts the nature of this religion. God wants for this religion to continue eternally, match different times and get in harmony with different historical conditions, so it is easy, soft and flexible, with no stiffness or hardship.
>
> Believing in that, we excuse those who hold different opinions in *furūʿ* than ours. We see these differences as no reason to stop the binding of hearts, exchange of love and the cooperation for doing goodness …[335]

As we see above, realizing that consensus is impossible, he merely aims for keeping love and mutual respect, that is the *jamʿ* of hearts and people. Al-Bannā, however, follows the same strategy with the Muslim Brothers themselves. To make an argument, he avoids any selection of one opinion. He would rather draws excluding borders to state what is *not* a correct opinion. Then, he does his best to tolerate as many different opinions as he can. In

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[334] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 14.
[335] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 14.

the treatise of *al-Aqāʾid*, for instance, he discusses the attributes of God and rejects two interpretations: the absolutely literalist, *al-mušabbihah* and *al-mujassimah* and the absolutely metaphorical, *al-muʿaṭṭilah*. However, he readily tolerates both *salaf* and *khalaf*, who head a middle-path leaning to this or that end.[336] This, in fact, is a pseudo-choice, for absolutely literalist and absolutely metaphorical interpretations exist only as examples in theology books, not in real life. The debate has always been between the two groups that al-Bannā is tolerating.

This *jamʿ* of the duals is a basic character of MBG literature. For instance, al-Bannā proposes *jamʿ* between Islamism and Nationalism, the rational and superstitious, *ghaybī*, mind, and the independence from the West and taking advantage of its useful sciences. Al-Qaraḍāwī uses the same style of juxtaposing duals. For instance, he writes,

> They (MBG) balance between reason and passion, the material and the spiritual, thought and action, the individual and the society, consultation and obedience, rights and duties, and the old and the new.
>
> The Movement has taken advantage of the entire *turāth*, tradition. From *Šarīʿah* scholars, it has taken the consideration of texts and rulings; from *kalām* scholars, the consideration of rational evidences and clarifying ambiguities; and from *taṣawwuf* scholars, the consideration of disciplining hearts and purifying selves. They have also been careful to get rid of innovations and inconsistencies that were mixed with the tradition, and to always go back to the pure source of God's

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[336] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 237-257.

Book and His Messenger's tradition.[337]

What is important here is not the attitude of *wasaṭiyyah*, middle-path, but the *style* of writing, that every proposal has to be introduced as either an in-between choice flanked with two excluded extremes, or as a gathering, *jam*ʿ, of their dual.

This textual style, this strategy of action, the style and strategy of *jam*ʿ, could sometimes be unsuccessful in creating balance and stability. Al-Bannā aimed to the *jam*ʿ of peaceful and militant work, recruiting as many members as he can and focusing on the hardcore elite of the Group, reforming the government and forcibly changing it, and launching numerous initiatives of public work and privately founding the Special System. This case of *jam*ʿ was definitely unsuccessful. His Special System came out of his control, escalated a bloody confrontation with the state and was eventually discovered. This discovery led to the banning of the Group, closing its chapters, confiscating its money and projects, arrest of masses of its members and the assassination of its Founder.

2. *Al-Ghayb*: It is a a concept that is mentioned frequently in the Qurʾān. *Ghayb* indicates "what is hidden, inaccessible to the senses and to reason—thus, at the same time absent from human knowledge and hidden in divine wisdom."[338] *Al-ghayb* exists, but exists outside the human knowledge. However, Muslims should *believe* in its existence. It does not render our human knowledge false, not even metaphorical, as opposite to its true

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[337] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah*, 78.
[338] "Al-Ghayb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Brill Online*, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-ghayb-COM_0231 (accessed August 1st, 2012).

knowledge. It renders it *incomplete.* There is always something missing in our knowledge. Meaning too is never complete. This missing-ness, this loss, has to be carefully preserved, protected and reflected in statements and actions. It is not a problem to be solved; it is the way this world is. There is no expectation for it to be solved. Only in the other world, only with meeting with the Truth, God Himself, that it would be recovered.

In *ʿAwāmil al-Saʿah wa al-Murūnah fī al-Šarīʿah al-Islāmiyyah*, al-Qaraḍāwī writes about these missing areas in *Šarīʿah* and argues that they are intentionally overlooked. He writes,

> The first of these factors (of *Šarīʿah* flexibility) … is the broadness of *ʿafwu*, forgiveness, ignoring or overlooking, area. It is the emptiness that texts leave out intentionally for the *mujtahid* scholars to fill it up with whatever meets their best interest and fits their time. They have to consider the general objectives of *Šarīʿah*, and be guided with its spirit and *nuṣūṣuha al-muḥkamah*, conclusive texts.
>
> I said that the area of *ʿafwu* or emptiness was left out intentionally by the Legislator because of what was reported of the Prophet, PBUH, that he said, "God *ḥadd ḥudūdan*, has drawn borders, so do not transgress them; He commanded orders, so do not miss them; He prohibited things, so do not violate them; and He stayed silent on things out of His mercy not forgetting them, so do

> not seek them out!"[339]

The text of Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, therefore, are themselves intentionally incomplete. Realizing this emptiness, scholars are advised to fill it in, not with truth, but with historical and temporary texts that accommodate the eternal text to the temporal reality.

Ghayb is also "the 'mystery of things' and the destiny of men (and of each man)."[340] In this sense of being knowledge of the future, pieces of this *ghayb* could be revealed in this world. The Qurʾān reads, "You know not; perhaps Allah will *yuḥdith*, bring about or create an event in history, after that a [different] matter." [Sūrah 65: Āyah 1.] This sense of *ghayb* creates empty spaces in every plan and strategy. There is always something *new*, something *unexpected*, un-thought of, to be expected. The discourse has to respectfully preserves these spaces for *ghayb*, or it risks turning itself into merely a rational discourse grounded only in reason, a materialist discourse that is disconnected from the unseen reality. After describing in details the strategies and plans of MBG, al-Bannā writes,

> Those chains will not be there forever. Time is *qullab*, turning around eternally! In a glance, God changes it all! … Therefore, we are never desperate. The verses of God and the reports of Ḥadīth of His Messenger that articulate the rise of

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339 Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *ʿAwāmil al-Saʿah wa al-Murūnah fī al-Šarīʿah al-Islāmiyyah* (Kuwait: al-Majlis al-Waṭanī lil-Funūn wa al-Ādāb, 2002),, 15.

340 "Al-Ghayb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *ibid*.

> peoples, after their immanent destruction, invite us to so much hope and guide us to the path of uprising. You may read in Surah al-Qaṣaṣ, "*Ṭā-Sīn-Mīm.* These are Verses of the manifest Book. We recite to you some of the news of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, for a people who believe. Verily, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, oppressing a group among them, killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the *mufsidīn*, corrupting people. And We wished to do a favor to those who were oppressed in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land, and We let Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts receive from them that which they feared."[341]

In another piece, al-Bannā disconnects action and its results. He writes that there are three objectives of MBG members' actions. First, they do their work because it is their duty. Second, they do it to be rewarded by God in the Other World. Third, they do it for the benefit it brings forth. This benefit, however, is *amruhā ilā Allāh*, subject to God. Then he adds, "An opportunity that he (an MBG member) never thought of could perhaps come and make the work bring forth the most blessed benefits."[342]

This expectation of the unexpected, this partial disconnection of causal relationships, is crucial to understand MBG thought and action. This is why I preferred the *games rules and* obligation over logical laws and power in understanding MBG discourse. In the example above, the MBG member has to do the work, not because of

[341] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 17.
[342] Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 35.

any power relationship exercised on him, not because of any power he exercises to bring forth the result, but only because of his obligation. Like in games, he waits to see his destiny and if the result will come forth or not. In the treatise of *The Fifth Conference*, al-Bannā says, “do not fight the laws of the universe, for they are *ghālibah*, hegemonic, but *ghālibūhā*, encounter them, use them, divert their current, use them against each other, and expect the moment of victory; it is not far from you!” On the one hand, there are *rules* that have to be respected. On the other hand, the player should be skilled enough to play with these rules. The result is always contingent on *destiny*. It has to be patiently hoped for as a surprise, not a logical consequence.

It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to argue that, in fact, the MBG leadership never had a clear plan with determined steps when they decided to nominate a candidate for presidency in 2012. Some analysts called them foolish; others thought they plan for an open confrontation with the Army. Rational theory is not enough to understand an action like this. They nominated a president out of *obligation*. They were not lying when they announced that they *have to* take responsibility. They knew they could win the presidency or go back to prison. They did not have a *complete* plan and strategy. Theirs were full of spaces, which they left for *ghayb*. We may call them believers or gamblers, but not wise or foolish, for wise and foolish will return us back to mere reason.

3. Textual Techniques: The *reversibility* of the discourse, and its avoidance of *truth* by strategies of *jamʿ* and *ghayb* are supported and communicated through a number of textual techniques. I will explore a number of these techniques by reflecting on two

pieces that are quoted from the Freedom and Justice Party Platform. Under “The Characters of the State,” the document has a subtitle: “A Civil State.” it reads,

> The Islamic State by its nature is a civil state, for it is neither a military state autocratically ruled by the Army that reaches authority by military coups, nor a police state dominated by security institutions.
>
> Nor is it a religious state, theocracy, ruled by a class of clergy, for, leave alone ruling in the name of God, there is no clergy in Islam, but only specialist scholars of religion. There are no infallible people, who may monopolize the interpretation of Qurʾān, solely legalize for the *ummah*, judge on hearts’ beliefs, claim absolute obedience and assume holiness. Rulers in the Islamic State are but citizens elected by their people. The *ummah* is the source of authorities. Qualification, expertise and honesty are the bases of assuming different positions. Not only does the *ummah* choose its ruler and representatives, but it also has the right to account and remove them.
>
> The main difference between the Islamic State and other states is the taking of Islamic *Šarīʿah* as its reference. *Šarīʿah* reflects both the religion of the majority of the Egyptian people and the one civilization of the entire *ummah*. *Šarīʿah*, by its nature, regulates, not only the ritual and ethical aspects, but also all aspects of the lives of Muslims and those non-Muslims who share them the country. *Šarīʿah* organizes these aspects by a few pieces of text that both its authenticity and its meaning are certain, *qaṭʿiyyat al-thubūt wa al-dalālah*, or by general rules and

> universal principles, leaving the details to the appropriate *ijtihād* that adapts legislation to historical circumstances aiming to meet righteousness, justice and community interest. This is the rule of legislative councils, giving that the Constitutional Court supervises this legislation. In addition, non-Muslims maintain their right to return to their religious laws in domestic and religious matters.
>
> This state is as much responsible for protecting the freedom of religion, practicing it and the worship houses of non-Muslims as much as it is responsible for protecting Islam, its affairs and its mosques.[343]

The piece above starts by stating that the state is *civil*. Civil is a concept that has a known and well-documented, if debated, history. The editor of the document takes it out from its context and *grafts* it in his own document. For him, a negative definition is enough; civil means that it is not military and not theocratic. There is the *ambiguity* created by leaving Islam itself without a clear definition, since the Islamic is not only *civil*, but also *not* religious. The religious state is strictly theocracy. There is another ambiguity in stating that the *ummah* is the source of *authority*, *maṣdar al-suluṭāṭ*, but who is the source of *legislation*, *maṣdar al-tašrī*ʿ? The answer is ambiguously *proposed* in the following lines.

If we leave the grafting of "civil" and the *ambiguity* of "Islamic" aside, we find an interesting *intersectionism* in the emergence of the MBG Islamic State discourse in-

[343]Freedom and Justice Party, *Barnāmaj Ḥizb al-Ḥurriyyah wa al-*ʿ*Adālah*, (Cairo: Freedom and Justice Party, 2011),, 15.

between two other discourses, one of them is clearly secular; the other Islamic and traditional. What is characteristic of this *intersectionism* is not merely the coexistence of heterogeneous concepts that have distinctively different biographies, but the *dynamics* of the text itself. The text swings continuously back and forth between two discourses. It carefully avoids any settling at any point in-between these two discourses. This is the back and forth movement of the text:

1. There is no theocracy or clergy in Islam. There are only scholars.

2. However, *Šarīʿah* is the ultimate reference of the state because it is the religion of the majority.

3. Not only a religion, *Šarīʿah* is also a reference because it is *culture*, a (perhaps secular) civilization.

4. That should not preclude the fact the *Šarīʿah* has to be applied since it organizes all aspects of life.

5. However, except for a few pieces of text, *Šarīʿah* basically is a number of general rules and principles, and the legislation itself will be conducted by regular legislative councils,

6. (which may have a majority of Islamist,)

7. (but do not worry, for) it is the Constitutional Court that will supervise them,

8. even though a religion-based legal plurality is still tolerated in areas like religious and domestic matters.

Half of those statements are derived from a traditional Islamic discourse; the other half from a secular and modern discourse. Accordingly, half of the analysts will conclude MBG is a fundamentalist group; the other half will see it as a modern and liberal group. Probably, the two groups of analysts will see MBG as *changing* and moving from a traditionalist point of view to a more modern and liberal one. Some of them, however, will discover that MBG is in fact a resourceful Group that aims to deceive the public until it reaches power, and then reveals its true intentions. In my opinion, MBG is swinging and either incapable or unwilling to have a definite and final decision.

This short piece ends with a statement taken directly from human rights discourses to be wrapped in MBG Islamic discourse of the state. Though it is undeniably wrapped in the right spot, the wrapped piece could not be more secular. It speaks nothing about *Šarīʿah* being the reference or its organization of all aspects of life, etc. It speaks about the state protecting freedom of religion, in all of the latter's private spaces: belief, ritual and temples. This wrapped piece will only stimulate more *reversibility* within the discourse.

From the same Document, I want to bring one more quotation that articulates the economic vision of MBG. Under "Ruʾyatunā al-Iqtiṣādiyyah," "Our Economic Vision," the Editor wrote,

> The Party derives its economic vision from the Islamic economic system. The goal of this system is worshiping God, in the broadest definition of worship,

which includes all actions of the individual, especially *taʿmīr al-arḍ*, developing the land, to achieve *al-ḥayāh al-ṭayyibah*, good life, and secure the complete *kifāyah*, satisfaction of basic needs, for each individual living in the society, be he a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

Thus, the System is based on the principle that all transactions are *ḥalāl*, legal, unless proved otherwise, to *akhdh bi-al-asbāb*, take advantage of all means and *taʿmīr al-arḍ*, develop the land. It is also based on a delicate balance and natural coupling between soul and matter, the individual and the group, and, *al-ʿibādāt wa al-muʿāmalāt*, the ritual and the transactional, with *ʿadālah wa iʿtidāl*, fairness and moderation, and without *ifrāṭ aw tafrīṭ*, abundance or abandonment, determining roles of work and responsibilities of sectors -functional and productive- and putting the performance controlling rules and the product-distribution fair standards, to limit the faulty practices, that could happen because of our humanity, and which hinder the procession of the society toward a better life.

Above that, the System, through a conscious supervision on execution at all levels, and according to determined procedures of direction and follow-up, evaluation and accounting, and rewarding and punishment is self-correcting to the occasional deviations.

Therefore, the System fixes practically most economic deviations, assuring the definite *taḥrīm*, prohibition, of injustice and exploitation, *ribā wa ghišš*, usury and cheating, bribery and clientelism, monopoly and *iktināz*, saving money without either spending or investing it, *taṭfīf wa bakhs*, underestimating the value

of the product or its price, *isrāf wa taqṭīr*, lavish in spending or being stingy, and *tadlīs*, fraud … and the rest of all kinds of economic corruption. Thus, the System is based on the Islamic ethics as an internal variable in its dynamics, and a main motivator of its action. The System starts from a faith-fact that is the human being is the *khalīfah*, steward of God in the land, in terms of ownership, development, *taʿmīr*, development, *takāful*, symbiosis, *šūrā*, consultation, *tarbiyah*, cultivation, brotherhood and being a role-model.

According to this System, the economic activities are conducted through the Islamic market, which is based on fair competition and tied economic freedom that controls the production of *ṭayyibāt*, good products of good work, through the offer-and-supply forces, and the price mechanics, and according to the fair financial negotiations founded on sharing profits and losses. The Islamic market is also based on real and risking Islamic financing and investment frameworks, and a clear system of priority. It works through plural ownership that includes public ownership, public sector ownership and private ownership, which is the essence of ownership in Islam, giving that it conducts its social function, achieving the fairness of controlling money, securing social solidarity and guaranteeing the best use of resources. That should happen through a specific and decentralized role of the state, especially in governance, jurisdiction and finance, that installs care-giving system for the poor and the needy, who may exclusively enjoy some services.

…

Using resources in this System is based on a comprehensive and balanced

perspective that avoids wasting resources or energy. It is based on a specific role of the state or the public sector focusing on developing the basic structures, infrastructures and strategic projects, especially those that the private sector will avoid. In addition, there is the main function of the state, which is the continuous work to develop a healthy environment and an appropriate investment environment for the production process, one that protects man's dignity, respects his humanity, and secures his freedom and rights.

The main role of efficient use of resources and launching sustainable development, as an objective of this System, is the responsibility of the private sector, that is the individuals or people, who carry the responsibility of *istikhlāf*, stewardship, and who are responsible for *iʿmār al-arḍ*, developing the land, achieving the sustainable development through a package of small, medium and big-sized projects.

Finally, this System is built on the fact that the growth of money is the result of the real contribution in economic activity. There is no *kasb ṭayyib* without serious work and taking a risk. Therefore, there is no individual, group or class under this system that lives off the sweat, work and money of the others.

The product is fairly distributed according to three factors that make three standards: first, the provided work, second, the taken risk, according to the frameworks of Islamic investment based on partnership, sale and lease contracts, and, third, the partial or complete need of those who are incapable to work. For this last sector of people, there is the responsibility of the state and the responsibility of the society individuals in distribution and redistribution, through

> obligatory charity, especially *al-zakāh*, the alms, volunteer charity and taxes, so that *ḥayah ṭayyibah* is provided to the poor and the needy.
>
> Here, Islam comes as both a religion and a way of life to get humanity once again out of darkness and the life of *ḍank*, material and psychological hardship. With its geenral and complimentary regulations, it presents a real purification of the human life, through continuous work to uproot evils and continuous correction of deviations through its economic system. This *taʿmīrī*, developmental, system brings back, as *šarīʿah*, things in human society to its nature, and will return, as *minhāj*, method, the issue of *taʿmīr*, development, to its corner stone, the human being, for the human being in this System is the most important and most high of this existence, and he is truly the main means of *taʿmīr* process.[344]

A number of textual techniques are displayed in this long quotation. The last paragraph, for instance, is an example of the wrapping technique. This paragraph is quite rhetorical and is directly taken from an earlier consolidation discourse of MBG. The first sentence of this paragraph, for example, is taken immediately from *Maʿālim* of Sayyid Quṭb. This piece of a consolidation discourse is carefully wrapped in the folds of an explicitly liberal economic discourse of Islam. It definitely does not work to create a parallel Islamic economic system that stands at a distance from other global systems. However, the mere coexistence of this paragraph next to those paragraphs that emphasize the role of the private sector provides legitimacy and authenticity to the liberal discourse. It also shifts

[344]Freedom and Justice Party, 50-52.

focus from discussing the technicalities of economic policies and strategies to the generality of their assumed objectives. This is why, in this final paragraph, there is complete avoidance of any *fiqh* terms. After all, *fiqh* has traditionally concerned the technicalities and details of transactions. Taking humanity out of darkness is not a phrase that one expects in any *fiqh* book. It is modern political rhetoric. In addition, it creates a temporal space. By being a reminiscent of an older discourse, it adds a temporal dimension to the liberal agenda, so that the latter seems as the final step of success, the coming true of the dream.[345]

Grafting, or the situating of a smaller piece of discourse within a completely different discourse can be detected as well. In this technique, the graft has a more direct function within the newer discourse. It solves a problem, closes a gap or fixes a defect. It is more integrated into the newer discourse than just being wrapped into its folds. As an example, we have the concept of *khilāfah*, or stewardship. It comes once to emphasize man's stewardship of God, in terms of ownership and development of the land. Although this concept will be proposed as a *duty* in an older discourse of Islam, here it seems more like a *right*. The man has this sacred *right* of ownership, of private ownership. It is the man, not a certain government or an idealized *ummah*. This meaning is further emphasized when the concept comes again to explicitly state, and in a significant context, that

[345]Interestingly, an English version of this platform on FJP website avoids completely all Islamic rhetoric when it comes to the economy. The liberal agenda in this version, the explicit speaking of privatization, etc. is more direct. Reading this English version, I had a strong impression that this part of the platform was written by two different editors, one to supply the liberal economic agenda; the other to provide Islamic economic rhetoric from older discourses.

> The main role of efficient use of resources and launching sustainable development, as an objective of this System, is the responsibility of the private sector, that is the individuals or people, who carry the responsibility of *istikhlāf*, stewardship, and who are responsible for *iʿmār al-arḍ*, developing the land, achieving the sustainable development through a package of small, medium and big-sized projects.

Istikhlāf that once upon a time referred to the conversion of man into a historical creature, who enjoys freedom of will, but is held accountable for his action, *istikhlāf* that in a modern discourse of Islam referred to a comprehensive project of the *ummah*, comes now to support a liberal discourse of economy by selecting *development* from the modern discourse and *individual responsibility* from a traditional discourse. Not the society, not the *ummah*, not any collectivity, it has to be the man, the individual man who enjoys the *right* of ownership and the right of *developing* what he owns. It has to be this *individual* man because only as individuals people are accountable before God.

Sometimes, we find *parallelism*, where two dissimilar streams run through the same discourse. Here we find, for instance, the coupling of the two concepts of *al-iḥtikār* and *al-iktināz*. *Iḥtikār* means monopoly; *iktināz* refers to saving money and not investing it. The two words come together as if they mean the same thing: keeping an exclusive right on wealth. *Iḥtikār* is a modern economic term, while *iktināz* is an Islamic and

Qurʾānic term. *Iḥtikār* would work to reverse the the liberal attitude of MBG economic vision; *iktināz* reverses it back, since it supports both investment and spending money, the two dimensions of a capitalist economy.

Parallelism is not the only textual technique we see here. There is also the bridging of *iḥtikār*. It has a traditional Islamic use. In this context it means *ḥabs al-šayʾ ʿan al-ʿarḍ*, or keeping the product away from the market. It is an economic policy to keep the prices high. In this sense, we may conclude, monopoly itself is not the problem; it is monopoly that is accompanied by not offering the monopolized product in the market. *Iḥtikār*, thus, bridges two discourses, one is Islamic and traditional, the other is economic and modern. In addition, it dilutes the reversibility effect the word has in its modern context. In fact, the ambiguity of the meaning of this concept per se is a third textual technique. It leaves questions unanswered and avoids any definite *vision*.

The textual technique of coupling, sometimes of synonyms, sometimes of antonyms, is quite frequent. Speaking about the Islamic economic system, the editor writes,

> It is also based on a delicate balance and natural coupling between soul and matter, the individual and the group, and, *al-ʿibādāt wa al-muʿāmalāt*, the ritual and the transactional, with *ʿadālah wa iʿtidāl*, fairness and moderation, and without *ifrāṭ aw tafrīṭ*, abundance or abandonment, determining roles of work and responsibilities of sectors -functional and productive …

Here, we can notice the two spheres, between which the discourse is deployed. It is deployed between *systems* and *lifeworld* in Habermas' terms, or between *sociality* and the *ritual* in Baudrillard's terms. *Systems* and *sociality* are represented by the matter, the individual and the transactional, while *lifeworld* and the *ritual* are represented by the soul, the group and the ritual. The coupling secures reversibility and legitimizes it by claiming its being natural and in balance. The fairness and moderation, and the abundance and abandonment come only to stress the balance itself. This technique of coupling could be found in other places, for instance, in "fair competition" and "tied economic freedom." the other does not offer any explanation as how competition could be fair, or how freedom will be tied. The message is not in any specific meaning of these concepts. It is not in any details of regulations or otherwise. It is *balance* itself. What s/he is offering here is not an economic policy or vision, but a promise of being *balanced*. In other words, it is a promise of keeping reversibility in and firm ideology out.

Sometimes, the editor would refrain from any binaries that may secure reversibility. Reversibility, or perhaps indeterminacy, is preserved by another textual technique, which is analogizing the digital. It is the continuous creation of in-between positions, the conversion of binaries into continua. The following makes a simple example. The Editor writes,

> It [using resources] is based on a specific role of the state or the public sector

> focusing on developing the basic structures, infrastructures and strategic projects, especially those that the private sector will avoid. In addition, there is the main function of the state, which is the continuous work to develop a healthy environment and an appropriate investment environment for the production process, one that protects man's dignity, respects his humanity, and secures his freedom and rights.

Here, the state has to both develop economic infrastructures that serve business enterprises and protect the workers' rights. Launching businesses is the work of the private sector, as it will be clearer in the following paragraph. The Editor, however, creates an in-between position by singling out strategic projects as the business of the state. Right before finishing the first sentence, the Editor creates a second in-between position by adding "especially those that the private sector will avoid." This phrase re-opened the door to the private sector to be involved in the strategic projects. While the first part may indicate a state that is willing to *control* strategic projects, the last phrase reversed this attitude and made the state *responsible* for securing these projects, when and if the private sector was not willing to launch. In other words, the state-private sector binary was analogized by "strategic projects" and "strategic projects that the private sector is avoiding."

In addition to the couple of examples of bridging I mentioned above, there are other examples in this piece. Bridging is a technique by which concepts are introduced, neither to integrate, nor to juxtapose, but to *communicate* two different discourses. *Al-Sūq*

al-Islāmiyyah, or the Islamic market, is one of those bridging concepts. On the one hand, it bridges a discourse of Islam with a discourse of the economy. On the other hand, it also bridges two images rooted in two definitions of "market," an image of numerous and globally expanding financial transactions, goods, stocks, corporations, workers, banks, etc. and an image of buyers and sellers, that is humans, meeting personally and gathering at a local marketplace to negotiate and exchange goods and money.

We find another bridging term, *kasb*. It basically means making money. The word, however, is recycled from the traditional *fiqh*. This grounding is further emphasized by attributing *ṭayyib* to *kasb*. *Al-kasb al-ṭayyib* refers, therefore, to both making money by legal means and receiving God's providence by *šarʿī* means. In the latter sense, the means does not merely make the money legal and allowed; it makes it *blessed* as will. The whole process of making money, today and through the liberal market is rooted, at least partially, in *ghayb*. One more bridging concept here is *iʿmār* or *taʿmīr*. In its Islamic context, it refers to building up the earth, making it fertile, making civilization grow and prosper, making it productive, etc. In its modern concept, it refers mainly to *development*. Capitalist *development*, and *growth* in its heart, are surprisingly rooted in a traditional discourse of Islam. Development turns out to be, not only *šarʿī* as legal or allowed, but also *šarʿī* as the mission of the human on earth. Capitalist development is suddenly an integral part of *istikhlāf*. Once again, development is partially rooted in *ghayb* with promises of success based on its being blessed. Though strongly supporting a liberal agenda of development, this strategy, nevertheless, runs the risk of reversing economic liberalism, the least by grounding it in possibly restrictive Islamic morale.

Intentional ambiguity is another textual technique that can be detected in the above quotation. As an example, there is the paragraph of the standards of distributing the product. The Editor writes,

> The product is fairly distributed according to three factors that make three standards: first, the provided work, second, the taken risk, according to the frameworks of Islamic investment based on partnership, sale and lease contracts, and, third, the partial or complete need of those who are incapable to work.

It could be understood as a liberal economic policy with Islamic rhetoric covering to give it cultural and religious legitimacy. The *fair* compensation of the workers makes it more appealing to a socialist economy, especially when we find this *responsibility* for those who can not work. The Editor, however, will then writes,

> For this last sector of people, there is the responsibility of the state and the responsibility of the individuals of the society in distribution and redistribution, through obligatory charity, especially *al-zakāh*, the alms, volunteer charity and taxes, so that *ḥayah ṭayyibah* is provided to the poor and the needy.

This sentence further confuses us since we are not sure who eventually is the ultimate

responsible for satisfying the needs of the needy. We go back and forth between a state that uses its political power to redistribute the product and wealthy individuals who are religiously motivated. The binary of voluntary charity and obligatory taxes is analogized by the obligatory alms, which we understand that it will be collected and redistributed by the state. This indeterminacy is not simply a deceptive technique to legitimize this or that economic policy. It is a technique used to keep two different policies, not integrated or fused, but confused.

4. Style: I will reflect on one quotation from al-Bannā to explore some of the main features of the *style* of MBG discourse. As I wrote above, *style* mediates intersubjective conventions. Its form is empty and transparent. Yet, it assumes values and ideological references. The repetition of *style*, its *parody*, its conventional *ritual* creates obligations and observance. In *al-Rasāʾil*, commenting on the use of power and the legitimacy of revolution, al-Bannā, writes,

> Many people wonder if the Muslim Brothers have the intention to use power in achieving their objectives and reaching their goals. Do Muslim Brothers contemplate a comprehensive revolution on the political or social system in Egypt? I do not want to keep those people wondering. I want to take this opportunity to clearly reveal the satisfying answer.
>
> Power is the banner of Islam in all its systems and legislation. The Qurʾān clearly states, "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds

of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy.” [Sūrah al-Anfāl, Āyah 60.] The Prophet says, “The strong believer is better than the weak believer.” In fact, power is the banner of Islam even in prayer that is a place of humbleness and reverence. Listen to what the Prophet was saying privately in his prayer, teaching his companions and whispering to his God: “O Allah, I take refuge in You from anxiety and sorrow, weakness and laziness, miserliness and cowardice, the burden of debts and from being overpowered by men.” Do not you see that the Prophet in these prayers took refuge from all manifestations of weakness –weakness of will in anxiety and sadness, weakness of production in weakness and laziness, weakness of finances in miserliness and cowardice, and weakness of dignity in being in debt and being overpowered? What do you expect from a human who is following this religion except to be strong in everything? The Muslim Brothers have to be strong and have to work in strength.

However, the Muslim Brothers are deeper in thought and more insightful in their vision to be seduced by shallow works and thought, so that they rush into them without exploring their depths, weighing their results and knowing what their objectives are. They know that the first step of power is the power of faith and creed. Then there is the power of unity and binding together. Then there is the power of arms and weapons. A group can not be called powerful unless it has all these dimensions of power. If a group used the power of arms and weapons before it had acquired the power of unity and the power of faith, it will be destined to destruction and perdition.

From another angle, did Islam -and power is its banner- recommend the use of

power in all times and all conditions? Or did it draw limits, put conditions and planned directions for the use of this power?

From a third angle, should power be the first solution or is it that the last remedy is cautery? Is it necessary that the man would weigh the good and bad results of using power, or should he just use it regardless the consequences?

Those are perspectives, from which the Muslim Brothers evaluate power before using it. Revolution is the most violent manifestation of power. This is why the Muslim Brothers contemplate it more cautiously, especially in a country like Egypt that already tried revolutions and has not gained from them except what you know.

After all these reflections, I tell those who question us that the Muslim Brothers will use the practical power, when it is the only solution, and when they are sure that they have achieved the power of faith and unity. When they use power. They will be honest and noble. They will threaten first and wait. Then, they will go forward in dignity and honor and comfortably accept the results of their move.

As of the revolution, the Muslim Brothers do not think of it, do not count on it and do not believe in its benefit or results. However, they explicitly tell every government that if things do not change, if the political leaders do not immediately think of an urgent reform and a fast remedy for these problems, a revolution will erupt, one that is neither the work of the Muslim Brothers, nor their plan. It is a revolution that will come out of the pressures and necessities of

these hard times, and of ignoring the reform.[346]

The first feature that we may detect here is the religious rhetoric of the discourse. It starts with quotations from Qurʾān and Sunnah. The connection between those body of texts and the argument that emerges after them does not need to be clear. It is just the act of quoting Qurʾān and Sunnah before laying down the argument that has to be observed. The quotations work less on meaning and more as a marker; they announce a discourse that is Islamic. It is more like the mentioning of the debris before delving into the main subject in *Jahilī* poetry. This beginning is supported by a number of religious concepts that replace non-religious ones. For instance, we find ideology replaced with *quwwat al-imān* or the power of faith. This replacement moves ideology to spaces far beyond its intellectual sphere and connects it to *ghayb*.

The second feature of the style, according to the piece above, is this swinging back and forth between two genres, where neither of them is completely unfolded. Quotations of Qurʾān and Sunnah are there, but they are not followed by serious exegesis, medieval commentaries or an examination of their *isnād*. They are immediately followed by rational arguments. Those two, however, are not grounded in mere reason. Their logic is violated by a content that communicates *ghayb*. For instance, the three steps of power and their putting in order provides a rational *style*, but this *style* is reversed by the content of *faith* or assumption of unreasonable use of power unless it is preceded by achieving

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[346]Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*, 89-90.

the power of faith. In other words, there is neither a religious discourse, nor a rational and secular one. They come as empty forms that have no meaning or true essence; they come as *styles*.

That empty style of *jamʿ* constraints meaning and embodies values, nevertheless. The arguments will always struggle their way between *ghayb* and reason. Legal and political opinions will flow back and forth between medieval Islamic rhetoric and modern secular structures and concepts. Authenticity and modernity will alternate within the discourse.

Sometimes, the *style* will emphasize its emptiness by coming evacuated of all alternative contents. For example, we can reexamine this quotation from the MBG platform.

> Therefore, the System fixes practically most economic deviations, assuring the definite *taḥrīm*, prohibition, of injustice and exploitation, *ribā wa ghišš*, usury and cheating, bribery and clientelism, monopoly and *iktināz*, saving money without either spending or investing it, *taṭfīf wa bakhs*, underestimating the value of the product or its price, *isrāf wa taqṭīr*, lavish in spending or being stingy, and *tadlīs*, fraud … and the rest of all kinds of economic corruption.

This sentence has many words that come in couples. *Coupling* could come either as a textual technique aiming to balance two concepts or to confuse two discourses, or as

merely a *style*. In this sentence, it is a *style*, for the pairs do not keep any constant logic. The relationship between usury and cheating is like the relationship between bribery and clientelism. The pairing introduces two *different* transactions that both of them are illegal. The relationship between monopoly and *iktināz* is one of parallelism. They may or may not mean the same thing. *Taṭfīf* and *bakhs* are almost synonymous. *Isrāf* and *taqṭīr* are contradictory. Those pairs, therefore, do not maintain one logic. Continuity is created through the *coupling* itself, the *coupling* as a *style*. In fact, in an earlier sentence we find the two pairs of *ʿadālah* and *iʿtidāl*, and *ifrāṭ* or *tafrīṭ*. They mean fairness and moderation, and abundance or abandonment. The first pair has two words that are semantically related; the second pair has two words that are contradictory. Leave alone the difference in their logic, the continuity here is grounded in the mere rhyme, the phonetic resemblance of *adālah* and *iʿtidāl*, on the one hand, and *ifrāṭ* or *tafrīṭ*, on the other hand. Meaning here is minimized to the extreme, where the emphasis is only on the mere form.[347]

The third feature is the laying down of two types of *rules*: *maṣlaḥah* and *ḥudūd*. The first refers to the interest of the community, grounded in reason; the second to legal limits, grounded in revelation. These two sets of rules encounter each other's logic. In the quotation above, we find the imposition of power as a revelation, and its regulation and disciplining by reason and *maṣlaḥah*. This form is essential to accommodate a *fatwa* that is produced between two structures, one of them is textual, the other is social. The two

[347]A similar case here is the naming of medieval Islamic books, where the title displays phonetic rhyme and visual images, none of which is related to the content of the book. Meaning is aggressively downplayed for the advantage of an empty form that is conventionally observed.

sets create space for both *game rules* that have to be conventionally observed out of obligation and space for individual or social strategies that creatively seek *maṣlaḥah* without violating those *rules*. This *style* of contrasting these two sets of rules can be found in MBG statements, articles, commentaries, etc. Each statement has to be proposed, not as *truth* but as a solution or a choice that dances its way between *maṣlaḥah* and *ḥudūd*. To make a statement about *Šarīʿah*, for instance, the speaker has to lay this statement down between two *rules* one of *ḥudūd* and one of *maṣlaḥah*. For instance, *Šarīʿah* has to be applied, since this is *ḥudūd*, but its application must be gradual to avoid any conflict with social *maṣlaḥah*.

A fourth feature of the style is the constant use of *we* over I. The statement has to represent a group or a collectivity. It could be the *ummah* or just a group within the *ummah*. The use of power can not be allowed before there is a community of faith that has achieved the power of unity. This group is the objective of the project and its means. It also makes the conventional standards of any project. The logic of the *dual* keeps reversibility and avoids truth. Decisions, therefore, are based on the conventional acceptance by the group. *Šarīʿah* will be applied because it is the religion of the religious majority and the culture of the entire nation. The speaker of the discourse usually hides away, not because he or she is seeking objectivity, but because he or she speaks the voice of the group.

Conclusion

Central to the conclusions of this study is the impossibility to study Islamism as an isolated phenomenon. In addition, it is not enough to examine relationships between Islamism and other contemporary social phenomena. Islamism has to be studied in its emergence and development as one manifestation of a larger and more complex social phenomenon. To do this without compromising Islamism as an independent subject of study, I studied the three discourses of Islamism, the nation-state and the economy in Egypt. This approach uncovered similarities and comparable formations among the three discourses without relying on any causal explanation. Islamism in this approach could be explained neither as an isolated phenomenon, nor as a mistake or a negative side-effect of another phenomenon, especially modernity. It is explained as an integral part of the larger phenomenon of modernity.

This study adds to a number of earlier studies that shed light on the significance of the state in studying Islamism. It avoided, however, the common approach that focuses on *agency*, the agency of the state and that of Islamist –whether their relationship is one of conflict or one of cooperation, to focus more on the formations and structures of the state, Islamism and the economy in Egypt. Talal Asad argues that the religious and the secular were created in the spaces of the emerging modern state. This study proposes an approach that examines the state, economy and Islamism as parallel and related discourses that define and delimit each other. It shows the significance of studying discourse concepts and common questions, for instance, progression, planning, unity,

moderation, openness, diversity, etc. in shaping the three formations of the state, economy and Islamism. The study emphasizes the significance of the two Foucauldian analytical concepts of the *rules of formation* and *system of dispersion* in studying the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood Group, MBG, in Egypt in its emergence among the two discourses of the state and the economy. Those are the analytical concepts that make it possible to examine the interesting similarities and comparable differences between Islamism as a discourse and other contemporary discourses that accompanied its emergence and delimited its unfolding.

Three layers of MBG discourse could be identified. The first layer stretches from the reign of Mehmet Ali (R. 1805-1848) to Nāsser's regime (R. 1954-1970). One finds the emergence and establishment of a discourse of a central, hegemonic, and inclusive national state. The same inclusiveness could be found in the emerging discourse of comprehensive and systematic Islam, which the founder of MBG, Hasan el-Banna (1906-1949) called *al-Islām al-šāmil.* Contemporary with first two discourses, there was a third, related discourse of national political economy that aims to connect a multitude of social, political, scientific, educational, medical and economic activities.

A second layer is characterized by a bipolar socialist-liberal state discourse, double state corporatist-privatized economy and dual conservative-reformer Islamist discourse. While compromise and moderation characterized the first two discourses, Islamists called their discourse *al-Islām al-wasaṭī*, or the middle-way Islam. This layer has been detected from the mid-1970s until the present.

The third layer has gradually been emerging since mid 1990s. Compromise and

moderation of the three discourses are being substituted for functional redistribution and *modularization* at the institutional level. A multitude of functional *modules* are being continuously created to carry out different functions. Alliances and networks are continuously formed and dissolved to accommodate different and, sometimes, contradictory functions.

That brings us to the two notions of continuity and change. This study traced back the discourses of the MBG, the state and the economy to the early 19th century. It challenged the conventional wisdom that has dominated the studies of Islamism, which trace the emergence of the MBG to the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate, the spread of the Western culture in Egypt and the establishment of the so called secular state in Egypt. The study identified the gradual change in the three discourses of the MBG, the state and the economy that led to the emergence of the Group in 1928. The study also showed how a change in the *rules of formation* and *the system of dispersion* would result in a change in the discourse without necessarily creating new concepts or completely abandoning older ones. This study, therefore, challenges the approaches that emphasize a rupture created by *modernity*. It also challenges recent studies that claims new liberal changes with the MBG and explain these assumed changes as either genuine or pragmatic.

This study found that neither rigid ideology, nor flexible pragmatism could explain the MBG tactics and decisions. *Practicality* is proposed instead; and it is framed as *fatwa*, an informed opinion regarding a specific situation, which is driven by the concept of *maṣlaḥah*, or community interest, and limited by the concept of *ḥudūd*, or

borders. Accordingly, MBG tactics are driven by two, sometimes contradictory, forces, between which the Group produces its compromised decisions.

By exploring the archeology of Islamism and, not the least, by comparing it to the archeology of the discourses of the state and the economy, the study aims to de-politicize and de-economize Islamism. Though political and economic activities are in the heart of the MBG interests and concerns, this should not lead us to over-politicize the Group, framing it *only* as a political party, or to over-economize it, portraying it as a group of marginalized proletariat. The approach that is proposed in this study aims to create a site outside politics and outside capitalism to critique Islamism, the state and the economy. Avoiding agency and any causal interpretation of the emergence and development of Islamism is one step to have this site. The archaeological examination of the three juxtaposed discourses is another step. These two steps are supported by further methods, which I will explain in the following lines.

One of the central conclusions of this study is the extreme significance of theology in Muslim' reality, and, therefore, in its analysis. Ignoring the thesis that Islam's emphasis is on *orthopraxy*, not *orthodoxy*, as it is the case in Christianity, this study paid serious attention to theology. More importantly, this study sought theology not in any scholastic debate around dogmas or elements of belief. It sought and found theology in its sociological manifestation. A discussion of the notion of truth in Islam and its historical impossibility led to an investigation of the notion of *ghayb*, the unseen reality. *Ghayb* came to complete the semiotic square of subjectivity-objectivity-intersubjectivity as the negation of negation. It came to create space for an impossibly reified meaning that goes,

like God and the Truth, far beyond any semiotic articulation.

This theological and semiotic investigation was supported by the Islamic legal concept of *jamʿ*, which refers, not to consensus, *ijmāʿ*, but to the mere gathering of contradictory alternatives. I traced these concepts of *ghayb* and *jamʿ* within the text arguing that *no-choice* it is a central feature of MBG discourse. Unlike structuralist approaches that emphasize binary oppositions, and the Foucauldian post-structuralist approach that proposes the *points of diffraction*, where alternatives come in the form of either/or, I argued that concepts within MBG discourse, and, in fact, the discourses of the state and economy as well, should be understood, neither as a choice of the two alternatives, nor as an integration of both of them, but as an avoidance of the two clear choices. Concepts head an ambiguous path in-between binary oppositions, one that claims *jamʿ* not *ijmāʿ*.

In addition to the above, I argued that the discourse is grounded in the logic of the dual, which I proposed as a replacement for the dialectic logic. There is no integration of thesis and anti-thesis to develop a new thesis. Thesis and anti-thesis dance eternally within the discourse, where no-choice is the basic strategy. This insight was supported by Baudrillard's concept of *reversibility*. Statements within MBG discourse are continuously reversed. This is a challenge to the dominant notion of *power* that has dominated discourse analyses for the last three decades. Power is not resisted; it is *seduced* and reversed.

If *ghayb* and *jamʿ* drive reversibility theologically, if the *dual* supports it logically, it is *ntersubjectivity* that maintains reversibility sociologically. This study does away from

the object-subject binary in sociological analyses. It supports neither structures nor agency, individuality and subjectivity. Nor does this study aim to fuse this binary through new concepts, for instance, discourse or habitus. This study situates the discourse between objectivity and intersubjectivity, between laws and norms, reason and values, as well as between power and seduction.

The study seriously aims to explore the interaction of the above spheres at the level of the text. It examines carefully how each end of those binaries exists and manifests within the text, and how it interacts with its opposition. The study identified, at the level of the text, not only manifestations of *ghayb* and *jamʿ*, but also nine specific textual techniques that are frequently used within MBG discourse that maintains the logic of the dual and the strategy of no-choice, and reverses the assumed perpetual unfolding of power. Moreover, the study emphasized *style* as an essential component of any discourse analysis. It found in this pure form an empty and transparent form that mediates intersubjective conventions, while assuming values and ideological references. Like *fatwa*, it is flexible enough to accommodate *practicality* and limiting enough to mark its discourse. Like the *ritual*, it is grounded in imitation and what Baudrillard calls the *parody.*

Finally, this study concludes that to solve the insider/outsider methodological problem, researchers have to tailor their method itself. Without ignoring the work of *translation*, where the native's concepts are translated into our culture, and without underestimating the emphasis on the researcher, who, being a participant-observant, will internally change, so that it is easier for him/her to get the native's point of view, this

study calls to tailor the method itself, the approach, to reflect the cultural features and epistemological dimensions of the native. As I stated above, discourse and semiotic analyses are culturally specific and sometimes theologically embedded.

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